THE PROTEST AND THE CONFERENCE (1526–1529)

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Chapter 1

Twofold Movement of Reform

We have witnessed the commencement, the struggles, the reverses, and the progress of the Reformation; but the conflicts hitherto described have been only partial; we are entering upon a new period, — that of general battles.

Spires (1529) and Augsburg (1530) are names that shine forth with more immortal glory than Marathon, Pavia, or Marengo. Forces that up to the present time were separate, are now uniting into one energetic band; and the power of God is at work in those brilliant actions, which open a new era in the history of nations, and communicate an irresistible impulse to mankind. The passage from the middle ages to modern times has arrived.

A great protest is about to be accomplished; and although there have been protestants in the Church from the very beginning of Christianity, since liberty and truth could not be maintained here

below, save by protesting continually against despotism and error, Protestantism is about to take a new step. It is about to become a body, and thus attack with greater energy that “mystery of iniquity” which for ages has taken a bodily shape at Rome, in the very temple of God. But although we have to treat of protests, it must not however be imagined that the Reformation is a negative work. In every sphere in which anything great is evolved, whether in nature or society, there is a principle of life at work, — a seed that God fertilizes. The Reformation, when it appeared in the sixteenth century, did not, indeed, perform a new work, for a reformation is not a formation; but it turned its face toward the beginnings of Christianity; it seized upon them with affection, and embraced them with adoration. Yet it was not satisfied with this return to primitive times.

Laden with its precious burden, it again crossed the interval of ages, and brought back to fallen and lifeless Christendom the sacred fire that was destined to restore it to light and life. In this twofold movement consisted its action and its

strength. Afterwards, no doubt, it rejected superannuated forms, and combated error; but this was, so to speak, only the least of its works, and its third movement. Even the protest of which we have to speak had for its end and aim the re-establishment of truth and of life, and was essentially a positive act.

This powerful and rapid twofold action of reform, by which the apostolic times were re-established at the opening of modern history, proceeded not from man. A reformation is not arbitrarily made, as charters and revolutions are in some countries. A real reformation, prepared during many ages, is the work of the Spirit of God. Before the appointed hour, the greatest geniuses and even the most faithful of God's servants cannot produce it; but when the reforming time is come, when it is God's pleasure to renovate the affairs of the world, the divine life must clear a passage, and it is able to create of itself the humble instruments by which this life is communicated to the human race. Then, if men are silent, the very stones will cry out. It is to the protest of Spires (1529) that we

are now about to turn our eyes; but the way to this protest was prepared by years of peace, and followed by attempts at concord that we shall have also to describe.

Nevertheless the formal establishment of Protestantism remains the great fact that prevails in the history of the Reformation from 1526 to 1529.

The Duke of Brunswick had brought into Germany the threatening message of Charles the Fifth. That emperor was about to repair from Spain to Rome to come to an understanding with the pope, and from thence to pass into Germany to constrain the heretics. The last summons was to be addressed to them by the Diet of Spires, 1526. The Decisive hour for the Reformation was on the point of striking.

On the 25th June 1526, the diet opened. In the instructions, dated at Seville, 23rd March, the emperor ordered that the Church customs should be maintained entire, and called upon the diet to punish those who refused to carry out the edict of

Worms. Ferdinand himself was at Spires, and his presence rendered these orders more formidable. Never had the hostility which the Romish partisans entertained against the evangelical princes, appeared in so striking a manner. “The Pharisees,” said Spalatin, “are inveterate in their hatred against Jesus Christ.” Never also had the evangelical princes showed so much hope. Instead of coming forward frightened and trembling, like guilty men, they were seen advancing, surrounded by the ministers of the word, with uplifted heads and cheerful looks. Their first step was to ask for a place of worship. The Bishop of Spires, count-palatine of the Rhine, having indignantly refused this strange request, the princes complained of it as an act of injustice, and ordered their ministers to preach daily in the halls of their palaces, which were immediately filled by an immense crowd from the city and the country, amounting to many thousands. In vain on the feast days did Ferdinand, the ultra-montane princes, and the bishops assist in the pomps of the Roman worship in the beautiful cathedral of Spires; the unadorned Word of God, preached in the protestant vestibules, engrossed all

hearers, and the mass was celebrated in an empty church. It was not only the ministers, but the knights and the grooms, “mere idiots,” who, unable to control their zeal, everywhere eagerly extolled the Word of the Lord. All the followers of the evangelical princes wore these letters embroidered on their right sleeves: V. D. M. I. AE., that is to say, “The Word of the Lord endureth for ever.” The same inscription might be read on the escutcheons of the princes, suspended over their hotels. The Word of God — such from this moment was the palladium of the Reformation.

This was not all. The Protestants knew that the mere worship would not suffice: the landgrave had therefore called upon the elector to abolish certain “court customs” which dishonored the Gospel. These two princes had consequently drawn up an order of living which forbade drunkenness, debauchery, and other vicious customs prevalent during a diet. Perhaps the protestant princes sometimes put forward their dissent beyond what prudence would have required. Not only they did not go to mass, and did not observe the prescribed

fasts, but still further, on the fast days, their attendants were seen publicly bearing dishes of meat and game, destined for their masters' tables, and crossing, says Cochloeus, in the presence of the whole auditory, the halls in which the worship was celebrating. "It was," says this writer, "with the intent of attracting the catholics by the savor of the meats and of the wines." The elector in effect had a numerous court: seven hundred persons formed his retinue. One day he gave a banquet at which twenty-six princes with their gentlemen and councillors were present. They continued playing until a very late hour — ten at night. Everything in Duke John announced the most powerful prince of the empire. The youthful landgrave of Hesse, full of zeal and knowledge, and in the strength of a first christian love, made a still deeper impression on those who approached him. He would frequently dispute with the bishops, and owing to his acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, easily stopped their mouths. This firmness in the friends of the Reformation produced results that surpassed their expectation. It was no longer possible to be deceived: the spirit that was manifested in these

men was the spirit of the Bible.

Everywhere the scepter was falling from the hands of Rome. “The leaven of Luther,” said a zealous papist, “sets all the people of Germany in a ferment, and foreign nations themselves are agitated by formidable movements.” It was immediately seen how great is the strength of deep convictions. The states that were well disposed towards the reform, but which had not ventured to give their adhesion publicly, became emboldened. The neutral states, demanding the repose of the empire, formed the resolution of opposing the edict of Worms, the execution of which would have spread trouble through all Germany; and the papist states lost their boldness. The bow of the mighty was broken. Ferdinand did not think proper, at so critical a moment, to communicate to the diet the severe instructions he had received from Seville. He substituted a proposition calculated to satisfy both parties.

The laymen immediately recovered the influence of which the clergy had dispossessed

them. The ecclesiastics resisted a proposal in the college of princes that the diet should occupy itself with church abuses, but their exertions were unavailing. Undoubtedly a non-political assembly would have been preferable to the diet, but it was already a point gained that religious matters were no longer to be regulated solely by the priests.

As soon as this resolution was communicated to the deputies from the cities, they called for the abolition of every usage contrary to the faith in Jesus Christ. In vain did the bishops exclaim that, instead of doing away with pretended abuses, they would do much better to burn all the books with which Germany had been inundated during the last eight years. “You desire,” was the reply, “to bury all wisdom and knowledge.” The request of the cities was agreed to, and the diet was divided into committees for the abolition of abuses.

Then was manifested the profound disgust inspired by the priests of Rome. “The clergy,” said the deputy for Frankfort, “make a jest of the public good, and look after their own interests only.” “The

laymen," said the deputy from Duke George, "have the salvation of Christendom much more at heart than the clergy." The commissioners made their report: people were astonished at it. Never had men spoken out so freely against the pope and the bishops. The commission of the princes, in which the ecclesiastics and laymen were in equal numbers, proposed a fusion of popery and reform. "The priests would do better to marry," said they, "than to keep women of ill fame in their houses; every man should be at liberty to communicate under one or both forms; German and Latin may be equally employed in the Lord's Supper and in Baptism; as for the other sacraments, let them be preserved, but let them be administered gratuitously. Finally, let the Word of God be preached according to the interpretation of the Church (this was the demand of Rome), but always explaining Scripture by Scripture" (this was the great principle of the Reformation). Thus the first step was taken towards a national union. Still a few more efforts, and the whole German race would be walking in the direction of the Gospel.

The evangelical Christians, at the sight of this glorious prospect, redoubled their exertions. “Stand fast in the doctrine,” said the Elector of Saxony to his councillors. At the same time hawkers in every part of the city were selling Christian pamphlets, short and easy to read, written in Latin and in German, and ornamented with engravings, in which the errors of Rome were vigorously attacked. One of these books was entitled, The Papacy with its Members painted and described by Doctor Luther. In it figured the pope, the cardinals, and all the religious orders, exceeding sixty, each with their costumes and description in verse. Under the picture of one of these orders were the following lines: Greedy priests, see, roll in gold, Forgetful of the humble Jesu: under another: We forbid you to behold The Bible; lest it should mislead you! and under a third: We can fast and pray the harder With an overflowing larder. “Not one of these orders,” said Luther to the reader, “thinks either of faith or charity. This one wears the tonsure, the other a hood; this a cloak, that a robe. One is white, another black, a third gray, and a fourth blue. Here is one holding a looking-glass,

there one with a pair of scissors. Each has his playthings.....Ah! these are the palmer-worms, the locusts, the cankerworms, and the caterpillars, which, as Joel saith, have eaten up all the earth." But if Luther employed the scourges of sarcasm, he also blew the trumpet of the prophets; and this he did in a work entitled The Destruction of Jerusalem. Shedding tears like Jeremiah, he denounced to the German people a ruin similar to that of the holy city, if like it they rejected the Gospel. "God has imparted to us all his treasures," exclaimed he; "he became man, he has served us, he died for us, he has risen again, and he has so opened the gates of heaven, that all may enter.....The hour of grace is come.....The glad tidings are proclaimed..... But where is the city, where is the prince that has received them? They insult the Gospel: they draw the sword, and daringly seize God by the beard .....But wait.....He will turn round; with one blow will he break their jaws, and all Germany will be one vast ruin." These works had a very great sale. They were read not only by the peasants and townspeople, but also by the nobles and princes. Leaving the priests alone

at the foot of the altar, they threw themselves into the arms of the new Gospel. The necessity of a reform of abuses was proclaimed on the 1st of August by a general committee.

Then Rome, which had appeared to slumber, awoke. Fanatical priests, monks, ecclesiastical princes, all gathered round Ferdinand. Cunning, bribery, nothing was spared. Did not Ferdinand possess the instructions of Seville? To refuse their publication was to effect the ruin of the Church and of the empire. Let the voice of Charles, said they, oppose its powerful veto to the dizziness that is hurrying Germany along, and the empire will be saved! Ferdinand made up his mind, and at length, on the 3rd August, published the decree drawn up more than four months previously in favor of the edict of Worms. The persecution was about to begin; the reformers would be thrown into dungeons, and the sword drawn on the banks of the Guadalquivir would at last pierce the bosom of the Reformation.

The effect of the imperial ordinance was

immense. The breaking of an axletree does not more violently check the velocity of a railway train. The elector and the landgrave announced that they were about to quit the diet, and ordered their attendants to prepare for their departure. At the same time the deputies from the cities drew towards these two princes, and the Reformation appeared as if it would enter immediately upon a contest with the pope and Charles the Fifth.

But it was not yet prepared for a general struggle. The tree was destined to strike its roots deeper, before the almighty unchained the stormy winds against it. A spirit of blindness, similar to that which in former times was sent out upon Saul and Herod, then seized upon the great enemy of the Gospel; and thus was it that Divine Providence saved the Reformation in its cradle.

The first movement of trouble being over, the friends of the Gospel began to consider the date of the imperial instructions, and to weigh the new political combinations which seemed to announce to the world the most unlooked-for events. “When

the emperor wrote these letters," said the cities of Upper Germany, "he was on good terms with the pope, but now everything is changed. It is even asserted that he told Margaret, his representative in the Low Countries, to proceed gently with respect to the Gospel. Let us send him a deputation." That was not necessary. Charles had not waited until now to form a different resolution. The course of public affairs, taking a sudden turn, had rushed into an entirely new path.

Years of peace were about to be granted to the Reformation.

Clement VII, whom Charles was about to visit, according to the instructions of Seville, in order to receive the imperial crown in Rome itself and from his sacred hands, and in return to give up to the pontiff the Gospel and the reformation, — Clement VII, seized with a strange infatuation, had suddenly turned against this powerful monarch. The emperor, unwilling to favor his ambition in every point, had opposed his claims on the states of the Duke of Ferrara. Clement immediately became

exasperated, and cried out that Charles wished to enslave the peninsula, but that the time was come for re-establishing the independence of Italy.

