

THE DIET OF WORMS (1521)

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Chapter 1

Victories of the Word of God

The Reformation, commenced by the struggles of an humble spirit in the cell of a cloister at Erfurth, had continually increased. An obscure individual, bearing in his hand the Word of Life, had stood firm before the mighty ones of the world, and they had shaken before him. He had wielded this arm of the Word of God, first against Tetzels and his numerous army; and those greedy merchants, after a brief struggle, had fled away: he next employed it against the Roman legate at Augsburg; and the legate in amazement had allowed the prey to escape him: somewhat later with its aid he contended against the champions of learning in the halls of Leipsic; and the astonished theologians had beheld their syllogistic weapons shivered in their hands: and, lastly, with this single arm, he had opposed the pope, when the latter, disturbed in his slumbers, had risen on his throne to blast the unfortunate monk with his thunders; and this same Word had paralyzed all the power of this

head of Christendom. A final struggle remained to be undergone. The Word was destined to triumph over the emperor of the West, over the kings and princes of the earth; and then, victorious over all the powers of the world, to arise in the Church, and reign as the very Word of God.

The entire nation was agitated. Princes and nobles, knights and citizens, clergy and laity, town and country, — all participated in the struggle. A mighty religious revolution, of which God himself was the prime mover, but which was also deeply rooted in the lives of the people, threatened to overthrow the long-venerated chief of the Roman hierarchy. A new generation of a serious, deep, active, and energetic spirit, filled the universities, cities, courts, castles, rural districts, and frequently even the cloisters. A presentiment that a great transformation of society was at hand, inspired all minds with holy enthusiasm. What would be the position of the emperor with regard to this movement of the age? and what would be the end of this formidable impulse by which all men were carried along?.....

A solemn diet was about to be opened: this was the first assembly of the empire over which Charles was to preside. As Nuremberg, where it should have been held, in accordance with the Golden Bull, was suffering from the plague, it was convoked to meet at Worms on the 6th January 1521. Never before had so many princes met together in diet; each one was desirous of participating in this first act of the young emperor's government, and was pleased at the opportunity of displaying his power.

The youthful landgrave Philip of Hesse, among others, who was afterwards to play so important a role in the Reformation, arrived at Worms, about the middle of January, with six hundred horsemen, among whom were warriors celebrated for their valor.

But a much stronger motive inclined the electors, dukes, archbishops, landgraves, margraves, counts, bishops, barons, and lords of the empire, as well as the deputies of the towns,

and the ambassadors of the kings of Christendom, to throng with their brilliant trains the roads that led to Worms. It had been announced that, among other important matters to be laid before the diet, would be the nomination of a council of regency to govern the empire during Charles's absence, and the jurisdiction of the imperial chamber; but public attention was more particularly directed to another question, which the emperor had also mentioned in his letters of convocation: that of the Reformation. The great interests of worldly policy grew pale before the cause of the monk of Wittenberg. It was this which formed the principal topic of conversation between the noble personages who arrived at Worms.

Every thing announced that the diet would be stormy, and difficult to manage. Charles, who was hardly twenty years of age, was pale, of weak health, and yet a graceful horseman, able to break a lance like others of his time; his character was as yet undeveloped; his air was grave and melancholy, although of a kindly expression, and he had not hitherto shown any remarkable talent,

and did not appear to have adopted any decided line of conduct. The skillful and active William de Croi, lord of Chievres, his high chamberlain, tutor, and prime minister, who enjoyed an absolute authority at court, died at Worms: numerous ambitions here met; many passions came into collision; the Spaniards and the Belgians vied with each other in their exertions to creep into the councils of the young prince; the nuncios multiplied their intrigues; the German princes spoke out boldly. It might easily be foreseen that the underhanded practices of parties would have a principal share in the struggle. But over all these scenes of agitation hovered a terrible will — the Roman papacy, which, inflexible as the destiny of the ancients, had unceasingly crushed for ages past every doctor, king, or people that had opposed its tyrannous progress. A letter written at Rome in the month of January 1521, and by a Roman citizen, reveals its intentions. “If I am not mistaken, the only business in your diet will be this affair of Luther, which gives us much more trouble than the Turk himself. We shall endeavor to gain over the young emperor by threats, by prayers, and feigned

caresses. We shall strive to win the Germans by extolling the piety of their ancestors, and by making them rich presents, and by lavish promises. If these methods do not succeed, we shall depose the emperor; absolve the people for their obedience; elect another (and he will be one that suits us) in his place; stir up civil war among the Germans, as we have just done in Spain; and summon to our aid the armies of the kings of France, England, and all the nations of the earth. Probity, honor, religion, Christ — we shall make light of all, provided our tyranny be saved.” A very slight familiarity with the history of the papacy is sufficient to show that these words are a faithful description of its policy. It is identically what Rome has always done when she has had the power: only the times were now a little changed. We shall soon behold her busy at her task.

Charles opened the diet on the 28th January 1521, the festival of Charlemagne. His mind was filled with the high importance of the imperial dignity. He said, in his opening discourse, that no monarchy could be compared with the Roman

empire, to which nearly the whole world had submitted in former times; that unfortunately this empire was a mere shadow of what it once had been; but that, by means of his kingdoms and powerful alliances, he hoped to restore it to its ancient glory.

But numerous difficulties immediately presented themselves to the young emperor. What must he do, placed between the papal nuncio and the elector to whom he was indebted for his crown? How can he avoid displeasing either Aleander or Frederick? The first entreated the emperor to execute the pope's bull, and the second besought him to take no steps against the monk until he had been heard. Desirous of pleasing both parties, the young prince, during his stay at Oppenheim, had written to the elector to bring Luther with him to the diet, assuring him that no injustice should be shown to the reformer, that no violence should be used towards him, and that learned men should confer with him.

This letter, accompanied by others from

Chievres and the count of Nassau, threw the elector into great perplexity. At every moment the alliance of the pope might become necessary to the young and ambitious emperor, and then Luther's fate was sealed. If Frederick should take the reformer to Worms, he might be leading him to the scaffold. And yet Charles's orders were precise. The elector commanded Spalatin to communicate to Luther the letters he had received. "The adversaries," said the chaplain to him, "are making every exertion to hasten on this affair." Luther's friends were alarmed, but he himself did not tremble. His health was at that time very weak; but that was a trifling matter for him. "If I cannot go to Worms in good health," replied he to the elector, "I will be carried there, sick as I am. For if the emperor calls me, I cannot doubt that it is the call of God himself. If they desire to use violence against me, and that is very probable (for it is not for their instruction that they order me to appear), I place the matter in the Lord's hands. He still lives and reigns who preserved the three young men in the burning fiery furnace. If He will not save me, my life is of little consequence. Let us only prevent the Gospel from

being exposed to the scorn of the wicked, and let us shed our blood for it, for fear they should triumph. It is not for me to decide whether my life or my death will contribute most to the salvation of all.

Let us pray God that our young emperor may not begin his reign by dipping his hands in my blood. I would rather perish by the sword of the Romans. You know what chastisement was inflicted on the Emperor Sigismund after the murder of John Huss. You may expect every thing from me.....except flight and recantation. Fly I cannot, and still less retract!" Before receiving Luther's reply, the elector had formed his resolution. This prince, who was advancing in the knowledge of the Gospel, now became more decided in his conduct. He felt that the conference at Worms would not have a favorable result. "It appears a difficult matter," he wrote in reply to Charles, "to bring Luther with me to Worms; I beseech you to relieve me from this anxiety. Furthermore, I have never been willing to defend his doctrine, but only to prevent his being condemned without a hearing. The legates, without

waiting for your orders, have permitted themselves to take a step at once dishonoring Luther and myself; and I much fear that they thus dragged Luther to commit a very imprudent act, which might expose him to great danger, if he were to appear before the diet.” The elector alluded to the burning of the papal bull.

But the rumor of Luther’s coming was already current through the city.

Men eager for novelty were delighted; the emperor’s courtiers were alarmed; but none showed greater indignation than the papal legate. On his journey, Aleander had been able to discover how far the Gospel announced by Luther had found an echo in all classes of society. Men of letters, lawyers, nobles, the inferior clergy, the regular orders, and the people, were gained over to the Reformation. These friends of the new doctrine walked boldly with heads erect; their language was fearless and daring; an invincible terror froze the hearts of the partisans of Rome. The papacy was still standing, but its buttresses were tottering; for

their ears already distinguished a presage of destruction, like that indistinct murmur heard ere the mountain falls and crumbles into dust. Aleander on the road to Worms was frequently unable to contain himself. If he desired to dine or sleep in any place, neither the learned, the nobles, nor the priests, even among the supposed partisans of Rome, dared receive him; and the haughty nuncio was obliged to seek a lodging at inns of the lowest class.

Aleander was frightened, and began to think his life in danger. Thus he arrived at Worms, and to his Roman fanaticism was then superadded the feeling of the personal indignities he had suffered. He immediately used every exertion to prevent the appearance of the bold and formidable Luther. "Would it not be scandalous," said he, "to behold laymen examining anew a cause already condemned by the pope?" Nothing is so alarming to a Roman courtier as inquiry; and yet, should this take place in Germany, and not at Rome, how great would be the humiliation, even were Luther's condemnation to be agreed upon unanimously; but

such a result appeared by no means certain. Will not Luther's powerful eloquence, which has already committed such ravages, drag many princes and lords into inevitable destruction? Aleander pressed Charles closely: he entreated, threatened, and spoke as the nuncio of the head of the Church. Charles submitted, and wrote to the elector that the time accorded to Luther having already elapsed, this monk lay under the papal excommunication, so that, if he would not retract what he had written, Frederick must leave him behind at Wittenberg. But this prince had already quitted Saxony without Luther. "I pray the Lord to be favorable to our elector," said Melancthon, as he saw him depart. "It is on him all our hopes for the restoration of Christendom repose. His enemies will dare anything, and they will not leave a stone unturned; but God will confound the councils of Ahithophel. As for us, let us maintain our share of the combat by our teaching and by our prayers." Luther was deeply grieved at being forbidden to come to Worms. It was not sufficient for Aleander that Luther did not appear at Worms; he desired his condemnation. He was continually soliciting the

princes, prelates, and different members of the diet; he accused the Augustine monk not only of disobedience and heresy, but even of sedition, rebellion, impiety, and blasphemy. But the very tone of his voice betrayed the passions by which he was animated. “He is moved by hatred and vengeance, much more than by zeal and piety,” was the general remark; and frequent and violent as were his speeches, he made no converts to his sentiments. Some persons observed to him that the papal bull had only condemned Luther conditionally; others could not altogether conceal the joy they felt at this humiliation of the haughtiness of Rome. The emperor’s ministers on the one hand, the ecclesiastical electors on the other, showed a marked coldness; the former, that the pope might feel the necessity of leaguering with their master; the latter, that the pontiff might purchase their support at a dearer price. A feeling of Luther’s innocence predominated in the assembly; and Aleander could not contain his indignation.

But the coldness of the diet made the legate less

impatient than the coldness of Rome. Rome, which had had so much difficulty in taking a serious view of this quarrel of a “drunken German,” did not imagine that the bull of the sovereign pontiff would be ineffectual to humiliate and reduce him. She had resumed all her carelessness, and sent neither additional bulls nor money. But how could they bring this matter to an issue without money? Rome must be awakened. Aleander uttered a cry of alarm. “Germany is separating from Rome,” wrote he to the Cardinal de Medicis; “the princes are separating from the pope. Yet a little more delay, yet a little more negotiation, and hope will be gone. Money! money! or Germany is lost.” Rome awake at this cry; the vassals of the papacy, emerging from their torpor, hastily forged their redoubtable thunderbolts in the Vatican. The pope issued a new bull; and the excommunication, with which the heretical doctor had as yet been only threatened, was decidedly pronounced against him and all his adherents. Rome, by breaking the last tie which still bound him to the Church, augmented Luther’s liberty, and with increased liberty came an increase of strength. Cursed by the pope, he took refuge

with fresh love at the feet of Christ. Ejected from the outward courts of the temple, he felt more strongly that he was himself a temple in which dwelt the living God.

“It is a great glory,” said he, “that we sinners, by believing in Christ, and eating his flesh, possess within us, in all their vigor, his power, wisdom, and righteousness, as it is written, Whoso believeth in me, in him do I dwell. Wonderful abiding-place! marvelous tabernacle! far superior to that of Moses, and magnificently adorned within, with beautiful hangings, curtains of purple, and ornaments of gold; while without, as on the tabernacle that God commanded to be built in the desert of Sinai, we perceive nought but a rude covering of goats’ hair and ram’s skins. Often do Christians stumble, and, to look at them outwardly, they seem all weakness and reproach. But this matters not, for beneath this weakness and this foolishness dwells in secret a power that the world cannot know, and which yet overcometh the world; for Christ dwelleth in us. I have sometimes beheld Christians walking lamely and with great

feebleness; but when came the hour of conflict or of appearing before the bar of the world, Christ suddenly stirred with them, and they became so strong and so resolute, that Satan fled away frightened from before their face.” Such an hour would soon strike for Luther; and Christ, in whose communion he dwelt, could not fail him. Meantime Rome rejected him with violence. The reformer and all his partisans were accursed, whatever their rank and power, and dispossessed, with their inheritors, of all their honors and goods. Every faithful Christian, who valued the salvation of his soul, was to flee at the sight of this accursed band. Wherever the heresy had been introduced, the priests were enjoined, on Sundays and festivals, at the hour when the churches were thronged with worshippers, to publish the excommunication with due solemnity. The altars were to be stripped of their ornaments and sacred vessels; the cross to be laid on the ground; twelve priests holding tapers in their hands were first to light them, and immediately dashing them violently to the earth, to extinguish them under their feet; the bishop was then to proclaim the condemnation of these

unbelievers; all the bells were to be rung; the bishops and priests were to utter their anathemas and maledictions, and preach boldly against Luther and his adherents.

The excommunication had been published in Rome twenty-two days, but probably had not yet reached Germany, when Luther, being informed that there was another talk of summoning him to Worms, wrote a letter to the elector, drawn up in such a manner that Frederick might show it to the diet. Luther was desirous of correcting the erroneous ideas of the princes, and of frankly laying before this august tribunal the true nature of a cause so misunderstood. "I rejoice with all my heart, most serene Lord," says he, "that his imperial majesty desires to summon me before him touching this affair. I call Jesus Christ to witness, that it is the cause of the whole German nation, of the universal Church, of the christian world. Nay, of God himself.....and not of an individual, especially such a one as myself.

I am ready to go to Worms, provided I have a

safe-conduct, and learned, pious, and impartial judges. I am ready to answer.....for it is not from a presumptuous spirit, or to derive any advantage, that I have taught the doctrine with which I am reproached: it is in obedience to my conscience and to my oath as doctor of the Holy Scriptures: it is for the glory of God, for the salvation of the Christian Church, for the good of the German nation, and for the extirpation of so much superstition, abuse, evil, scandal, tyranny, blasphemy, and impiety.” This declaration, drawn up at a moment so solemn for Luther, merits particular attention. Such were the motives of his actions, and the inward springs that led to the revival of christian society. This is very different from the jealousy of a monk or the desire of marriage!

Chapter 2

A Foreign Prince

But all this was of little consequence to politicians. However noble might have been the idea Charles had formed of the imperial dignity, Germany was not the center of his interests and of policy. He understood neither the spirit nor the language of Germany. He was always a Duke of Burgundy, who to many other scepters had united the first crown of Christendom. It was a remarkable circumstance that, at the moment of its most intimate transformation, Germany should elect a foreign prince, to whom the necessities and tendencies of the nation were but of secondary importance.

Undoubtedly the emperor was not indifferent to the religious movement, but it had no meaning in his eyes except so far as it threatened the pope.

War between Charles and Francis I was inevitable; the principal scene of that war would be

Italy. The alliance of the pope became therefore daily more necessary to Charles's projects. He would have preferred detaching Frederick from Luther, or satisfying the pope without offending Frederick.

Many of his courtiers manifested in the affair of the Augustine monk that disdainful coldness which politicians generally affect when there is any question of religion. "Let us avoid all extreme measures," said they. "Let us entangle Luther by negotiations, and reduce him to silence by some trifling concessions. The proper course is to stifle and not to fan the flame.

If the monk falls into the net, we are victorious! By accepting a compromise, he will silence himself and ruin his cause. For form's sake we will decree certain exterior reforms; the elector will be satisfied; the pope will be gained; and matters will resume their ordinary course." Such was the project formed by the emperor's confidants. The Wittenberg doctors seem to have divined this new policy. "They are trying to win men over secretly,"

said Melancthon, “and are working in the dark.” Charles’s confessor, John Glapio, a man of great weight, a skillful courtier, and a wily monk took upon himself the execution of the scheme. Glapio possessed the full confidence of Charles; and this prince, imitating the Spanish customs in this particular, intrusted him almost entirely with the care of matters pertaining to religion. As soon as Charles had been named emperor, Leo hastened to win over Glapio by favors which the confessor very gratefully acknowledged. He could make no better return to the pontiff’s generosity than by crushing this heresy, and he applied himself to the task. Among the elector’s councilors was Gregory Bruck, or Pontanus, the chancellor, a man of intelligence, decision, and courage, who was a better theological scholar than many doctors, and whose wisdom was capable of resisting the wiles of the monks in Charles’s court. Glapio, knowing the chancellor’s influence, requested an interview with him, and introducing himself as if he had been a friend of the reformer, said with an air of kindness: “I was filled with joy, in reading Luther’s first writings; I thought him a vigorous tree, which

had put forth goodly branches, and gave promise to the Church of the most precious fruit. Many people, it is true, have entertained the same views before his time; yet no one but himself has had the noble courage to publish the truth without fear. But when I read his book on the Captivity of Babylon, I felt like one overwhelmed with blows from head to foot. I do not think," added the monk, "that brother Martin will acknowledge himself to be the author of it; I do not find in it either his usual style or learning." After some discussion, the confessor continued: "Introduce me to the elector, and in your presence I will show him Luther's errors." The chancellor replied that the business of the diet left his highness no leisure, and besides he did not mix himself up with this matter. The monk was vexed at seeing his demand rejected. "Nevertheless," continued the chancellor, "since you say there is no evil without a remedy, explain yourself." Assuming a confidential air, the confessor replied: "The emperor earnestly desires to see a man like Luther reconciled with the Church; for his books (previous to the publication of the treatise on the Captivity of Babylon) were

rather agreeable to his majesty..... The irritation caused by the bull no doubt excited Luther to write the latter work. Let him then declare that he had not intention of troubling the repose of the Church, and the learned of every nation will side with him. Procure me an audience with his highness.” The chancellor went to Frederick. The elector well knew that any retraction whatsoever was impossible: “Tell the confessor,” answered he, “that I cannot comply with his request; but continue your conference.” Glapio received this message with every demonstration of respect; and changing his line of attack, he said: “Let the elector name some confidential persons to deliberate on this affair.” The Chancellor. — “The elector does not profess to defend Luther’s cause.” The Confessor. — “Well, then, you at least can discuss it with me.....Jesus Christ is my witness that I make this proposition from love to the Church and Luther, who has opened so many hearts to the truth.” The chancellor having refused to undertake a task which belonged to the reformer, prepared to withdraw.

