AGITATION, REVERSES, AND PROGRESS (1522–1526)

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Chapter 1

Political Element

The Reformation, which at first had existed in the hearts of a few pious men, had entered into the worship and the life of the Church; it was natural that it would take a new step, and penetrate into civil relationships and the life of nations. Its progress was always from the interior to the exterior.

We are about to see this great revolution taking possession of the political life of the world.

For eight centuries past, Europe had formed one vast sacerdotal state.

Emperors and kings had been under the patronage of popes. Whenever any energetic resistance had been offered to her audacious pretensions, particularly in Germany and France, Rome eventually had the upperhand, and princes, docile agents of her terrible decrees, had been seen

fighting to secure her dominion against private believers obedient to their rule, and profusely shedding in her behalf the blood of their people's children.

No injury could be inflicted on this vast ecclesiastical state, of which the pope was the head, without affecting the political relations.

Two great ideas then agitated Germany. On the one hand, a desire for a revival of faith; and on the other, a longing for a national government, in which the German states might be represented, and thus serve as a counterpoise to the power of the emperors. The Elector Frederick had insisted on this latter point at the election of Maximilian's successor; and the youthful Charles had complied. A national government had been framed in consequence, consisting of the imperial governor and representatives of the electors and circles.

Thus Luther reformed the Church, and Frederick of Saxony reformed the State.

But while, simultaneously with the religious reform, important political modifications were introduced by the leaders of the nation, it was to be feared that the commonalty would also put itself in motion, and by its excesses, both in politics and religion, compromise both reforms.

This violent and fanatical intrusion of the people and of certain ringleaders, which seems inevitable where society is shaken and in a state of transition, did not fail to take place in Germany at the period of which we are now treating.

There were other circumstances also that contributed to give rise to such disorders.

The emperor and the pope had combined against the Reformation, and it seemed on the point of falling beneath the blows of two such powerful enemies. Policy, ambition, and interest compelled Charles V and Leo X to attempt its destruction. But these are poor champions to contend against the truth. Devotedness to a cause which is looked upon as sacred can only be conquered by a similar

devotedness. But the Romans, yielding to the impulses of a Leo X, were enthusiastic about a sonnet or a melody, and insensible to the religion of Jesus Christ; and if any less futile thought came across their minds, instead of purifying and tempering their hearts anew in the Christianity of the apostles, they were busied with alliances, wars, conquests, and treaties, which gained new provinces, and with cold disdain left the Reformation to awaken on all sides a religious enthusiasm, and to march triumphantly to more noble conquests. The enemy that had been doomed to destruction in the cathedral of Worms, reappeared full of confidence and strength; the contest must be severe; and blood must flow.

Yet some of the most imminent dangers that threatened the Reformation seemed at this time to be disappearing. Shortly before the publication of the edict of Worms, the youthful Charles, standing one day at a window of his palace with his confessor, had said, it is true, as he laid his hand on his heart: “I swear to hang up at this very window the first man who shall declare himself a Lutheran

after the publication of my edict." But it was not long before his zeal abated considerably. His project for reviving the ancient glory of the holy empire, that is to say, of increasing his own power, had been coldly received. Dissatisfied with Germany, he left the banks of the Rhine, repaired to the Netherlands, and availed himself of his residence there to afford the monks those gratifications that he found himself unable to give them in the empire. Luther's works were burnt at Ghent by the hangman with all possible solemnity. More than fifty thousand spectators were present at this auto-da-fe; the emperor himself looking with an approving smile. He thence proceeded to Spain, where wars and internal dissensions compelled him, for a time at least, to leave Germany at peace. Since he is refused in the empire the power to which he lays claim, let others hunt down the heretic of Wittenberg. More anxious thoughts engrossed all his attention.

In effect, Francis I, impatient to try his strength with his rival, had thrown down the gauntlet. Under the pretense of restoring the children of Jean

d'Albret, king of Navarre, to their patrimony, he had begun a bloody struggle, destined to last all his life, by invading that kingdom with an army under the command of Lesparre, whose rapid conquests were only checked by the fortress of Pampeluna.

On these strong walls an enthusiasm was kindled, destined afterwards to oppose the enthusiasm of the reformer, and to breathe into the papacy a new spirit of energy, devotedness, and authority. Pampeluna was destined to be the cradle, as it were, of the rival of the Wittenberg monk.

The chivalrous spirit that had so long animated the christian world survived in Spain alone. The wars against the Moors, scarcely terminated in the Peninsula, and continually breaking out in Africa, with distant and adventurous expeditions beyond the seas, fostered in the Castilian youths that enthusiastic and unaffected valor of which Amadis formed the ideal model.

Among the defenders of Pampeluna was a young gentleman, Inigo Lopez of Recalda, the

youngest of a family of thirteen children. Recalda, better known as Ignatius Loyola, had been brought up in the court of Ferdinand the Catholic. His person was graceful; he was expert in handling the sword and the lance, and ardently desired the glory of chivalry. To array himself in glittering arms, to ride a noble steed, to expose himself to the brilliant dangers of the tournament, to engage in hazardous exploits, to share in the envenomed struggles of faction, and to display as much devotion for Saint Peter as for his lady-love — such was the life of this young chevalier.

The governor of Navarre having gone into Spain to procure succors, had left the defense of Pampeluna to Inigo and a few nobles. The latter, perceiving the superiority of the French troops, resolved to withdraw.

Inigo conjured them to make a stand against Lesparre; finding them resolute in their intention, he looked at them with indignation, accusing them of cowardice and perfidy; he then flung himself alone into the citadel, determined to hold it at the

peril of his life. The French, who were enthusiastically received into Pampeluna, having proposed a capitulation to the commander of the fortress: “Let us suffer everything,” said Inigo impetuously to his companions, “rather than surrender.” Upon this the French began to batter the walls with their powerful machines, and soon attempted an assault. Inigo’s courage and exhortations inspirited the Spaniards; they repelled the assailants with arrows, swords, and battle-axes; Inigo fought at their head: standing on the ramparts, his eyes glistening with rage, the young cavalier brandished his sword, and the enemy fell beneath his blows. Suddenly a ball struck the wall which he was defending; a splinter from the stone wounded him severely in the right leg, and the ball recoiling with the violence of the blow, broke his left leg. Inigo fell senseless. The garrison surrendered immediately; and the French, admiring the courage of their youthful opponent, conveyed him in a litter to his parents in the castle of Loyola.

In this lordly mansion, from which he afterwards derived his name, Inigo had been born,

eight years after Luther, of one of the most illustrious families of that district.

A painful operation had become necessary. Under the most acute sufferings, Inigo firmly clenched his hands, but did not utter a single groan.

Confined to a wearisome inactivity, he found it necessary to employ his active imagination. In the absence of the romances of chivalry, which had hitherto been his only mental food, he took up the life of Jesus Christ, and the legends of Flowers of the Saints. This kind of reading, in his state of solitude and sickness, produced an extraordinary impression on his mind.

The noisy life of tournaments and battles, which had hitherto exclusively occupied his thoughts, appeared to recede, to fade and vanish from his sight; and at the same time a more glorious career seemed opening before his astonished eyes. The humble actions of the saints and their heroic sufferings appeared far more worthy of praise than all the high feats of arms and

chivalry. Stretched upon his bed, a prey to fever, he yielded to the most opposite thoughts. The world that he was forsaking, the world whose holy mortifications lay before him, appeared together, the one with its pleasures, the other with its austerities; and these two worlds contended in deadly struggle within his bosom. “What if I were to act like St. Francis or St. Dominick?” said he. Then the image of the lady to whom he had pledged his heart rose before him: “She is not a countess,” exclaimed he with artless vanity, “nor a duchess; but her condition is much loftier than either.” Such thoughts as these filled him with distress and ennui, while his plan of imitating the saints inspired him with peace and joy.

From this period his choice was made. As soon as his health was restored, he determined to bid adieu to the world. After having, like Luther, shared in one more repast with his old companions in arms, he departed alone, in great secrecy, for the solitary dwellings that the hermits of St.

Benedict had hewn out of the rocks of

Montserrat. Impelled not by a sense of sin or his need of Divine grace, but by a desire to become a "knight of the Virgin," and of obtaining renown by mortifications and pious works, after the example of the whole army of saints, he confessed for three days together, gave his rich attire to a beggar, put on sackcloth, and girt himself with a rope. Then, remembering the celebrated armed vigils of Amadis of Gaul, he suspended his sword before an image of Mary, passed the night in watching in his new and strange costume, and sometimes on his knees, sometimes upright, but always in prayer and with the pilgrim's staff in his hand, he repeated all the devout practices that the illustrious Amadis had observed before him. "It was thus," says his biographer, the Jesuit Maffei, "that while Satan was arming Luther against all laws human and divine, and while that infamous heresiarch appeared at Worms, and impiously declared war against the apostolic see, Christ, by a call from his heavenly providence, was awakening this new champion, and binding him, and those who were to follow in his steps, to the service of the Roman pontiff, and opposing him to the licentiousness and

fury of heretical depravity." Loyola, although still lame in one of his legs, dragged himself by winding and lonely paths to Manresa, where he entered a Dominican convent, in order to devote himself in this secluded spot to the severest mortifications.

Like Luther, he daily begged his bread from door to door. He passed seven hours upon his knees, and scourged himself three times a day; at midnight he rose to pray; he allowed his hair and nails to grow, and in the thin pale face of the monk of Manresa it would have been impossible to recognize the young and brilliant knight of Pampeluna.

Yet the hour had come when religious ideas, which hitherto had been to Inigo a mere chivalrous amusement, were to be evolved in him with greater depth, and make him sensible of a power to which he was as yet a stranger. Suddenly, without anything to give him warning, the joy he had felt disappeared. In vain he had recourse to prayer and singing hymns; he could find no rest. His

imagination had ceased to call up pleasing illusions; he was left alone with his conscience. A state so new to him was beyond his comprehension, and he fearfully asked himself whether God, after all the sacrifices he had made, was still angry with him. Night and day gloomy terrors agitated his soul; he shed bitter tears; with loud cries he called for the peace of mind which he had lost......but all was in vain. He then recommenced the long confession he had made at Montserrat.

"Perhaps," thought he, "I have forgotten something." But this confession only increased his anguish, for it reminded him of all his errors. He wandered about gloomy and dejected; his conscience accused him of having done nothing all his life but add sin to sin; and the wretched man, a prey to overwhelming terrors, filled the cloister with his groans.

Strange thoughts then entered into his heart. Finding no consolation in confession or in the various ordinances of the Church, he began, like

Luther, to doubt their efficacy. But instead of forsaking the works of men, and seeking the all-sufficient work of Christ, he asked himself whether he should not again pursue the pleasures of time. His soul sprang eagerly towards the delights of the world he had renounced, but immediately recoiled with affright.

Was there, at that time, any difference between the monk of Manresa and the monk of Erfurth? Unquestionably, — in secondary points: but the state of their souls was the same. Both were deeply sensible of the multitude of their sins. Both were seeking for reconciliation with God, and longed to have the assurance in their hearts. If a Staupitz with the Bible in his hand had appeared in the convent of Manresa, possibly Inigo might have become Luther of the Peninsula. These two great men of the sixteenth century, these founders of two spiritual powers which for three centuries have been warring together, were at this moment brothers; and perhaps, if they had met, Luther and Loyola would have embraced, and mingled their tears and their prayers.

But from this hour the two monks were destined to follow entirely different paths.

Inigo, instead of feeling that his remorse was sent to drive him to the foot of the cross, persuaded himself that these inward reproaches proceeded not from God, but from the devil; and he resolved never more to think of his sins, to erase them from him memory, and bury them in eternal oblivion. Luther turned towards Christ, Loyola only fell back upon himself.

Visions came erelong to confirm Inigo in the conviction at which he had arrived. His own resolves had become a substitute for the grace of the Lord; his own imaginings supplied the place of God's Word. He had looked upon the voice of God in his conscience as the voice of the devil; and accordingly the remainder of his history represents him as given up to the inspirations of the spirit of darkness.

One day Loyola met an old woman, as Luther

in the hour of his trial was visited by an old man. But the Spanish woman, instead of proclaiming remission of sins to the penitent of Manresa, predicted visitations from Jesus. Such was the Christianity to which Loyola, like the prophet of Zwickau, had recourse. Inigo did not seek truth in the Holy Scriptures; but imagined in their place immediate communication with the world of spirits.

He soon lived entirely in ecstasies and contemplation.

One day, as he was going to the church of St. Paul, outside the city, he walked along the banks of the Llobregat, and sat down absorbed in meditation. His eyes were fixed on the river, which rolled its deep waters silently before him. He was lost in thought. Suddenly he fell into ecstasy: he saw with his bodily eyes what men can with difficulty understand after much reading, long vigils, and study. He rose, and as he stood on the brink of the river, he appeared to have become another man; he then knelt down at the foot of the

cross which was close at hand, and prepared to sacrifice his life in the service of that cause whose mysteries had just been revealed to him.

From this time his visions became more frequent. Sitting one day on the steps of St. Dominick's church at Manresa, he was singing a hymn to the Holy Virgin, when on a sudden his soul was wrapt in ecstasy; he remained motionless, absorbed in contemplation; the mystery of the most Holy Trinity was revealed to his sight under magnificent symbols; he shed tears, filled the church with his sobs, and all day long continued speaking of this ineffable vision.

These numerous apparitions had removed all doubts; he believed, not like Luther because the things of faith were written in the Word of God, but because of the visions he had seen. "Even had there been no Bible," say his apologists, "even had these mysteries never been revealed in Scripture, he would have believed them, for God had appeared to him." Luther, on taking his doctor's degree, had pledged his oath to Holy Scripture, and

the only infallible authority of the Word of God had become the fundamental principle of the Reformation. Loyola, at this time, bound himself to dreams and visions; and chimerical apparitions became the principle of his life and of his faith.

Luther's sojourn in the convent of Erfurth and that of Loyola in the convent of Manresa explain to us — the first, the Reformation; the latter, modern Popery. The monk who was to reanimate the exhausted vigor of Rome repaired to Jerusalem after quitting the cloister. We will not follow him on this pilgrimage, as we shall meet with him again in the course of this history.

Chapter 2

Victory of the Pope

While these events were taking place in Spain, Rome herself appeared to be assuming a more serious character. The great patron of music, hunting, and festivities disappeared from the pontifical throne, and was succeeded by a pious and grave monk.

Leo X had been greatly delighted at hearing of the edict of Worms and Luther’s captivity; and immediately, in testimony of his victory, he had consigned the effigy and writings of the reformer to the flames. It was the second or third time that Rome had indulged in this innocent pleasure.

At the same time Leo X, wishing to testify his gratitude to Charles V, united his army with the emperor’s. The French were compelled to evacuate Parma, Piacenza, and Milan; and Giulio de Medici, the pope’s cousin, entered the latter city. The pope was thus approaching the summit of human power.

These events took place at the beginning of winter 1521. Leo X was accustomed to spend the autumn in the country. At such times he would leave Rome without surplice, and, what was considered still more scandalous, wearing boots. At Viterbo he amused himself with hawking; at Corneti in hunting the stag: the lake of Bolsena afforded him the pleasure of fishing; thence he passed to his favorite villa at Malliana, where he spent his time in the midst of festivities. Musicians, improvisatori, and all the artists whose talents could enliven this delightful abode, were gathered round the pontiff. He was residing there when he received intelligence of the capture of Milan. A great agitation immediately ensued in the villa. The courtiers and officers could not restrain their exultation, the Swiss discharged their carbines, and Leo, in excess joy, walked up and down his room all night, from time to time looking out of the window at the rejoicings of the soldiers and of the people. He returned to Rome, fatigued but intoxicated with success. He had scarcely arrived at the Vatican when he felt suddenly indisposed.

"Pray for me," said he to his attendants. He had not even time to receive the holy sacrament, and died in the prime of life, at the age of forty-five, in the hour of victory, and amid the noise of rejoicing.

The crowd followed the pontiff to the grave, loading him with abuse. They could not forgive him for having died without the sacrament and for leaving his debts unpaid, the result of his enormous expenses. "You gained your pontificate like a fox," said the Romans; "you held it like a lion, and left it like a dog." Such was the funeral oration with which Rome honored the pope who excommunicated the Reformation, and whose name serves to designate one of the great epochs in history.

Meantime a feeble reaction against the spirit of Leo and of Rome was already beginning in Rome itself. Some pious men had there established an oratory for their common edification, near the spot which tradition assigns as the place where the early Christians used to meet. Contarini, who had heard Luther at Worms, was the leader in these prayer-

meetings.

Thus a species of reformation was beginning at Rome almost at the same time as at Wittenberg. It has been said with truth, that wherever the seeds of piety exist, there also are the germs of reformation. But these good intentions were soon to be frustrated.

In other times, a Gregory VII or an Innocent III would have been chosen to succeed Leo X, could such men have been found; but the interest of the Empire was now superior to that of the Church, and Charles V required a pope devoted to his service. The Cardinal de Medici, afterwards Clement VII, seeing that he had no chance at present of obtaining the tiara, exclaimed: "Elect the Cardinal of Tortosa, a man in years, and whom every one regards as a saint." This prelate, who was a native of Utrecht, and sprung from the middle classes, was chosen, and reigned under the title of Adrian VI. He had been professor at Louvain, and afterwards tutor to Charles V, by whose influence he was invested with the Roman

purple in 1517. Cardinal de Vio supported his nomination. “Adrian,” said he, “had a great share in Luther’s condemnation by the Louvain doctors.” The cardinals, tired out and taken by surprise, elected this foreigner; but as soon as they came to their senses (says a chronicler), they almost died of fright. The thought that the austere Netherlander would not accept the tiara gave them some little consolation at first; but this hope was not of long duration. Pasquin represented the pontiff-elect under the character of a schoolmaster, and the cardinals as little boys under the rod. The citizens were so exasperated that the members of the conclave thought themselves fortunate to have escaped being thrown into the river. In Holland, on the contrary, the people testified by general rejoicings their delight at giving a pope to the Church. “Utrecht planted; Louvain watered; the Emperor gave the increase,” was the inscription on the hangings suspended from the fronts of the houses. A wag wrote below these words: “And God had nothing to do with it.” Notwithstanding the dissatisfaction at first manifested by the people of Rome, Adrian VI repaired to that city in the

month of August 1522, and was well received. It was reported that he had more than five thousand benefices in his gift, and every man reckoned on having his share. For many years the papal throne had not been filled by such a pontiff. Just, active, learned, pious, sincere, and of irreproachable morals, he permitted himself to be blinded neither by favor nor passion.

He followed the middle course traced out by Erasmus, and in a book reprinted at Rome during his pontificate, he said: “It is certain that the pope may err in matters of faith, in defending heresy by his opinions or decretals.” This is indeed a remarkable assertion for a pope to make; and if the ultramontanists reply that Adrian was mistaken on this point, by this very circumstance they affirm what they deny, viz. the fallibility of the popes.

Adrian arrived at the Vatican with his old housekeeper, whom he charged to continue providing frugally for his moderate wants in the magnificent palace which Leo X had filled with luxury and dissipation. He had not a single taste in

common with his predecessor. When he was shown the magnificent group of Laocoon, discovered a few years before, and purchased at an enormous price by Julius II, he turned coldly away, observing: “The are the idols of the heathen!” “I would rather serve God,” said he, “in my deanery of Louvain, than be pope at Rome.” Alarmed at the dangers with which the Reformation threatened the religion of the Middle Ages, and not, like the Italians, at those to which Rome and her hierarchy were exposed, it was his earnest desire to combat and check it; and he judged the best means to this end would be a reform of the Church carried out by the Church itself. “The Church needs a reform,” said he; “but we must go step by step.” — “The pope means,” says Luther, “that a few centuries should intervene between each step.” In truth, for ages the Church had been moving towards a reformation. But there was no longer room for temporizing: it was necessary to act.

Faithful to his plan, Adrian set about banishing from the city all perjurers, profane persons, and usurers; a task by no means easy, since they

formed a considerable portion of the inhabitants.

At first the Romans ridiculed him; soon they began to hate him. The sacerdotal rule, the immense profits it brought, the power of Rome, the sports, festivals, and luxury that filled it, — all would be irretrievably lost, if there was a return to apostolic manners.

The restoration of discipline, in particular, met with a strong opposition.

"To succeed in this," said the cardinal high-penitentiary, "we must first revive the zeal of Christians. The remedy is more than the patient can bear, and will cause his death. Beware lest, by wishing to preserve Germany, you should lose Italy." In effect, Adrian had soon greater cause to fear Romanism than Lutheranism itself.