This great idea of Italian independence, entertained at that period by a few literary men, had not, as in out days, penetrated the mass of the nation.

Clement therefore hastened to have recourse to political combinations. The Pope, the Venetians, and the King of France, who had scarcely recovered his liberty, formed a holy league, of which the King of England was by a bull nominated the preserver and protector. In June 1526, the emperor caused the most favorable propositions to be presented to the pope; but his advances were ineffectual, and the Duke of Sessa, Charles's ambassador at Rome, returning on horseback from his last audience, placed a court-fool behind him, who, by a thousand monkey tricks, gave the Roman people to understand how little they cared for the pope and his projects. Clement responded to these bravadoes by a brief,

in which he threatened the emperor with excommunication, and without loss of time pushed his troops into Lombardy, while Milan, Florence, and Piedmont declared for the holy league. Thus was Europe preparing to be avenged for the triumph of Pavia.

Charles did not hesitate. He wheeled to the right as quickly as the pope had done to the left, and turned abruptly towards the evangelical princes.

“Let us suspend the edict of Worms,” wrote he to his brother; “let us bring back Luther’s partisans by mildness, and by a good council cause the triumph of evangelical truth.” At the same time he demanded that the elector, the landgrave, and their allies should march with him against the Turks — or against Italy, for the common good of Christendom.

Ferdinand hesitated. To gain the friendship of the Lutherans was to forfeit that of the other princes, who were already beginning to utter

violent threats. The Protestants themselves were not very eager to take the emperor's hand. "It is God, God himself," they said, "who will save his churches." What was to be done? The edict of Worms could neither be repealed nor carried into execution.

So strange a situation led of necessity to the desired solution: religious liberty. The first idea of this occurred to the deputies of the cities. "In one place," said they, "the ancient ceremonies have been preserved; in another they have been abolished; and both think they are right. Let us allow every man to do as he thinks fit, until a council shall re-establish the desired unity by the Word of God." This idea gained favor, and the recess of the diet, dated the 27th August, decreed that a universal or at the least a national free council should be convoked within a year, that they should request the emperor to return speedily to Germany, and that,, until then, each state should behave in its own territory in such a manner as to be able to render an account to God and to the emperor. Thus they escaped from their difficulty

by a middle course; and this time it was really the true path. Each one maintained his rights, while recognizing another's. The diet of 1526 forms an important epoch in history: an ancient power, that of the middle ages, is shaken; a new power, that of modern times, is advancing; religious liberty boldly takes its stand in front of Romish despotism; a lay spirit prevails over the sacerdotal spirit. In this single step there is a complete victory: the cause of the reform is won.

Yet it was little suspected. Luther, on the morrow of the day on which the recess was published, wrote to a friend: "The diet is sitting at Spires in the German fashion. They drink and gamble, and there is nothing done except that." "Le congres danse et ne marche pas," has been said in our days. Great things are often transacted under an appearance of frivolity, and God accomplishes his designs unknown even to those whom he employs as his instruments. In this diet a gravity and love of liberty of conscience were manifested, which are the fruits of Christianity, and which in the sixteenth century had its earliest if not its most energetic

development among the German nations.

Yet Ferdinand still hesitated. Mahomet himself came to the aid of the Gospel. Louis, king of Hungary and Bohemia, drowned at Mohacz on the 29th August 1526, as he was fleeing from before Soliman II, had bequeathed the crown of these two kingdoms to Ferdinand. But the Duke of Bavaria, the Waywode of Transylvania, and, above all, the terrible Soliman, contested it against him. This was sufficient to occupy Charles’s brother: he left Luther, and hastened to dispute two thrones.

Chapter 2

Italian War

The emperor immediately reaped the fruits of his new policy. No longer having his hands tied by Germany, he turned them against Rome. The Reformation was to be exalted and the Papacy abased. The blows aimed at its pitiless enemy were about to open a new career to the evangelical work.

Ferdinand, who was destined by his Hungarian affairs, gave the charge of the Italian expedition to Freundsberg, that old general who had in so friendly a manner patted Luther on the shoulder, as the reformer was about to appear before the Diet of Worms. This veteran, who, as a contemporary observes, “bore in his chivalrous heart God’s holy Gospel, well fortified and flanked by a strong wall,” pledged his wife’s jewels, sent recruiting parties into all the towns of Upper Germany, and, owing to the magic idea of a war against the pope, soon witnessed crowds of soldiers flocking to his standard. “Announce,” Charles had said to his

brother, — “announce that the army is to march against the Turks; every one will know what Turks are meant.” Thus the puissant Charles, instead of marching with the pope against the Reformation, as he had threatened at Seville, marches with the Reformation against the pope. A few days had sufficed to produce this change of direction: there are few periods in history in which the hand of God is more plainly manifested. Charles immediately assumed all the airs of a reformer. On the 17th September, he addressed a manifesto to the pope, in which he reproaches him for behaving not like the father of the faithful, but like an insolent and haughty man; and declares his astonishment that he, Christ’s vicar, should dare shed blood to acquire earthly possessions, “which,” added he, “is quite contrary to the evangelical doctrine.” Luther could not have spoken better. “Let your holiness,” continued Charles the Fifth, “return the sword of St. Peter into the scabbard, and convoke a holy and universal council.” But the sword was much more to the pontiff’s taste than the council. Is not the papacy, according to the Romish doctors, the source of the two powers? Can it not depose kings,

and consequently fight against them? Charles prepared to requite “eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.” Now began that terrible campaign during which the storm burst on Rome and on the Papacy that had been destined to fall on Germany and the Gospel. By the violence of the blows inflicted on the pontifical city, we may judge of the severity of those that would have dashed in pieces the reformed churches. While retracing such scenes of horror, we have constant need of calling to mind that the chastisement of the seven-hilled city had been predicted by the Holy Scriptures. In the month of November, Freundsberg at the head of fifteen thousand men was at the foot of the Alps. The old general, avoiding the military roads, that were well guarded by the enemy, flung himself into a narrow path, over frightful precipices, that a few blows of the mattock would have rendered impassable. The soldiers were forbidden to look behind them; nevertheless their heads turned, their feet slipped, and horse and foot rolled from time to time into the abyss. In the most difficult passes, the surest-footed of the infantry lowered their long pikes to the right and left of their aged chief, by

way of barrier, and Freundsberg advanced clinging to the lansquenet in front, and pushed on by the one behind. In three days the Alps were crossed, and on the 19th November the army reached the territory of Brescia.

The Constable of Bourbon, who succeeded to the chief command of the imperial army after the death of Pescara, had just taken possession of the duchy of Milan. The emperor having promised him this conquest for a recompense, Bourbon was compelled to remain there some time to consolidate his power. At length, on the 12th February, he and his Spanish troops joined the army of Freundsberg, which was becoming impatient at his delays. The constable had many men, but no money; he resolved therefore to follow the advice of the Duke of Ferrara, that inveterate enemy of the princes of the Church, and proceed straight to Rome. The whole army received this news with a shout of joy. The Spaniards were filled with the desire of avenging Charles the Fifth, and the Germans were overflowing with hatred against the pope: all exulted in the hope of receiving their pay and of

having their labors richly repaid at last by those treasures of Christendom that Rome had been accumulating for ages. Their shouts re-echoed beyond the Alps. Every man in Germany thought that the last hour of the papacy had arrived, and prepared to contemplate its fall. “The emperor’s forces are triumphing in Italy,” wrote Luther; “the pope is visited from every quarter. His destruction draweth nigh: his hour and his end are come.” A few slight advantages gained by the papal soldiers in the kingdom of Naples, led to the conclusion of a truce that was to be ratified by the pope and by the emperor. As soon as this was known, a frightful tumult broke out in the constable’s army. The Spanish troops revolted, compelled him to flee, and pillaged his tent. Then approaching the lansquenets, they began to shout as loudly as they could, the only German words they knew: Lance! lance! money! money! Such cries found an echo in the bosoms of the imperialists: they were moved in their turn, and also began to shout with all their might: Lance! lance! money! money! Freundsberg beat to muster, and having drawn up the soldiers around him and his principal officers, calmly

demanded if he had ever deserted them. All was useless.

The old affection which the lansquenets bore to their leader seemed extinct.

One chord alone vibrated in their hearts: they must have pay and war.

Accordingly, lowering their lances, they presented them, as if they would slay their officers, and again began to shout, “Lance! lance! money! money!” When Freundsberg, whom no army however large had ever frightened, — Freundsberg, who was accustomed to say, “the more enemies, the greater the honor,” saw these lansquenets, at whose head he had grown gray, aiming their murderous steel against him, he lost all power of utterance, and fell senseless upon a drum, as if struck with a thunderbolt. The strength of the veteran general was broken for ever.

But the sight of their dying captain produced on the lansquenets an effect that no speech could have

made. All the lances were upraised, and the agitated soldiers retired with downcast eyes. Four days later, Freundsberg recovered his speech.

“Forward,” said he to the Constable; “God himself will bring us to the mark.” Forward! forward! repeated the lansquenets. Bourbon had no alternative: besides, neither Charles nor Clement would listen to any proposals of peace. Freundsberg was carried to Ferrara, and afterwards to his castle of Mindelheim, where he died after an illness of eighteen months; and on the 18th April, Bourbon took that highroad to Rome, which so many formidable armies coming from the north had already trodden.

While the storm descending from the Alps was approaching the eternal city, the pope lost his presence of mind, sent away his troops, and kept only his body-guard. More than thirty thousand Romans, capable of bearing arms, paraded their bravery in the streets, dragging their long swords after them, quarrelling and fighting; but these citizens, eager in the pursuit of gain, had little

thought of defending the pope, and hoping to derive great profit from his stay, they desired on the contrary that the magnificent Charles would come and settle in Rome.

On the evening of the 5th May, Bourbon arrived under the walls of the capital; and he would have begun the assault at that very moment had he been provided with ladders. On the morning of the 6th, the army, concealed by a thick fog which hid their movements, was put in motion, the Spaniards marching to their station above the gate of the Holy Ghost, and the Germans below. The Constable, wishing to encourage his soldiers, seized a scaling-ladder, mounted the wall, and called on them to follow him. At this moment a ball struck him: he fell, and expired an hour after. Such was the end of this unhappy man, a traitor to his king and to his country, and suspected even by his new friends.

His death, far from checking, served only to excite the army. Claudius Seidenstucker, grasping his long sword, first cleared the wall; he was followed by Michael Hartmann, and these two

reformed Germans exclaimed that God himself was marching before them in the clouds. The gates were opened, the army poured in, the suburbs were taken, and the pope, surrounded by thirteen cardinals, fled to the castle of St. Angelo.

The Imperialists, at whose head was now the Prince of Orange, offered him peace on condition of his paying three hundred thousand crowns. But Clement, who thought that the holy league was on the point of delivering him, and fancied he already saw their leading horsemen, rejected every proposition. After four hours' repose, the attack was renewed, and by sunset the army was master of all the city. It remained under arms and in good order until midnight, the Spaniards in the Piazza Navona, and the Germans in the Campofiore. At last, seeing no demonstrations either of war or of peace, the soldiers disbanded and ran to pillage.

Then began the famous "Sack of Rome." The papacy had for centuries put Christendom in the press. Prebends, annates, jubilees, pilgrimages, ecclesiastical graces, — she had made money of

them all. These greedy troops, that for months had lived in wretchedness, determined to make her disgorge. No one was spared, the imperial not more than the ultramontane party, the Ghibellines not more than the Guelfs. Churches, palaces, convents, private houses, basilics, banks, tombs — every thing was pillaged, even to the golden ring that the corpse of Julius II still wore on its finger. The Spaniards displayed the greatest skill, scenting out and discovering treasures in the most mysterious hidingplaces; but the Neapolitans were the most outrageous. “On every side were heard,” says Guicciardini, “the piteous shrieks of the Roman women and of the nuns whom the soldiers dragged away by companies to satiate their lust.

At first the Germans found a certain pleasure in making the papists feel the weight of their swords. But erelong, happy at procuring victuals and drink, they were more pacific than their allies. It was upon those things which the Romans called “holy” that the anger of the Lutherans was especially discharged. They took away the chalices, the pyxes, the silver remontrances, and clothed their

servants and camp-boys with the sacerdotal garments. The Campofiore was changed into an immense gambling-house. The soldiers brought thither golden vessels and bags full of crowns, staked them upon one throw of the dice, and after losing them, went in search of others. A certain Simon Baptista, who had foretold the sack of the city, had been thrown into prison by the pope; the Germans liberated him, and made him drink with them. But, like Jeremiah, he prophesied against all. “Rob, plunder,” cried he to his liberators; “you shall however give back all; the money of the soldiers and the gold of the priests will follow the same road.” Nothing pleased the Germans more than to mock the papal court. “Many prelates,” says Guicciardini, “were paraded on asses through all the city of Rome.” After this procession, the bishops paid their ransom; but they fell into the hands of the Spaniards, who made them pay it a second time.