“Stay,” said the monk.

The Chancellor. — “What remains to be done?” The Confessor. — “Let Luther deny that he wrote the Captivity of Babylon.” The Chancellor. — But the pope’s bull condemns all his other writings.” The Confessor. — “That is because of his obstinacy. If he disclaims this book, the pope in his omnipotence can easily pardon him. What hopes may we not entertain, now that we have so excellent an emperor!”.....

Perceiving that these words had produced some effect on the chancellor, the monk hastily added: “Luther always desires to argue from the Bible.

The Bible.....it is like wax, you may stretch it and bend it as you please. I would undertake to find in the Bible opinions more extravagant even than Luther’s. He is mistaken when he changes every word of Christ into a commandment.” And then wishing to act upon the fears of his hearer, he added: “What would be the result if to-day or to-morrow the emperor should have recourse to arms?

Reflect upon this.” He then permitted Pontanus to retire.

The confessor laid fresh snares. “A man might live ten years with him, and not know him at last,” said Erasmus.

“What an excellent book is that of Luther’s on Christian Liberty,” said he to the chancellor, whom he saw again a few days after; “what wisdom! what talent! what wit! if it is thus that a real scholar ought to write.....Let both sides choose men of irreproachable character, and let the pope and Luther refer the whole matter to their decision. There is no doubt that Luther would come off victorious on many points. I will speak about it to the emperor. Believe me, I do not mention these things solely on my own authority. I have told the emperor that God would chastise him and all the princes, if the Church, which is the spouse of Christ, be not cleansed from all the stains that defile her. I added, that God himself had sent Luther, and commissioned him to reprove men for their offenses, employing him as a scourge to

punish the sins of the world.” The chancellor, on hearing these words (which reflected the feelings of the age, and showed the opinion entertained of Luther even by his adversaries), could not forbear expressing his astonishment that his master was not treated with more respect. “There are daily consultations with the emperor on this affair,” said he, “and yet the elector is not invited to them.

He thinks it strange that the emperor, who is not a little indebted to him, should exclude him from his councils.” The Confessor. — “I have been present only once at these deliberations, and then heard the emperor resist the solicitations of the nuncios. Five years hence it will be seen what Charles has done for the reformation of the Church.” “The elector,” answered Pontanus, “is unacquainted with Luther’s intentions. Let him be summoned and have a hearing.” The confessor replied with a deep sigh: “I call God to witness how ardently I desire to see the reformation of Christendom accomplished.” To protract the affair and to keep the reformer silent was all that Glop proposed. In any case, Luther must not come to

Worms. A dead man returning from the other world and appearing in the midst of the diet, would have been less alarming to the nuncios, the monks, and all the papal host, than the presence of the Wittenberg doctor.

“How many days does it take to travel from Wittenberg to Worms?” asked the confessor with an assumed air of indifference; and then, begging Pontanus to present his most humble salutations to the elector, he retired.

Such were the manoeuvres resorted to by the courtiers. They were disconcerted by the firmness of Pontanus. That just man was immovable as a rock during all these negotiations. The Roman monks themselves fell into the snares they had laid for their enemies. “The Christian,” said Luther in his figurative language, “is like a bird tied near a trap. The wolves and foxes prowl round it, and spring on it to devour it; but they fall into the pit and perish, while the timid bird remains unhurt. It is thus the holy angels keep watch around us, and those devouring wolves, the hypocrites and

persecutors, cannot harm us.” Not only were the artifices of the confessor ineffectual, but his admissions still more confirmed Frederick in his opinion that Luther was right, and that it was his duty to protect him.

Men’s hearts daily inclined more and more towards the Gospel. A Dominican prior suggested that the emperor, the kings of France, Spain, England, Portugal, Hungary, and Poland, with the pope and the electors, should name representatives to whom the arrangement of this affair should be confided. “Never,” said he, “has implicit reliance been placed on the pope alone.” The public feeling became such that it seemed impossible to condemn Luther without having heard and confuted him. Aleander grew uneasy, and displayed unusual energy. It was no longer against the elector and Luther alone that he had to contend. He beheld with horror the secret negotiations of the confessor, the proposition of the prior, the consent of Charles’s ministers, the extreme coldness of Roman piety, even among the most devoted friends of the pontiff, “so that one might have thought,”

says Pallavicini, “that a torrent of iced water had gushed over them.” He had at length received from Rome the money he had demanded; he held in his hand the energetic briefs addressed to the most powerful men in the empire. Fearing to see his prey escape, he felt that now was the time to strike a decisive blow. He forwarded the briefs, scattered the money profusely, and made the most alluring promises; “and, armed with this threefold weapon,” says the historian, Cardinal Pallavicini, “he made a fresh attempt to bias the wavering assembly of electors in the pope’s favor.” But around the emperor in particular he laid his snares. He took advantage of the dissensions existing between the Belgian and Spanish ministers. He besieged the monarch unceasingly. All the partisans of Rome, awakened by his voice, solicited Charles. “Daily deliberations,” wrote the elector to his brother John, “are held against Luther; they demand that he shall be placed under the ban of the pope and of the emperor; they endeavor to injure him in every way.

Those who parade in their red hats, the Romans, with all their followers, display

indefatigable zeal in this task.” Aleander was in reality pressing for the condemnation of the reformer with a violence that Luther characterizes as marvelous fury. The apostate nuncio, as Luther styles him, transported by anger beyond the bounds of prudence, one day exclaimed: “If you Germans pretend to shake off the yoke of obedience to Rome, we will act in such a manner that, exterminated by mutual slaughter, you shall perish in your own blood.” — “This is how the pope feeds Christ’s sheep,” adds the reformer.

But such was not his own language. He asked nothing for himself. “Luther is ready,” said Melancthon, “to purchase at the cost of his own life the glory and advancement of the Gospel.” But he trembled when he thought of the calamities that might be the consequence of his death. He pictured to himself a misled people revenging perhaps his martyrdom in the blood of his adversaries, and especially of the priests. He rejected so dreadful a responsibility. “God,” said he, “checks the fury of his enemies; but if it breaks forth.....then shall we see a storm burst upon the priests like that which

has devastated Bohemia.....My hands are clear of this, for I have earnestly entreated the German nobility to oppose the Romans by wisdom, and not by the sword. To make war upon the priests, — a class without courage or strength, — would be to fight against women and children.” Charles V could not resist the solicitations of the nuncio. His Belgian and Spanish devotion had been developed by his preceptor Adrian, who afterwards occupied the pontifical throne. The pope had addressed him in a brief, entreating him to give the power of law to the bull by an imperial edict. “To no purpose will God have invested you with the sword of the supreme power,” said he, “if you do not employ it, not only against the infidels, but against the heretics also, who are far worse than they.” Accordingly, one day at the beginning of February, at the moment when every one in Worms was making preparations for a splendid tournament, and the emperor’s tent was already erected, the princes who were arming themselves to take part in the brilliant show were summoned to the imperial palace. After listening to the reading of the papal bull, a stringent edict was laid before them,

enjoining its immediate execution. "If you can recommend any better course," added the emperor, following the usual custom, "I am ready to hear you." An animated debate immediately took place in the assembly. "This monk," wrote a deputy from one of the free cities of Germany, "gives us plenty of occupation. Some would like to crucify him, and I think that he will not escape; only it is to be feared that he will rise again the third day." The emperor had imagined that he would be able to publish his edict without opposition from the states; but such was not the case. Their minds were not prepared. It was necessary to gain over the diet. "Convince this assembly," said the youthful monarch to the nuncio. This was all that Aleander desired; and he was promised to be introduced to the diet on the 13th of February.

Chapter 3

Aleander introduced to the Diet

The nuncio prepared for this solemn audience. This was an important duty, but Aleander was not unworthy of it. Ambassador from the sovereign pontiff, and surrounded with all the splendor of his high office, he was also one of the most eloquent men of his age. The friends of the Reformation looked forward to this sitting with apprehension. The elector, pretending indisposition, was not present; but he gave some of his councilors orders to attend, and take notes of the nuncio's speech.

When the day arrived, Aleander proceeded towards the assembly of the princes. The feelings of all were excited; many were reminded of Annas and Caiaphas going to Pilate's judgment-seat and calling for the death of this fellow who perverted the nation. "Just as the nuncio was about to cross the threshold, the usher of the diet," says

Pallavicini, “approaching him rudely, thrust him back by a blow on the breast.” “He was a Lutheran in heart,” adds the Romanist historian. If this story be true, it shows no doubt an excess of passion; but at the same time it furnishes us with a standard by which to measure the influence that Luther’s words had excited even in those who guarded the doors of the imperial council. The proud Aleander, recovering himself with dignity, walked forward, and entered the hall. Never had Rome been called to make its defense before so august an assembly. The nuncio placed before him the documents that he had judged necessary, namely, Luther’s works and the papal bulls; and as soon as the diet was silent, he began: — “Most august emperor, most mighty princes, most excellent deputies! I appear before you in defense of a cause for which my heart glows with the most ardent affection. It is to retain on my master’s head that triple crown which you all adore: to maintain that papal throne for which I should be willing to deliver my body to the flames, if the monster that has engendered this growing heresy that I am now to combat could be consumed at the same stake, and mingle his ashes

with mine. “No! the whole difference between Luther and the pope does not turn on the papal interests. I have Luther’s books before me, and a man only needs have eyes in his head to see that he attacks the holy doctrines of the Church. He teaches that those alone communicate worthily whose consciences are overwhelmed with sorrow and confusion because of their sins, and that no one is justified by baptism, if he has not faith in the promise of which baptism is the pledge. He denies the necessity of works to obtain heavenly glory. He denies that we have the liberty and power of obeying the natural and Divine law. He asserts that we sin of necessity in every one of our actions. Has the arsenal of hell ever sent forth weapons better calculated to break the bonds of decency?.....He preaches in favor of the abolition of monastic vows. Can we imagine any greater sacrilegious impiety?.....What desolation should we not witness in the world, were those who are the salt of the earth to throw aside their sacred garments, desert the temples that re-echo with their holy songs, and plunge into adultery, incest, and every vice!.....

“Shall I enumerate all the crimes of this Augustine monk? He sins against the dead, for he denies purgatory; he sins against heaven, for he says that he would not believe even an angel from heaven; he sins against the Church, for he maintains that all Christians are priests; he sins against the saints, for he despises their venerable writings; he sins against councils, for he designates that of Constance an assembly of devils; he sins against the world, for he forbids the punishment of death to be inflicted on any who have not committed a deadly sin. Some of you may say that he is a pious man.....I have no desire to attack his life, but only to remind this assembly that the devil often deceives people in the garb of truth.” Aleander, having spoken of the doctrine of purgatory condemned by the Council of Florence, laid at the emperor’s feet the papal bull of this council. The Archbishop of Mentz took it up, and gave it to the Archbishops of Treves and Cologne, who received it reverently, and passed it to the other princes. The nuncio, after having thus accused Luther, proceeded to the second point, which was to justify Rome: — “At Rome, says

Luther, the mouth promises one thing, the hand does another. If this were true, must we not come to the very opposite conclusion? If the ministers of a religion live conformably to its precepts, it is a sign that the religion is false. Such was the religion of the ancient Romans.....Such is that of Mahomet and of Luther himself; but such is not the religion which the Roman pontiffs teach us. Yes, the doctrine they profess condemns them all, as having committed faults; many, as guilty; and some (I will speak frankly) as criminal.This doctrine exposes their actions to the censure of men during their lives, to the brand of history after their death. Now, I would ask what pleasure or profit could the popes have found in inventing such a religion?

“The Church, it may be said, was not governed by the Roman pontiffs in the primitive ages. — What conclusion shall we draw from this? With such arguments we might persuade men to feed on acorns, and princesses to wash their own linen.” But his adversary — the reformer — was the special object of the nuncio’s hatred. Boiling with indignation against those who said that he ought to

be heard, he exclaimed: “Luther will not allow himself to be instructed by any one. The pope had already summoned him to Rome, and he did not comply. Next, the pope cited him before the legate at Augsburg, and he did not appear until he had procured a safe-conduct, that is to say, after the legate’s hands were tied, and his tongue alone was left unfettered..... Ah!” said Aleander, turning towards Charles V, “I entreat your imperial Majesty to do nothing that may lead to your reproach. Do not interfere in a matter which does not concern the laity. Perform your own duties! Let Luther’s doctrines be interdicted by you throughout the length and breadth of the empire: let his writings be burnt everywhere. Fear not! In Luther’s errors there is enough to burn a hundred thousand heretics..... And what have we to fear? The multitude?.....Its insolence makes it appear terrible before the conflict, but in the battle its cowardice renders it contemptible. Foreign princes?.....But the King of France has forbidden the introduction of Luther’s doctrines into his kingdom; and the King of England is preparing an assault with his own royal hand. You know what are the sentiments

of Hungary, Italy, and Spain, and there is not one of your neighbors, however much he may hate you, who wishes you so much evil as this heresy would cause you. For if our adversary's house adjoins our own, we may desire it to be visited with fever, but not with the plague.....What are all these Lutherans? A crew of insolent pedagogues, corrupt priests, dissolute monks, ignorant lawyers, and degraded nobles, with the common people, who they have misled and perverted. How far superior to them is the catholic party in number, ability, and power! A unanimous decree from this illustrious assembly will enlighten the simple, warn the imprudent, decide the waverers, and give strength to the weak.....But if the axe is not put to the roots of this poisonous tree, if the death-blow is not struck, then.....I see it overshadowing the heritage of Jesus Christ with its branches, changing our Lord's vineyard into a gloomy forest, transforming the kingdom of God into a den of wild beasts, and reducing Germany into that frightful state of barbarism and desolation which has been brought upon Asia by the superstition of Mahomet." The nuncio was silent. He had spoken for three hours.

The enthusiasm of his language had produced a deep impression on the assembly. The princes looked at each other, excited and alarmed, says Cochloeus, and murmurs soon arose from every side against Luther and his partisans. If the eloquent Luther had been present; if he had been able to reply to this speech; if, profiting by the avowals extorted from the Roman nuncio by the recollection of his former master, the infamous Borgia, he had shown that these very arguments, intended to defend Rome, were of themselves its condemnation; if he had shown that the doctrine which proved its iniquity was not invented by him, as the orator said, but was that religion which Christ had given to the world, and which the Reformation was reestablishing in its primitive splendor; if he had presented a faithful and animated picture of the errors and abuses of the papacy, and had shown how the religion of Christ had been made an instrument of self-interest and rapacity: the effect of the nuncio's harangue would have been instantly nullified. But no one rose to speak. The assembly remained under the impression produced by this speech; and, agitated

and transported, showed itself ready to extirpate Luther's heresy by force from the soil of the empire. Nevertheless, it was a victory only in appearance. It was among the purposes of God that Rome should have an opportunity of displaying her reasons and her power. The greatest of her orators had spoken in the assembly of the princes; he had given utterance to all that Rome had to say. But it was precisely this last effort of the papacy that became a signal of defeat in the eyes of many who had listened to it. If a bold confession is necessary for the triumph of truth, the surest means of destroying error is to make it known without reserve. Neither the one nor the other, to run its course, should be concealed. The light tests all things.

Chapter 4

Sentiments of the Princes

A few days were sufficient to dissipate the first impression, as is ever the case when an orator conceals the emptiness of his arguments by high sounding words.

The majority of the princes were ready to sacrifice Luther, but no one desired to immolate the rights of the empire and the grievances of the Germanic nation. They were very ready to give up the insolent monk who had dared to speak so boldly; but they were the more resolved to make the pope feel the justice of a reform demanded by the chiefs of the nation. It was accordingly Luther's most determined personal enemy, Duke George of Saxony, who spoke with the greatest energy against the encroachments of Rome. The grandson of Podiebrad, king of Bohemia, although offended by the doctrine of Grace preached by the reformer, had not yet lost the hope of a moral ecclesiastical reform. The principal cause of his irritation against

the monk of Wittenberg was, that by his despised doctrines he was spoiling the whole affair. But now, seeing the nuncio affecting to involve Luther and the reform of the Church in one and the same condemnation, George suddenly rose in the assembly of the princes, to the great astonishment of those who knew his hatred of the reformer. “The diet,” said he, “must not forget its grievances against the court of Rome. How many abuses have crept into our states! The annats, which the emperor granted voluntarily for the good of Christianity, now exacted as a due; the Roman courtiers daily inventing new regulations to monopolize, sell, and lease the ecclesiastical benefices; a multitude of transgressions connived at; rich transgressors undeservedly tolerated, while those who have no money to purchase impunity are punished without mercy; the popes continually bestowing on their courtiers reversions and reserves, to the detriment of those to whom the benefices belong; the commendams of the abbeys and convents of Rome conferred on cardinals, bishops, and prelates, who appropriate their revenues, so that not a single monk is to be found

in a convent where there should be twenty or thirty; stations multiplied to infinity, and stalls for the sale of indulgences set up in every street and public place of our cities — stalls of Saint Anthony, of the Holy Ghost, of Saint Hubert, of Saint Cornelius, of Saint Vincent, and so forth; companies purchasing at Rome the right to hold such markets, then buying permission of their bishop to display their wares, and squeezing and draining the pockets of the poor to obtain money; the indulgence, that ought only to be granted for the salvation of souls, and that should be earned by prayer, fasting, and works of charity, sold according to a tariff; the bishops' officials oppressing the lowly with penances for blasphemy, adultery, debauchery, and the violation of any festival, but not even reprimanding the clergy who commit similar crimes; penalties imposed on those who repent, and devised in such a manner that they soon fall again into the same error and give more money:these are some of the abuses that cry out against Rome. All shame has been put aside, and their only object is.....money! money! money!.....so that the preachers who should teach the truth, utter nothing

but falsehoods, and are not only tolerated, but rewarded, because the greater their lies, the greater their gain. It is from this foul spring that such tainted waters flow. Debauchery stretches out the hand to avarice. The officials invite women to their dwellings under various pretexts, and endeavor to seduce them, at one time by threats, at another by presents, or if they cannot succeed, they ruin their good fame. Alas! it is the scandal caused by the clergy that hurls so many poor souls into eternal condemnation! A general reform must be effected. An ecumenical council must be called to bring about this reform. For these reasons, most excellent lords, I humbly entreat you to take this matter into your immediate consideration.” Duke George then handed in a list of the grievances he had enumerated. This was some days after Aleander’s speech. The important catalogue has been preserved in the archives of Weimar.