Exertions were made to bring him back into the path he was desirous of quitting. The old and crafty Cardinal Soderini of Volterra, the familiar friend of Alexander VI, Julius II, and Leo X, often let fall

hints well adapted to prepare the worthy Adrian for that character, so strange to him, which he was called upon to fill. “The heretics,” remarked Soderini one day, “have in all ages spoken of the corrupt manners of the court of Rome, and yet the popes have never changed them.” — “It has never been by reforms,” said he on another occasion, “that heresies have been put down, but by crusades.” — “Alas,” replied the pontiff with a deep sigh, “how unhappy is the fate of a pope, since he has not even liberty to do what is right!”

Chapter 3

Diet of Nuremberg

On the 23rd March 1522, before Adrian had reached Rome, the diet assembled at Nuremberg. Prior to this date the Bishops of Mersburg and Misnia had asked permission of the Elector of Saxony to make a visitation of the convents and churches in his states. Frederick, thinking that truth would be strong enough to resist error, had given a favorable reply to this request, and the visitation took place. The bishops and their doctors preached violently against the Reformation, exhorting, threatening, and entreating; but their arguments seemed useless; and when, desirous of having recourse to more effectual weapons, they called upon the secular authority to carry out their decrees, the elector's ministers replied, that the business was one that required to be examined according to the Bible, and that the elector in his advanced age could not begin to study divinity.

These efforts of the bishops did not lead one

soul back to the fold of Rome; and Luther, who passed through these districts shortly after, and preached in his usual powerful strain, erased the feeble impressions that had been here and there produced.

It might be feared that the emperor's brother, the Archduke Ferdinand, would do what Frederick had refused. This young prince, who presided during part of the sittings of the diet, gradually acquiring more firmness, might in his zeal rashly draw the sword which his more prudent and politic brother wisely left in the scabbard. In fact, he had already begun a cruel persecution of the partisans of the Reformation in his hereditary states of Austria. But God on several occasions made use of the same instrument for the deliverance of reviving Christianity that he had employed in the destruction of corrupt Christianity. The crescent appeared in the terrified provinces of Hungary. On the 9th of August, after a six weeks' siege, Belgrade, the bulwark of this kingdom and of the empire, fell before Soliman's attack. The followers of Mahomet, after having evacuated Spain, seemed

bent on entering Europe by the east. The Diet of Nuremberg forgot the monk of Worms, to think only of the Sultan of Constantinople. But Charles V kept both these adversaries in mind. On the 31st of October, he wrote to the pope from Valladolid: "We must check the Turks, and punish the abettors of Luther's poisonous doctrines with the sword." The storm which seemed to be passing away from the Reformation, and turning towards the east, soon gathered anew over the head of the reformer. His return to Wittenberg, and the zeal he had there displayed, rekindled animosity. "Now that we know where to catch him," said Duke George, "let us execute the decree of Worms!" It was even asserted in Germany that Charles V and Adrian would meet at Nuremberg to concert their plans. "Satan feels the wound that has been inflicted on him," says Luther; "and this is why he is so furious. But Christ has already stretched out his hand, and will soon trample him under foot in spite of the gates of hell." In the month of December 1522, the diet again assembled at Nuremberg.

Everything seemed to indicate, that if Soliman

had been the great enemy that had engaged its attention in the spring session, Luther would be that of the winter meeting. Adrian VI, in consequence of his German descent, flattered himself with the hope of a more favorable reception from his nation than any pope of Italian origin could expect. He therefore commissioned Chieregati, whom he had known in Spain, to repair to Nuremberg.

As soon as the diet had opened, several princes spoke strongly against Luther. The Cardinal-archbishop of Salzburg, who enjoyed the full confidence of the emperor, desired that prompt and decisive measures should be taken before the arrival of the Elector of Saxony. The Elector Joachim of Brandenburg, always decided in his proceedings, and the Chancellor of Treves, alike pressed for the execution of the edict of Worms. The other princes were in a great measure undecided and divided in opinion. The state of confusion in which the Church was placed filled its most faithful servants with anguish. The Bishop of Strasburg exclaimed, in a full meeting of the diet,

“I would give one of my fingers not to be a priest.” Chieregati, jointly with the Cardinal of Salzburg, called for Luther’s death.

“We must,” said he in the pope’s name, and holding the pontiff’s brief in his hands, “we must cut off this gangrened member from the body. Your fathers put John Huss and Jerome of Prague to death at Constance; but they live again in Luther. Follow the glorious example of your ancestors, and, with the aid of God and St. Peter, gain a signal victory over the infernal dragon.” On hearing the brief of the pious and moderate Adrian, most of the princes were awe-stricken. Many were beginning to understand Luther better, and had hoped better things of the pope. Thus then Rome, under an Adrian, will not acknowledge her faults; she still hurls her thunderbolts, and the provinces of Germany are about to be laid waste and drowned in blood. While the princes remained sad and silent, the prelates and members of the diet in the interest of Rome became tumultuous. “Let him be put to death,” cried they, according to the report of the Saxon envoy, who was present at the sitting.

Very different language was heard in the churches of Nuremberg. The people crowded into the chapel attached to the hospital, and to the churches of the Augustines, of St. Sebaldus, and St. Lawrence, to listen to the preaching of the Gospel. Andrew Osiander was preaching powerfully in the latter temple. Several princes, and especially Albert, margrave of Brandenburg, who, in his quality of grand-master of the Teutonic Order, took rank immediately after the archbishops, went there frequently.

Monks, leaving the convents in the city, were learning trades in order to gain a livelihood by their labor.

Chieregati could not endure so much boldness. He insisted that the priests and rebellious monks should be thrown into prison. The diet, notwithstanding the resolute opposition of the envoys of the Elector of Saxony and of the Margrave Casimir, determined on seizing the monks, but consented to make a previous

communication of the nuncio’s complaint to Osiander and his colleagues. A committee, of which the fanatical Cardinal of Salzburg was president, was intrusted with this duty. The danger was threatening; the struggle was about to begin, and it was the council of the nation that provoked it.

The people, however, anticipated them. While the diet was deliberating what should be done with these ministers, the town-council of Nuremberg were considering how they should proceed with regard to the decision of the diet. They resolved, without exceeding their jurisdiction, that if attempts were made to lay violent hands on the city preachers, they should be set at liberty by main force. Such a determination was very significant. The astonished diet replied to the nuncio, that it was not lawful to arrest the preachers of the free city of Nuremberg, unless previously convicted of heresy.

Chieregati was deeply moved at this new insult to the omnipotence of the papacy. “Well, then,”

said he haughtily to Ferdinand, "do nothing, but let me act. I will have these preachers seized in the pope's name." As soon as the Cardinal-archbishop Albert of Mentz and the Margrave Casimir were informed of this extravagant design, they hastened to the legate, entreating him to renounce his intentions. The nuncio was immovable, affirming that in the bosom of Christendom obedience to the pope was of the first importance. The two princes quitted the legate, saying: "If you persist in your design, we desire that you will give us warning; for we will leave the city before you venture to lay hands on these preachers." The legate abandoned his project.

Despairing of success by measures of authority, he resolved to have recourse to other expedients, and with this view he acquainted the diet with the intentions and mandates of the pontiff, which he had hitherto kept secret.

But the worthy Adrian, a stranger to the ways of the world, injured by his very frankness the cause he so heartily desired to serve. "We are well

aware," said he in the resolutions intrusted to his legate, "that for many years certain abuses and abominations have crept into the holy city. The contagion has spread from the head to the members; it has descended from the popes to the other ecclesiastics. It is our desire to reform this Roman court, whence proceed so many evils; the whole world is craving after it, and to effect this we submitted to ascend the papal chair." The partisans of Rome blushed for shame as they heard this extraordinary language. They thought, with Pallavicini, that these avowals were too sincere. The friends of the Reformation, on the contrary, were delighted at seeing Rome proclaim her own corruption. They no longer doubted that Luther was right, since the pope himself declared it.

The reply of the diet showed how much the authority of the sovereign pontiff had fallen in the empire. Luther's spirit seemed to have entered into the hearts of the representatives of the nation. The moment was favorable: Adrian's ear seemed open; the emperor was absent; the diet resolved to collect into one body all the grievances that for ages

Germany had endured from Rome, and forward them to the pope.

The legate was frightened at this determination. He entreated and threatened in turns. He insinuated that under a purely religious exterior the reformer concealed great political dangers; he asserted, like Adrian, that these children of iniquity had no other end in view than to destroy all obedience, and lead every men to do as he pleased. "Will those men keep your laws," said he, "who not only despise the holy canons of the Father, but still further, tear them in pieces and burn them in their diabolical fury?

Will they spare your lives who do not fear to insult, to strike, to kill the anointed of the Lord? It is your persons, your goods, your houses, your wives, your children, your domains, your states, your temples, and all that you adore, that are threatened by this frightful calamity." All these declamations proved of no avail. The diet, although commending the promises of the pope, required for their speedy fulfillment that a free and christian

council should be assembled as soon as possible at Strasburg, Mentz, Cologne, or Metz, in which laymen should be present. Laymen in a council! Laymen regulating the affairs of the Church in concert with priests! It is more than we can see even now in many protestant states.

The diet added, that every man should have the liberty to speak freely for the glory of God, the salvation of souls, and the good of the christian commonwealth. It then proceeded to draw up a catalogue of its grievances, which amounted to the number of eighty. The abuses and arts of the popes and the Roman court to extort money from Germany; the scandals and profanations of the clergy; the disorders and simony of the ecclesiastical tribunals; the encroachments on the secular power for the enslaving of consciences; were all set forth with as much frankness as energy. The states gave the pope to understand that the traditions of men were the source of all this corruption, and concluded by saying: "If these grievances are not redressed within a limited time, we shall seek other means to escape from so many

oppressions and sufferings.” Chieregati, foreseeing the terrible recess that the diet would draw up, hastily left Nuremberg, that he might not have to deliver this sad and insolent message.

Yet was there reason to fear that the diet would seek to make amends for its boldness by sacrificing Luther? People thought so at first; but a spirit of justice and truth had descended on this assembly. It demanded, as Luther had done, the convocation of a free council in the empire, and added, that in the meanwhile the pure Gospel alone should be preached, and nothing should be printed without the approbation of a certain number of pious and learned men. These resolutions furnish us with the means of calculating the immense progress the Reformation had made subsequently to the Diet of Worms; and yet the knight of Feilitsch, the Saxon envoy, solemnly protested against this censorship, moderate as it was, which the diet prescribed. This decree was regarded as the first triumph of the Reformation, which would be followed by other more decisive victories. The Swiss themselves, in the midst of their mountains, thrilled with delight.

“The Roman pontiff is vanquished in Germany,” said Zwingle. “We have nothing more to do than deprive him of his weapons.

This is the battle we have now to fight, and a furious one it will be. But Christ is the umpire of the conflict.” Luther said publicly that God himself had inspired the princes to draw up this edict. The indignation at the Vatican among the papal ministers was very great.

What! is it not enough to have a pope who disappoints all the expectations of the Romans, and in whose palace there is neither singing nor playing; but, more than this, secular princes are allowed to hold the language that Rome detests, and refuse to put the Wittenberg heretic to death!

Adrian himself was filled with indignation at the events in Germany, and it was on the head of the Elector of Saxony that he discharged his anger.

Never had the Roman pontiffs uttered a cry of alarm more energetic, more sincere, or perhaps

more affecting.

“We have waited long — and perhaps too long,” said the pious Adrian in the brief he addressed to the elector; “we were anxious to see whether God would visit thy soul, and if thou wouldst not at last escape from the snares of Satan. But when we looked to gather grapes, we found nothing but sour grapes. The blower hath blown in vain; thy wickedness is not consumed. Open, then, thine eyes to see the greatness of thy fall!......

“If the unity of the Church is broken; if the simple have been turned aside from that faith which they had imbibed at their mothers’ breasts; if the temples are destroyed; if the people are without priests; if the priests receive not the honor that is due to them; if Christians are without Christ: to whom is it owing, but to thee? ......If christian peace has vanished from the earth; if the world is full of discord, rebellion, robbery, murder, and conflagration; if the cry of war is heard from east to west; if a universal conflict is at hand: it is thou — thou who art the author of these things!

“Sawest thou not this sacrilegious man (Luther) rending with his wicked hands and trampling under his impure feet the images of the saints and even the holy cross of Christ?......Dost thou not behold him, in his ungodly wrath, instigating laymen to imbrue their hands in the blood of the priests, and overturning the churches of our Lord?

“And what matters it, if the priests he assails are wicked priests?

Has not the Lord said: Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; thus showing the honor that belongs to them, even when their lives are blameworthy.

“Rebellious apostate! he is not ashamed to defile the vessels consecrated to God; he drags from their sanctuaries the holy virgins consecrated to Christ, and gives them over to the devil; he takes the priests of the Lord, and delivers them up to infamous harlots......Awful profanation! which even the heathen would have condemned with

horror in the priests of their idols!

“What punishment, what martyrdom dost thou think we judge thee to deserve?......Have pity on thyself; have pity on thy wretched Saxons; for if you do not all return into the fold, God will pour out his vengeance upon you.

“In the name of the Almighty God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose representative I am upon earth, I declare that thou shalt be punished in this world, and plunged into everlasting fire in that which is to come. Repent and be converted!......Two swords are suspended over thy head, — the sword of the Empire and the sword of the Church.” The pious Frederick shuddered as he read this threatening brief. He had written to the emperor shortly before, to the effect that old age and sickness rendered him incapable of taking any part in these affairs; and he had been answered by the most insolent letter that a sovereign prince had ever received. Although bowed down by age, he cast his eyes on that sword which he had worn at the holy sepulcher in the days of his manly

strength. He began to think that he would have to unsheathe it in defense of the conscience of his subjects, and that, already on the brink of the tomb, he would not be allowed to go down in peace. He immediately wrote to Wittenberg to hear the opinion of the Fathers of the Reformation.

There also troubles and persecutions were apprehended. "What shall I say?" exclaimed the gentle Melancthon; "whither shall I turn? Hatred overwhelms us, and the world is transported with fury against us." Luther, Linck, Melancthon, Bugenhagen, and Amsdorff consulted together on the reply they should make to the elector. Their answer was almost entirely to the same purport, and the advice they gave him is very remarkable.

"No prince," said they, "can undertake a war without the consent of the people, from whose hands he has received his authority. Now, the people have no desire to fight for the Gospel, for they do not believe. Let not princes, therefore, take up arms; they are rulers of the nations, and therefore of unbelievers." Thus, it was the

impetuous Luther who counselled the wise Frederick to restore his sword to its sheath. He could not have returned a better answer to the reproach of the pope, that he excited the laity to imbrue their hands in the blood of the clergy. Few characters have been more misunderstood than his. This advice was dated the 8th of February. Frederick restrained himself.

The pope's wrath soon bore fruit. The princes who had set forth their grievances against Rome, alarmed at their own daring, were now desirous of making amends by their compliance. Many, besides, thought that the victory would remain with the Roman pontiff, as he appeared to be the stronger party. "In our days," said Luther, "princes are content to say three times three make nine; or else, twice seven make fourteen: The reckoning is correct; the affair will succeed. Then our Lord God arises and says: How many do you reckon me?......For a cipher perhaps?......He then turns their calculations topsy-turvy, and their accounts prove false."

Chapter 4

Persecution

The torrent of fire poured forth by the humble and meek Adrian kindled a conflagration; and its flickering flames communicated an immense agitation to the whole of Christendom. The persecution, which had been for some time relaxed, broke out afresh. Luther trembled for Germany, and endeavored to appease the storm. "If the princes," said he, "oppose the truth, the result will be a confusion that will destroy princes and magistrates, priests and people. I fear to see all Germany erelong deluged with blood. Let us rise up as a wall and preserve our people from the wrath of our God. Nations are not such now as they have hitherto been.

The sword of civil war is impending over the heads of our kings. They are resolved to destroy Luther; but Luther is resolved to save them. Christ lives and reigns; and I shall live and reign with him." These words produced no effect; Rome was

hastening onward to scaffolds and bloodshed. The Reformation, like Jesus Christ, did not come to bring peace, but a sword. Persecution was necessary in God's purposes. As certain objects are hardened in the fire, to protect them from the influence of the atmosphere, so the fiery trial was intended to protect the evangelical truth from the influence of the world. But the fire did still more than this: it served, as in the primitive times of Christianity, to kindle in men's hearts a universal enthusiasm for a cause so furiously persecuted. When man begins to know the truth, he feels a holy indignation against injustice and violence. A heavendescended instinct impels him to the side of the oppressed; and at the same time the faith of the martyrs exalts, wins, and leads him to that doctrine which imparts such courage and tranquillity.

Duke George took the lead in the persecution. But it was a little thing to carry it on in his own states only; he desired, above all, that it should devastate electoral Saxony, that focus of heresy, and spared no labor to move the Elector Frederick and Duke John. "Merchants from Saxony," he

wrote to them from Nuremberg, “relate strange things about that country, and such as are opposed to the honor of God and of the saints: they take the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper with their hands!......The bread and wine are consecrated in the language of the people; Christ’s blood is put into common vessels; and at Eulenburg, a man to insult the priest entered the church riding on an ass!...... Accordingly, what is the consequence? The mines with which God has enriched Saxony have failed since the innovating sermons of Luther. Would to God that those who boast of having uplifted the Gospel in the electorate had rather carried it to Constantinople. Luther’s strain is sweet and pleasing, but there is a poisoned tail, that stings like that of the scorpion. Let us now prepare for the conflict! Let us imprison these apostate monks and impious priests; and that too without delay, for our hair is turning gray as well as our beards, and shows us that we have but a short time left for action.” Thus wrote Duke George to the elector. The latter replied firmly but mildly, that any one who committed a crime in his states would meet with due punishment; but that for what

concerned the conscience, such things must be left to God. George, unable to persuade Frederick, hastened to persecute the followers of the work he detested. He imprisoned the monks and priests who followed Luther; he recalled the students belonging to his states from the universities which the Reformation had reached; and ordered that all the copies of the New Testament in the vulgar tongue should be given up to the magistrates. The same measures were enforced in Austria, Wurtemberg, and the duchy of Brunswick.

But it was in the Low Countries, under the immediate authority of Charles V, that the persecution broke out with greatest violence. The Augustine convent at Antwerp was filled with monks who had welcomed the truths of the Gospel. Many of the brethren had passed some time at Wittenberg, and since 1519, salvation by grace had been preached in their church with great energy. The prior, James Probst, a man of ardent temperament, and Melchior Mirisch, who was remarkable, on the other hand, for his ability and prudence, were arrested and taken to Brussels

about the close of the year 1521. They were brought before Aleander, Glapio, and several other prelates. Taken by surprise, confounded, and alarmed, Probst retracted.

Melchior Mirisch found means to pacify his judges; he escaped both from recantation and condemnation.

These persecutions did not alarm the monks who remained in the convent at Antwerp. They continued to preach the Gospel with power. The people crowded to hear them, and the church of the Augustines in that city was found too small, as had been the case with the one at Wittenberg. In October 1522, the storm that was muttering over their heads burst forth; the convent was closed, and the monks thrown into prison and condemned to death. A few of them managed to escape. Some women, forgetting the timidity of their sex, dragged one of them (Henry Zuphten) from the hands of the executioners. Three young monks, Henry Voes, John Esch, and Lambert Thorn, escaped for a time the search of the inquisitors.

All the sacred vessels of the convent were sold; the gates were barricaded; the holy sacrament was removed, as if from a polluted spot; Margaret, the governor of the Low Countries, solemnly received it into the church of the Holy Virgin; orders were given that not one stone should be left upon another of that heretical monastery; and many citizens and women who had joyfully listened to the Gospel were thrown into prison. Luther was filled with sorrow on hearing this news. “The cause that we defend,” said he, “is no longer a mere game; it will have blood, it calls for our lives.” Mirisch and Probst were to meet with very different fates. The prudent Mirisch soon became the docile instrument of Rome, and the agent of the imperial decrees against the partisans of the Reformation. Probst, on the contrary, having escaped from the hands of the inquisitors, wept over his backsliding; he retracted his retraction, and boldly preached at Bruges in Flanders the doctrines he had abjured. Being again arrested and thrown into prison at Brussels, his death seemed inevitable. A Franciscan took pity on him, and

assisted his escape; and Probst, “preserved by a miracle of God,” says Luther, reached Wittenberg, where his twofold deliverance filled the hearts of the friends to the Reformation with joy. On all sides the Roman priests were under arms. The city of Miltenberg on the Maine, which belonged to the Archbishop of Mentz, was one of the German towns that had received the Word of God with the greatest eagerness. The inhabitants were much attached to their pastor John Draco, one of the most enlightened men of his times. He was compelled to leave the city; but the Roman ecclesiastics were frightened, and withdrew at the same time, fearing the vengeance of the people. One evangelical deacon alone remained to comfort their hearts. At the same time troops from Mentz marched into the city: they spread through the streets, uttering blasphemies, brandishing their swords, and giving themselves up to debauchery. Some evangelical Christians fell beneath their blows; others were seized and thrown into dungeons; the Romish rites were restored; the reading of the Bible was prohibited; and the inhabitants were forbidden to speak of the Gospel, even in the most private

meetings. On the entrance of the troops, the deacon had taken refuge in the house of a poor widow. He was denounced to their commanders, who sent a soldier to apprehend him.