One day a lansquenet named Guillaume de Sainte Celle put on the pope’s robes, and placed the triple crown upon his head; others gathered

round him, adorning themselves with the red hats and long robes of the cardinals; and going in procession upon asses through the streets of the city, they all arrived at last before the castle of St. Angelo, to which Clement VII had retired. Here the soldiercardinals alighted, and lifting up the front of their robes, kissed the feet of the pretended pontiff. The latter drank to the health of Clement VII, the cardinals kneeling did the same, and exclaimed that henceforward they would be pious popes and good cardinals, careful not to excite wars as their predecessors had done. They then formed a conclave, and the pope having announced to his consistory that it was his intention to resign the papacy, all hands were immediately raised for the election, and they cried out, “Luther is pope! Luther is pope!” Never had pontiff been proclaimed with such perfect unanimity. Such were the humors of the Germans.

The Spaniards did not let the Romans off so easily. Clement VII had called them “Moors,” and had published a plenary indulgence for whoever should kill any of them. Nothing, therefore, could

restrain their fury. These faithful Catholics put the prelates to death in the midst of horrible cruelties, destined to extort their treasures from them: they spared neither rank, sex, nor age. It was not until the sack had lasted ten days, and a booty of ten millions of golden crowns had been collected, and from five to eight thousand victims had perished, that quiet began to be in some degree restored.

Thus did the pontifical city decline in the midst of a long and cruel pillage, and that splendor with which Rome from the beginning of the sixteenth century had filled the world faded in a few hours. Nothing could preserve this haughty capital from chastisement, not even the prayers of its enemies. “I would not have Rome burnt,” Luther had exclaimed; “it would be a monstrous deed.” The fears of Melancthon were still keener: “I tremble for the libraries,” said he: “we know how hateful books are to Mars.” But in despite of these wishes of the reformers, the city of Leo X fell under the judgment of God.

Clement VII, besieged in the castle of St.

Angelo, and fearful that the enemy would blow his asylum into the air with their mines, at last capitulated. He renounced every alliance against Charles the Fifth, and bound himself to remain a prisoner until he had paid the army four hundred thousand ducats. The evangelical Christians gazed with astonishment on this judgment of the Lord. “Such,” said they, “is the empire of Jesus Christ, that the emperor, pursuing Luther on behalf of the pope, is constrained to ruin the pope instead of Luther. All things minister unto the Lord, and turn against his adversaries.”

Chapter 3

Profitable Calm

The Reformation needed some years of repose that it might increase and gain strength; and it could not enjoy peace, unless its great enemies were at war with each other. The madness of Clement VII was as it were the lightning-conductor of the Reformation, and the ruins of Rome built up the Gospel. It was not only a few months' gain; from 1526 to 1529 there was a calm in Germany, by which the Reformation profited to organize and extend itself. A constitution was now to be given to the renovated Church.

As the papal yoke had been broken, the ecclesiastical order required to be re-established. It was impossible to restore their ancient jurisdiction to the bishops; for these continental prelates maintained that they were, in an especial manner, the pope's servants. A new state of things was therefore called for, under pain of seeing the Church fall into anarchy. This was immediately

provided against. It was then that the evangelical nations separated definitely from that despotic dominion which had for ages kept all the West in bondage.

The diet had already on two occasions wished to make the reform of the Church a national work; the emperor, the pope, and a few princes were opposed to it; the diet of Spires had therefore resigned to each state the task that it could not accomplish itself.

But what constitution were they about to substitute for the papal hierarchy?

They could, while suppressing the pope, preserve the Episcopal order: it was the form nearest approximating that which was on the point of being destroyed. This was done in England, where we have an Episcopalian Church; but, as we have just observed, it could not be realized on the continent. There were no Latimers, no Cranmers among the continental bishops.

They might, on the contrary, reconstruct the ecclesiastical order, by having recourse to the sovereignty of God’s Word, and by re-establishing the rights of the christian people. This form was the most remote from the Roman hierarchy. Between these two extremes there were several middle courses.

The latter plan was Zwingle’s: but the reformer of Zurich had not fully carried it out. He had not called upon the christian people to exercise the sovereignty, and had stopped at the Council of Two Hundred as representing the Church. The step before which Zwingle had hesitated might be taken, and it was so. A prince did not shrink from what had alarmed even republicans. Evangelical Germany, at the moment when she began to try her hand on ecclesiastical constitutions, began with that which trenched deepest on the papal monarchy.

It was not, however, from Germany that such a system could proceed. If aristocratic England was destined to cling to the episcopal form, docile

Germany was destined the rather to stop in a governmental medium. The democratic extreme issued from Switzerland and France. One of Calvin's predecessors now hoisted that flag which the powerful arm of the Genevese Reformer was to lift again in after-years and plant in France, Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, and even in England, whence it was a century later to cross the Atlantic and summon North America to take its rank among the nations.

Philip of Hesse, who has been compared to Philip of Macedon in subtlety, and to his son Alexander in courage, was the most enterprising of all the evangelical princes. Philip comprehended that religion was at length acquiring its due importance; and far from opposing the great development that was agitating the people, he put himself in harmony with the new ideas.

The morning-star had risen for Hesse almost at the same time as for Saxony. In 1517, when Luther in Wittenberg was preaching the gratuitous remission of sins, men and women in Marburg

were seen repairing secretly to one of the ditches of the city, and there, collected round a solitary loophole, listening eagerly to the words of consolation that issued from within. It was the voice of the Franciscan, James Limburg, who having declared that for fifteen centuries the priests had falsified the Gospel of Christ, had been thrown into this gloomy dungeon. These mysterious assemblies lasted a fortnight. On a sudden the voice was silent; these lonely meetings had been discovered, and the Franciscan, torn from his cell, had been hurried away across the Lahnberg towards some unknown spot.

Not far from the Ziegenberg, some weeping citizens of Marburg came up with him, and hastily pulling aside the awning that covered his car, they asked him, “Whither are you going?” “Where God wills,” calmly replied the friar. He was never heard of again, and it is not known what became of him. These disappearances are usual in the papacy.

No sooner had Philip prevailed in the Diet of Spires, than he resolved on devoting himself to the

reformation of his hereditary states.

His resolute character made him incline towards the Swiss reform: it was not therefore one of the moderates that he wanted. He had formed a connection at Spires with James Sturm, the deputy from Strasburg, who spoke to him of Francis Lambert of Avignon, who was then at Strasburg.

Of a pleasing exterior and decided character, Lambert combined with the fire of the south all the perseverance of the north. He was the first in France to throw off the cowl, and from that time he had never ceased to call for a thorough reform in the Church. “Formerly,” said he, “when I was a hypocrite, I lived in abundance; now I consume frugally my daily bread with my small family; but I had rather be poor in Christ’s kingdom, than possess abundance of gold in the dissolute dwellings of the pope.” The landgrave saw that Lambert was just the man he required, and invited him to his court.

Lambert, desiring to clear the way for the

Reformation of Hesse, drew up one hundred and fifty-eight theses, which he entitled “paradoxes,” and posted them, according to the custom of the times, on the church doors.

Friends and enemies immediately crowded round them. Some Romancatholics would have torn them down, but the reformed townspeople kept watch, and holding a synod in the public square, discussed, developed, and proved these propositions, ridiculing at the same time the anger of the papists.

Boniface Dornemann, a young priest, full of self-conceit, whom the bishop, on the day of his consecration, had extolled above Paul for his learning, and above the Virgin for his chastity, finding himself too short to reach Lambert’s placard, borrowed a stool, and, surrounded by a numerous audience, began to read the propositions aloud. “All that is deformed ought to be reformed. The Word of God alone teaches us what ought to be so, and all reform that is effected otherwise is vain.” This was the first thesis. “Hem!” said the

young priest, “I shall not attack that.” He continued.

“It belongs to the Church to judge on matters of faith. Now the Church is the congregation of those who are united by the same spirit, the same faith, the same God, the same Mediator, the same Word, by which alone they are governed, and in which alone they have life.” “I cannot attack that proposition,” said the priest. He continued reading from his stool.

“The Word is the true key. The kingdom of heaven is open to him who believes the Word, and shut against him who believes it not.

Whoever, therefore, truly possesses the Word of God, has the power of the keys. All other keys, all the decrees of the councils and popes, and all the rules of the monks, are valueless.” Friar Boniface shook his head and continued.

“Since the priesthood of the Law has been abolished, Christ is the only immortal and eternal

priest, and he does not, like men, need a successor. Neither the Bishop of Rome nor any other person in the world is his representative here below. But all Christians, since the commencement of the Church, have been and are participators in his priesthood." This proposition smelt of heresy. Dornemann, however, was not discouraged; and whether it was from weakness of mind, or from the dawning of light, at each proposition that did not too much shock his prejudices, he repeated: "Certainly, I shall not attack that one!" The people listened in astonishment, when one of them — whether he was a fanatical Romanist, a fanatical reformer, or a mischievous wag, I cannot tell — tired with these continual repetitions, exclaimed: "Get down, you knave, who cannot find a word to impugn." Then rudely pulling away the stool, he threw the unfortunate clerk flat in the mud. On the 21st October, at seven in the morning, the gates of the principal church at Homburg were thrown open, and prelates, abbots, priests, counts, knights, and deputies of the towns, entered in succession, and among them was Philip, in his quality of first member of the church.

After Lambert had explained and proved his theses, he added: “Let him stand forth who has anything to say against them.” At first there was a profound silence; but at length Nicholas Ferber, superior of the Franciscans of Marburg, who in 1524, applying to Rome’s favorite argument, had entreated the Landgrave to employ the sword against the heretics, began to speak with drooping head and downcast eyes. As he invoked Augustin, Peter Lombard, and other doctors to his assistance, the landgrave observed to him: “Do not put forward the wavering opinions of men, but the Word of God, which alone fortifies and strengthens out hearts.” The Franciscan sat down in confusion, saying, “This is not the place for replying.” The disputation, however, recommenced, and Lambert, showing all the power of truth, so astonished his adversary, that the superior, alarmed at what he called “thunders of blasphemy and lightnings of impiety,” sat down again, observing a second time, “This is not the place for replying.” In vain did the Chancellor Feige declare to him that each man had the right of maintaining his opinion with full

liberty; in vain did the landgrave himself exclaim that the Church was sighing after truth: silence had become Rome's refuge. "I will defend the doctrine of purgatory," a priest had said prior to the discussion; "I will attack the paradoxes under the sixth head (on the true priesthood)," had said another; and a third had exclaimed, "I will overthrow those under the tenth head (on images);" but now they were all dumb.

Upon this Lambert, clasping his hands, exclaimed with Zacharias: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.

After three days of discussion, which had been a continual triumph for the evangelical doctrine, men were selected and commissioned to constitute the churches of Hesse in accordance with the Word of God. They were more than three days occupied in the task, and their new constitution was then published in the name of the synod.

The first ecclesiastical constitution produced by

the Reformation should have a place in history, and the more so as it was then put forward as a model for the new churches of Christendom. The autonomy or self-government of the Church is its fundamental principle: it is from the Church, from its representatives assembled in the name of the Lord, that this legislation emanates; there is no mention in the prologue either of state or of landgrave. Philip, content with having broken for himself and for his people the yoke of a foreign priest, had no desire to put himself in his place, and was satisfied with that external superintendence which is necessary for the maintenance of order.

A second distinctive feature in this constitution is its simplicity both of government and worship. The assembly conjures all future synods not to load the churches with a multitude of ordinances, “seeing that where orders abound, disorder superabounds.” They would not even continue the organs in the churches, because, said they, “men should understand what they hear.” The more the human mind has been bent in one direction, the more violent is the reaction when it is unbent. The

Church passed at that time from the extreme of symbols to the extreme of simplicity. These are the principal features of this constitution: — “The Church can only be taught and governed by the Word of its Sovereign Pastor. Whoever has recourse to any other word shall be deposed and excommunicated. “Every pious man, learned in the Word of God, whatever be his condition, may be elected bishop if he desire it, for he is called inwardly of God. “Let no one believe that by a bishop we understand anything else than a simple minister of the Word of God. “The ministers are servants, and consequently they ought not to be lords, princes, or governors.