Even Luther had not spoken with greater force against the abuses of Rome; but he had done something more. The duke pointed out the evil; Luther had pointed out both the cause and the

remedy. He had demonstrated that the sinner receives the true indulgence, that which cometh from God, solely by faith in the grace and merits of Jesus Christ; and this simple but powerful doctrine had overthrown all the markets established by the priests. “How can man become pious?” asked he one day. “A gray friar will reply, By putting on a gray hood and girding yourself with a cord. A Roman will answer, By hearing mass and by fasting. But a Christian will say, Faith in Christ alone justifies and saves. Before works, we must have eternal life. But when we are born again, and made children of God by the Word of grace, then we perform good works.” The duke’s speech was that of a secular prince; Luther’s, that of a reformer. The great evil in the Church had been its excessive devotion to outward forms, its having made of all its works and graces mere external and material things. The indulgences were the extreme point of this course; and that which was most spiritual in Christianity, namely, pardon, might be purchased in shops like any other commodity. Luther’s great work consisted in employing this extreme degeneration of religion to lead men and

the Church back to the primitive sources of life, and to restore the kingdom of the Holy Ghost in the sanctuary of the heart. Here, as often happens in other cases, the remedy was found in the disease itself, and the two extremes met. From that time forward, the Church, that for so many centuries had been developed externally in human ceremonies, observances, and practices, began to be developed internally in faith, hope, and charity.

The duke's speech produced a proportionally greater impression, as his hostility to Luther was notorious. Other members of the diet brought forward their respective grievances, which received the support of the ecclesiastical princes themselves. "We have a pontiff who loves only the chase and his pleasures," said they; "the benefices of the German nation are given away at Rome to gunners, falconers, footmen, ass-drivers, grooms, guardsmen, and other people of this class, ignorant, inexperienced, and strangers to Germany." The diet appointed a committee to draw up all these grievances; they were found to amount to a hundred and one. A deputation composed of

secular and ecclesiastical princes presented the report to the emperor, conjuring him to see them rectified, as he had engaged to do in his capitulation.

“What a loss of Christian souls!” said they to Charles V; “what depredations! what extortions, on account of the scandals by which the spiritual head of Christendom is surrounded! It is our duty to prevent the ruin and dishonor of our people. For this reason we most humbly but most urgently entreat you to order a general reformation, and to undertake its accomplishment.” There was at that time in christian society an unknown power operating on princes and people alike, a wisdom from on high, influencing even the adversaries of the Reformation, and preparing for that emancipation whose hour was come at last.

Charles could not be insensible to the remonstrances of the empire. Neither he nor the nuncio had expected them. Even his confessor had threatened him with the vengeance of Heaven, unless he reformed the Church. The emperor

immediately recalled the edict commanding Luther's writings to be burnt throughout the empire, and substituted a provisional order to deliver these books into the keeping of the magistrates.

This did not satisfy the assembly, which desired the appearance of the reformer. It is unjust, said his friends, to condemn Luther without a hearing, and without learning from his own mouth whether he is the author of the books that are ordered to be burnt. His doctrines, said he adversaries, have so taken hold of men's minds, that it is impossible to check their progress, unless we hear them from himself. There shall be no discussion with him; and if he avows his writings, and refuses to retract them, then we will all with one accord, elector, princes, estates of the holy empire, true to the faith of our ancestors, assist your majesty to the utmost of our power in the execution of your decrees. Aleander in alarm, and fearing everything from Luther's intrepidity and the ignorance of the princes, instantly strained every nerve to prevent the reformer's appearance.

He went from Charles's ministers to the princes most favorable inclined to the pope, and from them to the emperor himself. "It is not lawful," said he, "to question what the sovereign pontiff has decreed. There shall be no discussion with Luther, you say; but," continued he, "will not the energy of this audacious man, the fire of his eyes, the eloquence of his language, and the mysterious spirit by which he is animated, be sufficient to excite a tumult? Already many adore him as a saint, and in every place you may see his portrait surrounded with a glory like that which encircles the heads of the blessed.....If you are resolved to summon him before you, at least do not put him under the protection of the public faith!" These latter words were meant either to intimidate Luther, or to prepare the way for his destruction.

The nuncio found an easy access to the grandees of Spain. In Spain, as in Germany, the opposition to the Dominican inquisitors was national. The yoke of the inquisition, that had been thrown off for a time, had just been replaced on their necks by Charles. A numerous party in that

peninsula sympathized with Luther; but it was not thus with the grandees, who had discovered on the banks of the Rhine what they had hated beyond the Pyrenees. Inflamed with the most ardent fanaticism, they were impatient to destroy the new heresy. Frederick, duke of Alva, in particular, was transported with rage whenever he heard the Reformation mentioned. He would gladly have waded in the blood of all these sectarians. Luther was not yet summoned to appear, but already had his mere name powerfully stirred the lords of Christendom assembled at Worms.

The man who thus moved all the powers of the earth seemed alone undisturbed. The news from Worms was alarming. Luther's friends were terrified. "There remains nothing for us but your good wishes and prayers," wrote Melancthon to Spalatin. "Oh! that God would deign to purchase at the price of our blood the salvation of the christian world!" But Luther was a stranger to fear; shutting himself up in his quiet cell, he there meditated on and applied to himself those words in which Mary, the mother of Jesus, exclaims: My soul doth

magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. These are some of the reflections that filled Luther's heart: "HE THAT IS MIGHTY.....says Mary. What great boldness on the part of a young girl! With a single word she brands all the strong with weakness, all the mighty with feebleness, all the wise with folly, all those whose name is glorious upon earth with disgrace, and casts all strength, all might, all wisdom, and all glory at the feet of God. His arm, continues she, meaning by this the power by which he acts of himself, without the aid of any of his creatures: mysterious power!.....which is exerted in secrecy and in silence until His designs are accomplished. Destruction is at hand, when no one has seen it coming: relief is there, and no one had suspected it. He leaves His children in oppression and weakness, so that every man says: They are lost.....But it is then He is strongest; for where the strength of men ends, there begins that of God.

Only let faith wait upon him.....And, on the other hand, God permits his adversaries to increase in grandeur and power. He withdraws His support, and suffers them to be puffed up with their own. He empties them of his eternal wisdom, and lets them be filled with their own, which is but for a day. And while they are rising in the brightness of their power, the arm of the Lord is taken away, and their work vanishes as a bubble bursting in the air.” It was on the 10th of March, at the very moment when the imperial city of Worms was filled with dread at his name, that Luther concluded this explanation of the Magnificat.

He was not left quiet in his retreat. Spalatin, in conformity with the elector’s orders, sent him a note of the articles which he would be required to retract. A retraction, after his refusal at Augsburg!.....”Fear not,” wrote he to Spalatin, “that I shall retract a single syllable, since their only argument is, that my works are opposed to the rites of what they call the Church. If the Emperor Charles summons me only that I may retract, I shall reply that I will remain here, and it will be the

same as if I had gone to Worms and returned. but, on the contrary, if the emperor summons me that I may be put to death as an enemy of the empire, I am ready to comply with his call; for, with the help of Christ, I will never desert the Word on the battle-field. I am well aware that these bloodthirsty men will never rest until they have taken away my life. Would that it was the papists alone that would be guilty of my blood!”

Chapter 5

Shall Luther have a Safe-conduct

At last the emperor made up his mind. Luther's appearance before the diet seemed the only means calculated to terminate an affair which engaged the attention of all the empire. Charles V resolved to summon him, but without granting him a safe-conduct. Here Frederick was again compelled to assume the character of a protector. The dangers by which the reformer was threatened were apparent to all. Luther's friends, says Cochloeus, feared that he would be delivered into the pope's hands, or that the emperor himself would put him to death, as undeserving, on account of his heresy, that any faith should be kept with him. On this question there was a long and violent debate between the princes. Struck at last by the extensive agitation then stirring up the people in every part of Germany, and fearing that during Luther's journey some unexpected tumult or dangerous commotion

might burst forth in favor of the reformer, the princes thought the wisest course would be to tranquilize the public feelings on this subject; and not only the emperor, but also the Elector of Saxony, Duke George, and the Landgrave of Hesse, through whose territories he would have to pass, gave him each a safeconduct.

On the 6th of March 1521, Charles V signed the following summons addressed to Luther: — “Charles, by the grace of God Emperor elect of the Romans, always August, etc. etc.

“Honorable, well-beloved, and pious! We had the States of the Holy Empire here assembled, having resolved to institute an inquiry touching the doctrine and the books that thou hast lately published, have issued, for thy coming hither, and thy return to a place of security, our safe-conduct and that of the empire, which we send thee herewith. Our sincere desire is, that thou shouldst prepare immediately for this journey, in order that within the space of the twenty-one days fixed by our safe-conduct, thou mayst without fail be

present before us. Fear neither injustice nor violence. We will firmly abide by our aforesaid safe-conduct, and expect that thou wilt comply with our summons. In so doing, thou wilt obey our earnest wishes.

“Given in our imperial city of Worms, this sixth day of March, in the year of our Lord 1521, and the second of our reign.

Charles.

“By order of my Lord the Emperor, witness my hand, Albert, Cardinal of Mentz, High-chancellor.

“Nicholas Zwil.” The safe-conduct contained in the letter was directed: “To the honorable, our wellbeloved and pious Doctor Martin Luther, of the order of the Augustines.” It began thus: “We, Charles, the fifth of that name, by the grace of God Emperor elect of the Romans, always August, King of Spain, of the Two Sicilies, of Jerusalem, of Hungary, of Dalmatia, of Croatia, etc., Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, Count of Hapsburg,

of Flanders, of the Tyrol,” etc. etc.

Then the king of so many states, intimating that he had cited before him an Augustine monk name Luther, enjoined all princes, lords, magistrates, and others, to respect the safe-conduct which had been given him, under pain of the displeasure of the emperor and the empire. Thus did the emperor confer the titles of “well-beloved, honorable, and pious,” on a man whom the head of the Church had excommunicated. This document had been thus drawn up, purposely to remove all distrust from the mind of Luther and his friends. Gaspard Sturm was commissioned to bear this message to the reformer, and accompany him to Worms. The elector, apprehending some outburst of public indignation, wrote on the 12th of March to the magistrates of Wittenberg to provide for the security of the emperor’s officer, and to give him a guard, if it was judged necessary. The herald departed.

Thus were God’s designs fulfilled. It was His will that this light, which he had kindled in the world, should be set upon a hill; and emperor,

kings, and princes, immediately began to carry out His purpose without knowing it.

It cost Him little to elevate what is lowest. A single act of His power suffices to raise the humble native of Mansfeldt from an obscure cottage to the palaces in which kings were assembled. In His sight there is neither small nor great, and, in His good time, Charles and Luther meet.

But will Luther comply with this citation? His best friends were doubtful about it. “Doctor Martin has been summoned here,” wrote the elector to his brother on the 25th March; “but I do not know whether he will come. I cannot augur any good from it.” Three weeks later (on the 16th of April), this excellent prince, seeing the danger increase, wrote again to Duke John: “Orders against Luther are placarded on the walls. The cardinals and bishops are attacking him very harshly: God grant that all may turn out well! Would to God that I could procure him a favorable hearing!” While these events were taking place at Worms and Wittenberg, the Papacy redoubled its attacks. On

the 28th of March (which was the Thursday before Easter), Rome re-echoed with a solemn excommunication.

It was the custom to publish at that season the terrible bull *In Coena Domini*, which is a long series of maledictions. On that day the approaches to the temple in which the sovereign pontiff was to officiate were early occupied with the papal guards, and by a crowd of people that had flocked together from all parts of Italy to receive the benediction of the holy father. Branches of laurel and myrtle decorated the open space in front of the cathedral; tapers were lighted on the balcony of the temple, and there the remonstrance was elevated. On a sudden the air re-echoes with the loud pealing of bells; the pope, wearing his pontifical robes, and borne in an arm-chair, appears on the balcony; the people kneel down, all heads are uncovered, the colors are lowered, the soldiers ground their arms, and a solemn silence prevails. A few moments after, the pope slowly stretches out his hands, raises them towards heaven, and then as slowly bends them towards the earth, making the sign of

the cross. Thrice he repeats this movement. Again the noise of bells reverberates through the air, proclaiming far and wide the benediction of the pontiff; some priests now hastily step forward, each holding a lighted taper in his hand; these they reverse, and after tossing them violently, dash them away, as if they were the flames of hell; the people are moved and agitated; and the words of malediction are hurled down from the roof of the temple. As soon as Luther was informed of this excommunication, he published its tenor, with a few remarks written in that cutting style of which he was so great a master. Although this publication did not appear till later, we will insert in this place a few of its most striking features. We shall hear the high-priest of Christendom on the balcony of the cathedral, and the Wittenberg monk answering him from the farthest part of Germany. There is something characteristic in the contrast of these two voices.

The Pope. — “Leo, bishop”.....

Luther. — “Bishop!.....yes, as the wolf is a

shepherd: for the bishop should exhort according to the doctrine of salvation and not vomit forth imprecations and maledictions.”.....

The Pope. — “Servant of all the servants of God”.....

Luther. — “At night, when we are drunk; but in the morning, our name is Leo, lord of all lords.”
The Pope. — “The Roman bishops, our predecessors, have been accustomed on this festival to employ the arms of righteousness”.....

Luther. — “Which, according to your account, are excommunication and anathema; but according to Saint Paul, long-suffering, kindness, and love.” (2 Corinthians 6:6, 7.)
The Pope. — “According to the duties of the apostolic office, and to maintain the purity of the christian faith”.....

Luther. — “That is to say, the temporal possessions of the pope.”
The Pope. — “And its unity, which consists in the union of the members with Christ, their head,.....and with his vicar”.....

Luther. — “For Christ is not sufficient: we must have another besides.” The Pope. — “To preserve the holy communion of believers, we follow the ancient custom, and excommunicate and curse, in the name of Almighty God, the Father”.....

Luther. — “Of whom it is said: God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world.” (John 3:17.) The Pope. — “The Son, and the Holy Ghost, and according to the power of the apostles Peter and Paul.....and our own”.....

Luther. — “Our own! says the ravenous wolf, as if the power of God was too weak without him.” The Pope. — “We curse all heretics, — Garasi, Patarins, Poor Men of Lyons, Arnoldists, Speronists, Passageni, Wickliffites, Hussites, Fratricelli”.....

Luther. — “For they desired to possess the Holy Scriptures, and required the pope to be sober and preach the Word of God.” The Pope. — “And

Martin Luther, recently condemned by us for a similar heresy, as well as all his adherents, and all those, whomsoever they may be, who show him any countenance.”.....

Luther. — “I thank thee, most gracious pontiff, for condemning me along with all these Christians! It is very honorable for me to have my name proclaimed at Rome on a day of festival, in so glorious a manner, that it may run through the world in conjunction with the names of these humble confessors of Jesus Christ.” The Pope. — “In like manner, we excommunicate and curse all pirates and corsairs”.....

Luther. — “Who can be a greater corsair and pirate than he that robs souls, imprisons them, and puts them to death?” The Pope. — “Particularly those who navigate our seas”.....

Luther. — “Our seas!.....Saint Peter, our predecessor, said: Silver and gold have I none (Acts 3:6); and Jesus Christ said: The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; but ye shall

not be so (Luke 600 22:25). But if a wagon filled with hay must give place on the road to a drunken man, how much more must a Saint Peter and Christ himself give way to the pope!" The Pope. — "In like manner we excommunicate and curse all those who falsify our bulls and our apostolical letters".....

Luther. — "But God's letters, the Holy Scriptures, all the world may condemn and burn." The Pope. — "In like manner we excommunicate and curse all those who intercept the provisions that are coming to the court of Rome".....

Luther. — "He snarls and snaps, like a dog that fears his bone will be taken from him." The Pope. — "In like manner we condemn and curse all those who withhold any judiciary dues, fruits, tithes, or revenues, belonging to the clergy".....

Luther. — "For Christ has said: If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also (Matthew 5:40), and this is our commentary." The Pope. — "Whatever be their

station, dignity, order, power, or rank; were they even bishops or kings”.....

Luther. — “For there shall be false teachers among you, who despise dominion and speak evil of dignities, says Scripture.” (Jude 8.) The Pope. — “In like manner we condemn and curse all those who, in any manner whatsoever, do prejudice to the city of Rome, the kingdom of Sicily, the islands of Sardinia and Corsica, the patrimony of St. Peter in Tuscany, the duchy of Spoleto, the marquisate of Ancona, the Campagna, the cities of Ferrara and Benevento, and all other cities or countries belonging to the Church of Rome.” Luther. — “O Peter! thou poor fisherman! whence didst thou get Rome and all these kingdoms? all hail, Peter! king of Sicily!.....and fisherman at Bethsaida!” 601 The Pope. — “We excommunicate and curse all chancellors, councilors, parliaments, procurators, governors, officials, bishops, and others, who oppose our letters of exhortation, invitation, prohibition, mediation, execution.”.....

Luther. — “For the holy see desires only to live

in idleness, in magnificence, and debauchery; to command, to intimidate, to deceive, to lie, to dishonor, to seduce, and commit every kind of wickedness in peace and security.....

“O Lord, arise! it is not as the papists pretend; thou hast not forsaken us; thou hast not turned away thine eyes from us!” Thus spoke Leo at Rome and Luther at Wittenberg.

The pontiff having ended these maledictions, the parchment on which they were written was torn in pieces, and the fragments scattered among the people. Immediately the crowd began to be violently agitated, each one rushing forward and endeavoring to seize a scrap of this terrible bull. These were the holy relics that the Papacy offered to its faithful adherents on the eve of the great day of grace and expiation. The multitude soon dispersed, and the neighborhood of the cathedral became deserted and silent as before.

Let us now return to Wittenberg.

Chapter 6

Luther's Courage

It was now the 24th of March. At last the imperial herald had passed the gate of the city in which Luther resided. Gaspard Sturm waited upon the doctor, and delivered the citation from Charles V. What a serious and solemn moment for the reformer! All his friends were in consternation. No prince, without excepting Frederick the Wise, had declared for him. The knights, it is true, had given utterance to their threats; but them the powerful Charles despised. Luther, however, was not discomposed. "The papists," said he, on seeing the anguish of his friends, "do not desire my coming to Worms, but my condemnation and my death. It matters not! Pray, not for me, but for the Word of God. Before my blood has grown cold, thousands of men in the whole world will have become responsible for having shed it! The most holy adversary of Christ, the father, the master, the generalissimo of murderers, insists on its being shed.

So be it! Let God's will be done! Christ will give me his Spirit to overcome these ministers of error. I despise them during my life; I shall triumph over them by my death. They are busy at Worms about compelling me to retract and this shall be my retraction: I said formerly that the pope was Christ's vicar; now I assert that he is our Lord's adversary, and the devil's apostle." And when he was apprized that all the pulpits of the Franciscans and Dominicans resounded with imprecations and maledictions against him: "Oh! what deep joy do I feel!" exclaimed he. He knew that he had done God's will, and that God was with him; why then should he not set out with courage? Such purity of intention, such liberty of conscience, is a hidden but incalculable support, that never fails the servant of God, and renders him more invulnerable than if protected by coats of mail and armed hosts.