The humble deacon, hearing the hasty steps of the soldier who sought his life, quietly waited for him, and just as the door of the chamber was opened abruptly, he went forward meekly, and cordially embracing him, said: "I welcome thee, brother; here I am; plunge thy sword into my bosom." The fierce soldier, in astonishment, let his sword fall from his hands, and protected the pious evangelist from any further harm.

Meantime, the inquisitors of the Low Countries, thirsting for blood, scoured the country, searching everywhere for the young Augustines who had escaped from the Antwerp persecution. Esch, Voes, and Lambert were at last discovered, put in chains, and led to Brussels. Egmondanus, Hochstraten, and several other inquisitors, summoned them into their presence. "Do you retract your assertion," asked Hochstraten, "that the

priest has not the power to forgive sins, and that it belongs to God alone?" He then proceeded to enumerate other evangelical doctrines which they were called upon to abjure. "No! we will retract nothing," exclaimed Esch and Voes firmly; "we will not deny the Word of God; we will rather die for the faith." The Inquisitor. — "Confess that you have been seduced by Luther." The Young Augustines. — "As the apostles were seduced by Jesus Christ." The Inquisitors. — "We declare you to be heretics, worthy of being burnt alive, and we give you over to the secular arm." Lambert kept silence; the prospect of death terrified him; distress and doubt tormented his soul. "I beg four days," said he with a stifled voice.

He was led back to prison. As soon as this delay had expired, Esch and Voes were solemnly deprived of their sacerdotal character, and given over to the council of the governor of the Low Countries. The council delivered them, fettered, to the executioner. Hochstraten and three other inquisitors accompanied them to the stake. When they came near the scaffold the youthful martyrs

looked at it calmly; their firmness, their piety, their age, drew tears even from the inquisitors. When they were bound, the confessors approached them: "Once more we ask you if you will receive the christian faith." The Martyrs. — "We believe in the Christian Church, but not in your Church." Half an hour elapsed: the inquisitors hesitated, and hoped that the prospect of so terrible a death would intimidate these youths. But alone tranquil in the midst of the turbulent crowd in the square, they sang psalms, stopping from time to time to declare boldly: "We will die for the name of Jesus Christ." "Be converted — be converted," cried the inquisitors, "or you will die in the name of the devil." — "No," replied the martyrs, "we will die like Christians, and for the truth of the Gospel." The pile was lighted. While the flames were ascending slowly, a heavenly peace filled their hearts, and one of them went so far as to say: "I seem to be lying on a bed of roses." The solemn hour was come; death was near: the two martyrs cried with a loud voice: "O Domine Jesu! Fili David! miserere nostri! O Lord Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us!" They began solemnly to

repeat the Apostle’s Creed. At last the flames reached them, burning the cords that fastened them to the stake, before their breath was gone. One of them, taking advantage of this liberty fell on his knees in the midst of the fire, and thus worshipping his Master, exclaimed, clasping his hands: “Lord Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us!” The flames now surrounded their bodies: they sang the Te Deum; soon their voices stifled, and nothing but their ashes remained.

This execution had lasted four hours. It was on the 1st of July 1523 that the first martyrs of the Reformation thus laid down their lives for the Gospel.

All good men shuddered when they heard of it. The future filled them with the keenest apprehension. “The executions have begun,” said Erasmus. — “At last,” exclaimed Luther, “Christ is gathering some fruits of our preaching, and has created new martyrs.” But the joy Luther felt at the constancy of these two young Christians was troubled by the thought of Lambert. The latter was

the most learned of the three; he had succeeded to Probst's station as preacher at Antwerp.

Agitated in his dungeon, and alarmed at the prospect of death, he was still more terrified by his conscience, which reproached him with cowardice, and urged him to confess the Gospel. He was soon delivered from his fears, and after boldly proclaiming the truth, died like his brethren. A rich harvest sprang from the blood of these martyrs. Brussels turned towards the Gospel. "Wherever Aleander raises a pile," said Erasmus, "there he seems to have been sowing heretics." "Your bonds are mine," said Luther; "your dungeons and your burning piles are mine! ......We are all with you, and the Lord is at our head!" He then commemorated the death of these young monks in a beautiful hymn, and soon, in Germany and in the Netherlands, in city and country, these strains were heard communicating in every direction an enthusiasm for the faith of these martyrs.

No! no! their ashes shall not die!

But, borne to every land, Where’er their sainted dust shall fall Up springs a holy band.

Though Satan by his might may kill, And stop their powerful voice, They triumph o’er him in their death, And still in Christ rejoice.

Chapter 5

The New Pope Clement VII

Adrian would doubtless have persisted in these violent measures; the inutility of his exertions to arrest the reform, his orthodoxy, his zeal, his austerity, and even his conscientiousness, would have made him a cruel persecutor. But this Providence did not permit. He died on the 14th of September 1523, and the Romans, overjoyed at being delivered from this stern foreigner, crowned his physicians's door with flowers, and wrote this inscription over it: "To the saviour of his country." Giulio de Medici, cousin to Leo X, succeeded Adrian VI, under the name of Clement VII. From the day of his election there was no more question of religious reform. The new pope, like many of his predecessors, thought only of upholding the privileges of the papacy, and of employing its resources for his own aggrandizement.

Anxious to repair Adrian's blunders, Clement sent to Nuremberg a legate of his own character,

one of the most skillful prelates of his court, a man of great experience in public business, and acquainted with almost all the princes of Germany. Cardinal Campeggio, for such was his name, after a magnificent reception in the Italian cities on his road, soon perceived the change that had taken place in the empire. When he entered Augsburg, he desired, as was usual, to give his benediction to the people, but they burst into laughter. This was enough: he entered Nuremberg privately, without going to the church of St. Sebaldus, where the clergy awaited him. No priests in sacerdotal ornaments came out to meet him; no cross was solemnly borne before him; one would have thought him some private individual passing along the streets of the city. Everything betokened that the reign of the papacy was drawing to an end.

The Diet of Nuremberg resumed its sittings in the month of January.

A storm threatened the national government, owing to the firmness of Frederick. The Swabian league, the wealthiest cities of the empire, and

particularly Charles V, had sworn its destruction. He was accused of favoring the new heresy. Accordingly it was resolved to remodify this administration without retaining one of its former members. Frederick, overwhelmed with grief, immediately quitted Nuremberg.

The festival of Easter was approaching. Osiander and the evangelical preachers redoubled their zeal. The former openly declared in his sermons that Antichrist entered Rome the very day when Constantine left it to fix his residence at Constantinople. The consecration of the palm-branches and many other ceremonies of this feast were omitted: four thousand persons received the sacrament in both kinds, and the Queen of Denmark, the emperor's sister, received it publicly, in like manner, at the castle.

"Ah!" exclaimed the Archduke Frederick, losing his temper, "would that you were not my sister!" — "The same womb bore us," replied the queen, "and I will sacrifice everything to please you, except the Word of God." Campeggio

shuddered as he witnessed such audacity; but affecting to despise the laughter of the populace and the discourses of the preachers, and resting on the authority of the emperor and of the pope, he reminded the diet of the edict of Worms, and called upon them to put down the Reformation by force. At this language many of the princes and deputies gave vent to their indignation: "What has become of the list of grievances presented to the pope by the German nation?" said they to Campeggio.

The legate, following his instructions, assumed an air of candor and surprise, and answered, "Three copies of that list reached Rome; but we have received no official communication of it, and neither the pope nor the college of cardinals could believe that such a paper could have emanated from your lordships. We thought that it came from some private individuals who had published it out of hatred to the court of Rome. In consequence of this I have no instructions on the matter." The diet was incensed at this reply. If it is thus the pope receives their representations, they will also know how to listen to those he addresses to them. "The

people," said many deputies, "are thirsting for the Word of God; and to take it away, as the edict of Worms enjoins, would cause torrents of blood to flow." The diet immediately made preparations for replying to the pope. As they could not repeal the edict of Worms, a clause was added to it rendering it ineffectual. They said, "The people must conform with it as far as possible." Now many states had declared it impossible to enforce it.

At the same time, raising up the importunate shade of the councils of Constance and of Basle, the diet demanded the convocation of a general council of Christendom to be held in Germany.

The friends of the Reformation did not confine themselves to this. What could they expect from a council which perhaps would never be convoked, and which, under all circumstances, would be composed of bishops from every nation? Will Germany submit her anti-Romish inclinations to prelates from France, Spain, Italy, and England? The government of the nation had already been abolished; for it a national assembly should be

substituted to protect the interests of the people.

In vain did Hannaart, the Spanish envoy from Charles V, and all the partisans of Rome and the emperor, endeavor to oppose this suggestion; the majority of the diet was immovable. It was agreed that a diet, a secular assembly, should meet at Spires, in the month of November, to regulate all religious questions, and that the states should immediately instruct their theologians to draw up a list of the controverted points to be laid before that august assembly.

They forthwith applied to their task. Each province drew up its memorial, and never had Rome been threatened with a more terrible explosion.

Franconia, Brandenburg, Henneburg, Windsheim, Wertheim, and Nuremberg, declared in favor of the Gospel, and against the seven sacraments, the abuses of the mass, the adoration of saints, and the papal supremacy. “Here is coin of the right stamp,” said Luther. Not one of the

questions that are agitating the popular mind will be passed by in this mutual council. The majority will carry general measures. The unity, independence, and reformation of Germany will be safe.

On being apprized of this, the pope could not restrain his wrath. What! dare they set up a secular tribunal to decide on religious questions in direct opposition to his authority! If this extraordinary resolution should be carried out, Germany would doubtless be saved, but Rome would be lost.

A consistory was hastily convened, and from the alarm of the senators one might have thought the Germans were marching against the Capitol. “We must take the electoral hat from Frederick’s head,” said Aleander. “The kings of England and Spain must threaten to break off all commercial intercourse with the free cities,” said another cardinal. The congregation at last decided that the only means of safety would be in moving heaven and earth to prevent the meeting at Spires.

The pope immediately wrote to the emperor: “If I am the first to make head against the storm, it is not because I am the only one the tempest threatens; but because I am at the helm. The rights of the empire are yet more invaded than the dignity of the court of Rome.” While the pope was sending this letter to Castile, he was endeavoring to procure allies in Germany. He soon gained over one of the most powerful houses in the empire, that of the dukes of Bavaria. The edict of Worms had not been more strictly enforced there than elsewhere, and the evangelical doctrine had made great progress. But about the close of the year 1521, the princes of that country, put in motion by Doctor Eck, chancellor in the university of Ingolstadt, had drawn nearer to Rome, and had published a decree enjoining all their subjects to remain faithful to the religion of their ancestors. The Bavarian bishops were alarmed at this encroachment of the secular power. Eck set out for Rome to solicit the pope for an extension of authority in behalf of the princes.

The pope granted everything, and even conferred on the dukes a fifth of the ecclesiastical

revenues of their country.

Thus, at a time when the Reformation possessed no organization, Romancatholicism already had recourse to powerful institutions for its support; and catholic princes, aided by the pope, laid their hands on the revenues of the Church, long before the Reformation ventured to touch them. What must we think of the reproaches the Roman-catholics have so often made in this respect?

Clement VII might reckon upon Bavaria to avert the formidable assembly at Spires. Erelong the Archduke Ferdinand, the Bishop of Salzburg, and other princes, were gained in their turn.

But Campeggio desired to go still further: Germany must be divided into two hostile camps; Germans must be opposed to Germans.

Some time before, during his residence at Stuttgard, the legate had concerted with Ferdinand the plan of a league against the Reformation.

"There is everything to be feared in an assembly where the voice of the people is heard," said he. "The Diet of Spires may destroy Rome and save Wittenberg. Let us close our ranks; let us come to an understanding for the day of battle." Ratisbon was fixed upon as the place of meeting.

Notwithstanding the jealousy between the houses of Bavaria and Austria, Campeggio succeeded in bringing the Dukes of Bavaria and the Archduke Ferdinand to this city, at the end of June 1524. They were joined by the Archbishop of Salzburg and the Bishops of Trent and Ratisbon. The Bishops of Spires, Bamberg, Augsburg, Strasburg, Basle, Constance, Freisingen, Passau, and Brixen were present by deputy.

The legate opened their sittings, describing in forcible language the dangers threatened by the Reformation both to princes and clergy. "Let us extirpate heresy and save the Church," exclaimed he.

The conference lasted fifteen days in the town-hall of Ratisbon. A grand ball, that continued till daylight, served to enliven this first Catholic assembly held by the papacy against the dawning Reformation. After this, measures were resolved upon for the destruction of the heretics.

The legate thought that, according to the notorious axiom of the Council of Constance, no faith should be kept with heretics, and in the mean time he carried out this great principle on a small scale. During the sittings of the diet at Nuremberg, Campeggio had taken a globe and a book from a poor vendor of astronomical instruments: these he kept, and refused to make any compensation, because the man was a Lutheran. Our authority for this incident is the celebrated Pirckheimer, one of the chief magistrates of Nuremberg. The princes and bishops bound themselves to enforce the edicts of Worms and Nuremberg; to permit no change in public worship; to tolerate no married priest in their states; to recall all their subjects who might be studying at Wittenberg; and to employ every means in their power for the extirpation of heresy. They

enjoined the preachers, in the interpretation of difficult passages, to rely on the fathers of the Latin Church, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory. Not venturing, in the face of the Reformation, to appeal to the authority of the schoolmen, they were content to lay the first foundations of Roman orthodoxy.

But, on the other hand, as they could not close their eyes against the scandals and corrupt morals of the priests, they agreed on a project of reform, in which they endeavored to embrace those German grievances which least concerned the court of Rome. The priests were forbidden to trade, to haunt the taverns, "to frequent dances," and to dispute over their cups about articles of faith.

Such was the result of the confederation of Ratisbon. Even while taking up arms against the Reformation, Rome conceded something; and in these decrees we may observe the first influence of the Reformation of the sixteenth century to effect an inward renovation of catholicism. The Gospel cannot display its strength without its enemies

endeavoring to imitate it in some way or another. Emser had published a translation of the bible in opposition to Luther's; Eck his Common-places, by way of counterpoise to Melancthon's; and now Rome was opposing to the Reformation those partial essays of reform to which modern Romanism is owing. But all these works were in reality subtle expedients to escape from impending danger; branches plucked indeed from the tree of the Reformation, but planted in a soil which killed them; there was no vitality, and never will there be any vitality in such attempts.

Another fact here occurs to us. The Roman party formed at Ratisbon the first league that infringed the unity of Germany. The signal for battle was given from the pope's camp. Ratisbon was the cradle of this division, this political rending of their native land, which so many of the Germans deplore to this hour. The national assembly of Spires, by sanctioning and generalizing the reform of the Church, would have secured the unity of the empire. The conventicle of separatists at Ratisbon for ever divided the nation

into two parties. Yet Campeggio’s plans did not at first succeed as had been expected. Few princes answered this appeal. Luther’s most decided adversaries, Duke George of Saxony, the Elector Joachim of Brandenburg, the ecclesiastical electors, and the imperial cities, took no part in it. It was felt that the pope’s legate was forming a Romish party in Germany against the nation itself. Popular sympathies counterbalanced religious antipathies, and in a short time the Ratisbon reformation became the laughing-stock of the people. But the first step had been taken, the example given. It was imagined that it would be no difficult task eventually to strengthen and enlarge this Roman league. Those who still hesitated would necessarily be drawn into it by the progress of events. To the legate Campeggio belongs the glory of having dug the mine which was most seriously to endanger the liberties of Germany, the existence of the empire, and of the Reformation.

Henceforward Luther’s cause ceased to be a mere religious affair; the dispute with the monk of Wittenberg ranked among the political events of

Europe. Luther is about to be eclipsed; and Charles V, the pope, and the princes will be the principal actors on the stage where the grand drama of the sixteenth century is to be performed.

Yet the assembly at Spires was still kept in view; it might repair the mischief that Campeggio had effected at Ratisbon. Rome made every exertion to prevent it. "What!" said the papal deputies, not only to Charles V but also to Henry VIII and other princes of Christendom, "What! do these insolent Germans pretend to decide points of faith in a national assembly? It would seem that kings, the imperial authority, all Christendom, and the whole world, should submit to their decrees!" The moment was well chosen to act upon the emperor. The war between this prince and Francis I was at its height. Pescara and the Constable of Bourbon had quitted Italy, and entering France in the month of May, had laid siege to Marseilles. The pope, who looked with an evil eye on this attack, might make a powerful diversion in the rear of the imperial army.

Charles, who must have feared to displease him, did not hesitate, and immediately sacrificed the independence of the empire to the favor of Rome and the success of his struggle with France.

On the 15th of July, Charles issued an edict from Burgos in Castile, wherein he declared, with am imperious and angry tone, “that the pope alone had the right of convoking a council, and the emperor of demanding one; that the meeting appointed to take place at Spires could not and ought not to be tolerated; that it was strange the German nation should undertake a task which all the other nations in the universe, even with the pope’s guidance, would not have the right of doing; and that they should hasten to enforce the decree of Worms against the new Mahomet.” Thus came from Spain and Italy the blow that arrested in Germany the development of the Gospel. Charles was not yet satisfied. In 1519, he had proposed to unite his sister, the Archduchess Catherine, to John Frederick, son of Duke John, the elector’s brother, and heir to the electorate. But was it not this Saxon house that supported in Germany those principles

of religious and political independence which Charles hated? He decided on breaking off entirely with the troublesome and guilty representative of the evangelical and national ideas, and gave his sister in marriage to John III, king of Portugal. Frederick, who in 1519 had shown his indifference to the overtures of the King of Spain, was able in 1524 to suppress the indignation he felt at the emperor's conduct; but Duke John haughtily intimated that this proceeding had wounded his feelings very deeply.

Thus the two hostile camps that were destined to rend the empire for so long a period became daily more distinct.

Chapter 6

Persecution

The Roman party was not satisfied with this. The alliance of Ratisbon was not to be a mere form; it must be sealed with blood. Ferdinand and Campeggio descended the Danube together from Ratisbon to Vienna, and during their journey bound each other by cruel promises. The persecution immediately broke out in the Austrian states.

One Gaspard Tauber, a citizen of Vienna, had circulated Luther's writings, and had even written against the invocation of saints, purgatory, and transubstantiation. Being thrown into prison, he was summoned by his judges, both theologians and lawyers, to retract his errors. It was thought that he had consented, and every preparation was made in Vienna to gratify the people with this solemn spectacle. On the festival of St.

Mary's nativity, two pulpits were erected in St. Stephen's cemetery, one for the leader of the choir,

who was to extol by his chants the repentance of the heretic; and the other for Tauber himself. The formula of recantation was placed in his hands; the people and choristers waited in silence.

Whether Tauber had made no promise, or whether at the moment of abjuration his faith suddenly revived with fresh energy, he exclaimed, “I am not convinced, and I appeal to the holy Roman empire!” Clergy, choristers, and people were seized with astonishment and alarm. But Tauber continued to call for death rather than that he should deny the Gospel. He was decapitated, and his body burnt; and his courage made an indelible impression on the inhabitants of Vienna.

At Buda in Hungary, an evangelical bookseller, named John, had circulated Luther’s New Testament and other of his writings throughout that country. He was bound to a stake; his persecutors then piled his books around him, enclosing him as if in a tower, and then set fire to them. John manifested unshaken courage, exclaiming from the midst of the flames, that he was delighted to suffer

in the cause of the Lord. "Blood follows blood," cried Luther, when informed of this martyrdom, "but that generous blood, which Rome loves to shed, will at last suffocate the pope with his kings and their kingdoms." Fanaticism grew fiercer every day; evangelical ministers were expelled from their churches; magistrates were banished; and at times the most horrible punishments were inflicted. In Wurtemberg, an inquisitor named Reichler caused the Lutherans, and above all the preachers, to be hanged upon trees.