“Let the faithful assemble and choose their bishops and deacons.

Each church should elect its own pastor. “Let those who are elected bishops be consecrated to their office by the imposition of the hands of three bishops; and as for the deacons, if there are no ministers present, let them receive the laying on of hands from the elders of the Church. “If a bishop

causes any scandal to the Church by his effeminacy, by the splendor of his garments, or by the levity of conduct, and if, on being warned, he persists, let him be deposed by the Church.

“Let each church place its bishop in a condition to live with his family, and to be hospitable, as St. Paul enjoins; but let the bishops exact nothing for their casual duties. “On every Sunday let there be in some suitable place an assembly of all the men who are in the number of the saints, to regulate with the bishop, according to God’s Word, all the affairs of the Church, and to excommunicate whoever gives occasion of scandal to the Church; for the Church of Christ has never existed without exercising the power of excommunication. “As a weekly assembly is necessary for the direction of the particular churches, so a general synod should be held annually for the direction of all the churches in the country. “All the pastors are its natural members; but each church shall further elect from its body a man full of the Spirit and of faith, to whom it shall intrust its powers for all that is in the jurisdiction of the synod. “Three visitors

shall be elected yearly, with commission to go through all the churches, to examine those who have been elected bishops, to confirm those who have been approved of, and to provide for the execution of the decrees of the synod." It will no doubt be found that this first evangelical constitution went in some points to the extreme of ecclesiastical democracy; but certain institutions had crept in that were capable of increase and of changing its nature. Six superintendents for life were afterwards substituted for the three annual visitors (who, according to the primitive institution, might be simple members of the church); and, as has been remarked, the encroachments, whether of these superintendents or of the state, gradually paralyzed the activity and independence of the churches of Hesse. This constitution fared like that of the Abbe Sieyes, in the year 8 (A.D. 1799), which although intended to be republican, served through the influence of Napoleon Bonaparte to establish the despotism of the empire.

It was not the less a remarkable work. Romish doctors have reproached the Reformation for

making the Church a too interior institution. In effect, the Reformation and Popery recognize two elements in the Church, — the one exterior, the other interior; but while Popery gives precedence to the former, the Reformation assigns it to the latter. If however it be a reproach against the Reformation for having an inward Church only, and for not creating an external one, the remarkable constitution of which we have just exhibited a few features, will save us the trouble of replying. The exterior ecclesiastical order, which then sprang from the very heart of the Reformation, is far more perfect than that of Popery.

One great question presented itself: Will these principles be adopted by all the Churches of the Reformation?

Everything seemed to indicate that they would. At that time the most pious men were of opinion, that the ecclesiastical power proceeded from the members of the Church. On withdrawing from the hierarchical extreme, they flung themselves into a democratical one. Luther himself had professed

this doctrine as early as 1523. When the Calixtins of Bohemia found that the bishops of their country refused them ministers, they had gone so far as to take the first vagabond priest. “If you have no other means of procuring pastors,” wrote Luther to them, “rather do without them, and let each head of a family read the Gospel in his own house, and baptize his children, sighing after the sacrament of the altar as the Jews at Babylon did for Jerusalem.” The consecration of the pope creates priests — not of God, but of the devil, ordained solely to trample Jesus Christ under foot, to bring his sacrifice to naught, and to sell imaginary holocausts to the world in his name. Men become ministers only by election and calling, and that ought to be effected in the following manner: — “First, seek God by prayer; then being assembled together with all those whose hearts God has touched, choose in the Lord’s name him or them whom you shall have acknowledged to be fitted for this ministry. After that, let the chief men among you lay their hands on them, and recommend them to the people and to the Church.” Luther, in thus calling upon the people alone to nominate their pastors, submitted

to the necessities of the times in Bohemia. It was requisite to constitute the ministry; and as the ministry had no existence, it could not then have the legitimate part that belongs to it in the choice of God’s ministers.

But another necessity, proceeding in like manner from the state of affairs, was to incline Luther to deviate in Saxony from the principles he had formerly laid down.

It can hardly be said that the German Reformation began with the lower classes, as in Switzerland and France; and Luther could scarcely find anywhere that christian people, which should have played so great a part in his new constitution. Ignorant men, conceited townspeople, who would not even maintain their ministers — these were the members of the Church. Now what could be done with such elements?

But if the people were indifferent, the princes were not so. They stood in the foremost rank of the great battle of the Reformation, and sat on the first

bench in the council. The democratic organization was therefore compelled to give way to an organization conformable to the civil government. The Church is composed of Christians, and they are taken wherever they are found — high or low. It was particularly in high stations that Luther found them. He admitted the princes (as Zwingle did the Council of Two Hundred) as representatives of the people, and henceforward the influence of the State became one of the principal elements in the constitution of the evangelical Church in Germany.

Thus Luther, setting out in principle from the democratic, arrived in fact at the Erastian extreme. Never perhaps was there so immense a space between the premises laid down by any man and the conduct he adopted.

If Luther crossed that wide interval without hesitation, it was not from mere inconsistency on his part; he yielded to the necessities of the times.

The rules of Church government are not, like

the doctrines of the Gospel, of an absolute nature; their application depends in a measure on the state of the Church. Nevertheless there was some inconsistency in Luther: he often expressed himself in a contradictory manner on what princes ought and ought not to do in the Church. This is a point upon which the reformer and his age had no very settled opinions: there were other questions to be cleared up.

In the mind of the reformer the tutelage of the princes was only to be provisional. The faithful being still in their minority, they had need of a guardian: but the era of the Church's majority might arrive, and then would come its emancipation.

As we said in another place, we will not decide on this great controversy of Church and State. But there are certain ideas which can never be forgotten. God is the principle from which every being emanates, and who ought to govern the whole world — societies as well as individuals — the State not less than the Church. God has to do

with governments, and governments with God. The great truths of which the Church is the depository are given from above to exert their influence on the whole nation, — on him who is seated on the throne, as well as on the peasant in his cottage: and it is not only as an individual that the prince must be partaker of this heavenly light; it is also that he may receive a Divine wisdom as governor of his people. God must be in the State. To place nations, governments, social and political life on one side, — and God, his Word, and his Church on the other, as if there were a great gulf between them, and that these two orders of things should never meet, — would be at once high treason against man and against God.

But if there ought to be a close union between these two spheres (the Church and State), we ought to seek the means best calculated to obtain it.

Now, if the direction of the Church is intrusted to the civil government, as was the case in Saxony, there is great reason to fear lest the reality of this union should be comprised, and the infiltration of

heavenly strength into the body of the nation be obstructed. The Church administered by a civil department will often be sacrificed to political ends, and, gradually becoming secularized, will lose its pristine vigor. This at least has taken place in Germany, where in some places religion has sunk to the rank of a temporal administration. In order that any created being may exercise all the influence of which it is capable, it ought to have a free development.

Let a tree grow unconfined in the open fields, you will better enjoy its cool shade, and gather more abundant fruits, than if you planted it in a vase and shut it up in your chamber. Such a tree is the Church of Christ.

The recourse to the civil power, which was perhaps at that time necessary in Germany, had still another consequence; when Protestantism became an affair of governments it ceased to be universal. The new spirit was capable of creating a new earth. But instead of opening new roads and of purposing the regeneration of all Christendom and the

conversion of the whole world, Protestantism shrank back, and Protestants sought to settle themselves as comfortably as possible in a few German duchies. This timidity, which has been called prudence, did immense injury to the Reformation.

The organizing power being once discovered in the councils of the princes, the reformers thought of organization, and Luther applied to the task; for although he was in an especial manner an assailant and Calvin an organizer, these two qualities, as necessary to the reformers of the Church as to the founders of empires, were not wanting in either of these great servants of God.

It was necessary to compose a new ministry, for most of the priests who had quitted the papacy were content to receive the watchword of Reform without having personally experienced the sanctifying virtue of the truth.

There was even one parish in which the priest preached the Gospel in his principal church, and

sang mass in its succursal. But something more was wanting: a christian people had to be created.

“Alas!” said Luther of some of the adherents of the Reform, “they have abandoned their Romish doctrines and rites, and they scoff at ours.” Luther did not shrink from before this double necessity; and he made provision for it. Convinced that a general visitation of the churches was necessary, he addressed the elector on this subject, on the 22nd October 1526. “Your highness, in your quality of guardian of youth, and of all those who know not how to take care of themselves,” said he, “should compel the inhabitants, who desire neither pastors nor schools, to receive these means of grace, as they are compelled to work on the roads, on bridges, and such like services. The papal order being abolished, it is your duty to regulate these things: no other person cares about them, no other can, and no other ought to do so. Commission, therefore, four persons to visit all the country; let two of them inquire into the tithes and church property; and let two take charge of the doctrine, schools, churches, and pastors.” It may be asked,

on reading these words, whether the Church which was formed in the first century without the support of princes, could not in the sixteenth be reformed without them?

Luther was not content with soliciting in writing the intervention of the prince. He was indignant at seeing the courtiers, who in the time of the Elector Frederick had shown themselves the inveterate enemies of the Reformation, now rushing, “sporting, laughing, skipping,” as he said, on the spoils of the Church. Accordingly, at the end of this year, the elector having come to Wittenberg, the reformer repaired immediately to the palace, made his complaint to the prince-electoral, whom he met at the gate, and then, without caring about those who would have stopped him, forced his way into the elector’s bedchamber, and addressing this prince, who was surprised at so unexpected a visit, begged him to remedy the evils of the Church. The visitation of the churches was resolved upon, and Melancthon was commissioned to draw up the necessary instructions.

In 1526, Luther published his “German Mass,” by which he signified the order of church service in general. “The real evangelical assemblies,” he said, “do not take place publicly, pell-mell, admitting people of every sort; but they are formed of serious Christians, who confess the Gospel by their words and by their lives, and in the midst of whom we may reprove and excommunicate those who do not live according to the rule of Christ Jesus. I cannot institute such assemblies, for I have no one to place in them; but if the thing becomes possible, I shall not be wanting in this duty.” It was with a conviction that he must give the Church, not the best form of worship imaginable, but the best possible, that Melancthon, like Luther, labored at his Instructions.

The German Reformation at that time tacked about, as it were. If Lambert in Hesse had gone to the extreme of a democratical system, Melancthon in Saxony was approximating the contrary extreme of traditional principles.

A conservative principle was substituted for a

reforming one. Melancthon wrote to one of the inspectors: “All the old ceremonies that you can preserve, pray do so. Do not innovate much, for every innovation is injurious to the people.” They retained, therefore, the Latin liturgy, a few German hymns being mingled with it; the communion in one kind for those only who scrupled from habit to take it in both; a confession made to the priest without being in any way obligatory; many saints’ days, the sacred vestments, and other rites, “in which,” said Melancthon, “there is no harm, whatever Zwingle may say.” And at the same time they set forth with reserve the doctrines of the Reformation.

It is but right to confess the dominion of facts and circumstances upon these ecclesiastical organizations; but there is a dominion which rises higher still — that of the Word of God.

Perhaps Melancthon did all that could be effected at that time; but it was necessary for the work to be one day resumed and re-established on its primitive plan, and this was Calvin’s glory.

A cry of astonishment was heard both from the camp of Rome and from that of the Reformation. “Our cause is betrayed,” exclaimed some of the evangelical Christians: “the liberty is taken away that Jesus Christ had given us.” On their part the Ultramontanists triumphed in Melancthon’s moderation: they called it a retractation, and took advantage of it to insult the Reform.

Cochloeus published a “horrible” engraving, as he styles it himself, in which, from beneath the same hood was seen issuing a seven-headed monster representing Luther. Each of these heads had different features, and all, uttering together the most frightful and contradictory words, kept disputing, tearing, and devouring each other. The astonished Elector resolved to communicate Melancthon’s paper to Luther. But never did the reformer’s respect for his friend show itself in a more striking manner. He made only one or two unimportant additions to this plan, and sent it back accompanied with the highest eulogiums. The Romanists said that the tiger caught in a net was

licking the hands that clipped his talons. But it was not so. Luther knew that the aim of Melancthon's labors was to strengthen the very soul of the Reformation in all the churches of Saxony. That was sufficient for him. He thought besides, that in every thing there must be a transition; and being justly convinced that his friend was more than himself a man of transition, he frankly accepted his views.

The general visitation began. Luther in Saxony, Spalatin in the districts of Altenburg and Zwickau, Melancthon in Thuringia, and Thuring in Franconia, with ecclesiastical deputies and several lay colleagues, commenced the work in October and November.