At this time there arrived at Wittenberg a man who, like Melancthon, was destined to be Luther's friend all his life, and to comfort him at the moment at his departure. This was a priest name

Bugenhagen, thirtysix years of age, who had fled from the severities which the Bishop of Camin and Prince Bogislas of Pomerania exercised on the friends of the Gospel, whether ecclesiastics, citizens, or men of letters. Sprung from a senatorial family, and born at Wollin in Pomerania (whence he is commonly called Pomeranus), Bugenhagen had been teaching at Treptow from the age of twenty years. The young eagerly crowded around him; the nobles and the learned emulated each other in courting his society. He diligently studied the Holy Scriptures, praying God to enlighten him. One day towards the end of December 1520, Luther's books on the Captivity of Babylon was put into his hands as he sat at supper with several of his friends. "Since the death of Christ," said he, after running his eye over the pages, "many heretics have infested the Church; but never yet has there existed such a pest as the author of this work." Having taken the book home and perused it two or three times, all his opinions were changed; truths quite new to him presented themselves to his mind; and on returning some days after to his colleagues, he said, "The whole world has fallen

into the thickest darkness. This man alone sees the light.” Several priests, a deacon, and the abbot himself, received the pure doctrine of salvation, and in a short time, by the power of their preaching, they led their hearers (says an historian) back from human superstitions to the sole and effectual merits of Jesus Christ. Upon this a persecution broke out. Already the prisons re-echoed with the groans of many individuals.

Bugenhagen fled from his enemies and arrived at Wittenberg. “He is suffering for love to the Gospel,” wrote Melancthon to the elector’s chaplain. “Whither could he fly, but to our asulon (asylum), and to the protection of our prince?” But no one welcomed Bugenhagen with greater joy than Luther. It was agreed between them, that immediately after the departure of the reformer, Bugenhagen should begin to lecture on the Psalms. It was thus Divine Providence led this able man to supply on some measure the place of him whom Wittenberg was about to lose. A year later, Bugenhagen was placed at the head of the Church in this city, over which he presided thirty-six years.

Luther styled him in an especial manner. The Pastor.

Luther was about to depart. His friends, in alarm, thought that if God did not interpose in a miraculous manner, he was going to certain death.

Melancthon, far removed from his native town, was attached to Luther with all affection of a susceptible heart. "Luther," said he, "supplies the place of all my friends; he is greater and more admirable for me than I can dare express. You know how Alcibiades admired Socrates; but I admire Luther after another and a christian fashion." He then added these beautiful and sublime words: "As often as I contemplate Luther, I find him constantly greater than himself." Melancthon desired to accompany Luther in his dangers; but their common friends, and no doubt the doctor himself, opposed his wishes. Ought not Philip to fill his friend's place? and if the latter never returned, who then would there be to direct the work of the Reformation? "Would to God," said Melancthon, resigned, yet disappointed, "that

he had allowed me to go with him.” The impetuous Amsdorff immediately declared that he would accompany the doctor. His strong mind found pleasure in confronting danger. His boldness permitted him to appear fearlessly before an assembly of kings.

The elector had invited to Wittenberg, as professor of jurisprudence, Jerome Schurff, son of a physician at St. Gall, a celebrated man, of gentle manners, and who was very intimate with Luther. “He has not yet been able to make up his mind,” said Luther, “to pronounce sentence of death on a single malefactor.” This timid man, however, desired to assist the doctor by his advice in this perilous journey. A young Danish student, Peter Suaven, who resided with Melancthon, and who afterwards became celebrated by his evangelical labors in Pomerania and Denmark, likewise declared that he would accompany his master. The youth of the schools were also to have their representative at the side of the champion of truth.

Germany was moved at the sight of the perils

that menaced the representative of her people. She found a suitable voice to give utterance to her fears. Ulrich of Hutten shuddered at the thought of the blow about to be inflicted on his country. On the 1st of April, he wrote to Charles V himself: “most excellent emperor,” said he, “you are on the point of destroying us, and yourself with us. What is proposed to be done in this affair of Luther’s, except to ruin our liberty, and to crush your power? In the whole extent of the empire there is not a single upright man that does not feel the deepest interest in this matter. The priests alone set themselves against Luther, because he has opposed their enormous power, their scandalous luxury, and their depraved lives; and because he has pleaded in behalf of Christ’s doctrine, for the liberty of our country, and for purity of morals.

“O emperor! discard from your presence these Roman ambassadors, bishops, and cardinals, who desire to prevent all reformation. Did you not observe the sorrow of the people as they saw you arrive on the banks of the Rhine, surrounded by these redhatted gentry.....and by a band of priests,

instead of a troop of valiant warriors?.....

“Do not surrender your sovereign majesty to those who desire to trample it under foot! Have pity on us! Do not drag yourself and the whole nation into one common destruction. Lead us into the midst of the greatest dangers, under the weapons of your soldiers, to the cannon’s mouth; let all nations conspire against us; let every army assail us, so that we can show our valor in the light of day, rather than that we should be thus vanquished and enslaved obscurely and stealthily, like women, without arms and unresisting.....Alas! we had hoped that you would deliver us from the Roman yoke, and overthrow the tyranny of the pontiff. God grant that the future may be better than these beginnings!

“All Germany falls prostrate at your feet; with tears we entreat and implore your help, your compassion, your faithfulness; and by the holy memory of those German who, when all the world owned the Roman sway, did not bow their heads before that haughty city, we conjure you to save us,

to restore us to ourselves, to deliver us from bondage, and take revenge upon our tyrants!” Thus, by the mouth of this knight, spoke the German nation to Charles V.

The emperor paid no attention to this epistle, and probably cast it disdainfully to one of his secretaries. He was a Fleming, and not a German.

His personal aggrandizement, and not the liberty and glory of the empire, was the object of all his desires.

Chapter 7

Departure for the Diet of Worms

It was now the 2nd of April, and Luther had to take leave of his friends.

After apprizing Lange, by a note, that he would spend the Thursday or Friday following at Erfurth, he bade farewell to his colleagues. Turning to Melancthon, he said with an agitated voice, "My dear brother, if I do not return, and my enemies put me to death, continue to teach, and stand fast in the truth. Labor in my stead, since I shall no longer be able to labor for myself. If you survive, my death will be of little consequence." Then, committing his soul to the hands of Him who is faithful, Luther got into the car and quitted Wittenberg. The town-council had provided him with a modest conveyance, covered with an awning, which the travelers could set up or remove at pleasure. The imperial herald, wearing his robe of office, and

carrying the imperial eagle, rode on horseback in front, attended by his servant. Next came Luther, Schurff, Amsdorff, and Suaven, in the car. The friends of the Gospel and the citizens of Wittenberg were deeply agitated, — and, invoking God's aid, burst into tears. Thus Luther began his journey.

He soon discovered that gloomy presentiments filled the hearts of all he met. At Leipsic no respect was shown him, and the magistrates merely presented him with the customary cup of wine. At Naumburg he met a priest, probably J. Langer, a man of stern zeal, who carefully preserved in his study a portrait of the famous Jerome Savonarola (who was burnt at Florence in 1498 by order of Pope Alexander VI), as a martyr to freedom and morality, as well as a confessor of the evangelical truth. Having taken down the portrait of the Italian martyr, the priest approached Luther, and held it out to him in silence. The latter understood what this mute representation was intended to announce, but his intrepid soul remained firm. "It is Satan," said he, "that would prevent, by these terrors, the

confession of the truth in the assembly of princes, for he foresees the blow it would inflict upon his kingdom.” “Stand firm in the truth thou hast proclaimed,” said the priest solemnly, “and God will as firmly stand by thee!” After passing the night at Naumburg, where he had been hospitably entertained by the burgomaster, Luther arrived the next evening at Weimar.

He had hardly been a minute in the town, when he heard loud cries in every direction: it was the publication of his condemnation. “Look there!” said the herald. He turned his eyes, and with astonishment saw the imperial messengers going from street to street, everywhere posting up the emperor’s edict commanding his writings to be deposited with the magistrates. Luther doubted not that this unseasonable display of severity was intended to frighten him from undertaking the journey, so that he might be condemned as having refused to appear. “Well, doctor! will you proceed?” asked the imperial herald in alarm. “Yes!” replied Luther; “although interdicted in every city, I shall go on! I rely upon the emperor’s

safe-conduct.” At Weimar, Luther had an audience with Duke John, brother to the Elector of Saxony, who resided there. The prince invited him to preach, and the reformer consented. Words of life flowed from the doctor’s agitated heart.

A Franciscan monk, who heard him, by name of John Voit, the friend of Frederick Myconius, was then converted to the evangelical doctrine. He left his convent two years after, and somewhat later became professor of theology at Wittenberg. The duke furnished Luther with the money necessary for his journey.

From Weimar the reformer proceeded to Erfurth. This was the city of his youth. Here he hoped to meet his friend Lange, if, as he had written to him, he might enter the city without danger. When about three or four leagues from the city, near the village of Nora, he perceived a troop of horsemen approaching in the distance. Were they friends or enemies? In a short time Crotus, rector of the university, Eobanus Hesse, the friend of Melancthon, and whom Luther styled the prince

of poets, Euricius Cordus, John Draco, and others, to the number of forty, all members of the senate, the university, or of the burghers, greeted him with acclamations. A multitude of the inhabitants of Erfurth thronged the road, and gave utterance to their joy. All were eager to see the man who had dared to declare war against the pope.

A man about twenty-eight years old, by name Justus Jonas, had outstripped the cavalcade. Jonas, after studying the law at Erfurth, had been appointed rector of that university in 1519. Receiving the light of the Gospel, which was shining forth in every direction, he had entertained the desire of becoming a theologian. "I think," wrote Erasmus to him, "that God has elected you as an instrument to make known the glory of his son Jesus." All his thoughts were turned towards Wittenberg and Luther.

Some years before, when he was as yet a law-student, Jonas, who was a man of active and enterprising spirit, had set out on foot in company with a few friends, and had crossed forests infested

with robbers, and cities devastated by the plague, in order to visit Erasmus, who was then at Brussels. Shall he now hesitate to confront other dangers by accompanying the reformer to Worms? He earnestly begged the favor to be granted him, and Luther consented. Thus met these two doctors, who were to labor together all their lives in the task of renovating the Church. Divine Providence gathered round Luther men who were destined to be the light of Germany: Melancthon, Amsdorff, Bugenhagen, and Jonas. On his return from Worms, Jonas was elected provost of the Church of Wittenberg, and doctor of divinity. “Jonas,” said Luther, “is a man whose life is worth purchasing at a large price, in order to retain him on earth.” No preacher ever surpassed him in his power of captivating his hearers. — “Pomeranus is a critic,” said Melancthon; “I am a dialectician, Jonas is an orator. Words flow from his lips with admirable beauty, and his eloquence is full of energy. But Luther surpasses us all.” It appears that about this time a friend of Luther’s childhood, and also one of his brothers, increased the number of his escort.

The deputation from Erfurth had turned their horses' heads. Luther's carriage entered within the walls of the city, surrounded by horsemen and pedestrians. At the gate, in the public places, in the streets where the poor monk had so often begged his bread, the crowd of spectators was immense.

Luther alighted at the convent of the Augustines, where the Gospel had first given consolation to his heart. Lange joyfully received him; Usingen, and some of the elder fathers, showed him much coldness. There was a great desire to hear him preach; the pulpit had been forbidden him, but the herald, sharing the enthusiasm of those about him, gave his consent.

On the Sunday after Easter the church of the Augustines of Erfurth was filled to overflowing. This friar, who had been accustomed to former times to unclosethe doors and sweep out the church, went up into the pulpit, and opening the Bible, read these words: — Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and side (John 20:19, 20).

“Philosophers, doctors, and writers,” said he, “have endeavored to teach men the way to obtain everlasting life, and they have not succeeded. I will now tell it to you.” This has been the great question in every age; accordingly Luther’s hearers redoubled their attention.

“There are two kinds of works,” continued the reformer: “works not of ourselves, and these are good; our own works, and they are of little worth. One man builds a church; another goes on a pilgrimage to St. Jago of Compostella or St. Peter’s; a third fasts, prays, takes the cowl, and goes barefoot; another does something else. All these works are nothingness and will come to nought; for our own works have no virtue in them. But I am now going to tell you what is the true work. God has raised one man from the dead, the Lord Jesus Christ, that He might destroy death, extirpate sin, and shut the gates of hell. This is the work of salvation. The devil thought he had the Lord in his power, when he saw Him hanging between two thieves, suffering the most disgraceful

martyrdom, accursed of God and of men.....But the Godhead displayed its power, and destroyed death, sin, and hell.....

“Christ has vanquished! this is the joyful news! and we are saved by his work, and not by our own. The pope says differently: but I affirm that the holy mother of God herself was saved, neither by her virginity, nor by her maternity, nor by her purity, nor by her works, but solely by the instrumentality of faith and the works of God.” While Luther was speaking, a sudden noise was heard; one of the galleries cracked, and it was feared that it would break down under the pressure of the crowd. This incident occasioned a great disturbance in the congregation.

Some ran out from their places; others stood motionless through fright.

The preacher stopped a moment, and then stretching out his hand, exclaimed with a loud voice: “Fear nothing! there is no danger: it is thus the devil seeks to hinder me from proclaiming the

Gospel, but he will not succeed.” At these words, those who were flying halted in astonishment and surprise; the assembly again became calm, and Luther, undisturbed by these efforts of the devil, continued thus: “You say a great deal about faith (you may perhaps reply to me): show us how we may obtain it. Well, I will teach you. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: Peace be unto you! behold my hands, that is to say, Behold, O man! it is I, I alone, who have taken away thy sin, and ransomed thee; and now thou hast peace, saith the Lord.

“I have not eaten of the fruit of the forbidden tree,” resumed Luther, “nor have you; but we have all partaken of the sin that Adam has transmitted to us, and have gone astray. In like manner, I have not suffered on the cross, neither have you; but Christ has suffered for us; we are justified by God’s work, and not by our own.....I am (saith the Lord) thy righteousness and thy redemption.” “Let us believe in the Gospel and in the epistles of St. Paul, and not in the letters and decretals of the popes.”.....

After proclaiming faith as the cause of the

sinner's justification, Luther proclaims works as the consequence and manifestation of salvation.

“Since God has saved us,” continues he, “let us so order our works that they may be acceptable to him. Art thou rich? let thy goods administer to the necessities of the poor! Art thou poor? let thy services be acceptable to the rich! If thy labor is useful to thyself alone, the service that thou pretendest to render unto God is a lie.” In the whole of this sermon there is not a word about himself; not a single allusion to the circumstances in which he is placed: nothing about Worms, or Charles, or the nuncios; he preaches Christ, and Christ only. At this moment, when the eyes of all the world are upon him, he has no thought of himself: this stamps him as a true servant of God.

Luther departed from Erfurth, and passed through Gotha, where he preached another sermon. Myconius adds, that as the people were leaving the church, the devil threw down from the pediment some stones that had not moved for two hundred years. The doctor slept at the convent of the

Benedictines at Reinhardsbrunn, and from thence proceeded to Eisenach, where he felt indisposed. Amsdorff, Jonas, Schurff, and all his friends were alarmed. He was bled; they tended him with the most affectionate anxiety, and John Oswald, the schultheiss of the town, brought him a cordial.

Luther having drunk a portion fell asleep, and, reinvigorated by this repose, he was enabled to continue his journey on the following morning.

His progress resembled that of a victorious general. The people gazed with emotion on the daring man, who was going to lay his head at the feet of the emperor and the empire. An immense crowd flocked eagerly around him. “Ah!” said some, “there are so many bishops and cardinals at Worms!.....They will burn you, and reduce your body to ashes, as they did with John Huss.” But nothing frightened the monk. “Though they should kindle a fire,” said he, “all the way from Worms to Wittenberg, the flames of which reached to heaven, I would walk through it in the name of the Lord, — I would appear before them, — I would enter the

jaws of this Behemoth, and break his teeth, confessing the Lord Jesus Christ.” One day, just as he had entered an inn, and the crowd was pressing around him as usual, an officer advanced and said: “Are you the man that has undertaken to reform the papacy? How can you hope to succeed?” — “Yes,” replied Luther, “I am the man. I trust in God Almighty, whose Word and commandment I have before me.” The officer was touched, and looking at him with a milder air, said: “My dear friend, what you say is a great matter. I am the servant of Charles, but your Master is greater than mine. He will aid and preserve you.” Such was the impression produced by Luther.

Even his enemies were struck at the sight of the multitudes that thronged around him; but they depicted his journey in far different colors. The doctor arrived at Frankfort on Sunday the 14th of April.

Already the news of Luther’s journey had reached Worms. The friends of the pope had thought that he would not obey the emperor’s

summons.

Albert, cardinal-archbishop of Mentz, would have given any thing to stop him on the road. New intrigues were put in motion to attain this result.

As soon as Luther arrived in Frankfort, he took some repose, and afterwards gave intelligence of his approach to Spalatin, who was then at Worms with the elector. This was the only letter he wrote during his journey. "I am coming," said he, "although Satan endeavored to stop me on the road by sickness. Since I left Eisenach I have been in a feeble state, and am still as I never was before. I learn that Charles has published an edict to frighten me. But Christ lives, and I shall enter Worms in despite of all the gates of hell, and of the powers of the air. Have the goodness, therefore, to prepare a lodging for me." The next day Luther went to visit the school of the learned William Nesse, a celebrated geographer of that period. "Apply to the study of the Bible, and to the investigation of the truth," said he to the pupils. And then, putting his right hand on one of the children, and his left upon

another, he pronounced a benediction on the whole school.

If Luther blessed the young, he was also the hope of the aged. Catherine of Holzhausen, a widow far advanced in years, and who served God, approached him and said: “My parents told me that God would raise up a man who should oppose the papal vanities and preserve His Word. I hope thou art that man, and I pray for the grace and Holy Spirit of God upon thy work.” These were far from being the general sentiments in Frankfort. John Cochloeus, dean of the church of Our Lady, was one of the most devoted partisans of the papacy. He could not repress his apprehensions when he saw Luther pass through Frankfort on his road to Worms. He thought that the Church had need of devoted champions. It is true no one had summoned him; but that mattered not. Luther had scarcely quitted the city, when Cochloeus followed him, ready (said he) to sacrifice his life in defense of the honor of the Church. The alarm was universal in the camp of the pope’s friends. The heresiarch was arriving; every day and every hour

brought him nearer to Worms. If he entered, all might perhaps be lost. Archbishop Albert, the confessor Glapio, and the politicians who surrounded the emperor, were confounded.