Barbarous ruffians were found who unfeelingly nailed the pastors by their tongues to a post; so that these unhappy victims, tearing themselves violently from the wood to which they were fastened, were horribly mutilated in attempting to recover their liberty, and thus deprived of that gift which they had long used to proclaim the Gospel. Similar persecutions took place in the other states of the catholic league.

An evangelical minister in the neighborhood of Salzburg was led to prison, where he was to pass

the rest of his days; whilst the police who had him in charge were drinking at an alehouse on the road, two young peasants, moved with compassion, eluded their vigilance, and delivered the pastor.

The anger of the archbishop was inflamed against these poor people, and without any form of trial they were ordered to be beheaded. They were secretly led outside the town early in the morning; and when they arrived on the plain where they were to die, the executioner himself hesitated, for (said he) they have not been tried. “Do what I command you,” harshly replied the archbishop’s emissary, “and leave the responsibility to the prince!” and the heads of these youthful liberators immediately fell beneath the sword. The persecution was most violent in the states of the Duke of Bavaria: priests were deprived of their office; nobles driven from their castles; spies filled the whole country; and in every heart reigned mistrust and alarm. As Bernard Fichtel, a magistrate, was going to Nuremberg on the duke’s business, on the high-road he fell in with Francis Burkhardt, professor at Ingolstadt, and one of Dr.

Eck's friends. Burkhardt accosted him, and they traveled together. After supper the professor began to talk of religion; Fichtel, who was no stranger to his fellow-traveler, reminded him that the new edict prohibited such conversations. "Between us," replied Burkhardt, "there is nothing to fear." — Upon this Fichtel remarked: "I do not think this edict can ever be enforced." He then proceeded to express himself in an ambiguous manner on purgatory, and said it was a horrible thing to punish religious differences with death. At these words Burkhardt could not contain himself: "What is more just," said he, "than to cut off the heads of all these Lutheran rascals!" He took a friendly leave of Fichtel, but immediately denounced him. Fichtel was thrown into prison, and the wretched man, who had never thought of becoming a martyr, and whose religious convictions were not very deep, only escaped death by a shameful retraction. There was no security in any place, not even in the bosom of a friend.

But others met with that death from which Fichtel escaped. In vain was the Gospel preached

in secret; the dukes tracked it in its obscurity and mystery, — beneath the domestic roof and in the lonely fields.

"The cross and persecution reign in Bavaria," said Luther; "these wild beasts are lashing themselves into madness." Even the north of Germany was not free from these cruelties. Bogislaus, duke of Pomerania, being dead, his son, who had been brought up at Duke George's court, persecuted the Gospel; Suaven and Knipstrow were compelled to flee.

But it was in Holstein that one of the most extraordinary instances of fanaticism occurred.

Henry von Zuphten, who had escaped, as we have seen, from the convent at Antwerp, was preaching the Gospel at Bremen; Nicholas Boye, pastor of Mehldorf in the Dittmarsh, and several pious men of that district, invited him to come and proclaim Jesus Christ among them. He complied with their wishes. Immediately the prior of the Dominicans and the vicar of the official of

Hamburg consulted together. “If he preaches and the people listen to him,” said they, “all is lost!” The prior, after passing an agitated night, rose early and repaired to the barren and uncultivated heath where the forty-eight regents of the country were wont to hold their meetings. “The monk of Bremen is come to ruin all the Dittmarshers,” said he to them. These forty-eight simple-minded and ignorant men, being persuaded that they would acquire great renown by delivering the world from the heretical monk, resolved on putting him to death, without having either seen or heard him.

This was on Saturday, and the prior wished to prevent Henry from preaching on the following day. He arrived at the pastor of Boye’s dwelling in the middle of the night with the letter of the forty-eight regents.

“If it be God’s will that I should die among the Dittmarshers,” said Henry von Zuphten, “heaven is as near me there as elsewhere; I will preach.” He went up into the pulpit and preached with great energy. His hearers, moved and excited by his

christian eloquence, had scarcely left the church when the prior handed them the letter of the forty-eight regents, forbidding the monk to preach. They immediately sent their representatives to the heath; and, after a long discussion, the Dittmarshers agreed that, considering their great ignorance, they would wait until Easter. But the incensed prior went up to some of the regents and inflamed their zeal afresh. "We will write to him," said they. — "Mind what you are about," replied the prior; "if he begins to speak, we shall be able to do nothing with him. We must seize him during the night, and burn him before he can open his mouth." They determined to adopt this course. At nightfall on the day after the Festival of the Conception, the Ave Maria bell was rung. At this signal, all the neighboring villagers assembled, to the number of five hundred, and their leaders having broached three butts of Hamburg beer, by this means inspired them with great courage. It was striking midnight when they reached Mehldorf; — the peasants were armed; — the monks carried torches; — all marched in disorder, exchanging shouts of fury. As they entered the village, they kept deep

silence for fear Henry should escape.

On a sudden the gates of the parsonage were burst open; the drunken peasants rushed in, striking everything they saw; dishes, kettles, flagons, clothing, were tossed about pell-mell; they seized on all the gold and silver they could find, and falling on the poor pastor, they beat him, with loud cries of "Kill him! kill him!" and then flung him into the mud. But it was Henry they were seeking; they pulled him out of bed, tied his hands behind his back, and dragged him after them, without clothing, and in a piercing cold night. "Why did you come here," said they. As Henry answered mildly, they cried out, "Down with him! down with him! if we listen to him we shall become heretics also!" They had dragged him naked through the ice and snow; his feet were bleeding; he entreated to be set on horseback. "Yes, indeed," replied they, mocking him, "we will find horses for heretics!......March!" — And they continued hurrying him towards the heath. A woman, standing at the door of her cottage as the servant of God was passing, began to weep. "My good

woman," said Henry, "do not weep for me." The bailiff pronounced his condemnation. Upon this one of the madmen who had dragged him hither struck the preacher of Jesus Christ on the head with a sword; another gave him a blow with a club; after which they brought him a poor monk to receive his confession. "Brother," said Henry, "have I ever done you any wrong?" — "None," replied the monk. — "In that case I have nothing to confess to you," resumed Henry, "and you have nothing to forgive me." The monk retired in confusion.

Several ineffectual attempts were made to kindle the pile; the logs would not catch fire. For two hours the martyr remained thus before the furious peasantry, — calm, and raising his eyes to heaven. While they were binding him to throw him into the flames, he began the confession of his faith. "Burn first," said a peasant, striking him on the mouth with his fist, "and then you may speak!" They tried to fling him on the pile, but he fell on one side. John Holme, seizing a club, struck him upon the breast, and he was laid dead on the burning heap. "Such is the true history of the

sufferings of the holy martyr, Henry von Zuphten.”

Chapter 7

Divisions

While the Roman party was everywhere drawing the sword against the Reformation, this work underwent new developments. It is not at Zurich or at Geneva, but in Wittenberg, the focus of the Lutheran revival, that we should look for the commencement of that reformed Church, of which Calvin became the chief doctor. These two great families had slept in the same cradle. Union ought in like manner to have crowned their mature age.

But when the question of the Lord’s Supper was once started, Luther violently rejected the reformed element, and bound himself and his Church in an exclusive Lutheranism. The vexation he felt at this rival doctrine caused him to lose much of his natural kindness of disposition, and aroused in him a mistrust, an habitual discontent and irritation, to which he had hitherto been a stranger.

The controversy broke out between the two old friends, the two champions who had fought side by side at Leipsic against Rome, — between Carlstadt and Luther. In each of them their attachment to contrary doctrines originated in a turn of mind that merits our esteem. In fact, there are two extremes in questions of religion; the one materializes, the other spiritualizes everything. The former of these two extremes is that of Rome; the latter, of the Mystics. Religion, like man himself, is compounded of body and soul; the pure idealists as well as the materialists, in religious views no less than in philosophical systems, are equally mistaken.

Such is the great question hidden under the discussion about the Lord's Supper. While on the superficial glance we see nothing but a trivial dispute about words, a deeper observation discloses to us one of the most important controversies that can occupy the human mind.

Here the reformers divide into two parties; but each carries away with it a portion of the truth.

Luther an his followers intend opposing an exaggerated spiritualism; Carlstadt and the reformed attack a hateful materialism. Each of them arraigns the error which is in his view appears the most fatal, and, in assailing it, possibly goes beyond the truth. But this is of no importance; each of them is true in his general tendency, and although belonging to two different hosts, these two illustrious teachers both take their stand under one common banner, — that of Jesus Christ, who alone is Truth in its infinite extent.

Carlstadt thought that nothing could be more injurious to real piety than confidence in outward ceremonies and in a certain magical influence of the sacraments. The outward participation in the Lord's Supper, according to Rome, was sufficient for salvation, and this principle had materialized religion. Carlstadt saw no better way of restoring its spirituality than by denying all presence of Christ's body: and he taught that this holy feast was to believers simply a pledge of their redemption.

Did Carlstadt arrive at these opinions unaided? No: all things are bound together in the Church; and the historical filiation of the reformed doctrine, so long overlooked, now appears clearly established. Unquestionably we cannot fail to see in this doctrine the sentiments of several of the Fathers; but if we search in the long chain of ages for the link which more immediately connects that of Carlstadt and the Swiss reformers, we shall find it in John Wessel, the most illustrious doctor of the fifteenth century.

A christian lawyer of Holland, Cornelius Hoen (Honius), a friend of Erasmus, and who had been thrown into prison in 1523 for his attachment to the Gospel, found among the papers of James Hoek, dean of Naeldwik, a great friend of Wessel, several treatises by this illustrious doctor touching the Lord's Supper. Hoen, convinced of the truth of the spiritual sense ascribed by Wessel to this sacrament, thought it his duty to communicate to the reformers these papers written by his fellowcountryman. He therefore transmitted them to two of his friends, John Rhodius, president of

the brethren of the Common-life at Utrecht, and George Sagarus or Saganus, together with a letter on the same subject, and desired them to lay all of them before Luther.

About the close of the year 1520, the two Dutchmen arrived at Wittenberg, where they seem to have been favorably received by Carlstadt from the first moment; while Luther, as was his custom, invited these foreign friends to meet some of his colleagues at dinner. The conversation naturally fell on the treasures these Netherlanders had brought with them, and particularly on the writings of Wessel concerning the Lord's Supper.

Rhodius invited Luther to receive the doctrine that the great doctor of the fifteenth century had so clearly set forth, and Carlstadt entreated his friend to acknowledge the spiritual signification of the Eucharist, and even to write against the carnal eating of Christ's body. Luther shook his head and refused, upon which Carlstadt exclaimed warmly: "Well, then, if you will not do it, I will, although far less fitted than yourself." Such was the

beginning of the division that afterwards occurred between these two colleagues. The two Netherlanders, being rejected in Saxony, resolved to turn their steps towards Switzerland, where we shall meet with them again.

Luther henceforward took a diametrically opposite direction. At first, he had apparently contended in favor of the opinion we have just pointed out. In his treatise on the mass, which appeared in 1520, he said: “I can every day partake of the sacraments, if I only call to mind the words and promises of Christ, and if I nourish and strengthen my faith with them.” Neither Carlstadt, Zwingle, nor Calvin, have ever used stronger language than this. It would even appear that the idea frequently occurred to him at this period, that a symbolical explanation of the Lord’s Supper would be the most powerful weapon to overturn the papal system from top to bottom; for he said in, that five years previously he had undergone many severe temptations for this doctrine, and that the man who could have proved to him that there was only bread and wine in the eucharist, would have

done him the greatest service.

But new circumstances threw him into an opposition, at times not unmingled with violence, against those very opinions to which he had made so near an approach. The fanaticism of the enthusiasts of the day explains the direction Luther now took. They were not content with undervaluing what they called the external Word, that is, the Bible, and with pretending to special revelations from the Holy Ghost; they went so far as to despise the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as something outward, and to speak of an inward communion as being the only true communion. From that time, in every attempt made to explain the doctrine of the Lord's Supper in a symbolical manner, Luther saw only the danger of weakening the authority of the Holy Scriptures; of substituting arbitrary allegories for their real meaning; of spiritualizing everything in religion; of making it consist, not in the gifts of God, but in the impressions of men; and of substituting by this means for the true Christianity a mysticism, a theosophy, a fanaticism, that would infallibly

become its grave. We must acknowledge that, had it not been for Luther's violent opposition, the mystical, enthusiastic, and subjective tendency would then perhaps have made rapid progress, and would have turned back the tide of blessings that the Reformation was to spread over the world.

Carlstadt, impatient at being prevented from explaining his doctrine freely in Wittenberg, urged by his conscience to combat a system which in his "opinion lowered Christ's death and destroyed his righteousness," resolved "to give a public testimony for the love of poor and cruelly deceived Christendom." He left Wittenberg at the beginning of 1524, without informing either the university or the chapter of his intentions, and repaired to the small town of Orlamund, the church of which was placed under his superintendence. He had the incumbent dismissed, got himself nominated pastor in his stead, and in despite of the chapter, the university, and the elector, established himself in this new post.

He soon began to propagate his doctrine. "It is

impossible," said he, "to find in the real presence any advantage that does not proceed from faith; it is therefore useless." In explaining Christ's words at the institution of the Lord's Supper, he had recourse to an interpretation which is not admitted by the reformed Churches. Luther, in the disputation at Leipsic, had explained these words: Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, by separating the two propositions, and applying the latter to our Savior's person. "In like manner," said Carlstadt, "the words take, eat, refer to the bread; but this is my body relates to Jesus Christ, who then pointed to himself, and intimated by the symbol of breaking the bread, that his body was soon to be broken." Carlstadt did not stop here. He was scarcely emancipated from the guardianship of Luther, before he felt his zeal revive against the images. It was easy for his imprudent discourses and his enthusiastic language to inflame men's minds in these agitated times. The people, imagining they heard a second Elijah, broke the idols of Baal. The excitement soon spread to the surrounding villages. The elector would have interfered; but the peasants replied that

they ought to obey God rather than man. Upon this, the prince determined to send Luther to Orlamund to restore peace. Luther regarded Carlstadt as a man eaten up by a love of notoriety, a fanatic who might be so far carried away as to make war on Christ himself.

Frederick might perhaps have made a wiser choice. Luther departed, and Carlstadt was fated to see this troublesome rival once more come and disturb his plans of reform, and check his soaring flight. Jena was on the road to Orlamund. Luther reached this city on the 23rd of August, and on the 24th went into the pulpit at seven in the morning; he spoke for an hour and a half in the presence of a numerous auditory against fanaticism, rebellion, the breaking of images, and the contempt of the real presence, inveighing most energetically against the innovations of Orlamund. He did not mention Carlstadt by name, but every one could see whom he had in view.

Carlstadt, either by accident or design, was at Jena, and among the number of Luther's hearers.

He did not hesitate to seek an explanation of this sermon. Luther was dining with the prior of Wittenberg, the burgomaster, the town-clerk, the pastor of Jena, and several officers of the emperor and the margrave, when he received a letter from Carlstadt demanding an interview; he handed it to his neighbors, and replied to the bearer: “If Doctor Carlstadt wishes to come to me, let him come; if not, I can do without him.” Carlstadt came. His visit produced a lively sensation in the whole party. The majority, eager to see the two lions battling, suspended their repast and looked on, while the more timid turned pale with alarm.

Carlstadt, on Luther’s invitation, took a seat in front of him and said: “Doctor, in your sermon of this morning you classed me with those who inculcate rebellion and assassination. Such a charge I declare to be false.” Luther. — “I did not name you, but since the cap fits, you may wear it.” After a brief pause Carlstadt resumed: “I will undertake to prove that on the doctrine of the sacrament you have contradicted yourself, and that no one, since the days of the apostles, has taught it so purely as

myself." Luther. — "Write! combat my opinions!" Carlstadt. — "I offer you a public disputation at Wittenberg or at Erfurth, if you will procure me a safe-conduct." Luther. — "Fear nothing, doctor." Carlstadt. — "You bind me hand and foot, and when you have rendered me unable to defend myself, you strike me." There was another brief silence, when Luther resumed: — "Write against me, but openly and not in secret." Carlstadt. — "I would do so, if I knew that you were speaking sincerely." Luther. — "Do so, and I will give you a florin." Carlstadt. — "Give it me; I accept the challenge." At these words Luther took a gold florin out of his pocket, and giving it to Carlstadt, said: "There is the money: now strike boldly." Carlstadt holding the florin in his hand, turned towards the assembly and said: "Dear brethren, this is my earnest-money, and warrant that I have authority to write against Doctor Luther; be you all witnesses to this." Then bending the florin that it might be known again, he put it in his purse and shook hands with Luther, who drank his health, to which Carlstadt responded. "The more vigorous your attack, the better I shall like it," resumed

Luther.

“If I miss you,” replied Carlstadt, “it shall be through no fault of mine.” They once more shook hands, and Carlstadt returned to his dwelling.

Thus, says an historian, as from a single spark often proceeds the conflagration of a whole forest, so from this small beginning a great division arose in the Church. Luther set out for Orlamund, and arrived there very ill prepared by the scene at Jena. He assembled the council and the church, and said: “Neither the elector nor the university will acknowledge Carlstadt as your pastor.” — “If Carlstadt is not our pastor,” replied the treasurer of the towncouncil, “St. Paul is a false teacher, and your books are full of falsehoods, for we have elected him.” As he said this, Carlstadt entered the room. Some of those who were near Luther beckoned him to sit down, but Carlstadt, going straight up to Luther, said: “Dear doctor, if you will allow me, I will entertain you.” Luther. — “You are my opponent. I gave you a gold florin for that purpose.” Carlstadt. — “I will be your opponent so

long as you remain the enemy of God and his truth." Luther. — "Leave the room: I cannot allow you to be present here." Carlstadt. — "This is a public meeting. If your cause is good, why should you fear me?" Luther to his servant. — "Go and put the horses to; I have nothing to do with Carlstadt, and since he will not leave, I must." At the same time Luther rose from his seat, upon which Carlstadt quitted the room.

After a short pause, Luther resumed: — "Prove by Scripture that we ought to destroy the images." A Councillor, opening a Bible. — "Doctor, you will grant me, however, that Moses knew God's commandments? Well, then, here are his words: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness." Luther. — This passage refers only to idolatrous images. If I have a crucifix hung up in my chamber, and do not worship it, what harm can it do me?" A Shoemaker. — "I have frequently taken off my hat before an image that I have seen in a room or in the streets. It is an idolatrous act that deprives God of the glory that is due to him alone." Luther. — "Must we then,

because of their abuse, put our women to death, and throw our wine into the streets?" Another Member of the Church. — "No! these are God's creatures, which we are not commanded to destroy." After the conference had lasted some time longer, Luther and his friends returned to their carriage, astonished at what they had seen, and without having succeeded in convincing the inhabitants, who claimed for themselves the right of freely interpreting and explaining the Scriptures.

The excitement was very great in Orlamund; the people insulted Luther, and some of them shouted out: "Begone, in the name of all the devils! May you break your neck before you get out of our city!" Never had the reformer undergone such humiliation.

He proceeded thence to Kale, where the pastor had also embraced the doctrines of Carlstadt, and resolved to preach there. But when he entered the pulpit, he found the fragments of a crucifix. At first his emotion was very great; but recovering himself, he gathered up the pieces into a corner, and

delivered a sermon without a single allusion to this circumstance. He said at a later period: “I determined to revenge myself on the devil by contempt.” The nearer the elector approached the end of his days, the more he feared lest men should go too far in the Reformation. He gave orders that Carlstadt should be deprived of his offices, and that he should not only leave Orlamund, but the electoral states also. In vain did the church of this place intercede in his favor; in vain did they ask that he might be allowed to remain among them as a private citizen, with permission to preach occasionally; in vain did they represent that they valued God’s truth more than the whole world, or even a thousand worlds, if God had created as many: Frederick was inflexible, and he even went so far as to refuse Carlstadt the funds necessary for his journey. Luther had nothing to do with these severe measures of the prince; they were far from his disposition, as he showed at a later period. But Carlstadt looked upon him as the author of all his misfortunes, and filled Germany with his complaints and lamentations. He wrote a farewell address to his friends at Orlamund. The people

were called together by the ringing of bells; and the letter, which was read to the assembled church, drew tears from every eye.