They purified the clergy by dismissing every priest of scandalous life; assigned a portion of the church property to the maintenance of public worship, and placed the remainder beyond the reach of plunder. They continued the suppression of the convents, and everywhere established unity of instruction. "Luther's greater and smaller

catechisms," which appeared in, contributed more perhaps than any other writings to propagate throughout the new churches the ancient faith of the apostles.

The visitors commissioned the pastors of the great towns, under the title of superintendents, to watch over the churches and the schools; they maintained the abolition of celibacy; and the ministers of the Word, become husbands and fathers, formed the germ of a third estate, whence in after-years were diffused in all ranks of society learning, activity, and light.

This is one of the truest causes of that intellectual and moral superiority which indisputably distinguishes the evangelical nations.

The organization of the churches in Saxony, notwithstanding its imperfections, produced for a time at least the most important results. It was because the Word of God prevailed; and because, wherever this Word exercises its power, secondary errors and abuses are paralyzed. The very

discretion that was employed really originated in a good principle. The reformers, unlike the enthusiasts, did not utterly reject an institution because it was corrupted. They did not say, for example, “The sacraments are disfigured, let us do without them! the ministry is corrupt, let us reject it!” — but they rejected the abuse, and restored the use. This prudence is the mark of a work of God; and if Luther sometimes permitted the chaff to remain along with the wheat, Calvin appeared later, and more thoroughly purged the christian threshing-floor.

The organization which was at that time going on in Saxony, exerted a strong reaction on all the German empire, and the doctrine of the Gospel advanced with gigantic strides. God’s design in turning aside from the reformed states of Germany the thunderbolt that he caused to fall upon the seven-hilled city, was clearly manifest. Never were years more usefully employed; and it was not only to framing a constitution that the Reformation devoted itself, it was also to extend its doctrine.

The duchies of Luneburg and Brunswick, many of the most important imperial cities, as Nuremberg, Augsburg, Ulm, Strasburg, Gottingen, Gosslar, Nordhausen, Lubeck, Bremen, and Hamburg, removed the tapers from the chapels, and substituted in their place the brighter torch of the Word of God.

In vain did the frightened canons allege the authority of the Church. “The authority of the Church,” replied Kempe and Zechenhagen, the reformer of Hamburg, “cannot be acknowledged unless the Church herself obeys her pastor Jesus Christ.” Pomeranus visited many places to put a finishing hand to the Reform.

In Franconia, the Margrave George of Brandenburg, having reformed Anspach and Bayreuth, wrote to his ancient protector, Ferdinand of Austria, who had knit his brows on being informed of these proceedings: “I have acted thus by God’s order; for he commands princes to take care not only of the bodies of their subjects, but also of their souls.” In East Friesland, on new-

year’s day 1527, a Dominican named Resius, having put on his hood, ascended the pulpit at Noorden, and declared himself ready to maintain certain theses according to the tenor of the Gospel. After silencing the Abbot of Noorden by the soundness of his arguments, Resius took off his cowl, left it on the pulpit, and was received in the nave by the acclamations of the faithful. Erelong the whole of Friesland laid aside the uniform of popery, as Resius had done.

At Berlin, Elizabeth, electress of Brandenburg, having read Luther’s works, felt a desire to receive the Lord’s Supper in conformity with Christ’s institution. A minister secretly administered it at the festival of Easter, 1528; but one of her children informed the elector. Joachim was greatly exasperated, and ordered his wife to keep her room for several days; it was even rumored that he intended shutting her up. This princess, being deprived of all religious support, and mistrusting the perfidious manoeuvers of the Romish priests, resolved to escape by flight; and claimed the assistance of her brother, Christian II of Denmark,

then residing at Torgau. Taking advantage of a dark night, she quitted the castle in a peasant's dress, and got into a rude country-wagon that was waiting for her at the gate of the city. Elizabeth urged on the driver, when, in a bad road, the wain broke down. The electress, hastily unfastening a handkerchief she wore round her head, flung it to the man, who employed it in repairing the damage, and erelong Elizabeth arrived at Torgau. "If I should expose you to any risk," said she to her uncle, the Elector of Saxony, "I am ready to go wherever Providence may lead me." But John assigned her a residence in the castle of Lichtenberg, on the Elbe, near Wittenberg. Without taking upon us to approve of Elizabeth's flight, let us acknowledge the good that God's Providence derived from it. This amiable lady, who lived at Lichtenberg in the study of His Word, seldom appearing at court, frequently going to hear Luther's sermons, and exercising a salutary influence over her children, who sometimes had permission to see her, was the first of those pious princesses whom the house of Brandenburg has counted, and even still counts, among its members.

At the same time, Holstein, Sleswick, and Silesia decided in favor of the Reformation: and Hungary, as well as Bohemia, saw the number of its adherents increase.

In every place, instead of a hierarchy seeking its righteousness in the works of man, its glory in external pomp, its strength in a material power, the Church of Apostles reappeared, humble as in primitive times, and like the ancient Christians, looking for its righteousness, its glory, and its power solely in the blood of the Lamb and in the Word of God.

Chapter 4

Edict of Ofen

These triumphs of the Gospel could not pass unperceived; there was a powerful reaction, and until political circumstances should permit a grand attack upon the Reformation on the very soil where it was established, and of fighting against it by means of diets, and if necessary by armies, the adversaries began to persecute it in detail in the Romish countries with tortures and the scaffold.

On the 20th August 1527, King Ferdinand, by the Edict of Ofen in Hungary, published a tariff of crimes and penalties, in which he threatened death by the sword, by fire, or by water, against whoever should say that Mary was like other women; or partake of the sacrament in an heretical manner; or consecrate the bread and wine, not being a Romish priest; and further, in the second case, the house in which the sacrament should have been administered was to be confiscated or rased to the ground.

Such was not the legislation of Luther. Link having asked him if it were lawful for the magistrate to put the false prophets to death, meaning the Sacramentarians, whose doctrines Luther had so violently attacked, the reformer replied: “I am slow whenever life is concerned, even if the offender is exceedingly guilty. I can by no means admit that the false teachers should be put to death: it is sufficient to remove them.” For ages the Romish Church has bathed in blood. Luther was the first to profess the great principles of humanity and religious liberty.

Recourse was sometimes had to more expeditious means than the scaffold itself. George Winkler, pastor of Halle, having been summoned before Archbishop Albert in the spring if 1527, for having administered the sacrament in both kinds, had been acquitted. As this minister was returning home along an unfrequented road in the midst of the woods, he was suddenly attacked by a number of horsemen, who murdered him, and immediately fled through the thickets without taking anything

from his person. “The world,” exclaimed Luther, “is a cavern of assassins under the command of the devil; an inn, whose landlord is a brigand, and which bears this sign, Lies and Murder: and none are more readily put to death therein than those who proclaim Jesus Christ.” At Munich, George Carpenter was led to the scaffold for having denied that the baptism of water is able by its own virtue to save a man. “When you are thrown into the fire,” said some of his brethren, “give us a sign by which we may know that you persevere in the faith.” — “As long as I can open my mouth, I will confess the name of the Lord Jesus.” The executioner stretched him on a ladder, tied a small bag of gunpowder round his neck, and then flung him into the flames. Carpenter immediately cried out, “Jesus! Jesus!” and while the executioner was turning him again and again with his hooks, the martyr several times repeated the word Jesus, and expired.

At Landsberg nine persons were consigned to the flames, and at Munich twenty-nine were thrown into the water. At Scherding, Leonard

Keyser, a friend and disciple of Luther, having been condemned by the bishop, had his head shaved, and being dressed in a smock-frock, was placed on horseback. As the executioners were cursing and swearing, because they could not disentangle the ropes with which his limbs were to be tied, he said to them mildly: “Dear friends, your bonds are not necessary; my Lord Christ has already bound me.” When he drew near the stake, Keyser looked at the crowd and exclaimed: “Behold the harvest! O Master, send forth thy laborers!” He then ascended the scaffold and said: “O Jesu, save me! I am thine.” These were his last words. “Who am I, a wordy preacher,” cried Luther, when he received the news of his death, “in comparison with this great doer!” Thus the Reformation manifested by such striking works the truth that it had come to re-establish; namely, that faith is not, as Rome maintains, an historical, vain, dead knowledge, but a lively faith, the work of the Holy Ghost, the channel by which Christ fills the heart with new desires and with new affections, the true worship of the living God.

These martyrdoms filled Germany with horror, and gloomy forebodings descended from the thrones among the ranks of the people. Around the domestic hearth, in the long winter evenings, the conversation wholly turned on prisons, tortures, scaffolds, and martyrs; the slightest noise alarmed the old men, women, and children. Such narratives gathered strength as they passed from mouth to mouth; the rumor of a universal conspiracy against the Gospel spread through all the empire. Its adversaries, taking advantage of this terror, announced with a mysterious air that they must look during this year (1528) for some decisive measures against the reform. One scoundrel (Pack) resolved to profit by this state of mind to satisfy his avarice.

No blows are more terrible to a cause than those which it inflicts upon itself. The Reformation, seized with a dizziness, was on the verge of selfdestruction.

There is a spirit of error that conspires against the cause of truth, beguiling by subtlety; the

Reformation was about to experience its attacks, and to stagger under the most formidable assault, — perturbation of thought, and estrangement from the ways of wisdom and of truth.

Otho Pack, vice-chancellor to Duke George of Saxony, was a crafty and dissipated man, who took advantage of his office, and had recourse to all sorts of practices to procure money. The duke having on one occasion sent him to the Diet of Nuremberg as his representative, the Bishop of Merseburg confided to him his contribution towards the imperial government. The bishop having been afterwards called upon for this money, Pack declared that he had paid it to a citizen of Nuremberg, whose seal and signature he produced. This paper was a forgery; Pack himself was the author of it. The wretch, however, put an impudent face on the matter, and having escaped conviction, preserved the confidence of his master. Erelong an opportunity presented itself of exercising his criminal talents on a larger scale.

No one entertained greater suspicions with

regard to the papists than the Landgrave of Hesse. Young, susceptible, and restless, he was always on the alert. In the month of February 1528, Pack happening to be at Cassel to assist Philip in some difficult business, the landgrave imparted to him his fears. If any one could have had any knowledge of the designs of the papists, it must have been the vicechancellor of one of the greatest enemies to the Reformation. The crafty Pack heaved a sigh, bent down his eyes, and was silent. Philip immediately became uneasy, entreated him, and promised to do nothing that would injure the duke. Then Pack, as if he had allowed an important secret to be torn from him with regret, confessed that a league against the Lutherans had been concluded at Breslau on the Wednesday following Jubilate Sunday, 12th May 1527; and engaged to procure the original of this act for the landgrave, who offered him for this service a remuneration of ten thousand florins. This was the greatest transaction that the wretched man had ever undertaken; but it tended to nothing less than the utter overthrow of the empire.

The landgrave was amazed: he restrained himself, however, wishing to see the act with his own eyes before informing his allies. He therefore repaired to Dresden. “I cannot,” said Pack, “furnish you with the original: the duke always carries it about his person to read it to other princes whom he hopes to gain over. Recently at Leipsic, he showed it to Duke Henry of Brunswick. But here is a copy made by his highness’s order.” The landgrave took the document, which bore all the marks of the most perfect authenticity. It was crossed by a cord of black silk, and fastened at both ends by the seal of the ducal chancery. Above was an impression from the ring Duke George always wore on his finger, with the three quarterings that Philip had so often seen; at the top, the coronet, and at the bottom, the two lions. He had no more doubts as to its authenticity. But how can we describe his indignation as he read this guilty document? King Ferdinand, the Electors of Mentz and of Brandenburg, Duke George of Saxony, the Dukes of Bavaria, the Bishops of Salzburg, Wurtzburg, and Bamberg, had entered into a coalition to call upon the Elector of Saxony to

deliver up the arch-heretic Luther, with all the apostate priests, monks, and nuns, and to re-establish the ancient worship. If he made default, his states were to be invaded, and this prince and his descendants for ever dispossessed. The same measure was next to be applied to the landgrave, only (“it was your father-in-law, Duke George,” said Pack to Philip, “who got this clause inserted”) his states were to be restored to him in consideration of his youth, if he became fully reconciled to the holy Church. The document stated moreover the contingents of men and money to be provided by the confederates, and the share they were to have in the spoils of the two heretical princes. Many circumstances tended to confirm the authenticity of this paper.

Ferdinand, Joachim of Brandenburg, and George of Saxony, had in fact met at Breslau on the day indicated, and an evangelical prince, the Margrave George, had seen Joachim leave Ferdinand’s apartments, holding in his hand a large parchment to which several seals were attached. The agitated landgrave caused a copy to be taken

of this document, promised secrecy for a time, paid Pack four thousand florins, and engaged to make up the sum agreed upon, if he would procure him the original. And then, wishing to prevent the storm, he hastened to Weimar to inform the elector of this unprecedented conspiracy.