How could they hinder this monk from coming? To carry him off by force was impossible, for he had Charles's safe-conduct. Stratagem alone could stop him. These artful men immediately conceived the following plan. The emperor's confessor and his head chamberlain, Paul of Amsdorff, hastily quitted Worms. They directed their course towards the castle of Ebernburg, about ten leagues from the city, the residence of Francis of Sickingen, — that knight who had offered an asylum to Luther. Bucer, a youthful Dominican, chaplain to the elector-palatine, and converted to the evangelical doctrine by the disputation at Heidelberg, had taken refuge in this "resting-place of the righteous." The knight, who did not understand much about religious matters, was easily deceived, and the character of the palatine chaplain facilitated the confessor's designs. In fact, Bucer was a man of pacific character. Making a

distinction between fundamental and secondary points, he thought that the latter might be given up for the sake of unity and peace. The chamberlain and Charles's confessor began their attack. They gave Sickingen and Bucer to understand, that Luther was lost if he entered Worms. They declared that the emperor was ready to send a few learned men to Ebernburg to confer with the doctor. "Both parties," said they to the knight, "will place themselves under your protection." "We agree with Luther on all essential points," said they to Bucer; "it is now a question of merely secondary matters, and you shall mediate between us." The knight and the doctor were staggered. The confessor and the chamberlain continued: "Luther's invitation must proceed from you," said they to Sickingen, "and Bucer shall carry it to him." Everything was arranged according to their wishes. Only let the too credulous Luther go to Ebernburg, his safe-conduct will soon have expired, and then who shall defend him?

Luther had arrived at Oppenheim. His safe-conduct was available for only three days more. He

saw a troop of horsemen approaching him, and at their head soon recognized Bucer, with whom he had held such intimate conversations at Heidelberg. "These cavaliers belong to Francis of Sickingen," said Bucer, after the first interchange of friendship; "he has sent me to conduct you to his castle.

The emperor's confessor desires to have an interview with you. His influence over Charles is unlimited; everything may yet be arranged. But beware of Aleander!" Jonas, Schurff, and Amsdorff knew not what to think. Bucer was pressing; but Luther felt no hesitation. "I shall continue my journey," replied he to Bucer; "and if the emperor's confessor has anything to say to me, he will find me at Worms. I go whither I am summoned." In the mean while, Spalatin himself began to be anxious and to fear.

Surrounded at Worms by the enemies of the Reformation, he heard it said that the safe-conduct of a heretic ought not to be respected. He grew alarmed for his friend. At the moment when the latter was approaching the city, a messenger

appeared before him, with this advice from the chaplain: “Do not enter Worms!” And thus from his best friend — the elector’s confidant — From Spalatin himself!.....But Luther, undismayed, turned his eyes on the messenger, and replied: “Go and tell your master, that even should there be as many devils in Worms as tiles on the house-tops, still I would enter it!” Never, perhaps, has Luther been so sublime! The messenger returned to Worms with this astounding answer. “I was then undaunted,” said Luther, a few days before his death; “I feared nothing.

God can indeed render a man intrepid at any time; but I know not whether I should now have so much liberty and joy.” — “When our cause is good,” adds his disciple Mathesius, “the heart expands, and gives courage and energy to evangelists as well as to soldiers.”

Chapter 8

Entry into Worms

At length, on the morning of the 16th of April, Luther discovered the walls of the ancient city. All were expecting him. One absorbing thought prevailed in Worms. Some young nobles, Bernard of Hirschfeldt, Albert of Lindenau, with six knights and other gentlemen in the train of the princes, to the number of a hundred (if we may believe Pallavicini), unable to restrain their impatience, rode out on horseback to meet him, and surrounded him, to form an escort at the moment of his entrance. He drew near. Before him pranced the imperial herald, in full costume. Luther came next in his modest car. Jonas followed him on horseback, and the cavaliers were on both sides of him. A great crowd was waiting for him at the gates.

It was near midday when he passed those walls, from which so many persons had predicted he would never come forth alive. Every one was at

table; but as soon as the watchman on the tower of the cathedral sounded his trumpet, all ran into the streets to see the monk. Luther was now in Worms.

Two thousand persons accompanied him through the streets of the city.

The citizens eagerly pressed forward to see him: every moment the crowd increasing. It was much greater than at the public entry of the emperor. On a sudden, says an historian, a man dressed in a singular costume, and bearing a large cross, such as is employed in funeral processions, made way through the crowd, advanced towards Luther, and then with a loud voice, and in that plaintive, measured tone in which mass is said for the repose of the soul, he sang these words, as if he were uttering them from the abode of the dead:-
Advenisti, O desiderabilis!

Quem expectabamus in tenebris! Thus a requiem was Luther's welcome to Worms. It was the court-fool of one of the dukes of Bavaria, who, if the story be true, gave Luther one of those

warnings, replete at once with sagacity and irony, of which so many examples have been recorded of these personages. But the shouts of the multitude soon drowned the *De Profundis* of the cross-bearer. The procession made its way with difficulty through the crowd. At last, the herald of the empire stopped before the hotel of the knights of Rhodes.

There resided the two councilors of the elector, Frederick of Thun and Philip of Feilitsch, as well as the marshal of the empire, Ulrich of Pappenheim. Luther alighted from his car, and said as he touched the ground: "God will be my defense." — "I entered Worms in a covered wagon, and in my monk's gown," said he at a later period. "All the people came out into the streets to get a sight of Friar Martin." The news of his arrival filled both the Elector of Saxony and Aleander with alarm.

The young and graceful Archbishop Albert, who kept a middle position between the two parties, was confounded at such boldness. "If I had possessed no more courage than he," said Luther,

“it is true they would never have seen me at Worms.” Charles V immediately summoned his council. The emperor’s privycouncilors hastily repaired to the palace, for the alarm had reached them also. “Luther is come,” said Charles; “what must we do?” Modo, bishop of Palermo, and chancellor of Flanders, replied, if we may credit the testimony of Luther himself: “We have long consulted on this matter. Let your imperial majesty get rid of this man at once. Did not Sigismund cause John Huss to be burnt? We are not bound either to give or to observe the safe-conduct of a heretic.” — “No!” said Charles, “we must keep our promise.” They submitted, therefore, to the reformer’s appearance before the diet.

While the councils of the great were thus agitated on account of Luther, there were many persons in Worms who were delighted at the opportunity of at length beholding this illustrious servant of God. Capito, chaplain and councillor to the Archbishop of Mentz, was the foremost among them.

This remarkable man, who, shortly before, had preached the Gospel in Switzerland with great freedom, thought it becoming to the station he filled to act in a manner which led to his being accused of cowardice by the Evangelicals, and of dissimulation by the Romanists. Yet at Mentz he had proclaimed the doctrine of grace with much clearness. At the moment of his departure, he had succeeded in supplying his place by a young and zealous preacher named Hedio. The Word of God was not bound in that city, the ancient seat of the primacy of the German Church. The Gospel was listened to with eagerness; in vain did the monks endeavor to preach from the Holy Scriptures after their manner, and employ all the means in their power to check the impulse given to men's minds: they could not succeed. But while proclaiming the new doctrine, Capito attempted to keep friends with those who persecuted it. He flattered himself, as others did who shared in his opinions, that he might in this way be of great service to the Church. To judge by their talk, if Luther was not burnt, if all the Lutherans were not excommunicated, it was owing to Capito's influence with the Archbishop

Albert. Cochloeus, dean of Frankfort, who reached Worms about the same time as Luther, immediately waited on Capito. The latter, who was, outwardly at least, on the very friendly terms with Aleander, presented Cochloeus to him, thus serving as a link between the two greatest enemies of the reformer. Capito no doubt thought he was advancing Christ's cause by all these temporizing expedients, but we cannot find that they led to any good result. The event almost always baffles these calculations of human wisdom, and proves that a decided course, while it is the most frank, is also the wisest.

Meantime, the crowd still continued round the hotel of Rhodes, where Luther had alighted. To some he was a prodigy of wisdom, to others a monster of iniquity. All the city longed to see him. They left him, however, the first hours after his arrival to recruit his strength, and to converse with his most intimate friends. But as soon as the evening came, counts, barons, knights, gentlemen, ecclesiastics, and citizens, flocked about him. All, even his greatest enemies, were struck with the

boldness of his manner, the joy that seemed to animate him, the power of his language, and that imposing elevation and enthusiasm which gave this simple monk an irresistible authority. But while some ascribed this grandeur to something divine, the friends of the pope loudly exclaimed that he was possessed by a devil. Visitors rapidly succeeded each other, and this crowd of curious individuals kept Luther from his bed until a late hour of the night.

On the next morning, Wednesday the 17th of April, the hereditary marshal of the empire, Ulrich of Pappenheim, cited him to appear at four in the afternoon before his imperial majesty and the states of the empire. Luther received this message with profound respect.

Thus everything was arranged; he was about to stand for Jesus Christ before the most august assembly in the world. Encouragements were not wanting to him. The impetuous knight, Ulrich Hutten, was then in the castle of Ebernburg. Unable to visit Worms (for Leo X had called upon

Charles V to send him bound hand and foot to Rome), he resolved at least to stretch out the hand of friendship to Luther; and on this very day (17th April) he wrote to him, adopting the language of a king of Israel: “The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee. Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.

Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfill all thy counsel. Dearly beloved Luther! my venerable father!.....fear not, and stand firm. The counsel of the wicked has beset you, and they have opened their mouths against you like roaring lions. But the Lord will arise against the unrighteous, and put them into confusion. Fight, therefore, valiantly in Christ’s cause. As for me, I too will combat boldly. Would to God that I were permitted to see how they frown. But the Lord will purge his vineyard, which the wild boar of the forest has laid waste.....May Christ preserve you!” Bucer did what Hutten was unable to do; he came from Ebernburg to Worms, and did not leave his friend during the time of his sojourn in that city. Four

o'clock arrived. The marshal of the empire appeared; Luther prepared to set out with him. He was agitated at the thought of the solemn congress before which he was about to appear. The herald walked first; after him the marshal of the empire; and the reformer came last. The crowd that filled the streets was still greater than on the preceding day. It was impossible to advance; in vain were orders given to make way; the crowd still kept increasing. At length the herald, seeing the difficulty of reaching the town-hall, ordered some private houses to be opened, and led Luther through the gardens and private passages to the place where the diet was sitting. The people who witnessed this, rushed into the houses after the monk of Wittenberg, ran to the windows that overlooked the gardens, and a great number climbed on the roofs. The tops of the houses and the pavements of the streets, above and below, all were covered with spectators. Having reached the town-hall at last, Luther and those who accompanied him were again prevented by the crowd from crossing the threshold. They cried, "Make way! make way!" but no one moved. Upon

this the imperial soldiers by main force cleared a road, through which Luther passed. As the people rushed forward to enter with him, the soldiers kept them back with their halberds. Luther entered the interior of the hall; but even there, every corner was crowded. In the antechambers and embrasures of the windows there were more than five thousand spectators, — Germans, Italians, Spaniards, and others. Luther advanced with difficulty. At last, as he drew near the door which was about to admit him into the presence of his judges, he met a valiant knight, the celebrated George of Freundsberg, who, four years later, at the head of his German lansquenets, bent the knee with his soldiers on the field of Pavia, and then charging the left of the French army, drove it into the Ticino, and in a great measure decided the captivity of the King of France. The old general, seeing Luther pass, tapped him on the shoulder, and shaking his head, blanched in many battles, said kindly: “Poor monk! poor monk! thou art now going to make a nobler stand than I or any other captains have ever made in the bloodiest of our battles! But if thy cause is just, and thou art sure of it, go forward in

God's name, and fear nothing! God will not forsake thee!" A noble tribute of respect paid by the courage of the sword to the courage of the mind! He that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city, were the words of a king. At length the doors of the hall were opened. Luther went in, and with him entered many persons who formed no portion of the diet. Never had man appeared before so imposing an assembly. The Emperor Charles V, whose sovereignty extended over great part of the old an new world; his brother Archduke Ferdinand; six electors of the empire, most of whose descendants now wear the kingly crown; twenty-four dukes, the majority of whom were independent sovereigns over countries more or less extensive, and among whom were some whose names afterwards became formidable to the Reformation, — The Duke of Alva and his two sons; eight margraves; thirty archbishops, bishops, and abbots; seven ambassadors, including those from the kings of France and England; the deputies of ten free cities; a great number of princes, counts, and sovereign barons; the papal nuncios; — in all, two hundred and four persons: such was the

imposing court before which appeared Martin Luther.

This appearance was of itself a signal victory over the papacy. The pope had condemned the man, and he was now standing before a tribunal which, by this very act, set itself above the pope. The pope had laid him under an interdict, and cut him off from all human society; and yet he was summoned in respectful language, and received before the most august assembly in the world. The pope had condemned him to perpetual silence, and he was now about to speak before thousands of attentive hearers drawn together from the farthest parts of Christendom. An immense revolution had thus been effected by Luther's instrumentality. Rome was already descending from her throne, and it was the voice of a monk that caused this humiliation.

Some of the princes, when they saw the emotion of this son of the lowly miner of Mansfeldt in the presence of this assembly of kings, approached him kindly, and one of them

said to him: “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.” And another added: “When ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, the spirit of your Father shall speak in you.” Thus was the reformer comforted with his Master’s words by the princes of this world.

Meanwhile the guards made way for Luther. He advanced, and stood before the throne of Charles V. The sight of so august an assembly appeared for an instant to dazzle and intimidate him. All eyes were fixed on him. The confusion gradually subsided, and a deep silence followed.

“Say nothing,” said the marshal of the empire to him, “before you are questioned.” Luther was left alone.

After a moment of solemn silence, the chancellor of the Archbishop of Treves, John ab Eck, the friend of Aleander, and who must not be confounded with the theologian of the same name, rose and said with a loud and clear voice, first in

Latin and then in German: “Martin Luther! his sacred and invincible imperial majesty has cited you before his throne, in accordance with the advice and counsel of the states of the holy Roman empire, to require you to answer two questions: First, Do you acknowledge these books to have been written by you?” — At the same time the imperial speaker pointed with his finger to about twenty volumes placed on a table in the middle of the hall, directly in front of Luther. “I do not know how they could have procured them,” said Luther, relating this circumstance. It was Aleander who had taken this trouble. “Secondly,” continued the chancellor, “Are you prepared to retract these books, and their contents, or do you persist in the opinions you have advanced in them?” Luther, having no mistrust, was about to answer the first of these questions affirmative, when his counsel, Jerome Schurff, hastily interrupting him, exclaimed aloud: “Let the titles of the books be read!” The chancellor approached the table and read the titles. There were among their number many devotional works, quite foreign to the controversy.

Their enumeration being finished, Luther said first in Latin, and then in German: “Most gracious emperor! Gracious princes and lords!

“His imperial majesty has asked me two questions.

“As to the first, I acknowledge as mine the books that have just been named: I cannot deny them.

“As to the second, seeing that it is a question which concerns faith and the salvation of souls, and in which the Word of God, the greatest and most precious treasure either in heaven or earth, is interested, I should act imprudently were I to reply without reflection. I might affirm less than the circumstance demands, or more than truth requires, and so sin against this saying of Christ: — Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. For this reason I entreat your imperial majesty, with all humility, to allow me time, that I may answer without offending against the Word of God.” This

reply, far from giving grounds to suppose Luther felt any hesitation, was worthy of the reformer and of the assembly. It was right that he should appear calm and circumspect in so important a matter, and lay aside everything in this solemn moment that might cause a suspicion of passion or rashness. Besides, by taking reasonable time, he would give a stronger proof of the unalterable firmness of his resolution. In history we read of many men who by a hasty expression have brought great misfortunes upon themselves and upon the world. Luther restrained his own naturally impetuous disposition; he controlled his tongue, ever too ready to speak; he checked himself at a time when all the feelings by which he was animated were eager for utterance. This restraint, this calmness, so surprising in such a man, multiplied his strength a hundredfold, and put him in a position to reply, at a later period, with such wisdom, power, and dignity, as to deceive the expectations of his adversaries, and confound their malice and their pride.

And yet, because he had spoken in a respectful manner, and in a low tone of voice, many thought

that he hesitated, and even that he was dismayed.

A ray of hope beamed on the minds of the partisans of Rome. Charles, impatient to know the man whose words had stirred the empire, had not taken his eyes off him. He turned to one of his courtiers, and said disdainfully, "Certainly this man will never make a heretic of me." Then rising from his seat, the youthful emperor withdrew with his ministers into a council-room; the electors with the princes retired into another; and the deputies of the free cities into third. When the diet assembled again, it was agreed to comply with Luther's request. This was a great miscalculation in men actuated by passion.

"Martin Luther," said the Chancellor of Treves, "his imperial majesty, of his natural goodness, is very willing to grant you another day, but under condition that you make your reply viva voce, and not in writing." The imperial herald now stepped forward and conducted Luther back to his hotel. Menaces and shouts of joy were heard by turns on his passage.

The most sinister rumors circulated among Luther's friends. "The diet is dissatisfied," said they; "the papal envoys have triumphed; the reformer will be sacrificed." Men's passions were inflamed. Many gentlemen hastened to Luther's lodgings: "Doctor," said they, with emotion, "what is this? It is said they are determined to burn you!" ... "If they do so," continued these knights, "it will cost them their lives!" — "And that certainly would have happened," said Luther, as, twenty years after, he quoted these words at Eisleben.

On the other hand, Luther's enemies exulted. "He has asked for time," said they; "he will retract. At a distance, his speech was arrogant; now his courage fails him.....He is conquered." Perhaps Luther was the only man that felt tranquil at Worms. Shortly after his return from the diet, he wrote to Cuspius, the imperial councillor: "I write to you from the midst of tumult (alluding probably to the noise made by the crowd in front of the hotel). I have just made my appearance before the emperor and his brother.I confessed myself

the author of my books, and declared that I would reply tomorrow touching my retraction.

With Christ's help, I shall never retract one tittle of my works." The emotion of the people and of the foreign soldiers increased every hour.

While the opposing parties were proceeding calmly in the diet, they were breaking out into acts of violence in the streets. The insolence of the haughty and merciless Spanish soldiers offended the citizens. One of these myrmidons of Charles, finding in a bookseller's shop the pope's bull with a commentary written by Hutten, took the book and tore it in pieces, and then throwing the fragments on the ground, trampled them under foot.

Others having discovered several copies of Luther's writings on the Captivity of Babylon, took them away and destroyed them. The indignant people fell upon the soldiers and compelled them to take flight. At another time, a Spaniard on horseback pursued, sword in hand, through one of the principal streets of Worms, a German who fled

before him, and the affrighted people dared not stop the furious man. Some politicians thought they had found means of saving Luther. “Retract your doctrinal errors,” said they; “but persist in all that you have said against the pope and his court, and you are safe.” Aleander shuddered with alarm at this counsel. But Luther, immovable in his resolution, declared that he had no great opinion of a political reform that was not based upon faith.