It was signed, “Andrew Bodenstein, expelled by Luther, unheard and unconvicted.” We cannot but feel pain at seeing the contest between these two men, who once were friends, and who were both so excellent. A feeling of sadness took possession of all the disciples of the Reformation. What would become of it now that its most illustrious defenders thus opposed each other? Luther noticed these fears, and endeavored to allay them. “Let us fight,” said he, “as if fighting for another. The cause is God’s, and to God belongs the glory! He will contend and conquer without us. Let that fall which ought to fall; let that stand which ought to stand. It is not our own cause that is at stake, nor our own glory that we seek.” Carlstadt took refuge at Strasburg, where he published several works. He was a sound Latin, Greek, and Hebrew scholar, says Dr. Scheur; and Luther acknowledged his superior crudition. Endowed with an elevated mind, he sacrificed his reputation,

his rank, his home, his very bread, to his convictions. He afterwards proceeded to Switzerland; it is there he should have commenced his teaching: his independence needed the free air in which Zwingle and Oecolampadius breathed. His doctrine soon awakened almost as much attention as that obtained by Luther's first theses.

Switzerland appeared to be won; Bucer and Capito seemed to be carried away by it.

Luther's indignation was then at its height, and he published one of the most powerful, but at the same time one of his most violent controversial works — his book "Against the Celestial Prophets." Thus the Reformation, attacked by the pope, attacked by the emperor, attacked by the princes, was beginning also to tear its own vitals. It seemed that it must fall under the weight of so many evils; and assuredly it 917 would have fallen had it been a work of man. But soon from the very brink of destruction it rose up with renewed energy.

Chapter 8

Progress

The Catholic League of Ratisbon and the persecutions that followed it, created a powerful reaction among the German people. They did not feel disposed to suffer themselves to be deprived of that Word of God which had been restored to them at last; and to the orders of Charles V, to the bulls of the pope, the menaces and burning piles of Ferdinand and the other Roman-catholic princes, they replied: “We will keep it!” No sooner had the members of the league quitted Ratisbon, than the deputies of the towns, whose bishops had taken part in this alliance, in surprise and indignation met at Spires, and declared that their ministers in despite of the prohibition of the bishops should preach the Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel, conformably to the doctrine of the prophets and apostles. They then proceeded to draw up a memorial in firm and consistent language, to be laid before the national assembly.

The imperial letter from Burgos, it is true, came to disturb their minds.

Nevertheless, about the close of the year, the deputies of these cities with many nobles met at Ulm, and swore to assist one another in case of attack.

Thus to the camp formed by Austria, Bavaria, and the bishops, the free cities immediately opposed another in which they planted the standard of the Gospel and of the national liberties.

While the cities were thus placing themselves in the van of the Reformation, many princes were gained over to its cause. In the beginning of the month of June 1524, as Melancthon was returning on horseback from a visit to his mother, accompanied by Camerarius and some other friends, he met a brilliant train near Frankfort. It was Philip, landgrave of Hesse, who three years before called on Luther at Worms, and who was then on his road to the tournament at Heidelberg, where all the princes of Germany would be present.

Thus did Providence bring Philip successively into contact with the two reformers. As it was known that the celebrated doctor had gone to his native place, one of the landgrave's attendants said: "It is Philip Melancthon, I think." The young prince immediately clapped spurs to his horse, and coming near the doctor said: "Is your name Philip?" — "It is," replied the scholar a little intimidated, and respectfully preparing to alight.

"Keep your seat," said the prince; "turn round, and come and pass the night with me; there are some matters on which I desire to have a little talk with you; fear nothing." — "What can I fear from such a prince as you?" replied the doctor. — "Ah! ah!" said the landgrave with a laugh, "if I were to carry you off and give you up to Campeggio, he would not be offended, I think." The two Philips rode on together, side by side, the prince asking questions and the doctor replying. The landgrave was delighted with the clear and impressive views set before him by Melancthon. The latter at length begged permission to continue his journey, and

Philip of Hesse parted from him with reluctance. “On one condition,” said he, “that on your return home you will carefully examine the questions we have been discussing, and send me the result in writing.” Melancthon gave his promise. “Go then,” said Philip, “and pass through my states.” Melancthon drew up with his usual talent an Abridgment of the Revived Doctrine of Christianity; a forcible and concise treatise, that made a decided impression on the landgrave’s mind. Shortly after his return from the tournament at Heidelberg, this prince, without joining the free cities, published an edict by which, in opposition to the league of Ratisbon, he ordered the Gospel to be preached in all its purity. He embraced it himself with the energy peculiar to his character. “Rather would I give up my body and life, my subjects and my states,” said he, “than the Word of God.” A Minorite friar, named Ferber, perceiving this prince’s leaning towards the Reformation, wrote him a letter full of reproach, in which he conjured him to remain faithful to Rome. “I will remain faithful to the old doctrine,” replied Philip, “but such as it is contained in Scripture.” He then

proved very forcibly that man is justified solely by faith. Astonishment kept the monk silent. The landgrave was commonly styled “Melancthon’s disciple.” Other princes followed in the same direction. The elector-palatine refused to lend himself to any persecution; the Duke of Luneburg, nephew to the Elector of Saxony, began to reform his own states; and the King of Denmark gave orders that in Sleswick and Holstein every one should be free to serve God as his conscience suggested.

The Reformation gained a still more important victory. A prince, whose conversion to the Gospel was destined to exert the greatest influence, even in our days, began about this time to turn aside from Rome. One day about the end of June, shortly after Melancthon’s return to Wittenberg, Albert, margrave of Brandenburg and grand-master of the Teutonic order, entered Luther’s chamber. This chief of the military monks of Germany, who then possessed Prussia, had gone to the Diet of Nuremberg to invoke the aid of the empire against Poland. He returned in the deepest distress. On the

one hand, the preaching of Osiander and the reading of the Bible had convinced him that his monastic profession was contrary to the Word of God; and on the other the fall of the national government in Germany had deprived him of all hope of obtaining the succor he had gone to solicit. What can he do then?......The Saxon councillor Von Planitz, with whom he had quitted Nuremberg, advised him to see the reformer. “What do you think of the regulations of my order?” said the restless and agitated prince. Luther felt no hesitation: he saw that a line of conduct in conformity with the Gospel was the only thing that could save Prussia. “Invoke the aid of God,” said he to the grand-master; “throw off the senseless and confused rules of your order; put an end to that abominable principality, a veritable hermaphrodite, which is neither religious nor secular; relinquish that false chastity, and seek the true one; take a wife, and instead of that nameless monster, found a legitimate sovereignty.” These words placed distinctly before the mind of the grand-master a state of things that he had as yet conceived but vaguely. A smile lit up his features; but he had too

much prudence to declare himself; he remained silent. Melancthon, who was present, spoke to the same effect as Luther, and the prince returned to his states, leaving the reformers under the conviction that the seed they had sown in his heart would one day bear fruit.

Thus Charles V and the pope had opposed the national assembly at Spires for fear the Word of God should gain over all who might be present; but the Word of God cannot be bound; they refused to let it be heard in one of the halls of a town in the Lower Palatinate; it avenged itself by spreading over all the provinces, and manifested in every part of the empire that Divine power which neither bulls nor edicts can ever take away.

Chapter 9

Reforms

While the nations and their rulers were thus hastening forward to the light, the reformers were endeavoring to regenerate everything, to interpenetrate everything with the principles of Christianity. The state of public worship first engaged their attention. The time fixed by the reformer, on his return from the Wartburg, had arrived. "Now," said he, "that men's hearts have been strengthened by Divine grace, we must put an end to the scandals that pollute the kingdom of the Lord, and dare something in the name of Jesus." He required that men should communicate in both kinds (the bread and wine); that everything should be retrenched from the ceremony of the eucharist that tended to make it a sacrifice; that Christians should never assemble together without having the Gospel preached; that believers, or at least the priests and scholars, should meet every morning at five or six o'clock to read the Old Testament; and at a corresponding hour in the evening to read the

New Testament; that every Sunday, the whole Church should assemble in the morning and afternoon, and that the great object of their worship should be to sound abroad the Word of God. The church of All Saints at Wittenberg especially excited Luther's indignation. Seckendorf informs us that 9901 masses were there celebrated yearly, and 35,570 pounds of wax annually burnt. Luther called it "a sacrilegious Tophet." "There are only three or four lazy-bellies," said he, "who still worship this shameful mammon, and if I had not restrained the people, this house of All Saints, or rather of all devils, would have made such a noise in the world as has never before been heard." The struggle began around this church. It resembled those ancient sanctuaries of paganism in Egypt, Gaul, and Germany, which were destined to fall that Christianity might be established.

Luther, desiring that the mass should be abolished in this cathedral, addressed a petition to the chapter to this effect on the 1st of March 1523, and a second on the 11th of July. The canons having pleaded the elector's orders, Luther replied,

“What is the prince’s order to us in this case? He is a secular prince; the sword, and not the preaching of the Gospel, belongs to him.” Here Luther clearly marks the distinction between the State and the Church. “There is but one sacrifice that taketh away sins,” said he again, “Christ, who offered himself up once for all; and in this we are partakers, not by works or by sacrifices, but solely by faith in the Word of God.” The elector, who felt his end drawing near, was opposed to new reforms.

But fresh entreaties were added to those of Luther.

“It is time to act,” said Jonas, provost of the cathedral, to the elector. “A manifestation of the Gospel, so striking as that which we now have, does not ordinarily last longer than a sunbeam. Let us make haste then.” As the letter of Jonas did not change the elector’s views, Luther lost all patience; he thought the moment had come for striking a decisive blow, and addressed a threatening letter to the chapter: “I entreat you amicably, and urge you seriously, to put an end to all this sectarian

worship. If you refuse, you will receive (with God's help) the reward that you have deserved. I mention this for your guidance, and require a positive and immediate answer, — yes or no, — before Sunday next, that I may know what I have to do. May God give you grace to follow his light.

"Thursday, 8th December 1524.

"Martin Luther, "Preacher at Wittenberg." At the same time the rector, two burgomasters, and ten councillors, waited on the dean, and entreated him in the name of the university, the council, and the township of Wittenberg, "to abolish the great and horrible impiety committed in the mass against the majesty of God." The chapter was forced to give way; they declared that, being enlightened by the holy Word of God, they acknowledged the abuses that had been pointed out, and published a new order of church-service, which began to be observed on Christmas-day 1524.

Thus fell the mass in this renowned sanctuary, where it had so long resisted the reiterated attacks

of the reformers. The Elector Frederick, suffering from the gout, and rapidly drawing near his end, could not, in spite of all his exertions, prevent this great victory of the Reformation. He saw in it a manifestation of the Divine will, and gave way. The fall of the Romish observances in the church of All Saints hastened their abolition in a great number of churches throughout Christendom; everywhere the same resistance was offered, — everywhere there was the same triumph. In vain did the priests, and even the princes in many places, try to interpose obstacles; they could not succeed.

It was not the public worship alone that the Reformation was ordained to change. The school was early placed beside the Church; and these two great institutions, so powerful to regenerate the nations, were equally reanimated by it. It was by a close alliance with learning that the Reformation entered into the world; in the hour of its triumph, it did not forget its ally.

Christianity is not a simple development of

Judaism. Unlike the papacy, it does not aim at confining man again in the close swaddling bands of outward ordinances and human doctrines. Christianity is a new creation; it lays hold of the inner man, and transforms him in the inmost principles of his human nature, so that man no longer requires other men to impose rules upon him; but, aided by God, he can of himself and by himself distinguish what is true, and do what is right. To lead mankind to that ripe age which Christ has purchased for them, and to free them from that tutelage in which Rome had held them so long, the Reformation had to develop the whole man; and while regenerating his heart and his will by the Word of God, to enlighten his understanding by the study of profane and sacred learning.

Luther saw this; he felt that, to strengthen the Reformation, it was requisite to work on the young, to improve the schools, and to propagate throughout Christendom the knowledge necessary for a profound study of the Holy Scriptures. This, accordingly, was one of the objects of his life.

He saw it in particular at the period which we have reached, and wrote to the councillors of all the cities of Germany, calling upon them to found christian schools. “Dear sirs,” said he, “we annually expend so much money on arquebuses, roads, and dikes, why should we not spend a little to give one or two schoolmasters to our poor children? God stands at the door and knocks; blessed are we if we open to him! Now the Word of God abounds. O my dear Germans, buy, buy, while the market is open before your houses. The Word of God and his grace are like a shower that falls and passes away. It was among the Jews; but it passed away, and now they have it no longer. Paul carried it into Greece; but in that country also it has passed away, and the Turk reigns there now. It came to Rome and the Latin empire; but there also it has passed away, and Rome now has the pope. O Germans, do not expect to have this Word for ever. The contempt that is shown to it will drive it away. For this reason, let him who desires to possess it lay hold of it and keep it!

“Busy yourselves with the children,” continues

Luther, still addressing the magistrates; “for many parents are like ostriches; they are hardened towards their little ones, and, satisfied with having laid the egg, they care nothing for it afterwards. The prosperity of a city does not consist merely in heaping up great treasures, in building strong walls, in erecting splendid mansions, in possessing glittering arms. If madmen fall upon it, its ruin will only be the greater. The true wealth of a city, its safety, and its strength, is to have many learned, serious, worthy, well educated citizens.

And whom must we blame, because there are so few at present, except you magistrates, who have allowed our youth to grew up like trees in a forest?” Luther particularly insisted on the necessity of studying literature and languages: “What use is there, it may be asked, in learning Latin, Greek, and Hebrew? We can read the Bible very well in German. Without languages,” replies he, “we could not have received the Gospel......Languages are the scabbard that contains the sword of the Spirit; they are the casket that guards the jewels; they are the vessel that

holds the wine; and, as the Gospel says, they are the baskets in which the loaves and fishes are kept to feed the multitude. If we neglect the languages, we shall not only eventually lose the Gospel, but be unable to speak or write in Latin or in German. No sooner did men cease to cultivate them than Christendom declined, even until it fell under the power of the pope. But now that languages are again honored, they shed such light that all the world is astonished, and every one is forced to acknowledge that our Gospel is almost as pure as that of the apostles themselves. In former times the holy Fathers were frequently mistaken, because they were ignorant of languages; and in our days there are some who, like the Waldenses, do not think the languages to be of any use; but although their doctrine be good, they have often erred in the real meaning of the sacred text; they are without arms against error, and I fear very much that their faith will not remain pure. If the languages had not made me positive as to the meaning of the Word, I might have been a pious monk, and quietly preached the truth in obscurity of a cloister; but I should have left the pope, the sophists, and their

anti-christian empire still unshaken." Luther did not concern himself about the education of the clergy only; it was his desire that knowledge should not be confined to the Church; he proposed extending it to the laity, who hitherto had been deprived of it.

He called for the establishment of libraries, which should comprise not only editions and commentaries of the schoolmen and of the fathers of the Church, but also the works of orators and poets, even were they heathens, as well as writings devoted to the fine arts, law, medicine, and history.

"These productions," said he, "serve to make known the works and the wonders of God." This effort on the part of Luther is one of the most important produced by the Reformation. He emancipated learning from the hands of the priests, who had monopolized it like those of Egypt in times of old, and put it within the reach of all. From this impulse given by the Reformation have proceeded the greatest developments of modern times. Those laymen, whether men of letters or

scholars, who now revile the Reformation, forget that they themselves are its offspring, and that, without it, they would still be, like ignorant children, under the rod of the clergy. The Reformation perceived the close tie that connected all the sciences; it saw that, as all knowledge is derived from God, it leads man back to God. It desired that all men should learn, and that they should learn everything. "Those who despise profane literature," said Melancthon, "hold theology in no greater estimation. Their contempt is a mere pretext, with which they seek to conceal their idleness." The Reformation was not satisfied with merely giving a strong impulse to letters; it gave also a fresh impulse to the arts. Protestantism has often been reproached as their enemy, and many Protestants willingly accept this reproach. We will not inquire whether the Reformation ought to glory in it or not; we shall be content to observe that impartial history does not confirm the fact on which this accusation is founded. Let Romancatholicism pride itself in being more favorable to the arts than Protestantism; be it so: paganism was still more favorable, and

Protestantism places its glory elsewhere. There are some religions in which the esthetic tendencies of man hold a more important place than his moral nature. Christianity is distinct from these religions, inasmuch as the moral element is its essence. The christian sentiment is manifested not by the productions of the fine arts, but by the works of a christian life. Every sect that should abandon this moral tendency of Christianity, would by that very circumstance forfeit its claims to the name of christian. Rome has not entirely abandoned it, but Protestantism cherishes this essential characteristic with much greater purity. It places its glory in diving into all that concerns the moral being, in judging of religious actions, not by their external beauty and the manner in which they strike the imagination, but according to their internal worth, and the connection they have with the conscience; so that if the papacy is above all an esthetical religion, as a celebrated writer has proved it to be, Protestantism is above all a moral religion.

And yet, although the Reformation at first addressed man as a moral being, it addressed the

whole man. We have just seen how it spoke to his understanding and what it did for literature; it also spoke to his sensibility, to his imagination, and contributed to the development of the arts. The Church was no longer composed exclusively of monks and priests; it was the assembly of the faithful. All were to take part in its public worship; and the chanting of the clergy was to be succeeded by the singing of the people. Accordingly Luther, in translating the Psalms, thought of adapting them to congregational singing. Thus a taste for music was spread among the nation.

"Next to theology," said Luther, "I give the first place and the highest honor to music. A schoolmaster should know how to sing," said he at another time, "or else I will not so much as look at him." One day, as certain of his friends were singing some beautiful chants at his house, he exclaimed with enthusiasm: "If our Lord God has scattered such admirable gifts on this earth, which is but a dark corner, what will it not be in the life eternal, in which all will be perfection!"......Since Luther's time, the people have sung; the Bible

inspired their songs, and the impulse given at the epoch of the Reformation produced in later years those noble oratories which seem to be the summit of this art.

Poetry shared in the general movement. In singing the praises of God, men could not confine themselves to mere translations of the ancient hymns.

The souls of Luther and many of his contemporaries, elevated by faith to the sublimest ideas, excited to enthusiasm by the conflicts and dangers that continually threatened the infant Church, inspired by the poetic genius of the Old Testament, and by the faith of the New, soon poured forth their feelings in religious songs, in which poetry and music united and blended their most heavenly features. Thus in the sixteenth century the hymns were revived which in the first century had consoled the pangs of the martyrs. In 1523, Luther, as we have already seen, consecrated them to the memory of the Brussels martyrs; other children of the Reformation imitated his example;

these hymns increased in number, and were circulated rapidly among the people, and contributed powerfully to awaken them from their slumbers. It was in this same year that Hans Sachs composed The Nightingale of Wittenberg. The doctrine that for the last four centuries had prevailed in the Church was as the moonlight, during which men lost their way in the wilderness. Now the nightingale proclaims the dawn, and, soaring above the mists of the morning, celebrates the brightness of the coming day.

While lyric poetry thus owed its birth to the loftiest inspirations of the Reformation, satirical verses and dramas from the pen of Hutten and Manuel attacked the most crying abuses.

It is to the Reformation that the greatest poets of England, Germany, and perhaps of France, are indebted for their highest flights.

Of all the arts, painting is that on which the Reformation had the least influence. Nevertheless, it was renovated, and as it were sanctified, by the

universal movement which at that time agitated all the powers of man.

Lucas Cranach, the great master of that age, settled at Wittenberg, lived on intimate terms with Luther, and became the painter of the Reformation.

We have seen how he represented the contrast between Christ and Antichrist (the pope), and thus ranked among the most influential organs of the revolution that was transforming the nations. As soon as he had received new convictions, he consecrated his chaste pencil solely to paintings in harmony with christian sentiments, and spread over groups of children, blessed by our Savior, those graces with which he had previously adorned legendary saints. Albert Durer also was gained over by the Word of the Gospel, and his genius received a fresh impulse. His masterpieces date from this period. We see from the touches with which he henceforward depicted the evangelists and apostles, that the Bible was restored to the people, and that the painter thence derived a depth, power, life, and sublimity, that he would never

have found in himself. And yet we must confess that of all the arts painting is that whose religious influence is most exposed to well-founded and strong objections.

Poetry and music come from heaven, and will be found again in heaven; but we continually see painting connected with serious immoralities or mournful errors. After a man has studied history or visited Italy, he expects nothing beneficial to humanity from this art. Whatever may be the value of this exception which we think it our duty to make, our general remark still holds good.

The Reformation of Germany, while it primarily addressed man’s moral nature, gave an impulse to the arts that they had not yet received from Roman-catholicism.