“I have seen,” said he to John and his son, “nay more — I have had in my hands, a duplicate of this horrible treaty. Signatures, seals — nothing was wanting. Here is a copy, and I bind myself to place the original before your eyes. The most frightful danger threatens us — ourselves, our faithful subjects, and the Word of God.” The elector had no reason to doubt the account the landgrave had just given him: he was stunned, confounded, and overpowered. The promptest measures alone could avert such unprecedented disasters: everything must be risked to extricate them from certain destruction. The impetuous Philip breathed fire and flames; his plan of defense was already prepared. He presented it, and in the first moment of consternation carried the consent of his ally, as it were by assault. On the 9th March 1528, the two

princes agreed to employ all their forces to defend themselves, and even to take the offensive, and sacrifice life, honor, rank, subjects, and states, that they might preserve the Word of God. The Dukes of Prussia, Mecklenburg, Luneburg, and Pomerania, the Kings of Denmark and Poland, and the Margrave of Brandenburg, were to be invited to enter into this alliance. Six hundred thousand florins were destined for the expenses of the war; and to procure them, they would raise loans, pledge their cities, and sell the offerings in the churches. They had already begun to raise a powerful army. The landgrave set out in person for Nuremberg and Anspach.

The alarm was general in those countries; the commotion was felt throughout all Germany, and even beyond it. John Zapolya, king of Hungary, at that time a refugee at Cracow, promised a hundred thousand florins to raise an army, and twenty thousand florins a month for its maintenance. Thus a spirit of error was misleading the princes; if it should carry away the Reformers also, the destruction of the Reformation would not be far

distant.

But God was watching over them. Supported on the rock of the Word, Melancthon and Luther replied: “It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” As soon as these two men whom the danger threatened (for it was they who were to be delivered up to the papal power) saw the youthful landgrave drawing the sword, and the aged elector himself putting his hand on the hilt, they uttered a cry, and this cry, which was heard in heaven, saved the Reformation.

Luther, Pomeranus, and Melancthon immediately forwarded the following advice to the elector: “Above all things, let not the attack proceed from our side, and let no blood be shed through our fault. Let us wait for the enemy, and seek after peace. Send an ambassador to the emperor to make him acquainted with this hateful plot.” Thus it was that the faith of the children of God, which is so despised by politicians, conducted them aright, at the very moment when the diplomatists were going astray. The elector and his

son declared to the landgrave that they would not assume the offensive. Philip was in amazement. “Are not the preparations of the papists worthy an attack?” asked he. “What! we will threaten war, and yet not make it! We will inflame the hatred of our antagonists, and leave them time to prepare their forces! No, no; forward! It is thus we shall secure the means of an honorable peace.” — — “If the landgrave desires to begin the war,” replied the reformer, “the elector is not obliged to observe the treaty; for we must obey God rather than men. God and the right are above every alliance. Let us beware of painting the devil on our doors, and inviting him as godfather.

But if the landgrave is attacked, the elector ought to go to his assistance; for it is God’s will that we preserve our faith.” This advice which the reformers gave, cost them dear. Never did man, condemned to the torture, endure a punishment like theirs. The fears excited by the landgrave were succeeded by the terrors inspired by the papist princes.

This cruel trial left them in great distress. “I am worn away with sorrow,” cried Melancthon; “and this anguish puts me to the most horrible torture.

The issue,” added he, “will be found on our knees before God.” The elector, drawn in different directions by the theologians and the politicians, at last took a middle course: he resolved to assemble an army, “but only,” said he, “to obtain peace.” Philip of Hesse at length gave way, and forthwith sent copies of the famous treaty to Duke George, to the dukes of Bavaria, and to the emperor’s representatives, calling upon them to renounce such cruel designs. “I would rather have a limb cut off,” said he to his father-in-law, “than know you to be a member of such an alliance.” The surprise of the German courts, when they read this document, is beyond description. Duke George immediately replied to the landgrave, that he had allowed himself to be deceived by unmeaning absurdities; that he who pretended to have seen the original of this act was an infamous liar, and an incorrigible scoundrel; and called upon the landgrave to give up his authority, or else it might

well be thought that he was himself the inventor of this impudent fabrication. King Ferdinand, the Elector of Brandenburg, and all the pretended conspirators, made similar replies.

Philip of Hesse saw that he had been deceived; his confusion was only exceeded by his anger. He had in this affair justified the accusations of his adversaries who called him a hot-headed young man, and had compromised to the highest degree the cause of the Reformation and that of his people.

He said afterwards, “If that business had not happened, it would no more happen now. Nothing that I have done in all my life has caused me greater vexation.” Pack fled in alarm to the landgrave, who caused him to be arrested; and envoys from the several princes whom this scoundrel had compromised met at Cassel, and proceeded to examine him. He maintained that the original act of the alliance had really existed in the Dresden archives. In the following year the landgrave banished him from Hesse, proving by this action that he did not fear him. Pack was

afterwards discovered in Belgium; and at the demand of Duke George, who had never shown any pity towards him, he was seized, tortured, and finally beheaded.

The landgrave was unwilling to have taken up arms to no purpose. The Archbishop-elector of Mentz was compelled, on the 11th June 1528, to renounce in the camp of Herzkirchen all spiritual jurisdiction in Saxony and Hesse. This was no small advantage.

Scarcely had the arms been laid aside before Luther took up his pen and began a war of another kind. “Impious princes may deny this alliance as long as they please,” wrote he to Link; “I am very certain that it is not a chimera. These insatiable leeches will take no repose until they see the whole of Germany flowing with blood.” This idea of Luther’s was the one generally entertained. “The document presented to the landgrave may be,” it was said, “Pack’s invention; but all this fabric of lies is founded on some truth. If the alliance has not been concluded it has been conceived.”

Melancholy were the results of this affair. It inspired division in the bosom of the Reformation, and fanned the hatred between the two parties.

The sparks from the piles of Keyser, Winkler, Carpenter, and so many other martyrs, added strength to the fire that was already threatening to set the empire in flames. It was under such critical circumstances, and which such menacing dispositions, that the famous Diet of Spires was opened in March 1529. The Empire and the Papacy were in reality preparing to annihilate the Reformation, although in a manner different from what Pack had pretended. It was still to be learnt whether more vital strength would be found in the revived Church than in so many sects that Rome had easily crushed. Happily the faith had increased, and the constitution given to the Church had imparted greater power to its adherents. All were resolved on defending a doctrine so pure, and a church government so superior to that of Popery. During three years of tranquillity, the Gospel tree had struck its roots deep; and if the storm should burst it would now be able to brave it.

Chapter 5

Alliance between Charles and Clement VII

The sack of Rome, by exasperating the adherents of the Papacy, had given arms to all the enemies of Charles V. The French army under Lautrec had forced the imperial army, enervated by the delights of a new Capua, to hide itself within the walls of Naples. Doria, at the head of his Genoese galleys, had destroyed the Spanish fleet, and all the imperial power seemed drawing to an end in Italy. But Doria suddenly declared for the emperor; pestilence carried off Lautrec and half of his troops; and Charles, suffering only from alarm, had again grasped the power with a firm resolution to unite henceforward closely with the pontiff, whose humiliation had nearly cost him so dear. On his side Clement VII, hearing the Italians reproach him for his illegitimate birth, and even refuse him the title of pope, said aloud, that he would rather be the emperor’s groom than the sport of his people.

On the 29th June 1528, a peace between the heads of the Empire and of the Church was concluded at Barcelona, based on the destruction of heresy; and in November a diet was convoked to meet at Spires on the 21st February 1529. Charles was resolved to endeavor at first to destroy the Reform by a federal vote; but if this means did not suffice, to employ his whole power against it. The road being thus traced out, they were about to commence operations.

Germany felt the seriousness of the position. Mournful omens filled every mind. About the middle of January, a great brightness in the sky had suddenly dispersed the darkness of the night. “What that forebodes,” exclaimed Luther, “God only knows!” At the beginning of April there was a rumor of an earthquake that had engulfed castles, cities, and whole districts in Carinthia and Istria, and split the tower of St. Mark at Venice into four parts. “If that is true,” said the reformer, “these prodigies are the forerunners of the day of Jesus Christ.” The astrologers declared that the aspect of the quartiles of Saturn and Jupiter, and the general

position of the stars, was ominous. The waters of the Elbe rolled thick and stormy, and stones fell from the roofs of churches. “All these things,” exclaimed the terrified Melancthon, “excite me in no trifling degree.” The letters of convocation issued by the imperial government agreed but too well with these prodigies. The emperor, writing from Toledo to the elector, accused him of sedition and revolt. Alarming whispers passed from mouth to mouth that were sufficient to cause the fall of the weak. Duke Henry of Mecklenburg and the elector-palatine hastily returned to the side of popery.

Never had the sacerdotal party appeared in the diet in such numbers, or so powerful and decided. On the 5th March, Ferdinand, the president of the diet, after him the Dukes of Bavaria, and lastly the ecclesiastical electors of Mentz and Treves, had entered the gates of Spires surrounded by a numerous armed escort. On the 13th March, the Elector of Saxony arrived, attended only by Melancthon and Agricola. But Philip of Hesse, faithful to his character, entered the city on the 18th March to the sound of trumpets, and with two

hundred horsemen.

The divergence of men's minds soon became manifest. A papist did not meet an evangelical in the street without casting angry glances upon him, and secretly threatening him with perfidious machinations. The elector-palatine passed the Saxons without appearing to know them; and although John of Saxony was the most important of the electors, none of the chiefs of the opposite party visited him. Grouped around their tables, the Roman-catholic princes seemed absorbed in games of hazard.

But erelong they gave positive marks of their hostile disposition. The elector and the landgrave were prohibited from having the Gospel preached in their mansions. It was asserted even at this early period that John was about to be turned out of Spires, and deprived of his electorate. "We are the execration and the sweepings of the world," said Melancthon; "but Christ will look down on his poor people, and will preserve them." In truth, God was with the witnesses to his Word. The people of

Spires thirsted for the Gospel, and the elector wrote to his son on Palm Sunday: “About eight thousand persons were present today in my chapel at morning and evening worship.” The Roman party now quickened their proceedings: their plan was simple but energetic. It was necessary to put down the religious liberty that had existed for more than three years, and for this purpose they must abrogate the decree of 1526, and revive that of 1521.

On the 15th March the imperial commissaries announced to the diet that the last resolution of Spires, which left all the states free to act in conformity with the inspirations of their consciences, having given rise to great disorders, the emperor had annulled it by virtue of his supreme power. This arbitrary act, which had no precedent in the empire, as well as the despotic tone in which it was notified, filled the evangelical Christians with indignation and alarm. “Christ,” exclaimed Sturm, “has again fallen into the hands of Caiaphas and Pilate.” A commission was charged to examine the imperial proposition. The Archbishop of Salzburg, Faber, and Eck, that is to

say, the most violent enemies of the Reformation, were among its members. “The Turks are better than the Lutherans,” said Faber, “for the Turks observe fast-days, and the Lutherans violate them. If we must choose between the Holy Scriptures and God and the old errors of the Church, we should reject the former.” Every day in full assembly Faber casts some new stone at us Gospellers,” says Melancthon. “Oh, what an Iliad I should have to compose,” added he, “if I were to report all these blasphemies!” The priests called for the execution of the edict of Worms, 1521, and the evangelical members of the commission, among whom were the Elector of Saxony and Sturm, demanded on the contrary the maintenance of the edict of Spires, 1526. The latter thus remained within the bounds of legality, while their adversaries were driven to coups d’etat. In fact, a new order of things having been legally established in the empire, no one could infringe it; and if the diet presumed to destroy by force what had been constitutionally established three years before, the evangelical states had the right of opposing it. The majority of the commission felt that the reestablishment of the

ancient order of things would be a revolution no less complete than the Reformation itself. How could they subject anew to Rome and to her clergy those nations in whose bosom the Word of God had been so richly spread abroad? For this reason, equally rejecting the demands of the priests and of the evangelicals, the majority came to a resolution on the 24th March that every religious innovation should continue to be interdicted in the places where the edict of Worms had been carried out; and that in those where the people had deviated from it, and where they could not conform to it without danger of revolt, they should at least effect no new reform, they should touch upon no controverted point, they should not oppose the celebration of the mass, they should permit no Roman-catholic to embrace Lutheranism, they should not decline the Episcopal jurisdiction, and should tolerate no anababtists or sacramentarians. The status-quo and no proselytism — such were the essentials of this resolution.