Glapio, the Chancellor ab Eck, and Aleander, by Charles’s order, met early on the morning of the 18th to concert the measures to be taken with regard to Luther.

For a moment Luther had felt dismay, when he was about to appear the preceding day before so august an assembly. His heart had been troubled in the presence of so many great princes, before whom nations humbly bent the knee. The reflection that he was about to refuse to submit to these men, whom God had invested with sovereign power, disturbed his soul; and he felt the necessity of looking for strength from on high. “The man who,

when he is attacked by the enemy, protects himself with the shield of faith,” said he one day, “is like Perseus with the Gorgon’s head.

Whoever looked at it, fell dead. In like manner should we present the Son of God to the snares of the devil.” On the morning of the 18th of April, he was not without his moments of trial, in which the face of God seemed hidden from him. His faith grew weak; his enemies multiplied before him; his imagination was overwhelmed at the sight.....His soul was as a ship tossed by a violent tempest, which reels and sinks to the bottom of the abyss, and then mounts up again to heaven. In this hour of bitter sorrow, in which he drinks the cup of Christ, and which was to him a little garden of Gethsemane, he falls to the earth, and utters these broken cries, which we cannot understand, unless we can figure to ourselves the depth of the anguish whence they ascend to God: — “O Almighty and Everlasting God! How terrible is this world!

Behold, it openeth its mouth to swallow me up, and I have so little trust in Thee!.....How weak is

the flesh, and Satan how strong! If it is only in the strength of this world that I must put my trust, all is over!.....My last hour is come, my condemnation has been pronounced!.....O God! O God!.....O God! do thou help me against all the wisdom of the world! Do this; thou shouldest do this.....thou alone.....for this is not my work, but Thine. I have nothing to do here, nothing to contend for with these great ones of the world! I should desire to see my days flow on peaceful and happy. But the cause is Thine.....and it is a righteous and eternal cause. O Lord! help me! Faithful and unchangeable God! In no man do I place my trust. It would be vain! All that is of man is uncertain; all that cometh of man fails.....O God! my God, hearest Thou me not?.....My God, art Thou dead?.....No! Thou canst not die! Thou hidest thyself only! Thou hast chosen me for this work.

I know it well!.....Act, then, O God!.....stand at my side, for the sake of thy well-beloved Jesus Christ, who is my defense, my shield, and my strong tower.” After a moment of silent struggle, he thus continues: “Lord! where stayest

Thou?.....O my God! where art Thou?.....Come!
come! I am ready!.....I am ready to lay down my
life for Thy truth.....patient as a lamb. For it is the
cause of justice — it is thine!.....I will never
separate myself from Thee, neither now nor
through eternity!.....And though the world should
be filled with devils, — though my body, which is
still the work of Thy hands, should be slain, be
stretched upon the pavement, be cut in
pieces.....reduced to ashes.....my soul is Thine!
.....Yes!

Thy Word is my assurance of it. My soul
belongs to Thee! It shall abide for ever with
Thee.....Amen!O God! help me!.....Amen!”
This prayer explains Luther and the Reformation.
History here raises the veil of the sanctuary, and
discloses to our view the secret place whence
strength and courage were imparted to this humble
and despised man, who was the instrument of God
to emancipate the soul and the thoughts of men,
and to begin the new times. Luther and the
Reformation are here brought before us. We
discover their most secret springs. We see whence

their power was derived. This out-pouring of a soul that offers itself up in the cause of truth is to be found in a collection of documents relative to Luther's appearance at Worms, under Number XVI, in the midst of safeconducts and other papers of a similar nature. One of his friends had not doubt overheard it, and has transmitted it to posterity. In our opinion, it is one of the most precious documents in all history.

After he had thus prayed, Luther found that peace of mind without which man can effect nothing great. He then read the Word of God, looked over his writings, and sought to draw up his reply in a suitable form. The thought that he was about to bear testimony to Jesus Christ and his Word, in the presence of the emperor and of the empire, filled his heart with joy.

As the hour for his appearance was not far off, he drew near the Holy Scriptures that lay open on the table, and with emotion placed his left hand on the sacred volume, and raising his right towards heaven, swore to remain faithful to the Gospel, and

freely to confess his faith, even should he seal his testimony with his blood. After this he felt still more at peace.

At four o'clock the herald appeared and conducted him to the place where the diet was sitting. The curiosity of the people had increased, for the answer was to be decisive. As the diet was occupied, Luther was compelled to wait in the court in the midst of an immense crowd, which swayed to and fro like the sea in a storm, and pressed the reformer with its waves. Two long hours elapsed, while the doctor stood in the multitude so eager to catch a glimpse of him. "I was not accustomed," said he, "to those manners and to all this noise." It would have been a sad preparation, indeed, for an ordinary man. But God was with Luther. His countenance was serene; his features tranquil; the Everlasting One had raised him on a rock. The night began to fall. Torches were lighted in the hall of the assembly. Their glimmering rays shone through the ancient windows into the court. Everything assumed a solemn aspect. At last the doctor was introduced.

Many persons entered with him, for every one desired to hear his answer. Men's minds were on the stretch; all impatiently awaited the decisive moment that was approaching. This time Luther was calm, free, and confident, without the least perceptible mark of embarrassment. His prayer had borne fruit. The princes having taken their seats, though not without some difficulty, for many of the places had been occupied, and the monk of Wittenberg finding himself again standing before Charles V, the chancellor of the Elector of Treves began by saying: "Martin Luther! yesterday you begged for a delay that has now expired. Assuredly it ought not to have been conceded, as every man, and especially you, who are so great and learned a doctor in the Holy Scriptures, should always be ready to answer any questions touching his faith.....Now, therefore, reply to the question put by his majesty, who has behaved to you with so much mildness. Will you defend your books as a whole, or are you ready to disavow some of them?" After having said these words in Latin, the chancellor repeated them in German.

“Upon this, Dr. Martin Luther,” says the Acts of Worms, “replied in the most submissive and humble manner. He did not bawl, or speak with violence; but with decency, mildness, suitability, and moderation, and yet with much joy and christian firmness.” “Most serene emperor! illustrious princes! gracious lords!” said Luther, turning his eyes on Charles and on the assembly, “I appear before you this day, in conformity with the order given me yesterday, and by God’s mercies I conjure your majesty and your august highness to listen graciously to the defense of a cause which I am assured is just and true. If, through ignorance, I should transgress the usages and proprieties of courts, I entreat you to pardon me; for I was not brought up on the palaces of kings, but in the seclusion of a convent.

“Yesterday, two questions were put to me on behalf of his imperial majesty: the first, if I was the author of the books whose titles were enumerated; the second, If I would retract or defend the doctrine I had taught in them. To the first question I then made answer, and I persevere in that reply.

“As for the second, I have written works on many different subjects. There are some in which I have treated of faith and good works, in a manner at once so pure, so simple, and so scriptural, that even my adversaries, far from finding anything to censure in them, allow that these works are useful, and worthy of being read by all pious men. The papal bull, however violent it may be, acknowledges this. If, therefore, I were to retract these, what should I do?.....Wretched man! Among all men, I alone should abandon truths that friends and enemies approve, and I should oppose what the whole world glories in confessing.....

“Secondly, I have written books against the papacy, in which I have attacked those who, by their false doctrine, their evil lives, or their scandalous example, afflict the christian world, and destroy both body and soul. The complaints of all who fear God are confirmatory of this. Is it not evident that the human doctrines and laws of the popes entangle, torment, and vex the consciences of believers, while the crying and perpetual

extortions of Rome swallow up the wealth and the riches of Christendom, and especially of this illustrious nation?.....

“Were I to retract what I have said on this subject, what should I do but lend additional strength to this tyranny, and open the floodgates to a torrent of impiety? Overflowing with still greater fury than before, we should see these insolent men increase in number, behave more tyrannically, and domineer more and more.

And not only the yoke that now weighs upon the christian people would be rendered heavier by my retraction, but it would become, so to speak, more legitimate, for by this very retraction it would have received the confirmation of your most serene majesty and of all the states of the holy empire. Gracious God! I should thus become a vile cloak to cover and conceal every kind of malice and tyranny!.....

“Lastly, I have written books against individuals who desired to defend the Romish

tyranny and to destroy the faith. I frankly confess that I may have attacked them with more acrimony than is becoming my ecclesiastical profession. I do not consider myself a saint; but I cannot disavow these writings, for by so doing I should sanction the impiety of my adversaries, and they would seize the opportunity of oppressing the people of God with still greater cruelty.

“Yet I am but a mere man, and not God; I shall therefore defend myself as Christ did. If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil (John 18:23), said he. How much more should I, who am but dust and ashes, and who may so easily go astray, desire every man to state his objections to my doctrine!

“For the reason, by the mercy of God, I conjure you, most serene emperor, and you, most illustrious princes, and all men of every degree, to prove from the writings of the prophets and apostles that I have erred. As soon as I am convinced of this, I will retract every error, and be the first to lay hold of my books and throw them into the fire.

“What I have just said plainly shows, I hope, that I have carefully weighed and considered the dangers to which I expose myself; but, far from being dismayed, I rejoice to see that the Gospel is now, as in former times, a cause of trouble and dissension. This is the character — this is the destiny of the Word of God. I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword, said Jesus Christ (Math. 10:34).

God is wonderful and terrible in his counsels; beware lest, by presuming to quench dissensions, you should persecute the holy Word of God, and draw down upon yourselves a frightful deluge of insurmountable dangers, of present disasters, and eternal desolation.....you should fear lest the reign of this young and noble prince, on whom (under God) we build such lofty expectations, not only should begin, but continue and close, under the most gloomy auspices. I might quote many examples from the oracles of God,” continued Luther, speaking with a noble courage in the presence of the greatest monarch of the world: “I

might speak of the Pharaohs, the kings of Babylon, and those of Israel, whose labors never more effectually contributed to their own destruction than when they sought by counsels, to all appearance most wise, to strengthen their dominion. God removeth mountains, and they know it not; which overturneth them in his anger (Job 9:5).

“If I say these things, it is not because I think that such great princes need my poor advice, but because I desire to render unto Germany what she has a right to expect from her children. Thus, commending myself to your august majesty and to your most serene highness, I humbly entreat you not to suffer the hatred of my enemies to pour out upon me an indignation that I have not merited.” Luther had pronounced these words in German with modesty, but with great warmth and firmness; he was ordered to repeat them in Latin.

The emperor did not like the German tongue. The imposing assembly that surrounded the reformer, the noise, and his own emotion, had

fatigued him.

“I was in a great perspiration,” said he, “heated by the tumult, standing in the midst of the princes.” Frederick of Thun, privy councillor to the Elector of Saxony who was stationed by his master’s orders at the side of the reformer, to watch over him that no violence might be employed against him, seeing the condition of the poor monk, said: “If you cannot repeat what you have said, that will do, doctor.” But Luther, after a brief pause to take breath, began again, and repeated his speech in Latin with the same energy as at first. “This gave great pleasure to the Elector Frederick,” says the reformer.

When he had ceased speaking, the Chancellor of Treves, the orator of the diet, said indignantly: “You have not answered the question put to you.

You were not summoned hither to call in question the decisions of councils. you are required to give a clear and precise answer. Will you, or will you not, retract?” Upon this Luther replied without

much hesitation: “Since your most serene majesty and your high mightinesses require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by the clearest reasoning, — unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, — and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the Word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience.” And then, looking round on this assembly before which he stood, and which held his life in its hands, he said: “HERE I STAND, I CAN DO NO OTHER; MAY GOD HELP ME? AMEN!” Luther, constrained to obey his faith, led by his conscience to death, impelled by the noblest necessity, the slave of his belief, and under this slavery still supremely free, like the ship tossed by a violent tempest, and which, to save that which is more precious than itself, runs and is dashed upon the rocks, thus uttered these sublime words which

still thrill our hearts at an interval of four centuries: thus spoke a monk before the emperor and the mighty ones of the nation; and this feeble and despised man, alone, but relying on the grace of the Most High, appeared greater and mightier than them all. His words contain a power against which all these mighty rulers can do nothing. This is the weakness of God, which is stronger than man. The empire and the Church on the one hand, this obscure man on the other, had met. God had brought together these kings and these prelates publicly to confound their wisdom. The battle is lost, and the consequences of this defeat of the great ones of the earth will be felt among every nation and in every age to the end of time.

The assembly was thunderstruck. Many of the princes found it difficult to conceal their admiration. The emperor, recovering from his first impression, exclaimed: "This monk speaks with an intrepid heart and unshaken courage." The Spaniards and Italians alone felt confounded, and soon began to ridicule a greatness of soul which they could not comprehend.

“If you do not retract,” said the chancellor, as soon as the diet had recovered from the impression produced by Luther’s speech, “the emperor and the states of the empire will consult what course to adopt against an incorrigible heretic.” At these words Luther’s friends began to tremble; but the monk repeated: “May God be my helper; for I can retract nothing.” After this Luther withdrew, and the princes deliberated. Each one felt that this was a critical moment for Christendom. The yes or the no of this monk would decide, perhaps for ages, the repose of the Church and of the world. His adversaries had endeavored to alarm him, and they had only exalted him before the nation; they had thought to give greater publicity to his defeat, and they had but increased the glory of his victory. The partisans of Rome could not make up their mind to submit to this humiliation. Luther was again called in, and the orator of the diet said to him: “Martin, you have not spoken with the modesty becoming your position.

The distinction you have made between your

books was futile; for if you retract those that contained your errors, the emperor would not allow the other to be burnt. It is extravagant in you to demand to be refuted by Scripture, when you are reviving heresies condemned by the general council of Constance. The emperor, therefore, calls upon you to declare simply, yes or no, whether you presume to maintain what you have advanced, or whether you will retract a portion?" — "I have no other reply to make than that which I have already made," answered Luther, calmly. His meaning was understood. Firm as a rock, all the waves of human power dashed ineffectually against him. The strength of his words, his bold bearing, his piercing eyes, the unshaken firmness legible on the rough outlines of his truly German features, had produced the deepest impression on this illustrious assembly. There was no longer any hope.

The Spaniards, the Belgians, and even the Romans were dumb. The monk had vanquished these great ones of the earth. He had said no to the Church and to the empire. Charles V arose, and all the assembly with him: "The diet will meet again

tomorrow to hear the emperor's opinion," said the chancellor with a loud voice.

Chapter 9

Tumult and Calmness

Night had closed in. Each man retired to his home in darkness. Two imperial officers formed Luther's escort. Some persons imagined that his fate was decided, that they were leading him to prison, whence he would never come forth but to mount the scaffold: an immense tumult broke out.

Several gentlemen exclaimed: "Are they taking him to prison?" — "No," replied Luther, "they are accompanying me to my hotel." At these words the agitation subsided. Some Spanish soldiers of the emperor's household followed this bold man through the streets by which he had to pass, with shouts and mockery, while others howled and roared like wild beasts robbed of their prey. But Luther remained calm and firm.

Such was the scene at Worms. The intrepid monk, who had hitherto boldly braved all his enemies, spoke on this occasion, when he found

himself in the presence of those who thirsted for his blood, with calmness, dignity, and humility. There was no exaggeration, no mere human enthusiasm, no anger; overflowing with the liveliest emotion, he was still at peace; modest, though withstanding the powers of the earth; great in presence of all the grandeur of the world. This is an indisputable mark that Luther obeyed God, and not the suggestions of his own pride. In the hall of the diet there was one greater than Charles and than Luther. When ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, saith Jesus Christ, for it is not ye that speak. Never perhaps had this promise been more clearly fulfilled.

A profound impression had been produced on the chiefs of the empire.

This Luther had noticed, and it had increased his courage. The pope's ministers were provoked because John ab Eck had not sooner interrupted the guilty monk. Many lords and princes were won over to a cause supported with such conviction.

With some, it is true, the impression was transient; but others, on the contrary, who concealed their sentiments at that time, at an after-period declared themselves with great courage.

Luther had returned to his hotel, seeking to recruit his body fatigued by severe a trial. Spalatin and other friends surrounded him, and all together gave thanks to God. As they were conversing, a servant entered, bearing a silver flagon filled with Eimbeck beer. "My master," said he, as he offered it to Luther, "invites you to refresh yourself with this draught." — "Who is the prince," said the Wittenberg doctor, "who so gracious remembers me?" It was the aged Duke Eric of Brunswick. The reformer was affected by this present from so powerful a lord, belonging to the pope's party.

"His highness," continued the servant, "has condescended to taste it before sending it to you." Upon this Luther, who was thirsty, poured out some of the duke's beer, and after drinking it, he said: "As this day Duke Eric has remembered me, so may our Lord Jesus Christ remember him in the

hour of his last struggle.” It was a present of trifling value; but Luther, desirous of showing his gratitude to a prince who remembered him at such a moment, gave him such as he had — a prayer. The servant returned with this message to his master. At the moment of his death the aged duke called these words to mind, and addressing a young page, Francis of Kramm, who was standing at his bedside: “Take the Bible,” said he, “and read it to me.” The child read these words of Christ, and the soul of the dying man was comforted: Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

Hardly had the Duke of Brunswick’s servant gone away, before a messenger from the Elector of Saxony came with orders for Spalatin to come to him immediately. Frederick had gone to the diet filled with uneasiness. He had imagined that in the presence of the emperor Luther’s courage would fail him; and hence he had been deeply moved by the resolute bearing of the reformer. He was proud of being a protector of such a man. When the

chaplain arrived, the table was spread; the elector was just sitting down to supper with his court, and already the servants had brought in the water for their hands. As he saw Spalatin enter, he motioned him to follow, and as soon as he was alone with the chaplain in his bedchamber, he said: "Oh! how Father Luther spoke before the emperor, and before all the states of the empire! I only trembled lest he should be too bold." Frederick then formed the resolution of protecting the doctor more courageously in future.

Aleander saw the impression Luther had produced; there was no time to lose; he must induce the emperor to act with vigor. The opportunity was favorable: war with France was imminent. Leo X, desirous of enlarging his states, and caring little for the peace of Christendom, was secretly negotiating two treaties at the same time, — one with Charles against Francis, the other with Francis against Charles. In the former, he claimed of the emperor, for himself, the territories of Parma, Placentia, and Ferrara; in the second, he stipulated with the king for a portion of the

kingdom of Naples, which would thus be taken from Charles. The latter felt the importance of gaining Leo to his side, in order to have his alliance in the war against his rival of France. It was a mere trifle to purchase the mighty pontiff's friendship at the cost of Luther's life.