Thus everything advanced; arts, literature, spirituality of worship, and the minds of princes and people. But this noble harmony which the Gospel at its revival everywhere called forth, was about to be disturbed. The songs of the Wittenberg

nightingale were to be interrupted by the howling of the tempest and the roaring of lions. In a moment a cloud overspread all Germany, and a glorious day was followed by the deepest darkness.

Chapter 10

Political Ferment

A political ferment, very different from that produced by the Gospel, had long been at work in the empire. The people, bowed down by civil and ecclesiastical oppression, bound in many countries to the seigneurial estates, and transferred from hand to hand along with them, threatened to rise with fury and at last to break their chains. This agitation had shown itself long before the Reformation by many symptoms, and even then the religious element was blended with the political; in the sixteenth century it was impossible to separate these two principles, so closely associated in the existence of nations. In Holland, at the close of the preceding century, the peasants had revolted, placing on their banners, by way of arms, a loaf and a cheese, the two great blessings of these poor people. “The Alliance of the Shoes,” had shown itself in the neighborhood of Spires in 1502. In 1513, it appeared again in Brisgau, being encouraged by the priests. In 1514, Wurtemberg

had seen the "League of Poor Conrad," whose aim was to maintain by rebellion "the right of God." In 1515, Carinthia and Hungary had been the theater of terrible agitations. These seditions had been quenched in torrents of blood; but no relief had been accorded to the people. A political reform, therefore, was not less necessary than a religious reform. The people were entitled to this; but we must acknowledge that they were not ripe for its enjoyment.

Since the commencement of the Reformation, these popular disturbances had not been renewed; men's minds were occupied by other thoughts.

Luther, whose piercing glance had discerned the condition of the people, had already from the summit of the Wartburg addressed them in serious exhortations calculated to restrain their agitated minds: — "Rebellion," he had said, "never produces the amelioration we desire, and God condemns it. What is it to rebel, if it be not to avenge oneself? The devil is striving to excite to revolt those who embrace the Gospel, in order to

cover it with opprobrium; but those who have rightly understood my doctrine do not revolt.” Everything gave cause to fear that the popular agitation could not be restrained much longer. The government that Frederick of Saxony had taken such pains to form, and which possessed the confidence of the nation, was dissolved. The emperor, whose energy might have been an efficient substitute for the influence of this national administration, was absent; the princes whose union had always constituted the strength of Germany were divided; and the new declaration of Charles V against Luther, by removing every hope of future harmony, deprived the reformer of part of the moral influence by which in 1522 he had succeeded in calming the storm. The chief barriers that hitherto had confined the torrent being broken, nothing could any longer restrain its fury.

It was not the religious movement that gave birth to political agitations; but in many places it was carried away by their impetuous waves. Perhaps we should even go further, and acknowledge that the movement communicated to

the people by the Reformation gave fresh strength to the discontent fermenting in the nation. The violence of Luther's writings, the intrepidity of his actions and language, the harsh truths that he spoke, not only to the pope and prelates, but also to the princes themselves, must all have contributed to inflame minds that were already in a state of excitement. Accordingly, Erasmus did not fail to tell him: "We are now reaping the fruits that you have sown." And further, the cheering truths of the Gospel, at last brought to light, stirred all hearts, and filled them with anticipation and hope. But many unregenerated souls were not prepared by repentance for the faith and liberty of Christians. They were very willing to throw off the papal yoke, but they would not take up the yoke of Christ. And hence, when princes devoted to the cause of Rome endeavored in their wrath to stifle the Reformation, real Christians patiently endured these cruel persecutions; but the multitude resisted and broke out, and seeing their desires checked in one direction, gave vent to them in another. "Why," said they, "should slavery be perpetuated in the state, while the Church invites all men to a

glorious liberty? Why should governments rule only by force, when the Gospel preaches nothing but gentleness?" Unhappily at a time when the religious reform was received with equal joy both by princes and people, the political reform, on the contrary, had the most powerful part of the nation against it; and while the former had the Gospel for its rule and support, the latter had soon no other principles than violence and despotism. Accordingly, while the one was confined within the bounds of truth, the other rapidly, like an impetuous torrent, overstepped all limits of justice. But to shut one's eyes against the indirect influence of the Reformation on the troubles that broke out in the empire, would betoken partiality. A fire had been kindled in Germany by religious discussions, from which it was impossible to prevent a few sparks escaping which were calculated to inflame the passions of the people.

The claims of a few fanatics to Divine inspiration increased the evil. While the Reformation had continually appealed from the pretended authority of the Church to the real

authority of the Holy Scriptures, these enthusiasts not only rejected the authority of the Church, but of Scripture also; they spoke only of an inner Word, of an internal revelation from God; and overlooking the natural corruption of their hearts, they gave way to all the intoxication of spiritual pride, and fancied they were saints.

"To them the Holy Scriptures were but a dead letter," said Luther, "and they all began to cry, The Spirit! the Spirit! But most assuredly I will not follow where their spirit leads them. May God of his mercy preserve me from a Church in which there are none but saints. I desire to dwell with the humble, the feeble, the sick, who know and feel their sins, and who groan and cry continually to God from the bottom of their hearts to obtain his consolation and support." These words of Luther's have great depth of meaning, and point out the change that was taking place in his views as to the nature of the Church. They indicate at the same time how contrary were the religious opinions of the rebels to those of the Reformation.

The most notorious of these enthusiasts was Thomas Munzer; he was not devoid of talent, had read his Bible, was zealous, and might have done good, if he had been able to collect his agitated thoughts and find peace of heart. But as he did not know himself, and was wanting in true humility, he was possessed with a desire of reforming the world, and forgot, as all enthusiasts do, that the reformation should begin with himself. Some mystical writings that he had read in his youth had given a false direction to his mind. He first appeared at Zwickau, quitted Wittenberg after Luther's return, dissatisfied with the inferior part he was playing, and became pastor of the small town of Alstadt in Thuringia. He could not long remain quiet, and accused the reformers of founding, by their adherence to the letter, a new popery, and of forming churches which were not pure and holy.

"Luther," said he, "has delivered men's consciences from the yoke of the pope, but he has left them in a carnal liberty, and not led them in spirit towards God." He considered himself as

called of God to remedy this great evil. The revelations of the Spirit were in his eyes the means by which his reform was to be effected. “He who possesses this Spirit,” said he, “possesses the true faith, although he should never see the Scriptures in his life.

Heathens and Turks are better fitted to receive it than many Christians who style us enthusiasts.” It was Luther whom he here had in view. “To receive this Spirit we must mortify the flesh,” said he at another time, “wear tattered clothing, let the beard grow, be of a sad countenance, keep silence, retire into desert places, and supplicate God to give us a sign of his favor. Then God will come and speak with us, as formerly He spoke with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If He were not to do so, He would not deserve our attention. I have received from God the commission to gather together his elect into a holy and eternal alliance.” The agitation and ferment which were at work in men’s minds were but too favorable to the dissemination of these enthusiastic ideas. Man loves the marvelous, and whatever flatters his

pride. Munzer, having persuaded a part of his flock to adopt his views, abolished ecclesiastical singing and all other ceremonies. He maintained that obedience to princes "void of understanding," was at once to serve God and Belial. Then marching out at the head of his parishioners to a chapel in the vicinity of Alstadt, whither pilgrims from all quarters were accustomed to resort, he pulled it down.

After this exploit, being compelled to leave that neighborhood, he wandered about Germany, and went as far as Switzerland, carrying with him, and communicating to all who would listen to him, the plan of a general revolution. Everywhere he found men's minds prepared; he threw gunpowder on the burning coals, and the explosion forthwith took place.

Luther, who had rejected the warlike enterprises of Sickengen, could not be led away by the tumultuous movements of the peasantry.

Fortunately for social order, the Gospel

preserved him; for what would have happened had he carried his extensive influence into their camp?......He ever firmly maintained the distinction between secular and spiritual things; he continually repeated that it was immortal souls which Christ emancipated by his Word; and if, with one hand, he attacked the authority of the Church, with the other he upheld with equal power the authority of the princes. “A Christian,” said he, “should endure a hundred deaths, rather than meddle in the slightest degree with the revolt of the peasants.” He wrote to the elector: “It causes me especial joy that these enthusiasts themselves boast, to all who are willing to listen to them, that they do not belong to us. The Spirit urges them on, say they; and I reply, it is an evil spirit, for he bears no other fruit than the pillage of convents and churches; the greatest highway robbers upon earth might do as much.” At the same time, Luther, who desired that others should enjoy the liberty he claimed for himself, dissuaded the prince from all measures of severity: “Let them preach what they please, and against whom they please,” said he; “for it is the Word of God that must march in front of the battle and fight

against them. If their spirit be the true Spirit, he will not fear our severity; if ours is the true one, he will not fear their violence. Let us leave the spirits to struggle and contend with one another. Perhaps some persons may be led astray; there is no battle without wounds; but he who fighteth faithfully shall be crowned. Nevertheless, if they desire to take up the sword, let your highness forbid it, and order them to quit the country." The insurrection began in the Black Forest, and near the sources of the Danube, so frequently the theater of popular commotions. On the 19th of July 1524, some Thurgovian peasants rose against the Abbot of Reichenau, who would not accord them an evangelical preacher. Erelong thousands were collected round the small town of Tengen, to liberate an ecclesiastic who was there imprisoned. The revolt spread with inconceivable rapidity from Swabia as far as the Rhenish provinces, Franconia, Thuringia, and Saxony. In the month of January 1525, all these countries were in a state of rebellion.

About the end of this month, the peasants

published a declaration in twelve articles, in which they claimed the liberty of choosing their own pastors, the abolition of small tithes, of slavery, and of fines on inheritance, the right to hunt, fish, and cut wood, etc. Each demand was backed by a passage from Holy Writ, and they said in conclusion, "If we are deceived, let Luther correct us by Scripture." The opinions of the Wittenberg divines were consulted. Luther and Melancthon delivered theirs separately, and they both gave evidence of the difference of their characters. Melancthon, who thought every kind of disturbance a crime, oversteps the limits of his usual gentleness, and cannot find language strong enough to express his indignation. The peasants are criminals, against whom he invokes all laws human and Divine. If friendly negotiation is unavailing, the magistrates should hunt them down, as if they were robbers and assassins. "And yet," adds he (and we require at least one feature to remind us of Melancthon), "let them take pity on the orphans when having recourse to the penalty of death!" Luther's opinion of the revolt was the same as Melancthon's; but he had a heart that beat for the

miseries of the people. On this occasion he manifested a dignified impartiality, and spoke the truth frankly to both parties. He first addressed the princes, and more especially the bishops: — "It is you," said he, "who are the cause of this revolt; it is your clamors against the Gospel, your guilty oppressions of the poor, that have driven the people to despair. It is not the peasants, my dear Lords, that rise up against you, — it is God himself who opposes your madness. The peasants are but the instruments he employs to humble you. Do not imagine you can escape the punishment he is preparing for you. Even should you have succeeded in destroying all these peasants, God is able from the very stones to raise up others to chastise your pride. If I desired revenge, I might laugh in my sleeve, and look on while the peasants were carrying on their work, or even increase their fury; but may God preserve me from such thoughts!......My dear Lords, put away your indignation, treat these poor peasants as a man of sense treats people who are drunk or insane. Quiet these commotions by mildness, lest a conflagration should arise and burn all Germany.

Among these twelve articles there are certain demands which are just and equitable." This prologue was calculated to conciliate the peasants' confidence in Luther, and to make them listen patiently to the truths he had to tell them.

He represented to them that the greater number of their demands were well founded; but that to revolt was to act like heathens; that the duty of a Christian is to be patient, not to fight; that if they persisted in revolting against the Gospel in the name of the Gospel, he should look upon them as more dangerous enemies than the pope. "The pope and the emperor," continued he, "combined against me; but the more they blustered the more did the Gospel gain ground......And why was this? Because I have never drawn the sword or called for vengeance; because I never had recourse to tumult or insurrection: I relied wholly upon God, and placed everything in His almighty hands. Christians fight not with swords or arquebuses, but with sufferings and with the cross. Christ, their Captain, handled not the sword.....he was hung

upon a tree." But to no purpose did Luther employ this christian language. The people were too much excited by the fanatical speeches of the leaders of the insurrection, to listen, as of old, to the words of the reformer. "He is playing the hypocrite," said they; "he flatters the nobles. He has declared war against the pope, and yet wishes us to submit to our oppressors." The revolt, instead of dying away, became more formidable. At Weinsberg, Count Louis of Helfenstein and the seventy men under his orders were condemned to death by the rebels. A body of peasants drew up with their pikes lowered, whilst others drove the count and his soldiers against this wall of steel. The wife of the wretched Helfenstein, a natural daughter of the Emperor Maximilian, holding an infant two years old in her arms, knelt before them, and with loud cries begged for her husband's life, and vainly endeavored to arrest this march of murder; a boy who had been in the count's service, and had joined the rebels, capered gaily before him, and played the dead march upon his fife, as if he had been leading his victims in a dance. All perished; the child was wounded in its mother's arms; and

she herself thrown upon a dungcart, and thus conveyed to Heilbrunn.

At the news of these cruelties, a cry of horror was heard from the friends of the Reformation, and Luther's feeling heart underwent a terrible conflict.

On the one hand the peasants, ridiculing his advice, pretended to receive revelations from heaven, made an impious use of the threatenings of the Old Testament, proclaimed an equality of ranks and a community of goods, defended their cause with fire and sword, and indulged in barbarous atrocities. On the other hand, the enemies of the Reformation asked the reformer, with a malicious sneer, if he did not know that it was easier to kindle a fire than to extinguish it. Shocked at these excesses, alarmed at the thought that they might check the progress of the Gospel, Luther hesitated no longer, no longer temporized; he inveighed against the insurgents with all the energy of his character, and perhaps overstepped the just bounds within which he should have contained himself.

“The peasants,” said he, “commit three horrible sins against God and man, and thus deserve the death of body and soul. First, they revolt against their magistrates to whom they have sworn fidelity; next, they rob and plunder convents and castles; and lastly, they veil their crimes with the cloak of the Gospel. If you do not put a mad dog to death, you will perish, and all the country with you.

Whoever is killed fighting for the magistrates will be a true martyr, if he has fought with a good conscience.” Luther then gives a powerful description of the guilty violence of the peasants who force simple and peaceable men to join their alliance, and thus drag them to the same condemnation. He then adds: “For this reason, my dear Lords, help, save, deliver, have pity on these poor people.

Let every one strike, pierce, and kill, who is able......If thou diest, thou canst not meet a happier death; for thou diest in the service of God, and to save thy neighbor from hell.” Neither gentleness nor violence could arrest the popular torrent. The

church-bells were no longer rung for divine service; whenever their deep and prolonged sounds were heard in the fields, it was the tocsin, and all ran to arms. The people of the Black Forest had rallied round John Muller of Bulgenbach. With an imposing aspect, covered with a red cloak, and wearing a red cap, this leader boldly advanced from village to village followed by the peasantry. Behind him, on a wagon decorated with ribands and branches of trees, was raised the tricolor flag, black, red, and white, — the signal of revolt. A herald, dressed in the same colors, read the twelve articles, and invited the people to join in the rebellion. Whoever refused was banished from the community.

Erelong this march, which at first was peaceable, became more disquieting.

"We must compel the lords to submit to our alliance," exclaimed they. And to induce them to do so, they plundered the granaries, emptied the cellars, drew the seigneurial fish-ponds, demolished the castles of the nobles who resisted,

and burnt the convents. Opposition had inflamed the passions of those rude men; equality no longer satisfied them; they thirsted for blood, and swore to put to death every man who wore a spur.

At the approach of the peasants, the cities that were unable to resist them opened their gates and joined them. In whatever place they entered, they pulled down the images and broke the crucifixes; armed women paraded the streets and threatened the monks. If they were defeated in one quarter, they assembled again in another, and braved the most formidable forces. A committee of peasants was established at Heilbrunn. The Counts of Lowenstein were taken prisoners, dressed in a smock-frock, and then, a white staff having been placed in their hands, they were compelled to swear to the twelve articles. "Brother George, and thou, brother Albert," said a tinker of Ohringen to the Counts of Hohenlohe, who had gone to their camp, "swear to conduct yourselves as our brethren; for you also are now peasants; you are no longer lords." Equality of rank, the dream of many democrats, was established in aristocratic

Germany.

Many nobles, some through fear, others from ambition, then joined the insurgents. The famous Goetz von Berlichingen, finding his vassals refuse to obey him, desired to flee to the Elector of Saxony; but his wife, who was lying-in, wishing to keep him near her, concealed the elector's answer.

Goetz, being closely pursued, was compelled to put himself at the head of the rebel army. On the 7th of May the peasants entered Wurtzburg, where the citizens received them with acclamations. The forces of the princes and knights of Swabia and Franconia, which had assembled in this city, evacuated it, and retired in confusion to the citadel, the last bulwark of the nobility.

But the movement had already extended to other parts of Germany.

Spires, the Palatinate, Alsace, and Hesse accepted the twelve articles, and the peasants threatened Bavaria, Westphalia, the Tyrol, Saxony,

and Lorraine. The Margrave of Baden, having rejected the articles, was compelled to flee. The coadjutor of Fulda acceded to them with a smile.

The smaller towns said, they had no lances with which to oppose the insurgents. Mentz, Treves, and Frankfort obtained the liberties which they had claimed.

An immense revolution was preparing in all the empire. The ecclesiastical and secular privileges, that bore so heavily on the peasants, were to be suppressed; the possessions of the clergy were to be secularized, to indemnify the princes and provide for the wants of the empire; taxes were to be abolished, with the exception of a tribute payable every ten years; the imperial power was to subsist alone, as being recognized by the New Testament; all the other princes were to cease to reign; sixtyfour free tribunals were to be established, in which men of all classes should have a seat; all ranks were to return to their primitive condition; the clergy were to be henceforward merely the pastors of the churches;

princes and knights were to be simply the defenders of the weak; uniformity in weights and measures was to be introduced, and only one kind of money was to coined throughout the empire.

Meanwhile the princes had shaken off their first lethargy, and George von Truchsess, commander-inchief of the imperial army, was advancing on the side of the Lake of Constance. On the 2nd of May he defeated the peasants at Beblingen, marched on the town of Weinsberg, where the unhappy Count of Helfenstein had perished, burnt and razed it to the ground, giving orders that the ruins should be left as an eternal monument of the treason of its inhabitants. At Furfeld he united with the Elector Palatine and the Elector of Treves, and all three moved towards Franconia.

The Frauenburg, the citadel of Wurtzburg, held out for the princes, and the main army of the peasants still lay before its walls. As soon as they heard of Truchsess' march, they resolved on an assault, and at nine o'clock at night on the 15th of May, the trumpets sounded, the tricolor flag was

unfurled, and the peasants rushed to the attack with horrible shouts.

Sebastian von Rotenhan, one of the warmest partisans of the Reformation, was governor of the castle. He had put the fortress in a formidable state of defense, and having exhorted the garrison to repel the assault with courage, the soldiers, holding up three fingers, had all sworn to do so. A most terrible conflict then took place. To the vigor and despair of the insurgents the fortress replied from its walls and towers by petards, showers of sulphur and boiling pitch, and the discharges of artillery. The peasants, thus struck by their unseen enemies, were staggered for a moment; but in an instant their fury grew more violent. The struggle was prolonged as the night advanced. The fortress, lit up by a thousand battle-fires, appeared in the darkness like a towering giant, who, vomiting flames, struggled alone amidst the roar of thunder for the salvation of the empire against the ferocious valor of these furious hordes. Two hours after midnight the peasants withdrew, having failed in all their efforts.

They now tried to enter into negotiations, either with the garrison or with Truchsess, who was advancing at the head of his army. But this was going out of their path; violence and victory alone could save them. After some little hesitation, they resolved to march against the imperial forces, but the cavalry and artillery made terrible havoc in their ranks. At Konigshofen, and afterwards at Engelstadt, those unfortunate creatures were totally defeated. The princes, nobles, and bishops, abusing their victory, indulged in the most unprecedented cruelties. The prisoners were hung on the trees by the wayside. The Bishop of Wurtzburg, who had run away, now returned, traversed his diocese accompanied by executioners, and watered it alike with the blood of the rebels and of the peaceful friends of the Word of God. Goetz von Berlichingen was sentenced to imprisonment for life.