The majority no longer voted as in 1526: the wind had turned against the Gospel. Accordingly

this proposition, after having been delayed a few days by the festival of Easter, was laid before the diet on the 6th April, and passed on the 7th. If it became law, the Reformation could neither be extended into those places where as yet it was unknown, nor be established on solid foundations in those where it already existed. The re-establishment of the Romish hierarchy, stipulated in the proposition, would infallibly bring back the ancient abuses; and the least deviation from so vexatious an ordinance would easily furnish the Romanists with a pretext for completing the destruction of a work already so violently shaken.

The Elector, the Landgrave, the Margrave of Brandenburg, the Prince of Anhalt, and the Chancellor of Luneburg on one side, and the deputies for the cities on the other, consulted together. An entirely new order of things was to proceed from this council. If they had been animated by selfishness, they would perhaps have accepted this decree. In fact they were left free, in appearance at least, to profess their faith: ought they to demand more? could they do so? Were they

bound to constitute themselves the champions of liberty of conscience in all the world? Never, perhaps, had there been a more critical situation; but these noble-minded men came victorious out of the trial. What! should they legalize by anticipation the scaffold and the torture! Should they oppose the Holy Ghost in its work of converting souls to Christ! Should they forget their Master's command: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature?" If one of the states of the empire desired some day to follow their example and be reformed, should they take away its power of doing so? Having themselves entered the kingdom of heaven, should they shut the door after them? No! rather endure everything, sacrifice everything, even their states, their crowns, and their lives.

"Let us reject this decree," said the princes. "In matters of conscience the majority has no power." — "It is to the decree of 1526," added the cities, "that we are indebted for the peace that the empire enjoys: its abolition would fill Germany with troubles and divisions. The diet is incompetent to

do more than preserve religious liberty until a council meets." Such in fact is the grand attribute of the state, and if in our days the protestant powers should desire to influence the Romish governments, they should strive solely at obtaining for the subjects of the latter that religious liberty which the pope confiscates to his own advantage wherever he reigns alone, and by which he profits greatly in every evangelical state. Some of the deputies proposed refusing all assistance against the Turks, hoping thus to force the emperor to interfere in this religious question. But Sturm called upon them not to mix up political matters with the salvation of souls. They resolved therefore to reject the proposition, but without holding out any threats. It was this noble resolution that gained for modern times liberty of thought and independence of faith.

Ferdinand and the priests, who were no less resolute, determined, however, on vanquishing what they called a daring obstinacy; and they commenced with the weaker states. They began to frighten and divide the cities, which had hitherto

pursued a common course. On the 12th April they were summoned before the diet: in vain did they allege the absence of some of their number, and ask for delay. It was refused, and the call was hurried on. Twenty-one free cities accepted the proposition of the diet, and fourteen rejected it. It was a bold act on the part of the latter, and was accomplished in the midst of the most painful sufferings. “This is the first trial,” said Pfarrer, second deputy of Strasburg; “now will come the second: we must either deny the Word of God or — be burnt.” A violent proceeding of Ferdinand’s immediately commenced the series of humiliations that were reserved for the evangelical cities. A deputy of Strasburg should, in conformity with the decree of Worms, have been a member of the imperial government from the commencement of April. He was declared excluded from his rights until the re-establishment of the mass in Strasburg. All the cities united in protesting against this arbitrary act.

At the same time, the elector-palatine and King Ferdinand himself begged the princes to accept the

decree, assuring them that the emperor would be exceedingly pleased with them. “We will obey the emperor,” replied they calmly, “in everything that may contribute to maintain peace and the honor of God.” It was time to put an end to this struggle. On the 18th April it was decreed that the evangelical states should not be heard again; and Ferdinand prepared to inflict the decisive blow on the morrow.

When the day came, the king appeared in the diet, surrounded by the other commissaries of the empire, and by several bishops. He thanked the Roman-catholics for their fidelity, and declared that the resolution having been definitively agreed to, it was about to be drawn up on the form of an imperial decree. He then announced to the elector and his friends, that their only remaining course was to submit to the majority.

The evangelical princes, who had not expected so positive a declaration, were excited at this summons, and passed, according to custom, into an adjoining chamber to deliberate. But Ferdinand

was not in a humor to wait for their answer. He rose, and the imperial commissaries with him. Vain were all endeavors to stop him. “I have received an order from his imperial majesty,” replied he; “I have executed it. All is over.” Thus did Charles’s brother notify an order to the christian princes, and then retire without caring even if there was any reply to be made! To no purpose they sent a deputation entreating the king to return. “It is a settled affair,” repeated Ferdinand; “submission is all that remains.” This refusal completed the schism: it separated Rome from the Gospel.

Perhaps more justice on the part of the empire and of the papacy might have prevented the rupture that since then has divided the Western Church.

Chapter 6

The Protest

If the imperial party displayed such contempt, it was not without a cause.

They felt that weakness was on the side of the Reformation, and strength with Charles and the pope. But the weak have also their strength; and of this the evangelical princes were aware. As Ferdinand paid no attention to their complaints, they ought to pay none to his absence, to appeal from the report of the diet to the Word of God, and from the Emperor Charles to Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

They resolved upon this step. A declaration was drawn up to that effect, and this was the famous Protest that henceforward gave the name of Protestant to the renovated Church. The elector and his allies having returned to the common hall of the diet, thus addressed the assembled states: — “Dear Lords, Cousins, Uncles, and Friends! Having

repaired to this diet at the summons of his majesty, and for the common good of the empire and of Christendom, we have heard and learnt that the decision of the last diet concerning our holy Christian faith are to be repealed, and that it is proposed to substitute for them certain restrictive and onerous resolutions.

“King Ferdinand and the other imperial commissaries, by affixing their seals to the last Recess of Spires, had promised, however, in the name of the emperor, to carry out sincerely and inviolably all that it contained, and to permit nothing that was contrary to it. In like manner, also, you and we, electors, princes, prelates, lords, and deputies of the empire, bound ourselves to maintain always and with our whole might every article of that decree.

“We cannot therefore consent to its repeal: — “Firstly, because we believe that his imperial majesty (as well as you and we), is called to maintain firmly what has been unanimously and solemnly resolved.

“Secondly, because it concerns the glory of God and the salvation of our souls, and that in such matters we ought to have regard, above all, to the commandment of God, who is King of kings and Lord of lords; each of us rendering him account for himself, without caring the least in the world about majority or minority. “We form no judgment on that which concerns you, most dear lords; and we are content to pray God daily that he will bring us all to unity of faith, in truth, charity, and holiness through Jesus Christ, our throne of grace and our only mediator.

“But in what concerns ourselves, adhesion to your resolution (and let every honest man be judge!) would be acting against our conscience, condemning a doctrine that we maintain to be christian, and pronouncing that it ought to be abolished in our states, if we could do so without trouble.

This would be to deny our Lord Jesus Christ, to reject his holy Word, and thus give him just reason

to deny us in turn before his Father, as he had threatened.

“What! we ratify this edict! We assert that when Almighty God calls a man to His knowledge, this man cannot however receive the knowledge of God! Oh! of what deadly backslidings should we not thus become the accomplices, not only among our own subjects, but also among yours!

“For this reason we reject the yoke that is imposed on us. And although it is universally known that in our states the holy sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord is becoming administered, we cannot adhere to what the edict proposes against the sacramentarians, seeing that the imperial edict did not speak of them, that they have not been heard, and that we cannot resolve upon such important points before the next council.

“Moreover” — and this is the essential part of the protest — “the new edict declaring the ministers shall preach the Gospel, explaining it according to the writings accepted by the holy

Christian Church; we think that, for this regulation to have any value, we should first agree on what is meant by the true and holy Church. Now, seeing that there is great diversity of opinion in this respect; that there is no sure doctrine but such as is conformable to the Word of God; that the Lord forbids the teaching of any other doctrine; that each text of the Holy Scriptures ought to be explained by other and clearer texts; that this holy book is in all things necessary for the Christian, easy of understanding, and calculated to scatter the darkness: we are resolved, with the grace of God, to maintain the pure and exclusive preaching of his only Word, such as it is contained in the biblical books of the Old and New Testament, without adding anything thereto that may be contrary to it. This Word is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrine and of all life, and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the powers of hell, while all the human vanities that are set up against it shall fall before the face of God.

“For these reasons, most dear lords, uncles,

cousins, and friends, we earnestly entreat you to weigh carefully our grievances and our motives. If you do not yield to our request, we Protest by these presents, before God, our only Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Savior, and who will one day be our judge, as well as before all men and all creatures, that we, for us and for our people, neither consent nor adhere in any manner whatsoever to the proposed decree, in any thing that is contrary to God, to his holy Word, to our right conscience, to the salvation of our souls, and to the last decree of Spires.

“At the same time we are in expectation that his imperial majesty will behave towards us like a christian prince who loves God above all things; and we declare ourselves ready to pay unto him, as well as unto you, gracious lords, all the affection and obedience that are our just and legitimate duty.” 1253 Thus, in presence of the diet, spoke out those courageous men whom Christendom will henceforward denominate The Protestants.

They had barely finished when they announced

their intention of quitting Spires on the morrow. This protest and declaration produced a deep impression. The diet was rudely interrupted and broken into two hostile parties, — thus preluding war. The majority became the prey of the liveliest fears. As for the Protestants, relying, jure humano, upon the edict of Spires, and, jure divino, upon the Bible, they were full of courage and firmness.

The principles contained in this celebrated protest of the 19th April 1529, constitute the very essence of Protestantism. Now this protest opposes two abuses of man in matters of faith: the first is the intrusion of the civil magistrate, and the second the arbitrary authority of the Church. Instead of these abuses, Protestantism sets the power of conscience above the magistrate; and the authority of the Word of God above the visible church.

In the first place, it rejects the civil power in divine things, and says with the prophets and apostles: We must obey God rather than man. In presence of the crown of Charles the Fifth, it uplifts the crown of Jesus Christ. But it goes

farther: it lays down the principle, that all human teaching should be subordinate to the oracles of God. Even the primitive Church, by recognizing the writings of the apostles, had performed an act of submission to this supreme authority, and not an act of authority, as Rome maintains; and the establishment of a tribunal charged with the interpretation of the Bible, had terminated only in slavishly subjecting man to man in what should be the most unfettered — conscience and faith. In this celebrated act of Spires no doctor appears, and the Word of God reigns alone. Never has man exalted himself like the pope; never have men kept in the background like the reformers.

A Romish historian maintains that the word Protestant signifies enemy of the emperor and of the pope. If he means that Protestantism, in matters of faith, rejects the intervention both of the empire and of the papacy, it is well. But even this explanation does not exhaust the signification of the word, for Protestantism threw off man’s authority solely to place Jesus Christ on the throne of the Church, and his Word in the pulpit. There

has never been anything more positive, and at the same time more aggressive, than the position of the Protestants at Spires. By maintaining that their faith alone is capable of saving the world, they defended with intrepid courage the rights of christian proselytism. We cannot abandon this proselytism without deserting the protestant principle.

The Protestants of Spires were not content to exalt the truth; they defended charity. Faber and the other papal partisans had endeavored to separate the princes, who in general walked with Luther, from the cities that ranged themselves rather on the side of Zwingle. Oecolampadius had immediately written to Melancthon, and enlightened him on the doctrines of the Zurich reformer. He had indignantly rejected the idea that Christ was banished into a corner of heaven, and had energetically declared that, according to the Swiss Christians, Christ was in every place upholding all things by the Word of his power. “With the visible symbols,” he added, “we give and we receive the invisible grace, like all the faithful.” These

declarations were not useless. There were at Spires two men who from different motives opposed the efforts of Faber, and seconded those of Oecolampadius. The landgrave, ever revolving projects of alliance in his mind, felt clearly that if the Christians of Saxony and of Hesse allowed the condemnation of the churches of Switzerland and of Upper Germany, they would by that very means deprive themselves of powerful auxiliaries. Melancthon, who unlike the landgrave was far from desiring a diplomatic alliance, lest it should hasten on a war, defended the great principles of justice, and exclaimed: “To what just reproaches should we not be exposed, were we to recognize in our adversaries the right of condemning a doctrine without having heard those who defend it!” The union of all evangelical Christians is therefore a principle of primitive Protestantism.

As Ferdinand had not heard the protest of the 19th April, a deputation of the evangelical states went the next day to present it to him. The brother of Charles the Fifth received it at first, but immediately after desired to return it. Then was

witnessed a strange scene — the king refusing to keep the protest, and the deputies to take it back. At last the latter, out of respect, received it from Ferdinand's hands but they laid it boldly upon a table, and directly quitted the hall.