One the day following Luther's appearance (Friday 19th April), the emperor ordered a message to be read to the diet, which he had written in French with his own hand. "Descended from the christian emperors of German," said he, "from the catholic kings of Spain, from the archdukes of Austria, and from the dukes of Burgundy, who have all been renowned as defenders of the Roman faith, I am firmly resolved to imitate the example of my ancestors. A single monk, misled by his own folly, has risen against the faith of Christendom. To stay such impiety, I will sacrifice my kingdoms, my treasures, my friends, my body, my blood, my soul, and my life. I am about to dismiss the Augustine Luther, forbidding him to cause the least disorder among the people; I shall then proceed against him and his adherents, as contumacious

heretics, by excommunication, by interdict, and by every means calculated to destroy them. I call on the members of the states to behave like faithful Christians.” This address did not please every one. Charles, young and hasty, had not complied with the usual forms; he should first have consulted with the diet. Two extreme opinions immediately declared themselves. The creatures of the pope, the Elector of Brandenburg, and several ecclesiastical princes, demanded that the safe-conduct given to Luther should not be respected. “The Rhine,” said they, “should receive his ashes, as it had received those of John Huss a century ago.” Charles, if we may credit an historian, bitterly repented in after-years that he did not adopt this infamous suggestion. “I confess,” said he, towards the close of his life, “that I committed a great fault by permitting Luther to live. I was not obliged to keep my promise with him; that heretic had offended a Master greater than I, — God himself. I might and ought to have broken my word, and to have avenged the insult he had committed against God: it is because I did not put him to death that heresy has not ceased to advance. His death would have

stifled it in the cradle.” So horrible a proposition filled the elector and all Luther’s friends with dismay. “The punishment of John Huss,” said the electorpalatine, “has brought too many misfortunes on the German nation for us ever to raise such a scaffold a second time.” — “The princes of Germany,” exclaimed even George of Saxony, Luther’s inveterate enemy, “will not permit a safeconduct to be violated. This diet, the first held by our new emperor, will not be guilty of so base an action. Such perfidy does not accord with the ancient German integrity.” The princes of Bavaria, though attached to the Church of Rome, supported this protest. The prospect of death that Luther’s friends had already before their eyes appeared to recede.

The rumor of these discussions, which lasted two days, circulated through the city. Party-spirit ran high. Some gentlemen, partisans of the reform, began to speak firmly against the treachery solicited by Aleander. “The emperor,” said they, “is a young man whom the papists and bishops by their flatteries manage at their will.” Pallavicini

speaks of four hundred nobles ready to enforce Luther's safeconduct with the sword. On Saturday morning placards were seen posted at the gates of houses and in the public places, — some against Luther, and others in his favor. On one of them might be read merely these expressive words of the Preacher: Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child. Sickingen, it was reported, had assembled a few leagues from Worms, behind the impregnable ramparts of his stronghold, many knights and soldiers, and was only waiting to know the result of the affair before proceeding to action. The enthusiasm of the people, not only in Worms, but also in the most distant cities of the empire; the intrepidity of the knights; the attachment felt by many princes to the cause of the reformer were all of a nature to show Charles and the diet that the course suggested by the Romanists might compromise the supreme authority, excite revolts, and even shake the empire. It was only the burning of a simple monk that was in question; but the princes and the partisans of Rome had not, all together, sufficient strength or courage to do this. There can be no doubt, also, that Charles V, who

was then young, feared to commit perjury. This would seem to be indicated by a saying, if it is true, which, according to some historians, he uttered on this occasion: "Though honor and faith should banished from all the world, they ought to find a refuge in the hearts of princes." It is mournful to reflect that he may have forgotten these words when on the brink of the grave. But other motives besides may have influenced the emperor. The Florentine Vettori, the friend of Leo X and of Machiavelli, asserts that Charles spared Luther only that he might thus keep the pope in check. In the sitting of Saturday, the violent propositions of Aleander were rejected. Luther was beloved; there was a general desire to preserve this simple-minded man, whose confidence in God was so affecting; but there was also a desire to save the Church. Men shuddered at the thought of the consequences that might ensue, as well from the triumph as from the punishment of the reformer. Plans of conciliation were put forward; it was proposed to make a new effort with the doctor of Wittenberg. The Archbishop-elect of Mentz himself, the young and extravagant Albert, more devout than bold,

says Pallavicini, had become alarmed at the interest shown by the people and nobility towards the Saxon monk.

Capito, his chaplain, who during his sojourn at Basle had formed an intimacy with the evangelical priest of Zurich, named Zwingle, a bold man in the defense of truth, and of whom we have already had occasion to speak, had also, there can be no doubt, represented to Albert the justice of the reformer's cause. The worldly archbishop had one of those returns to christian sentiments which we sometimes notice in his life, and consented to wait on the emperor, to ask permission to make a last attempt. But Charles refused everything. On Monday, the 22nd of April, the princes went in a body to repeat Albert's request. "I will not depart from what I have determined," replied the emperor. "I will authorize no one to communicate officially with Luther. But," added he, to Aleander's great vexation, "I will grant that man three days for reflection; during which time, you may exhort him privately." This was all that they required.

The reformer, thought they, elevated by the solemnity of his appearance before the diet, will give way in a more friendly conference, and perhaps will be saved from the abyss into which he is about to fall.

The Elector of Saxony knew the contrary, and hence was filled with apprehension. "If it were in my power," wrote he the next day to his brother Duke John, "I should be ready to defend Luther. You cannot imagine how far the partisans of Rome carry their attacks against me. Were I to tell you all, you would hear some most astonishing matters. They are resolved upon his destruction; and whoever manifests any interest for his safety, is immediately set down as a heretic. May God, who never abandons the cause of justice, bring all things to a happy end!" Frederick, without showing his kindly feelings towards the reformer, confined himself to observing every one of his movements.

It was not the same with men of every rank in society who were then at Worms. They fearlessly displayed their sympathy. On Friday a number of

princes, counts, barons, knights, gentlemen, ecclesiastics, laymen, and of the common people, collected before the hotel where the reformer was staying; they went in and out one after another, and could hardly satiate themselves with gazing on him. He had become the man of Germany.

Even those who thought him in error were affected by the nobleness of soul that led him to sacrifice his life to the voice of his conscience. With many persons then present at Worms, the chosen men of the nation, Luther held conversations abounding in that salt with which all his words were seasoned. None quitted him without feeling animated by a generous enthusiasm for the truth. "How many things I shall have to tell you!" wrote George Vogler, private secretary to Casimir, margrave of Brandenburg, to one of his friends. "What conversations, how full of piety and kindness, has Luther had with me and others! What a charming person he is!" One day a young prince, seventeen years of age, came prancing into the court of the hotel; it was Philip, who for two years had ruled Hesse. This youthful sovereign was of

prompt and enterprising character, wise beyond his years, warlike, impetuous, and unwilling to be guided by any ideas but his own. Struck by Luther's speeches, he wished to have a nearer view of him. "He, however, was not yet on my side," said Luther, as he related this circumstance. He leaped from his horse, unceremoniously ascended to the reformer's chamber, and addressing him, said: "Well! dear doctor, how goes it?" "Gracious lord," answered Luther, "I hope all will go well." "From what I hear of you, doctor," resumed the landgrave, smiling, "you teach that a woman may leave her husband and take another, when the former is become too old!" It was some members of the imperial court who had told this story to the landgrave. The enemies of truth never fail to invent and propagate fables on the pretended doctrines of christian teachers. "No, my lord," replied Luther seriously; "I entreat your highness not to talk thus!" Upon this the young prince hastily held out his hand to the doctor, shook it heartily, and said: "Dear doctor, if you are in the right, may God help you!" He then left the room, sprung on his horse, and rode off. This was the first interview between

these two men, who were afterwards destined to be at the head of the Reformation, and to defend it, — the one with the sword of the Word, the other with the sword of princes.

Chapter 10

Conference with the Archbishop of Treves

Richard of Greiffenklaue, archbishop of Treves, had with the permission of Charles V undertaken the office of mediator. Richard, who was on very intimate terms with the Elector of Saxony, and a good Roman-catholic, desired by settling the affair to render a service to his friend as well as to his Church. On Monday evening (22nd April), just as Luther was sitting down to table, a messenger came from the archbishop, informing him that this prelate desired to see him on the next morning but one (Wednesday) at six o'clock.

The chaplain and Sturm the imperial herald waited on Luther before six o'clock on that day. But as early as four in the morning, Aleander had sent for Cochloeus. The nuncio had soon discovered in the man whom Capito had introduced him, a devoted instrument of the court of Rome, on

whim he might count as upon himself. As he could not be present at this interview, Aleander desired to find a substitute. "Go to the residence of the Archbishop of Treves," said he to the Dean at Frankfort; "do not enter into discussion with Luther, but listen attentively to all that is said, so as to give me a faithful report." The reformer with some of his friends arrived at the archbishop's, where he found the prelate surrounded by Joachim, margrave of Brandenburg, Duke George of Saxony, the Bishops of Brandenburg and Augsburg, with several nobles, deputies of the free cities, lawyers, and theologians, among whom were Cochloeus and Jerome Wehe, chancellor of Baden. This skillful lawyer was anxious for a reformation in morals and discipline; he even went further: "the Word of God," said he, "that has been so long hidden under a bushel, must reappear in all its brightness." It was this conciliatory person who was charged with the conference. Turning kindly to Luther, he said: "We have not sent for you to dispute with you, but to exhort you in a fraternal tone. You know how carefully the Scriptures call upon us to beware of the arrow that flieth by day,

and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. That enemy of mankind has excited you to publish many things contrary to true religion. Reflect on your own safety and that of the empire. Beware lest those whom Christ by his blood has redeemed from eternal death should be misled by you, and perish everlastingly.....Do not oppose the holy councils. If we did not uphold the decrees of our fathers, there would be nothing but confusion in the Church. The eminent princes who hear me feel a special interest in your welfare; but if you persist, then the emperor will expel you from the empire, and no place in the world will offer you an asylum.....Reflect on the fate that awaits you!”

“Most serene princes,” replied Luther, “I thank you for your solitude on my account; for I am but a poor man, and too mean to be exhorted by such great lords.” He then continued: “I have not blamed all the councils, but only that of Constance, because by condemning this doctrine of John Huss, That the Christian Church is the assembly of all those who are predestined to salvation, it has condemned this article of our faith, I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, and the Word of God itself.

It is said my teaching is a cause of offense,” added he; “I reply that the Gospel of Christ cannot be preached without offense. Why then should the fear of apprehension of danger separate me from the Lord and from that Divine Word which alone is truth? No! I would rather give up my body, my blood, and my life!” The princes and doctors having deliberated, Luther was again called in, and Wehe mildly resumed: “We must honor the power that be, even when they are in error, and make great sacrifices for the sake of charity.” And then with greater earnestness of manner, he said: “Leave it to the emperor’s decision, and fear not.” Luther. — “I consent with all my heart that the emperor, the princes, and even the meanest Christian, should examine and judge my works; but on one condition, that they take the Word of God for their standard. Men have nothing to do but to obey it. Do not offer violence to my conscience, which is bound and chained up with the Holy Scriptures.” The Elector of Brandenburg. — “If I rightly understand you, doctor, you will acknowledge no other judge than the Holy Scriptures?” Luther. — “Precisely so, my lord, and on them I take my

stand.” Upon this the princes and doctors withdrew; but the excellent Archbishop of Treves could not make up his mind to abandon his undertaking. “Follow me,” said he to Luther, as he passed into his private room; and at the same time ordered John ab Eck and Cochloeus on the one side, and Schurff and Amsdorff on the other, to come after. “Why do you always appeal to Scripture,” asked Eck with warmth; “it is the source of all heresies.” But Luther, says his friend Mathesius, remained firm as a rock, which is based on the true rock, — the Word of the Lord. “The pope,” replied he, “is no judge in the things belonging to the Word of God. Every Christian should see and decide for himself how he ought to live and die.” They separated. The partisans of the Papacy felt Luther’s superiority, and attributed it to there being no one present capable of answering him. “If the emperor had acted wisely,” says Cochloeus, “when summoning Luther to Worms, he would also have invited theologians to refute his errors.” The Archbishop of Treves repaired to the diet, and announced the failure of his mediation. The astonishment of the young emperor was equal

to his indignation. "It is time to put an end to this business," said he. The archbishop, pressed for two days more; all the diet joined in the petition; Charles V gave way. Aleander, no longer able to restrain himself, burst out into violent reproaches. While these scenes were passing in the diet, Cochloeus burned to gain a victory in which kings and prelates had been unsuccessful. Although he had from time to time dropped a few words at the archbishop's, he was restrained by Aleander's injunction to keep silence. He resolved to find compensation, and as soon as he had rendered a faithful account of his mission to the papal nuncio, he called on Luther. He went up to him in the most friendly manner, and expressed the vexation he felt at the emperor's resolution. After dinner, the conversation became animated. Cochloeus urged Luther to retract. The latter shook his head. Several nobles who were at table with him could hardly contain themselves. They were indignant that the partisans of Rome should insist, not upon convincing Luther by Scripture, but on constraining him by force. "Well, then," said Cochloeus to Luther, impatient under these

reproaches, “I offer to dispute publicly with you, if you will renounce your safe-conduct.” All that Luther demanded was a public disputation. What ought he to do? To renounce the safe-conduct would be to endanger his life; to refuse this challenge would appear to throw doubts on the justice of his cause. His guests perceived in this proposal a plot framed with Aleander, whom the Dean of Frankfort had just quitted. One of them, Vollrat of Watzdorf by name, extricated Luther from the embarrassment occasioned by so difficult a choice. This fiery lord, indignant at a snare, the sole object of which was to deliver Luther into the hands of the executioner, rose hastily, seized the frightened priest, and pushed him out of the room, and blood no doubt would have been spilt, if the other guests had not left the table at the same moment, and mediated between the furious knight and Cochloeus, who trembled with alarm. The latter retired in confusion from the hotel of the Knights of Rhodes. Most probably it was in the heat of the discussion that these words had fallen from the dean, and there had been no preconcerted plan formed between him and Aleander to entice

Luther into so treacherous a snare. This Cochloeus denies, and we are inclined to credit his testimony. And yet just before going to Luther's lodging he had been in conference with Aleander.

In the evening, the Archbishop of Treves assembled at supper the persons who had attended that morning's conference: he thought that this would be a means of unbending their minds, and bringing them closer together.

Luther, so firm and intrepid before arbitrators and judges, in private life was so good-humored and jovial, that they might reasonably hope any thing from him. The archbishop's chancellor, who had been so formal in his official capacity, lent himself to this new essay, and towards the end of the repast proposed Luther's health. The latter prepared to return the compliment; the wine was poured out, and, according to his usual custom, he had made the sign of the cross on his glass when suddenly it burst in his hands, and the wine was spilt upon the table. The guests were astonished.

“It must have contained poison!” exclaimed some of Luther’s friends aloud. But the doctor, without betraying any agitation, replied with a smile: “My dear Sirs, either this wine was not intended for me, or else it would have disagreed with me.” And then he added calmly: “There is no doubt the glass broke because after washing it it was dipped too soon into cold water.” These words, although so simple, under such circumstances are not devoid of grandeur, and show an unalterable peace of mind. We cannot imagine that the Roman-catholics would have desired to poison Luther, especially under the roof of the Archbishop of Treves. This repast neither estranged nor approximated the two parties. Neither the favor nor the hatred of men had any influence over the reformer’s resolution: it proceeded from a higher source.

On the morning of Thursday, the 25th of April, the Chancellor Wehe, and Doctor Peutinger of Augsburg, the emperor’s councillor, who had shown great affection for Luther at the period of his interview with De Vio, repaired to the hotel of

the Knights of Rhodes. The Elector of Saxony sent Frederick of Thun and another of his councilors to be present at the conference. “Place yourself in our hands,” said with emotion both Wehe and Peutingen, who would willingly have made every sacrifice to prevent the division that was about to rend the Church. “We pledge you our word, that this affair shall be concluded in a christian-like manner.” — “Here is my answer in two words,” replied Luther. “I consent to renounce my safeconduct.

I place my person and my life in the emperor’s hands, but the Word of God.....never!” Frederick of Thun rose in emotion, and said to the envoys: “Is not this enough? Is not the sacrifice large enough?” And after declaring he would not hear a single word more, he left the room.

Upon this, Wehe and Peutingen, hoping to succeed more easily with the doctor, came and sat down by his side. “Place yourself in the hands of the diet,” said they. — No,” replied he, “for cursed be the man that trusteth in man!” (Jeremiah 17:5.)

Wehe and Peutinger became more earnest in their exhortations and attacks; they urged the reformer more pressingly. Luther, wearied out, rose and dismissed them, saying: "I will never permit any man to set himself above the Word of God." — "Reflect upon our proposal," said they, as they withdrew, "we will return in the evening." They came; but feeling convinced that Luther would not give way, they brought a new proposition. Luther had refused to acknowledge, first the pope, then the emperor, and lastly the diet; there still remained one judge whom he himself had once demanded: a general council. Doubtless such a proposal would have offended Rome; but it was their last hope of safety.

The delegates offered a council to Luther. The latter might have accepted it without specifying anything. Years would have passed away before the difficulties could have been set aside which the convocation of a council would have met with on the part of the pope. To gain time was for the reformer and the Reformation to gain everything. God and the lapse of years would have brought

about great changes. But Luther set plain dealing above all things; he would not save himself at the expense of truth, even were silence alone necessary to dissemble it. — “I consent,” replied he, “but” (and to make such a request was to refuse a council) “on condition that the council shall decide only according to Scripture.” Peutinger and Wehe, not imagining that a council could decide otherwise, ran quite overjoyed to the archbishop: “Doctor Martin,” said they, “submits his books to a council.” The archbishop was on the point of carrying these glad tidings to the emperor, when he felt some doubt, and ordered Luther to be brought to him.

Richard of Greiffenklau was alone when the doctor arrived. “Dear doctor,” said the archbishop, with great kindness and feeling, “my doctors inform me that you consent to submit, unreservedly, your cause to a council.” — “My lord,” replied Luther, “I can endure everything, but I cannot abandon the Holy Scriptures.” The bishop perceived that Wehe and Peutinger had stated the matter incorrectly. Rome could never consent to a

council that decided only according to Scripture. “It was like telling a short-sighted man,” says Pallavicini, “to read very small print, and at the same time refusing him a pair of spectacles.” The worthy archbishop sighed: “It was a fortunate thing that I sent for you,” said he. “What would have become of me, if I had immediately carried this news to the emperor?” Luther’s immovable firmness and inflexibility are doubtless surprising; but they will be understood and respected by all those who know the law of God. Seldom has a nobler homage been paid to the unchangeable Word from heaven; and that, too, at the peril of the liberty and life of the man who bore this testimony.