The Margrave Casimir of Anspach put out the eyes of eighty-five insurgents, who had sworn that their eyes should never look upon that prince

again; and he cast this troop of blinded individuals upon the world, who wandered up and down, holding each other by the hand, groping along, tottering, and begging their bread. The wretched boy, who had played the dead-march on his fife at the murder of Helfenstein, was chained to a post; a fire was kindled around him, and the knights looked on laughing at his horrible contortions.

Public worship was everywhere restored in its ancient forms. The most flourishing and populous districts of the empire exhibited to those who traveled through them nothing but heaps of dead bodies and smoking ruins.

Fifty thousand men had perished, and the people lost nearly everywhere the little liberty they had hitherto enjoyed. Such was the horrible termination of this revolt in the south of Germany.

Chapter 11

Munzer at Mulhausen

But the evil was not confined to the south and west of Germany. Munzer, after having traversed a part of Switzerland, Alsace, and Swabia, had again directed his steps towards Saxony. A few citizens of Mulhausen, in Thuringia, had invited him to their city, and elected him pastor. The towncouncil having resisted, Munzer deposed it and nominated another, consisting of his friends, with himself at their head. Full of contempt for that Christ, "sweet as honey," whom Luther preached, and being resolved to employ the most energetic measures, he exclaimed: "Like Joshua, we must put all the Canaanites to the sword." He established a community of goods, and pillaged the convents. "Munzer," wrote Luther to Amsdorff on the 11th of April 1525, "Munzer is not only pastor, but king and emperor of Mulhausen." The poor no longer worked; if any one needed corn or cloth, he went and demanded it of some rich man; if the latter refused, the poor man took it by force; if he

resisted, he was hung.

As Mulhausen was an independent city, Munzer was able to exercise his power for nearly a year without opposition. The revolt in the south of Germany led him to imagine that it was time to extend his new kingdom.

He had a number of heavy guns cast in the Franciscan convent, and endeavored to raise the peasantry and miners of Mansfeldt. “How long will you sleep?” said he to them in a fanatical proclamation. “Arise and fight the battle of the Lord! The time is come. France, Germany, and Italy are moving. On, on, on! — Dran, Dran, Dran!......Heed not the groans of the impious ones. They will implore you like children; but be pitiless. — Dran, Dran, Dran!......The fire is burning: let your sword be ever warm with blood. — Dran, Dran, Dran!......Work while it is yet day.” The letter was signed “MUNZER, servant of God against the wicked.” The country people, thirsting for plunder, flocked round his standard.

Throughout all the districts of Mansfeldt, Stolberg, and Schwartzburg in Hesse, and the duchy of Brunswick, the peasantry rose in insurrection.

The convents of Michelstein, Ilsenburg, Walkenried, Rossleben, and many others in the neighborhood of the Hartz, or in the plains of Thuringia, were devastated. At Reinhardsbrunn, which Luther had visited, the tombs of the ancient landgraves were profaned, and the liberty destroyed.

Terror spread far and wide. Even at Wittenberg some anxiety was felt.

Those doctors, who had feared neither the emperor nor the pope, trembled in the presence of a madman. They were always on the watch for news, and every step of the rebels was counted. "We are here in great danger," said Melancthon. "If Munzer succeeds, it is all over with us, unless Christ should rescue us. Munzer advances with a worse than Scythian cruelty, and it is impossible to repeat his

dreadful threats." The pious elector had long hesitated what he should do. Munzer had exhorted him and all the princes to be converted, because (said he) their hour was come; and he had signed these letters: "MUNZER, armed with the sword of Gideon." Frederick would have desired to reclaim these misguided men by gentle measures. On the 14th of April, when he was dangerously ill, he had written to his brother John: "We may have given these wretched people more than one cause for insurrection. Alas! the poor are oppressed in many ways by their spiritual and temporal lords." And when his attention was directed to the humiliation, the revolutions, the dangers to which he would expose himself, unless he promptly stifled the rebellion, he replied: "Hitherto I have been a mighty elector, having chariots and horses in abundance; if it be God's pleasure to take them from me now, I will go on foot." The youthful Philip, landgrave of Hesse, was the first of the princes who took up arms. His knights and soldiers swore to live and die with him.

After pacifying his own states, he directed his

march towards Saxony. On their side, Duke John, the elector's brother, Duke George of Saxony, and Duke Henry of Brunswick, advanced and united their troops with those of Hesse. The peasants, terrified at the sight of this army, fled to a small hill, where, without any discipline, without arms, and for the most part without courage, they formed a rampart with their wagons. Munzer had not even prepared ammunition for his large guns. No succors appeared; the rebels were hemmed in by the army; they lost all confidence. The princes, taking pity on them, offered them propositions which they appeared willing to accept. Upon this Munzer had recourse to the most powerful lever that enthusiasm can put in motion. "Today we shall behold the arm of the Lord," said he, "and all our enemies shall be destroyed." At this moment a rainbow appeared over their heads; the fanatical host, who carried a rainbow on their flags, beheld in it a sure prognostic of the Divine protection. Munzer took advantage of it: "Fear nothing," said he to the citizens and peasants: "I will catch all their balls in my sleeve." At the same time he cruelly put to death a young gentleman, Maternus

von Geholfen, an envoy from the princes, in order to deprive the insurgents of all hope of pardon.

The landgrave, having assembled his horsemen, said to them: “I well know that we princes are often in fault, for we are but men; but God commands all men to honor the powers that be. Let us save our wives and children from the fury of these murderers. The Lord will give us the victory, for he has said: Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.” Philip then gave the signal of attack. It was the 15th of May 1525. The army was put in motion; but the peasant host stood immovable, singing the hymn, “Come, Holy Ghost,” and waiting for Heaven to declare in their favor. The artillery soon broke down their rude rampart, carrying dismay and death into the midst of the insurgents. Their fanaticism and courage at once forsook them; they were seized with a panic-terror, and ran away in disorder. Five thousand perished in the flight.

After the battle the princes and their victorious troops entered Frankenhausen. A soldier, who had

gone into a loft in the house where he was quartered, found a man in bed. "Who art thou," asked he; "art thou one of the rebels?" Then observing a pocket-book, he took it up, and found several letters addressed to Thomas Munzer. "Art thou Munzer?" demanded the trooper. The sick man answered "No." But as the soldier uttered dreadful threats, Munzer, for it was really he, confessed who he was. "Thou art my prisoner," said the horseman. When Munzer was taken before Duke George and the landgrave, he persevered in saying that he was right to chastise the princes, since they opposed the Gospel. "Wretched man!" replied they, "think of all those of whose death you have been the cause." But he answered, smiling in the midst of his anguish: "They would have it so!" He took the sacrament under one kind, and was beheaded at the same time with Pfeiffer, his lieutenant. Mulhausen was taken, and the peasants were loaded with chains.

A nobleman having observed among the crowd of prisoners a peasant of favorable appearance, went up and said to him: "Well, my man, which

government do you like best — that of the peasants or of the princes?” The poor fellow made answer with a deep sigh: “Ah, my lord, no knife cuts so deep as the rule of peasant over his fellows.” The relics of the insurrection were quenched in blood; Duke George, in particular, acted with the greatest severity. In the states of the elector, there were neither executions nor punishment. The Word of God, preached in all its purity, had shown its power to restrain the tumultuous passions of the people.

From the very beginning, indeed, Luther had not ceased to struggle against the rebellion, which was, in his opinion, the forerunner of the judgmentday.

Advice, prayers, and even irony had not been spared. At the end of the articles drawn up at Erfurth by the rebels, he had subjoined, as a supplementary article: “Item, The following article has been omitted.

Henceforward the honorable council shall have no power; it shall do nothing; it shall sit like an idol

or a log of wood; the commonalty shall chew its food, and it shall govern with its hands and feet tied; henceforth the wagon shall guide the horses, the horses shall hold the reins, and we shall go on admirably, in conformity with the glorious system set forth in these articles.” Luther did not confine himself to writing. While the disturbance was still at its height, he quitted Wittenberg and went through some of the districts where the agitation was greatest. He preached, he labored to soften his hearers’ hearts, and his hand, to which God had given power, turned aside, quieted, and brought back the impetuous and overflowing torrents into their natural channels.

In every quarter the doctors of the Reformation exerted a similar influence.

At Halle, Brentz had revived the drooping spirits of the citizens by the promises of God’s Word, and four thousand peasants had fled before six hundred citizens. At Ichterhausen, a mob of peasants having assembled with an intent to demolish several castles and put their lords to

death, Frederick Myconius went out to them alone, and such was the power of his words, that they immediately abandoned their design. Such was the part taken by the reformers and the Reformation in the midst of this revolt; they contended against it with all their might, with the sword of the Word, and boldly maintained those principles which alone, in every age, can preserve order and subjection among the nations.

Accordingly, Luther asserted that if the power of sound doctrine had not checked the fury of the people, the revolt would have extended its ravages far more widely, and have overthrown both Church and State. Everything leads us to believe that these melancholy prognostics would have been realized.

If the reformers thus contended against sedition, it was not without receiving grievous wounds. That moral agony which Luther had first suffered in his cell at Erfurth, became still more serious after the insurrection of the peasants. No great change takes place among men without suffering on the part of those who are its

instruments. The birth of Christianity was effected by the agony of the cross; but He who hung upon that cross addressed these words to each of his disciples: Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the same baptism that I am baptized with?

On the side of the princes, it was continually repeated that Luther and his doctrine were the cause of the revolt, and, however absurd this idea may be, the reformer could not see it so generally entertained without experiencing the deepest grief. On the side of the people, Munzer and all the leaders of the insurrection represented him as a vile hypocrite, a flatterer of the great, and these calumnies easily obtained belief. The violence with which Luther had declared against the rebels had displeased even moderate men. The friends of Rome exulted; all were against him, and he bore the heavy anger of his times. But his greatest affliction was to behold the work of heaven thus dragged in the mire, and classed with the most fanatical projects. Here he felt was his Gethsemane: he saw the bitter cup that was

presented to him; and foreboding that he would be forsaken by all, he exclaimed: “Soon, perhaps, I also shall be able to say: All ye shall be offended because of me this night.” Yet in the midst of this deep bitterness, he preserved his faith: “He who has given me power to trample the enemy under foot,” said he, “when he rose up against me like a cruel dragon or a furious lion, will not permit this enemy to crush me, now that he appears before me with the treacherous glance of the basilisk. I groan as I contemplate those calamities. Often have I asked myself, whether it would not have been better to have allowed the papacy to go on quietly, rather than witness the occurrence of so many troubles and seditions in the world. But no! it is better to have snatched a few souls from the jaws of the devil, than to have left them all between his murderous fangs.” Now terminated the revolution in Luther’s mind that had begun at the period of his return from the Wartburg. The inner life no longer satisfied him: the Church and her institutions now became most important in his eyes. The boldness with which he had thrown down everything was checked at the sight of still more sweeping

destructions; he felt it his duty to preserve, govern, and build up; and from the midst of the bloodstained ruins with which the peasant war had covered all Germany, the edifice of the new Church began slowly to arise.

These disturbances left a lasting and deep impression on men's minds. The nations had been struck with dismay. The masses, who had sought in the Reformation nothing but political reform, withdrew from it of their own accord, when they saw it offered them spiritual liberty only. Luther's opposition to the peasants was his renunciation of the ephemeral favor of the people. A seeming tranquillity was soon established, and the noise of enthusiasm and sedition was followed in all Germany by a silence inspired by terror. Thus the popular passions, the cause of revolution, the interests of a radical equality, were quelled in the empire; but the Reformation did not yield. These two movements, which many have confounded with each other, were clearly marked out by the difference of their results. The insurrection was from below; the Reformation from above. A few

horsemen and cannons were sufficient to put down the one; but the other never ceased to rise in strength and vigor, in despite of the reiterated assaults of the empire and the Church.

Chapter 12

Death of the Elector Frederick

Meanwhile the cause of the Reformation itself appeared as if it would perish in the gulf that had swallowed up the liberties of the people. A melancholy event seemed destined to accelerate its fall. At the moment when the princes were marching against Munzer, and ten days before his defeat, the aged Elector of Saxony, that man whom God had raised up to defend the Reformation against all dangers from without, descended to the tomb.

His strength diminished day by day; the horrors that accompanied the peasant war wrung his feeling heart. "Alas!" exclaimed he with a deep sigh, "if it were God's will, I should die with joy. I see neither love, nor truth, nor faith, nor any good remaining upon earth." Averting his eyes from the struggles then prevailing throughout Germany, this pious prince, who was at that time residing in the castle of Lochau, tranquilly prepared to depart. On

the 4th of May he called for his chaplain, the faithful Spalatin: “You do right to come and see me,” said he mildly, as the chaplain entered: “for it is our duty to visit the sick.” Then ordering his couch to be wheeled towards the table near which Spalatin was sitting, he bade his attendants leave the room, and then affectionately taking his friend’s hand, spoke with him familiarly about Luther, the peasants, and his approaching departure. Spalatin came again at eight in the evening; the aged prince then unburdened his soul, and confessed his sins in the presence of God. On the morrow, it was the 5th of May, he received the communion under both kinds. No member of his family was near him; his brother and his nephew were gone with the army; but his domestics stood around him, according to the ancient custom of those times. As they gazed on that venerable prince, whom it had been so sweet a task to serve, they all burst into tears. “My little children,” said he tenderly, “if I have offended any one of you, forgive me for the love of God; for we princes often give offense to the poor, and that is wrong.” Thus did Frederick obey the injunction of the

apostle: Let him that is rich rejoice in that he is made low; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

Spalatin did not leave him again; he set before him the rich promises of the Gospel, and the pious elector drank in its powerful consolations with indescribable peace. The doctrine of the Gospel was no longer to him that sword which attacks error, following it up wherever it may be found, and after a vigorous contest triumphing over it at last; it fell upon his heart like the dew, or the gentle rain, filling it with hope and joy. Frederick had forgotten the present world: he saw nothing but God and eternity.

Feeling the rapid approach of death, he destroyed a will that he had made some years before, and in which he had commended his soul to "the mother of God;" and dictated another, in which he called upon the holy and the sole merits of Jesus Christ "for the forgiveness of his sins," and declared his firm assurance "that he was redeemed by the precious blood of his beloved

Savior.” He then added: “I can say no more!” and that evening, at five o’clock, he quietly fell asleep. “He was a child of peace,” exclaimed his physician, “and in peace he has departed.” — “O bitter death to all whom he has left behind him!” said Luther. Luther, who was then travelling through Thuringia to allay the excitement, had never seen the elector, except at a distance, at Worms at the side of Charles the Fifth. But these two men had met in spirit from the very moment the reformer appeared. Frederick labored for nationality and independence, as Luther did for truth and reformation. Unquestionably the Reformation was above all things a spiritual work; but it was perhaps necessary for its early success that it should be linked with some national interest. Accordingly Luther had no sooner risen up against indulgences than the alliance between the prince and the monk was tacitly concluded: — an alliance that was purely moral, without contract or writing, or even words, and in which the strong man lent no aid to the weak, but only allowed him to act. But now that the vigorous oak was cut down under whose shelter the Reformation had gradually

grown up, — now that the enemies of the Gospel were everywhere manifesting fresh force and hatred, and that its supporters were compelled to hide themselves or remain silent, nothing seemed able to defend them any longer against the sword of those who were pursuing it with such violence.

The confederates of Ratisbon, who had conquered the peasants in the south and west of the empire, were in all parts attacking the Reformation and the revolt alike. At Wurtzburg and at Bamberg they put to death many of the most peaceable citizens, and even some of those who had resisted the peasants. "What matters it?" said they openly; "these people were attached to the Gospel." This was enough to make their heads fall on the scaffold. Duke George hoped to impart his hatred and his affections to the landgrave and Duke John. "See," said he to them after the defeat of the peasants, as he pointed to the field of battle, "see what miseries Luther has occasioned!" John and Philip appeared to give him hopes that they would adopt his ideas. "Duke George," said the reformer, "imagines he shall triumph, now that Frederick is

dead; but Christ reigns in the midst of His enemies: in vain do they gnash their teeth,......their desire shall perish." George lost no time in forming a confederation in the north of Germany, similar to that of Ratisbon. The Electors of Mentz and Brandenburg, Dukes Henry and Erick of Brunswick, and Duke George, met at Dessau and concluded a Romish alliance in the month of July. George urged the new elector and his son-in-law the landgrave to join it. And then, as if to intimate what might be expected of it, he beheaded two citizens of Leipsic in whose house some of the reformer's writings had been found.

At the same time letters from Charles V, dated from Toledo, arrived in Germany, by which another diet was convoked at Augsburg. Charles wished to give the empire a constitution that would enable him to dispose of the forces of Germany at his good pleasure. Religious differences offered him the means; he had only to let loose the Catholics against the followers of the Gospel, and when they had exhausted their strength, he would easily triumph over both. Down with the

Lutherans! was therefore the cry of the emperor. Thus all things combined against the Reformation. Never had Luther's spirit been overwhelmed by so many fears. The remnants of Munzer's party had sworn to take his life; his sole protector was no more; Duke George, he was informed, intended to have him arrested in Wittenberg itself; the princes who might have defended him bowed their heads, and seemed to have forsaken the Gospel; it was rumored that the university, the number of whose students was already diminished by these troubles, was about to be suppressed by the new elector; and Charles, victorious at Pavia, was assembling a new diet with the end of giving a deathblow to the Reformation. What dangers must not Luther have foreboded!......This anguish, these inward struggles, that had so often tortured him to groans, now wrung his soul. How can he resist so many enemies? In the midst of these agitations, in the face of so many dangers, beside the corpse of Frederick that was scarcely cold, and the dead bodies of the peasants that yet strewed the plains of Germany, Luther — none could certainly have imagined such a thing — Luther married.

Chapter 13

The Nuns of Nimptsch

In the monastery of Nimptsch, near Grimma in Saxony, dwelt in the year 1523 nine nuns, who were diligent in reading the Word of God, and who had discovered the contrast that exists between a christian and a cloistered life. Their names were Magdalen Staupitz, Eliza Canitz, Ava Grossen, Ava and Margaret Schonfeldt, Laneta Golis, Margaret and Catherine Zeschau, and Catherine Bora. The first impulse of these young women, after they were delivered from the superstitions of the monastery, was to write to their parents. “The salvation of our souls,” said they, “will not permit us to remain any longer in a cloister.” Their parents, fearing the trouble likely to arise from such a resolution, harshly rejected their prayers. The poor nuns were dismayed. How can they leave the monastery? Their timidity was alarmed at so desperate a step. At last, the horror caused by the papal services prevailed, and they promised not to leave one another, but to repair in a body to some

respectable place, with order and decency.

Two worthy and pious citizens of Torgau, Leonard Koppe and Wolff Tomitzsch, offered their assistance, which they accepted as coming from God himself, and left the convent of Nimptsch without any opposition, and as if the hand of the Lord had opened the doors to them.

Koppe and Tomitzsch received them in their wagon; and on the 7th of April 1523, the nine nuns, amazed at their own boldness, stopped in great emotion before the gate of the old Augustine convent in which Luther resided.

"This is not my doing," said Luther, as he received them; "but would to God that I could thus rescue all captive consciences and empty all the cloisters! — the breach is made!" Many persons offered to receive these nuns into their houses, and Catherine Bora found a welcome in the family of the burgomaster of Wittenberg.

If Luther at that time thought of preparing for

any solemn event, it was to ascend the scaffold, and not to approach the altar. Many months after this, he still replied to those who spoke to him of marriage: “God may change my heart, if it be his pleasure; but now at least I have no thought of taking a wife; not that I do not feel any attractions in that estate; I am neither a stock nor a stone; but every day I expect the death and the punishment of a heretic.” Yet everything in the Church was advancing. The habits of a monastic life, the invention of man, were giving way in every quarter to those of domestic life, appointed by God. On Sunday the 9th of October 1524, Luther, having risen as usual, laid aside the frock of the Augustine monk, and put on the dress of a secular priest; he then made his appearance in the church, where this change caused a lively satisfaction. Renovated Christendom hailed with transport everything that announced that the old things were passed away.

Shortly after this, the last monk quitted the convent; but Luther remained; his footsteps alone re-echoed through the long galleries; he sat silent and solitary in the refectory that had so lately

resounded with the babbling of the monks. An eloquent silence, attesting the triumphs of the Word of God! The convent had ceased to exist. About the end of December 1524, Luther sent the keys of the monastery to the elector, informing him that he should see where it might please God to feed him. The elector gave the convent to the university, and invited Luther to continue his residence in it. The abode of the monks was destined erelong to be the sanctuary of a christian family.