“Well, then,” said the venerable prelate to Luther, “point out a remedy yourself.” Luther, after a moment’s silence. — “My lord, I know no better than this of Gamaliel: If this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. Let the emperor, the electors, the princes, and states of the empire, write this answer to the pope.” The Archbishop. — “Retract at least

some articles.” Luther. — “Provided they are none of those which the Council of Constance has already condemned.” The Archbishop. — “I am afraid it is precisely those that you would be called upon to retract.” Luther. — “In that case I would rather lose my life, — rather have my arms and legs cut off, than forsake the clear and true Word of God.” The archbishop understood Luther at last. “You may retire,” said he, still with the same kind manner. “My lord,” resumed Luther, “may I beg you to have the goodness to see that his majesty provides me with the safeconduct necessary for my return.” — “I will see to it,” replied the good archbishop, and so they parted.

Thus ended these negotiations. The whole empire had turned towards this man with the most ardent prayers and with the most terrible threats, and he had not faltered. His refusal to bend beneath the iron yoke of the pope emancipated the Church and began the new times. The interposition of Providence was manifest. This is one of those grand scenes in history over which hovers and rises the majestic presence of the Divinity.

Luther withdrew in company with Spalatin, who had arrived at the archbishop's during the interview. John Minkwitz, counsellor to the Elector of Saxony, had fallen ill at Worms. The two friends went to visit him. Luther gave the sick man the most affectionate consolations.

“Farewell!” said he, as he retired, “tomorrow I shall leave Worms.” Luther was not deceived. Hardly had he returned three hours to the hotel of the Knights of Rhodes, when the Chancellor ab Eck, accompanied by the imperial chancellor and a notary, appeared before him.

The chancellor said to him: “Martin Luther, his imperial majesty, the electors, princes, and states of the empire, having at sundry times and in various forms exhorted you to submission, but always in vain, the emperor, in his capacity of advocate and defender of the Catholic faith, finds himself compelled to resort to other measures. He therefore commands you to return home in the space of twenty-one days, and forbids you to disturb the

public peace on your road, either by preaching or writing.” Luther felt clearly that this message was the beginning of his condemnation: “As the Lord pleases,” answered he meekly, “blessed be the name of the Lord!” He then added: “Before all things, humbly and from the bottom of my heart do I thank his majesty, the electors, princes, and other states of the empire for having listened to me so kindly. I desire, and have ever desired, but one thing — a reformation of the Church according to Holy Scripture. I am ready to do and to suffer everything in humble obedience to the emperor’s will. Life or death, evil or good report — it is all the same to me, with one reservation — the preaching of the Gospel; for, says St. Paul, the Word of God must not be bound.” The deputies retired.

On the morning of Friday the 26th of April, the friends of the reformer with several lords met at Luther’s hotel. They were delighted at seeing the christian firmness with which he had opposed Charles and the empire; and recognized in him the feature of that celebrated portrait of antiquity:

Justum ac tenacem propositi virum, Non civium
ardor prava jubentium, Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solida..... They desired once more,
perhaps for the last time, to say farewell to this
intrepid monk. Luther partook of a humble repast.
But now he had to take leave of his friends, and fly
far from them, beneath a sky lowering with
tempests. This solemn moment he desired to pass
in the presence of God.

He lifted up his soul in prayer, blessing those
who stood around him. As it struck ten, Luther
issued from the hotel with the friends who had
accompanied him to Worms. Twenty gentlemen on
horseback surrounded his car. A great crowd of
people accompanied him beyond the walls of the
city. Some time after he was overtaken by Sturm,
the imperial herald, at Oppenheim, and on the next
day they arrived at Frankfort.

Chapter 11

The Conflict at Worms

Thus had Luther escaped from these walls of Worms, that seemed destined to be his sepulcher. With all his heart he gave God the glory. “The devil himself,” said he, “guarded the pope’s citadel; but Christ has made a wide breach in it, and Satan was constrained to confess that the Lord is mightier than he.” “The day of the Diet of Worms,” says the pious Mathesius, Luther’s disciple and friend, “is one of the greatest and most glorious days given to the earth before the end of the world.” The battle that had been fought at Worms resounded far and wide, and at its noise which spread through all Christendom, from the regions of the North to the mountains of Switzerland, and the towns of England, France, and Italy, many eagerly grasped the powerful weapons of the Word of God.

Luther, who reached Frankfort on the evening of Saturday the 27th of April, took advantage the

next day of a leisure moment, the first that he had enjoyed for a long time, to write a familiar and expressive note to his friend at Wittenberg, the celebrated painter Lucas Cranach. “Your servant, dear gossip Lucas,” said he. “I thought his majesty would have assembled some fifty doctors at Worms to convict the monk outright. But not at all.

— Are these your books? — Yes! — Will you retract them? — No! — Well, then, be gone! — There’s the whole history. O blind Germans!.....how childishly we act, to allow ourselves to be the dupes and sport of Rome!.....The Jews must sing their Yo! Yo! Yo! But a day of redemption is coming for us also, and then will we sing hallelujah!

.....For a season we must suffer in silence. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little while, and ye shall see me, said Jesus Christ (John 16:16). I hope that it will be the same with me. Farewell. I commend you all to the Lord. May he preserve in Christ your understanding and your faith against the attacks of the wolves and the

dragons of Rome.

Amen!” After having written this somewhat enigmatical letter, Luther, as the time pressed, immediately set out for Friedberg, which is six leagues distant from Frankfort. On the next day Luther again collected his thoughts. He desired to write once more to Charles, as he had no wish to be confounded with guilty rebels. In his letter to the emperor he set forth clearly what is the obedience due to kings, and that which is due to God, and what is the limit at which the former should cease and give place to the latter. As we read this epistle, we are involuntarily reminded of the words of the greatest autocrat of modern times: “My dominion ends where that of conscience begins.” “God, who is the searcher of hearts, is my witness,” says Luther, “that I am ready most earnestly to obey your majesty, in honor or in dishonor, in life or in death, and with no exception save the Word of God, by which man lives. In all the affairs of this present life, my fidelity shall be unshaken, for here to lose or to gain is of no consequence to salvation. But when eternal interests are concerned, God wills

not that man should submit unto man. For such submission in spiritual matters is a real worship, and ought to be rendered solely to the Creator.” Luther wrote also, but in German, a letter addressed to the states of the empire. Its contents were nearly similar to that which he had just written to the emperor. In it he related all that had passed at Worms. This letter was copied several times and circulated throughout Germany; “everywhere,” says Cochloeus, “it excited the indignation of the people against the emperor and the superior clergy.” Early the next day Luther wrote a note to Spalatin, enclosing the two letters he had written the evening before; he sent back to Worms the herald Sturm, won over to the cause of the Gospel; and after embracing him, departed hastily for Grunberg.

On Tuesday, at about two leagues from Hirschfeldt, he met the chancellor of the prince-abbot of that town, who came to welcome him. Soon after there appeared a troop of horsemen with the abbot at their head. The latter dismounted, and Luther got out of his wagon. The prince and the

reformer embraced, and afterwards entered Hirschfeldt together. The senate received them at the gates of the city. The princes of the Church came out to meet a monk anathematized by the pope, and the chief men of the people bent their heads before a man under the ban of the emperor.

“At five in the morning we shall be at church,” said the prince at night as he rose from the table to which he had invited the reformer. The abbot insisted on his sleeping in his own bed. The next day Luther preached, and this dignitary of the church with all his train escorted him on his way.

In the evening Luther reached Eisenach, the scene of his childhood. All his friends in this city surrounded him, entreating him to preach, and the next day, accompanied him to the church. Upon this the priest of the parish appeared, attended by a notary and witnesses; he came forward trembling, divided between the fear of losing his place, and of opposing the powerful man that stood before him. “I protest against the liberty that you are taking,” said the priest at last, in an embarrassed tone.

Luther went up into the pulpit, and that voice which, twenty-three years before, had sung in the streets of this town to procure a morsel of bread, sounded beneath the arched roof of the ancient church those notes that were beginning to agitate the world. After the sermon, the priest with confusion went up to Luther.

The notary had drawn up the protest, the witnesses had signed it, all was properly arranged to secure the incumbent's place. "Pardon me," said he to the doctor humbly; "I am acting thus to protect me from the resentment of the tyrants who oppress the Church." And there were in truth strong grounds for apprehension. The aspect of affairs at Worms was changed: Aleander alone seemed to rule there.

"Banishment is Luther's only prospect," wrote Frederick to his brother, Duke John; "nothing can save him. If God permits me to return to you, I shall have matters to relate that are almost beyond belief. It is not only Annas and Caiaphus, but Pilate and Herod also, that have combined against him."

Frederick had little desire to remain longer at Worms; he departed, and the elector-palatine did the same. The elector-archbishop of Cologne also quitted the diet. Their example was followed by many princes of inferior rank. As they deemed it impossible to avert the blow, they preferred (and in this perhaps they were wrong) abandoning the place. The Spaniards, the Italians, and the most ultra-montane German princes alone remained.

The field was not free — Aleander triumphed. He laid before Charles the outline of an edict intended by him as a model of that which the diet ought to issue against the monk. The nuncio's project pleased the exasperated emperor. He assembled the remaining members of the diet in his chamber, and there had Aleander's edict read over to them; it was accepted (Pallavicini informs us) by all who were present.

The next day, which was a great festival, the emperor went to the cathedral, attended by all the lords of his court. When the religious ceremonies were over, and a crowd of people still thronged the

sanctuary, Aleander, robed in all the insignia of his dignity, approached Charles V.

He held in his hand two copies of the edict against Luther, one in Latin, the other in German, and kneeling before his imperial majesty, entreated him to affix to them his signature and the seal of the empire. It was at the moment when the sacrifice had been offered, when the incense still filled the temple, while the sacred chants were still re-echoing through its long-drawn aisles, and as it were in the presence of the Deity, that the destruction of the enemy of Rome was to be sealed. The emperor, assuming a very gracious air, took the pen and wrote his name.

Aleander withdrew in triumph, immediately sent the decree to the printers, and forwarded it to every part of Christendom. This crowning act of the toils of Rome had cost the papacy little trouble. Pallavicini himself informs us, that this edict, although bearing date the 8th of May, was not signed till later; but it was antedated to make it appear that the signature was affixed at a period

when all the members of the diet were assembled.

“We, Charles the Fifth,” said the emperor (and then came his titles), “to all the electors, princes, prelates, and other whom it may concern.

“The Almighty having confided to us, for the defense of the holy faith, more kingdoms and greater authority than He has ever given to any of our predecessors, we purpose employing every means in our power to prevent our holy empire from being polluted by any heresy.

“The Augustine monk, Martin Luther, notwithstanding our exhortation, has rushed like a madman on our holy Church, and attempted to destroy it by books overflowing with blasphemy. He has shamefully polluted the indestructible law of holy matrimony; he has endeavored to excite the laity to dye their hands in the blood of the clergy; and, setting at nought all authority, has incessantly urged the people to revolt, schism, war, murder, robbery, incendiarism, and to the utter ruin of the christian faith.....In a word, not to mention his

many other evil practices, this man, who is in truth not a man, but Satan himself under the form of a man dressed in a monk's frock, has collected into one stinking slough all the vilest heresies of past times, and has added to them new ones of his own.....

“We have therefore dismissed from our presence this Luther, whom all pious and sensible man deem a madman, or one possessed by the devil; and we enjoin that, on the expiration of his safe-conduct, immediate recourse be had to effectual measure to check his furious rage.

“For this reason, under pain of incurring the penalties due to the crime of high-treason, we forbid you to harbor the said Luther after the appointed term shall be expired, to conceal him, to give him food or drink, or to furnish him, by word or by deed, publicly or secretly, with any kind of succor whatsoever. We enjoin you, moreover, to seize him, or cause him to be seized, wherever you may find him, to bring him before us without any delay, or to keep him in safe custody, until you

have learned from us in what manner you are to act towards him, and have received the reward due to your labors in so holy a work.

“As for his adherents, you will apprehend them, confine them, and confiscate their property.

“As for his writings, if the best nutriment becomes the detestation of all men as soon as one drop of poison is mingled with it, how much more ought such books, which contain a deadly poison for the soul, be not only rejected, but destroyed! You will therefore burn them, or utterly destroy them in any manner.

“As for the authors, poets, printers, painters, buyers or sellers of placards, papers, or pictures, against the pope or the Church, you will seize them, body and goods, and will deal with them according to your good pleasure.

“And if any person, whatever be his dignity, should dare to act in contradiction to the decree of our imperial majesty, we order him to be placed

under the ban of the empire.

“Let every man behave according to this decree.” Such was the edict signed in the cathedral of Worms. It was more than a bull of Rome, which, although published in Italy, could not be executed in Germany. The emperor himself had spoken, and the diet had ratified his decree. All the partisans of Rome burst into a shout of triumph. “It is the end of the tragedy!” exclaimed they. — “In my opinion,” said Alphonso Valdez, a Spaniard at Charles’s court, “it is not the end, but only the beginning.” Valdez perceived that the movement was in the Church, in the people, and in the age, and that, even should Luther perish, his cause would not perish with him. But no one was blind to the imminent and inevitable danger in which the reformer himself was placed; and the great majority of superstitious persons were filled with horror at the thought of that incarnate devil, covered with a monk’s hood, whom the emperor pointed out to the nation.

The man against whom the mighty ones of the

earth were thus forging their thunderbolts had quitted the church of Eisenach, and was preparing to bid farewell to some of his dearest friends. He did not take the road to Gotha and Erfurth, but proceeded to the village of Mora, his father's native place, once more to see his aged grandmother, who died four months after, and to visit his uncle, Henry Luther, and some other relations. Schurff, Jonas, and Suaven set out for Wittenberg; Luther got into the wagon with Amsdorff, who still remained with him, and entered the forests of Thuringia. The same evening he arrived at the village of his sires. The poor old peasant clasped in her arms that grandson who had withstood Charles the emperor and Leo the pope. Luther spent the next day with his relations; happy, after the tumult at Worms, in this sweet tranquillity. On the next morning he resumed his journey, accompanied by Amsdorff and his brother James. In this lonely spot the reformer's fate was to be decided.

They skirted the woods of Thuringia, following the road to Waltershausen.

As the wagon was moving through a hollow way, near the deserted church of Glisbach, at a short distance from the castle of Altenstein, a sudden noise was heard, and immediately five horsemen, masked and armed from head to foot, sprung upon the travelers. His brother James, as soon as he caught sight of the assailants, leaped from the wagon and ran away as fast as his legs would carry him, without uttering a single word. The driver would have resisted. "Stop!" cried one of the strangers with a terrible voice, falling upon him and throwing him to the ground. A second mask laid hold of Amsdorff and kept him at a distance. Meanwhile the three remaining horsemen seized upon Luther, maintaining a profound silence. They pulled him violently from the wagon, threw a military cloak over his shoulders, and placed him on a led horse. The two other masks now quitted Amsdorff and the wagoner; all five leaped to their saddles — one dropped his hat, but they did not even stop to pick it up — and in the twinkling of an eye vanished with their prisoner into the gloomy forest. At first they took the road

to Broderode, but soon retraced their steps by another path; and without quitting the wood, made so many windings in every direction as utterly to baffle any attempt to track them. Luther, little accustomed to be on horseback, was soon overcome with fatigue. They permitted him to alight for a few minutes: he lay down near a beechtree, where he drank some water from a spring which is still called after his name. His brother James, continuing his flight, arrived at Waltershausen in the evening. The affrighted wagoner jumped into the car, which Amsdorff had again mounted, and whipping his horses, drove rapidly away from the spot, and conducted Luther's friend to Wittenberg. At Waltershausen, at Wittenberg, in the country, villages, and towns along their road, they spread the news of the violent abduction of the doctor. This intelligence, which delighted some, struck the greater number with astonishment and indignation. A cry of grief soon resounded through all Germany: "Luther has fallen into the hands of his enemies!" After the violent combat that Luther had just sustained, God had been pleased to conduct him to a place of

repose and peace. After having exhibited him on the brilliant theater of Worms, where all the powers of the reformer's soul had been strung to so high a pitch. He gave him the secluded and humiliating retreat of a prison. God draws from the deepest seclusion the weak instruments by which He purposes to accomplish great things; and then, when He has permitted them to glitter for a season with dazzling brilliancy on an illustrious stage, He dismisses them again to the deepest obscurity. The Reformation was to be accomplished by other means than violent struggles or pompous appearances before diets. It is not thus that the leaven penetrates the mass of the people; the Spirit of God seeks more tranquil paths. The man, whom the Roman champions were persecuting without mercy, was to disappear for a time from the world. It was requisite that this great individuality should fade away, in order that the revolution then accomplishing might not bear the stamp of an individual. It was necessary for the man to retire, that God might remain alone to move by His Spirit upon the deep waters in which the darkness of the Middle Ages was already engulfed, and to say: Let

there be light, so that there might be light.

As soon as it grew dark, and no one could track their footsteps, Luther's guards took a new road. About one hour before midnight they reached the foot of a mountain. The horses ascended slowly. On the summit was an old castle, surrounded on all sides, save that by which it was approached, by the black forests that cover the mountains of Thuringia.

It was to this lofty and isolated fortress, named the Wartburg, where in former times the ancient landgraves had sheltered themselves, that Luther was conducted. The bolts were drawn back, the iron bars fell, the gates opened; the reformer crossed the threshold; the doors were closed behind him. He dismounted in the court. One of the horsemen, Burkhardt of Hund, lord of Altenstein, withdrew; another, John of Berlepsch, provost of the Wartburg, led the doctor into the chamber that was to be his prison, and where he found a knight's uniform and sword. The three other cavaliers, the provost's attendants, took away his ecclesiastical

robes, and dressed him in the military garments that had been prepared for him, enjoining him to let his beard and hair grow, in order that no one in the castle might discover who he was. The people in the Wartburg were to know the prisoner only by the name of Knight George. Luther scarcely recognized himself in his new dress. At last he was left alone, and his mind could reflect by turns on the astonishing events that had just taken place at Worms, on the uncertain future that awaited him, and on his new and strange residence. From the narrow loopholes of his turret, his eye roamed over the gloomy, solitary, and extensive forests that surrounded him. "It was there," says Mathesius, his friend and biographer, "that the doctor abode, like St. Paul in his prison at Rome." Frederick of Thun, Philip Feilitsch, and Spalatin, in a private conversation they had with Luther at Worms by the elector's orders, had not concealed from him that his liberty must be sacrificed to the anger of Charles and of the pope. And yet this abduction had been so mysteriously contrived, that even Frederick was for a long time ignorant of the place where Luther was shut up. The grief of the friends

of the Reformation was prolonged.

The spring passed away; summer, autumn, and winter succeeded; the sun had accomplished its annual course, and still the walls of the Wartburg enclosed their prisoner. Truth had been interdicted by the diet; its defender, confined within the ramparts of a castle, had disappeared from the stage of the world, and no one knew what had become of him: Aleander triumphed; the reformation appeared lost.....But God reigns, and the blow that seemed as if it would destroy the cause of the Gospel, did but contribute to save its courageous minister, and to extend the light of faith to distant countries.

Let us quit Luther, a captive in Germany, on the rocky heights of the Wartburg, to see what God was doing in other countries of Christendom.