Luther, whose heart was formed to taste the sweets of domestic life, honored and loved the marriage state; it is even probable that he had some liking for Catherine Bora. For a long while his scruples and the thought of the calumnies which such a step would occasion had prevented his thinking of her; and he had offered the poor Catherine, first to Baumgartner of Nuremberg; and then to Dr. Glatz of Orlamund. But when he saw Baumgartner refuse to take her, and when she had declined to accept Glatz, he asked himself seriously whether he ought not to think of marrying

her himself.

His aged father, who had been so grieved when he embraced a monastic life, was urging him to enter the conjugal state. But one idea above all was daily present before Luther's conscience, and with greater energy: marriage is an institution of God, — celibacy an institution of man. He had a horror of every thing that emanated from Rome. He would say to his friends, "I desire to retain nothing of my papistical life." Day and night he prayed and entreated the Lord to deliver him from his uncertainty.

At last a single thought broke the last links that still held him captive. To all the motives of propriety and personal obedience which led him to apply to himself this declaration of God, It is not good that man should be alone, was added a motive of a higher and more powerful nature. He saw that if he was called to the marriage-state as a man, he was also called to it as a reformer: this decided him.

“If this monk should marry,” said his friend Schurff the lawyer, “he will make all the world and the devil himself burst with laughter, and will destroy the work that he has begun.” This remark made a very different impression on Luther from what might have been supposed. To brave the world, the devil, and his enemies, and, by an action which they thought calculated to ruin the cause of the Reformation, prevent its success being in any measure ascribed to him — this was all he desired.

Accordingly, boldly raising his head, he replied, “Well, then, I will do it; I will play the devil and the world this trick; I will content my father, and marry Catherine!” Luther, by his marriage, broke off still more completely from the institutions of the Papacy; he confirmed the doctrine he had preached, by his own example, and encouraged timid men to an entire renunciation of their errors. Rome appeared to be recovering here and there the ground she had lost; she flattered herself with the hope of victory; and now a loud explosion scattered terror and surprise through her ranks, and still more fully disclosed to her the

courage of the enemy she fancied she had crushed. "I will bear witness to the Gospel," said Luther, "not by my words only, but also by my works. I am determined, in the face of my enemies who already exult and raise the shout of victory, to marry a nun, that they may see and know that they have not conquered me. I do not take a wife that I may live long with her; but seeing the nations and the princes letting loose their fury against me, foreseeing that my end is near, and that after my death they will again trample my doctrine under foot, I am resolved for the edification of the weak to bear a striking testimony to what I teach here below." On the 11th of June 1525, Luther went to the house of his friend and colleague Amsdorff. He desired Pomeranus, whom he styled emphatically The Pastor, to bless his union. The celebrated painter Lucas Cranach and Doctor John Apella witnessed the marriage. Melancthon was not present.

No sooner was Luther married than all Europe was disturbed. He was overwhelmed with accusations and calumnies from every quarter. "It

is incest,” exclaimed Henry VIII. “A monk has married a vestal,” said some.

— “Antichrist will be the offspring of such a union,” said others; “for a prophecy announces that he will be born of a monk and a nun.” To this Erasmus replied with a sarcastic smile: “If the prophecy is true, what thousands of antichrists do not already exist in the world!” But while Luther was thus assailed, many wise and moderate men, whom the Roman Church still counted among her members, undertook his defense. “Luther,” said Erasmus, “has taken a wife from the noble family of Bora, but she has no dowry.” A more valuable testimony was now given in his favor.

The master of Germany, Philip Melancthon, whom this bold step had at first alarmed, said with that grave voice to which even his enemies listened with respect: “It is false and slanderous to maintain that there is anything unbecoming in Luther’s marriage. I think that in marrying he must have done violence to himself. A married life is one of humility, but it is also a holy state, if there be any

such in the world, and the Scriptures everywhere represent it as honorable in the eyes of God." Luther was troubled at first when he saw such floods of anger and contempt poured out upon him; Melancthon became more earnest in friendship and kindness towards him; and it was not long before the reformer could see a mark of God's approbation in this opposition of man.

"If I did not offend the world," said he, "I should have cause to fear that what I have done is displeasing to God." Eight years had elapsed between the time when Luther had attacked the indulgences and his marriage with Catherine Bora. It would be difficult to ascribe, as is still done, his zeal against the abuses of the Church to an "impatient desire" for wedlock. He was then forty-two years old, and Catherine Bora had already been two years in Wittenberg.

Luther was happy in this union. "The best gift of God," said he, "is a pious and amiable wife, who fears God, loves her family, with whom a man may live in peace, and in whom he may safely confide."

Some months after his marriage he informed one of his friends of Catherine's pregnancy, and a year after they came together she gave birth to a son. The sweets of domestic life soon dispersed the storms that the exasperation of his enemies had at first gathered over him. His Ketha, as he styled her, manifested the tenderest affection towards him, consoled him in his dejection by repeating passages from the Bible, exonerated him from all household cares, sat near him during his leisure moments, worked his portrait in embroidery, reminded him of the friends to whom he had forgotten to write, and often amused him by the simplicity of her questions. A certain dignity appears to have marked her character, for Luther would sometimes call her, My Lord Ketha. One day he said playfully, that if he were to marry again, he would carve an obedient wife for himself out of a block of stone, for, added he, "it is impossible to find such a one in reality." His letters overflowed with tenderness for Catherine; he called her "his dear and gracious wife, his dear and amiable Ketha." Luther's character became more cheerful in Catherine's society, and this happy frame of mind

never deserted him afterwards, even in the midst of his greatest trials.

The almost universal corruption of the clergy had brought the priesthood into general contempt, from which the isolated virtues of a few faithful servants of God had been unable to extricate it. Domestic peace and conjugal fidelity, those surest foundations of happiness here below, were continually disturbed in town and country by the gross passions of the priests and monks. No one was secure from those attempts at seduction.

They took advantage of the access allowed them into every family, and sometimes even of the confidence of the confessional, to instil a deadly poison into the souls of their penitents, and to satisfy their guilty desires.

The Reformation, by abolishing the celibacy of the ecclesiastics, restored the sanctity of the conjugal state. The marriage of the clergy put an end to an immense number of secret crimes. The reformers became the models of their flocks in the

most intimate and important relations of life; and the people were not slow in rejoicing to see the ministers of religion once more husbands and fathers.

Chapter 14

The Landgrave

At the first glance, Luther's marriage had, in truth, seemed to add to the difficulties of the Reformation. It was still suffering from the blow inflicted on it by the revolt of the peasants; the sword of the emperor and of the princes was yet unsheathed against it; and its friends, the Landgrave Philip and the new Elector John, appeared discouraged and silenced.

This state of things did not, however, last long. The youthful landgrave in a short time boldly raised his head. Ardent and courageous as Luther, the noble character of the reformer had won his esteem. He threw himself into the Reformation with all the enthusiasm of a young man, and at the same time studied it with all the gravity of a superior mind.

In Saxony, Frederick's place could not be supplied either in discretion or in influence; but his

brother, the Elector John, instead of confining himself to the passive part of a protector, interposed more directly and with greater courage in religious affairs. As he was leaving Weimar on the 16th of August 1525, he said to the assembled clergy, “I desire that you will in future preach the pure Word of God, without any additions of man.” Some aged ecclesiastics, who were puzzled how to obey his directions, replied artlessly, “But we are not forbidden to say mass for the dead, or to bless the water and salt?” — “Everything,” said the elector, “ceremonies as well as sermons, must be conformed to God’s Word.” Erelong the landgrave formed the extraordinary project of converting his father-in-law, Duke George. At one time he would establish the sufficiency of Scripture; at another, he would attack the mass, the papacy, and compulsory vows. Letter followed letter, and all the declarations of the Word of God were in turns opposed to the faith of the aged duke. These efforts did not prove unavailing. The son of Duke George was won to the new doctrine. But Philip did not succeed with the father. “A hundred years hence we shall see who is right,” said the latter. “A

terrible saying," observed the Elector of Saxony; "what can that faith be which requires such long experience? Poor duke!......he will wait long enough.

I fear God has hardened his heart, as he did Pharaoh's of old." In Philip the evangelical party found a bold and intelligent leader, capable of making head against the terrible attacks the enemy were planning against them. But have we not cause to regret that the chief of the Reformation should have been from this moment a man of the sword, and not simply a disciple of the Word of God? The human element expanded in the Reformation, and the spiritual element declined. This was injurious to the work; for every work should develop itself in accordance with the laws of its own nature, and the Reformation was of a nature essentially spiritual.

God was adding to the number of its supporters. Prussia, that powerful state on the frontiers of Germany, had already taken its station with joy under the banner of the Gospel. The chivalrous and religious spirit which had founded

the Teutonic order gradually faded away with the ages in which it had arisen. The knights, consulting their own interests alone, had dissatisfied the people under their rule. Poland had taken advantage of this in 1466 to compel the order to recognize her supremacy. The people, the knights, the grand-master, the Polish domination, were so many contrary powers ever in collision and rendering the prosperity of the country impossible.

Then came the Reformation, and it was perceived that this was the only means of salvation remaining for the unhappy people. Brismann, Speratus, Poliander who had been Dr. Eck’s secretary at the Leipsic dispute, and many others, preached the Gospel in Prussia.

One day a mendicant from the country under the rule of the Teutonic knights, arrived at Wittenberg, and stopping before Luther’s house, sang with a solemn voice the beautiful hymn by Poliander: — “To us at last salvation’s come!” The reformer, who had never heard this christian strain, listened in astonishment and rapture; the foreign

accent of the singer added to his delight: “Again, again,” said he when the mendicant had finished. He then asked where he had learned the hymn; and his tears began to flow when the poor man informed him that a cry of deliverance was sounding from the shores of the Baltic even to Wittenberg. Luther clasped his hands and thanked God. In truth the tidings of salvation had gone thither.

“Have pity on our wretched state,” said the people of Prussia to the grand-master, “and give us preachers who teach the pure doctrine of the Gospel.” Albert at first made no reply; but entered into correspondence with Sigismund, king of Poland, his uncle and lord-suzerain.

The latter recognized him as hereditary duke of Prussia, and the new prince make a public entry into his capital of Konigsberg with the ringing of bells and the acclamations of the people; all the houses were splendidly decorated, and the streets strewn with flowers. “There is but one order,” said Albert, “and that is Christianity.” The monastic

orders were disappearing, and this Divine order was reestablished.

The bishops resigned their secular rights to the new duke; the convents were changed into hospitals, the Gospel was preached in the meanest villages, and in the following year Albert married Dorothea, daughter of the King of Denmark, whose "faith in the one only Savior" was not to be shaken.

The pope called upon the emperor to take severe measures against this "apostate" monk, and Charles laid Albert under an interdict.

Another prince of the family of Brandenburg, the Cardinal-archbishop of Mentz, was then on the point of following his cousin's example. The peasant-wars more especially threatened the ecclesiastical states; the elector, Luther, and all Germany imagined they were on the eve of a great revolution. The archbishop, thinking the only way of preserving his principality would be to secularize it, secretly invited Luther to prepare the people for this daring step, which the latter did by a

letter addressed to the archbishop and intended to be made public: “God,” said he, “has laid his heavy hand upon the clergy; they must fall, nothing can save them.” But the peasant-war having come to an end more speedily than had been anticipated, the cardinal kept his temporal possessions; his anxiety disappeared, and he renounced his plans of secularization.

While John of Saxony, Philip of Hesse, and Albert of Prussia were taking so prominent a part in the Reformation, and instead of the prudent Frederick three princes were found full of resolution and courage, the holy work was advancing in the Church and among the nations. Luther entreated the elector to establish the evangelical ministry instead of the Roman priesthood, and to direct a general visitation of the churches. About the same time they were beginning at Wittenberg to exercise the episcopal functions and to ordain ministers. “Let not the pope, the bishops, the monks, and the priests exclaim: ‘We are the Church; whosoever separates from us, separates from the Church!’ There is no

other Church than the assembly of those who have the Word of God, and who are purified by it." Such was the language of Melancthon.

All this could not be said and done without occasioning a strong reaction.

Rome had thought the Reformation extinguished in the blood of the rebellious peasants: but its flames burst forth again in every quarter with greater power and brightness. She resolved on making another effort. The pope and the emperor wrote threatening letters, — the one from Rome, the other from Spain. The imperial government prepared to set matters on their old footing; and the idea was seriously entertained of effectually crushing the Reformation in the approaching diet.

On the 7th of November, the electoral prince of Saxony and the landgrave met in alarm at the castle of Friedewalt, and agreed that their deputies at the diet should act in concert. Thus in the forest of Sullingen were created the first elements of an

evangelical alliance, in opposition to the leagues of Ratisbon and Dessau.

The diet opened at Augsburg on the 11th of December. The evangelical princes were not present in person. From the very first the deputies of Saxony and Hesse spoke out boldly: “The insurrection of the peasants,” said they, “was owing to an impolitic severity. It is neither be fire nor sword that God’s truth can be torn from the heart. If you determine to employ violent measures against the Reformation, more terrible calamities will befall you than those from which you have so recently and so narrowly escaped.” It was felt that whatever resolution was adopted, its results would be of the greatest importance. Every one desired to put off the decisive moment, in order to increase his own strength. They therefore determined to assemble again at Spires in the month of May following; and that in the meanwhile the recess of Nuremberg should continue in force. Then, said they, we will enter thoroughly into the subject “of the holy faith, of justice, and of peace.” The landgrave persevered in his plan. He had a

conference with the elector at Gotha at the end of February. These two princes agreed that if they were attacked on account of the Word of God, they should unite their forces to resist their adversaries. This alliance was ratified at Torgau, and was destined to produce important results.

The alliance of Torgau did not satisfy the landgrave. Convinced that Charles V was endeavoring to form a league “against Christ and his holy Word,” he wrote letter after letter to the elector, representing to him the necessity of combining with other states. “As for me,” wrote he, “I would rather die than renounce the Word of God and allow myself to be driven from my throne.” There was great uncertainty at the electoral court. In fact, a serious obstacle stood in the way of any union between the evangelical princes, and this obstacle was Luther and Melancthon. Luther desired that the evangelical doctrine should be defended by God alone. He thought that the less men interfered with it, the more striking would be God’s interposition.

It seemed to him that whatever measures they desired to take, they must be ascribed to an unworthy timidity or a blamable mistrust. Melancthon feared that the alliance of the evangelical princes would precipitate that very struggle which they were desirous of avoiding.

The landgrave was not to be checked by these considerations, and he endeavored to bring the neighboring states into the alliance; but his exertions were not crowned with success. Frankfort refused to enter it.

The Elector of Treves abandoned his opposition and accepted a pension from the emperor. Even the elector-palatine, whose evangelical disposition was well known, rejected Philip’s proposals.

Thus the landgrave failed on the side of the Rhine; but the elector, notwithstanding the opinions of the theologians of the Reformation, entered into negotiations with the princes who had at all times rallied round the powerful house of

Saxony. On the 12th of June, the elector and his son, the Dukes Philip, Ernest, Otho, and Francis of Brunswick and Luneburg, Duke Henry of Mecklenburg, Prince Wolff of Anhalt, Counts Albert and Gebhard of Mansfeldt, assembled at Magdeburg; and there, under the presidence of the elector, they formed an alliance similar to that of Torgau.

"Almighty God," said these princes, "having in his unspeakable mercy revived among men his holy and eternal Word, the food of our souls, and our greatest treasure here below; and great exertions having been made on the part of the clergy and their adherents to suppress and extirpate it, we, being firmly assured that He who hath sent it to glorify His name upon earth, will also know how to maintain it, bind ourselves to preserve that blessed Word for our people, and to that end to employ our goods, our lives, our states, our subjects, and all that we possess; putting our trust, not in our armies, but solely in the omnipotence of the Lord, whose instruments we desire to be." Such was the language of the princes.

Two days after, the city of Magdeburg was received into the alliance, and the new duke of Prussia, Albert of Brandenburg, acceded to it by a separate treaty.

The evangelical alliance was thus formed; but the perils that it was intended to avert became every day more threatening. The clergy and the princes friendly to Rome had seen the Reformation, which they had thought stifled, suddenly growing up before them in a formidable shape.

Already the partisans of the Reformation were almost as powerful as those of the pope. If they had a majority in the diet, the consequences to the ecclesiastical states might easily be imagined. Now or never! It is no longer a question of refuting a heresy; they have to contend against a powerful party. Other victories than those of Dr. Eck are required to save Christendom.

Effectual precautions had already been taken.

The metropolitan chapter of the collegiate church at Mentz had called a meeting of all its suffragans, and decided on sending a deputation to the emperor and the pope, calling on them to preserve the Church.

At the same time, Duke George of Saxony, Duke Henry of Brunswick, and the Cardinal-elector Albert, had met at Halle, and resolved to address a memorial to Charles V. “The detestable doctrine of Luther,” said they, “is making rapid progress. Every day attempts are made to gain over even us; and as they cannot succeed by gentle measures, they are striving to compel us, by exciting our subjects to revolt. We implore the assistance of the emperor.” Immediately after this conference, Brunswick himself set out for Spain in order to influence Charles’s determination.

He could not have arrived at a more favorable moment; the emperor had just concluded the famous treaty of Madrid with France; he seemed to have nothing more to fear in that quarter, and his eyes were now turned solely towards Germany.

Francis I had offered to defray a moiety of the expenses of a war, either against the heretics or against the Turks.

The emperor was at Seville, where he was about to marry a princess of Portugal, and the banks of the Guadalquivir re-echoed with the noise of his festivities. A glittering train of nobles and a vast concourse of people crowded that ancient capital of the Moors. Under the arched roof of its magnificent cathedral were displayed all the pompous ceremonies of the Church; a legate from the pope officiated, and never, even under the dominion of the Arabs, had Andalusia witnessed a spectacle of greater splendor and solemnity.

At this very moment Henry of Brunswick arrived from Germany, and besought Charles to rescue the empire and the Church from the attacks of the monk of Wittenberg. His request was immediately taken into consideration, and the emperor decided on adopting vigorous measures.

On the 23rd of March 1526, he wrote to several

of the princes and cities that had remained faithful to Rome. At the same time he gave Henry of Brunswick a special commission to inform them verbally that he had been seriously grieved to learn that the continual progress of the Lutheran heresy threatened to fill Germany with sacrilege, devastation, and bloodshed; that on the contrary he beheld with extreme pleasure the fidelity of the majority of the states; that, laying aside all other occupations, he was about to leave Spain and repair to Rome, to come to an understanding with the pope, and from thence proceed to Germany to fight against the abominable pest of Wittenberg; that, on their parts, it was their duty to adhere to their faith; and if the Lutherans sought to lead them into error by stratagem or force, they should form a close alliance and boldly resist them; and that he would soon arrive and support them with all his power. When Brunswick returned to Germany, the Romish party were transported with joy and proudly lifted up their heads. The Dukes of Brunswick and Pomerania, Albert of Mecklenburg, John of Juliers, George of Saxony, the Dukes of Bavaria, and all the princes of the Church, thought themselves

secure of victory, as they read the menacing letters of the conqueror of Francis I. They resolved to attend the approaching diet, to humble the heretical princes, and if they did not submit, to compel them by the sword. Duke George is reported to have said, “I may be Elector of Saxony whenever I please;” he subsequently, however, endeavored to give another meaning to these words. “Luther’s cause will not last long: let him look to it!” said the duke’s chancellor one day at Torgau, with an air of triumph.

Luther, indeed, was looking to it, but not as the chancellor understood the expression; he was attentively watching the motions of the enemies of God’s Word, and, like Melancthon, imagined he saw thousands of swords unsheathed against the Gospel. But he sought for other and higher strength than that of man. “Satan,” wrote he to Frederick Myconius, “is putting forth his fury; ungodly pontiffs are conspiring; and we are threatened with war. Exhort the people to contend valiantly before the throne of the Lord by faith and prayer, so that our enemies, vanquished by the Spirit of God, may

be constrained to peace. Our chief want, our chief labor is prayer; let the people know that they are now exposed to the edge of the sword and to the rage of Satan, and let them pray." Thus were all things tending towards a decisive struggle. The Reformation had on its side the prayers of Christians, the sympathy of the people, and an increasing influence over men's minds that no power could check. The papacy had in its favor the ancient order of things, the strength of old custom, the zeal and hatred of formidable princes, and the power of that mighty emperor who reigned over two worlds, and who had just before given so rude a check to the ambition of Francis the First.

Such was the state of affairs when the Diet of Spires was opened. Now let us return to Switzerland.