The king and the imperial commissaries remained in presence of this formidable writing. It was there — before their eyes — a significant monument of the courage and faith of the Protestants. Irritated against this silent but mighty witness, which accused his tyranny, and left him the responsibility of all the evils that were about to burst upon the empire, the brother of Charles the Fifth called some of his councillors, and ordered them instantly to carry the important document back to the Protestants.

All this was unavailing; the protest had been registered in the annals of the world, and nothing could erase it. Liberty of thought and of conscience had been conquered for ages to come. Thus all evangelical Germany, foreseeing these things, was moved at this courageous act, and adopted it as the

expression of its will and of its faith. Men in every quarter beheld in it not a mere political event, but a christian action, and the youthful electoral prince, John Frederick, in this respect the organ of his age, cried to the Protestants of Spires: “May the Almighty, who has given you grace to confess energetically, freely, and fearlessly, preserve you in that christian firmness until the day of eternity!” While the Christians were filled with joy, their enemies were frightened at their own work. The very day on which Ferdinand had declined to receive the protest (Tuesday 20th April), at one in the afternoon, Henry of Brunswick and Philip of Baden presented themselves as mediators, announcing, however, that they were acting solely of their own authority.

They proposed that there should be no more mention of the decree of Worms, and that the first decree of Spires should be maintained, but with a few modifications; that the two parties, while remaining free until the next council, should oppose every new sect, and tolerate no doctrine contrary to the sacrament of the Lord’s body. On

Wednesday, 21st April, the evangelical states did not appear adverse to these propositions; and even those who had embraced the doctrines of Zwingle declared boldly that such a proposal would not compromise their existence. “Only let us call to mind,” said they, “that in such difficult matters we must act, not with the sword, but with the sure Word of God.

For, as Saint Paul says: What is not of faith is sin. If therefore we constrain Christians to do what they believe unjust, instead of leading them by God’s Word to acknowledge what is good, we force them to sin and incur a terrible responsibility.” The fanatics of the Roman party trembled as they saw the victory nearly escaping from them; they rejected all compromise, and desired purely and simply the re-establishment of the papacy. Their zeal overcame everything, and the negotiations were broken off.

On Thursday, 22nd April, the diet re-assembled at seven in the morning, and the Recess was read precisely as it had been previously drawn up,

without even mentioning the attempt at conciliation which had just failed.

Faber triumphed. Proud of having the ear of kings, he tossed himself furiously about, and, to look at him, one would have said (according to an eye-witness) that he was a Cyclops forging in his cavern the monstrous chains with which he was about to bind the Reformation and the reformers. The papist princes, carried away by the tumult, gave the spur, says Melancthon, and flung themselves headlong into a path filled with dangers. Nothing was left for the evangelical Christians but to fall on their knees and cry to the Lord. “All that remains for us to do,” repeated Melancthon, “is to call upon the Son of God.” The last sitting of the diet took place on the 24th April. The princes renewed their protest, in which fourteen free and imperial cities joined; and they next thought of giving their appeal a legal form.

On Sunday, 25th April, two notaries, Leonard Stetner of Freysingen and Pangrace Saltzmann of Bamberg, were seated before a small table in a

narrow chamber on the ground-floor of a house situated in St. John’s Lane, near the church of the same name in Spires, and around them were the chancellors of the princes and of the evangelical cities, with several witnesses. This little house belonged to an humble pastor, Peter Muterstatt, deacon of St. John’s, who, taking the place of the elector or of the landgrave, had offered a domicile for the important act that was preparing. His name shall in consequence be transmitted to posterity. The document having been definitively drawn up, one of the notaries began reading it. “Since there is a natural communion between all men,” said the Protestants, “and since even persons condemned to death are permitted to unite and appeal against their condemnation; how much more are we, who are members of the same spiritual body, the Church of the Son of God, children of the same Heavenly Father, and consequently brothers in the Spirit, authorized to unite when our salvation and eternal condemnation are concerned.” After reviewing all that had passed in the diet, and after intercalating in their appeal the principal documents that had reference to it, the Protestants ended by saying:

“We therefore appeal for ourselves, for our subjects, and for all who receive or who shall hereafter receive the Word of God, from all past, present, or future vexatious measures, to his Imperial Majesty, and to a free and universal assembly of holy Christendom.” This document filled twelve sheets of parchment; the signatures and seals were affixed to the thirteenth.

Thus in the obscure dwelling of the chaplain of St. John’s was made the first confession of the true christian union. In presence of the wholly mechanical unity of the pope, these confessors of Jesus raised the banner of the living unity of Christ; and, as in the days of our Savior, if there were many synagogues in Israel, there was at least but one temple. The Christians of Electoral Saxony, of Luneburg, of Anhalt, of Hesse and the Margravate, of Strasburg, Nuremberg, Ulm, Constance, Lindau, Memmingen, Kempten, Nordlingen, Heilbronn, Reutlingen, Isny, Saint Gall, Weissemburg, and Windsheim, took each other’s hands on the 25th April, near the church of St. John, in the face of threatening persecutions.

Among them might be found those who, like Zwingle, acknowledged in the Lord's Supper the entirely spiritual presence of Jesus Christ, as well as those who, with Luther, admitted his corporeal presence. There existed not at that time in the evangelical body any sects, hatred, or schism; christian unity was a reality. That upper chamber in which, during the early days of Christianity, the apostles with the woman and the brethren "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication," and that lower chamber where, in the first days of the Reformation, the renewed disciples of Jesus Christ presented themselves to the pope and the emperor, to the world and to the scaffold, as forming but one body, are the two cradles of the Church; and it is in this its hour of weakness and humiliation that it shines forth with the brightest glory.

After this appeal each one returned in silence to his dwelling. Several tokens excited alarm for the safety of the Protestants. A short time previously Melancthon hastily conducted through the streets

of Spires toward the Rhine his friend Simon Grynaeus, pressing him to cross the river. The latter was astonished at such precipitation. “An old man of grave and solemn air, but who is unknown to me,” said Melancthon, “appeared before me and said: In a minute officers of justice will be sent by Ferdinand to arrest Grynaeus.” As he was intimate with Faber, and had been scandalized at one of his sermons, Grynaeus went to him, and begged him no longer to make war against the truth. Faber dissembled his anger, but immediately after repaired to the king, from whom he had obtained an order against the importunate professor of Heidelberg. Melancthon doubted not that God had saved his friend by sending one of His holy angels to forewarn him. Motionless on the banks of the Rhine, he waited until the waters of that stream had rescued Grynaeus from his persecutors.

“At last,” cried Melancthon, as he saw him on the opposite side, “at last he is torn from the cruel jaws of those who thirst for innocent blood.” When he returned to his house, Melancthon was informed that officers in search of Grynaeus had ransacked it

from top to bottom. There was nothing to detain the Protestants longer in Spires, and accordingly, on the morning after their appeal (Monday, 26th April), the elector, the landgrave, and the Dukes of Luneburg, quitted the city, reached Worms, and then returned by Hesse into their own states. The appeal of Spires was published by the landgrave on the 5th, and by the elector on the 13th of May.

Melancthon had returned to Wittenberg on the 6th of May, persuaded that the two parties were about to draw the sword. His friends were alarmed at seeing him agitated, exhausted, and like one dead. “It is a great event that has just taken place at Spires,” said he; “an event pregnant with dangers, not only to the empire, but to religion itself. All the pains of hell oppress me.” It was Melancthon’s greatest affliction, that these evils were attributed to him, as indeed he ascribed them himself. “One single thing has injured us,” said he; “our not having approved, as was required of us, the edict against the Zwinglians.” Luther did not take this gloomy view of affairs; but he was far from comprehending the force of the protest. “The diet,”

said he, “has come to an end almost without results, except that those who scourge Jesus Christ have not been able to satisfy their fury.” Posterity has not ratified this decision, and, on the contrary, dating from this epoch the definitive formation of Protestantism, it has hailed in the Protest of Spires one of the greatest movements recorded in history.

Let us see to whom the chief glory of this act belongs. The part taken by the princes, and especially by the Elector of Saxony, in the German Reformation, must strike every impartial observer. These are the true reformers — the true martyrs. The Holy Ghost, that bloweth where it listeth, had inspired them with the courage of the ancient confessors of the Church; and the God of election was glorified in them. Somewhat later, perhaps, this great part played by the princes may have produced deplorable consequences: there is no grace of God that man cannot pervert.

But nothing should prevent us from rendering honor to whom honor is due, and from adoring the work of the eternal Spirit in these eminent men

who, under God, were in the sixteenth century the liberators of Christendom.

The Reformation had taken a bodily form. It was Luther alone who had said No at the Diet of Worms: but churches and ministers, princes and people, said No at the Diet of Spires.

In no country had superstition, scholasticism, hierarchy, and popery, been so powerful as among the Germanic nations. These simple and candid people had humbly bent their neck to the yoke that came from the banks of the Tiber. But there was in them a depth, a life, a need of interior liberty, which, sanctified by the Word of God, might render them the most energetic orga

Chapter 7

Union necessary to Reform

The Protest of Spires had still further increased the indignation of the papal adherents; and Charles the Fifth, according to the oath he had made at Barcelona, set about preparing “a suitable antidote for the pestilential disease with which the Germans were attacked, and to avenge in a striking manner the insult offered to Jesus Christ.” The pope, on his part, endeavored to combine all the other princes of Christendom in this crusade; and the peace of Cambray, concluded on the 5th August, tended to the accomplishment of his cruel designs. It left the emperor’s hands free against the heretics. After having entered their protest at Spires, it was necessary for the evangelicals to think of maintaining it.

The protestant states that had already laid the foundations of an evangelical alliance at Spires, had agreed to send deputies to Rothach; but the elector, staggered by the representations of Luther,

who was continually repeating to him, “In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength,” ordered his deputies to listen to the propositions of his allies, but to decide upon nothing. They adjourned to a new conference, which never took place.

Luther triumphed; for human alliances failed. “Christ the Lord will know how to deliver us without the landgrave, and even against the landgrave,” said he to his friends. Philip of Hesse, who was vexed at Luther’s obstinacy, was convinced that it arose from a dispute about words. “They will hear no mention of alliances because of the Zwinglians,” said he; “well then, let us put an end to the contradictions that separate them from Luther.” The union of all the disciples of the Word of God seemed in fact a necessary condition to the success of the Reformation. How could the Protestants resist the power of Rome and of the empire, if they were divided? The landgrave no doubt wished to unite their minds, that he might afterwards be able to unite their arms; but the cause of Christ was not to triumph by the sword. If they

should succeed in uniting their hearts and prayers, the Reformation would then find such strength in the faith of its children, that Philip’s spearmen would no longer be necessary.

Unfortunately this union of minds, that was now to be sought after above all things, was a very difficult task. Luther in 1519 had at first appeared not only to reform, but entirely renovate the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper, as the Swiss did somewhat later. “I go to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper,” he had said, “and I there receive a sign from God that Christ’s righteousness and passion justify me: such is the use of the sacrament.” This discourse, which had gone through several impressions in the cities of Upper Germany, had prepared men’s minds for the doctrine of Zwingle. Accordingly Luther, astonished at the reputation he had gained, published this solemn declaration in 1527: “I protest before God and before the whole world that I have never walked with the sacramentarians.” Luther in fact was never Zwinglian as regards the Communion. Far from that, in 1519, he still

believed in Transubstantiation. Why then should he speak of a sign? It was for this reason. While, according to Zwingle, the bread and wine are signs of the body and blood of Christ; according to Luther, the very body and blood of Jesus Christ are signs of God's grace.

These opinions are widely different from one another.

Erelong this disagreement declared itself. In 1527 Zwingle, in his Friendly Exposition, refuted Luther's opinion with mildness and respect.

Unluckily the pamphlet of the Saxon reformer, "against the enthusiasts," was then issuing from the press, and in it Luther expressed his indignation that his adversaries should dare to speak of christian unity and peace.

"Well!" exclaimed he, "since they thus insult all reason, I will give them a Lutheran warning. Cursed be this concord! cursed be this charity! down, down, with it, to the bottomless pit of hell!

If I should murder your father, your mother, your wife, your child, and then, wishing to murder you, I should say to you, ‘Let us be at peace, my dear friend!’ what answer would you make? — It is thus that the enthusiasts, who murder Jesus Christ my Lord, God the Father, and Christendom my mother, wish to murder me also; and then they say, Let us be friends!” Zwingle wrote two replies “to the excellent Martin Luther,” in a cold tone and with a haughty calmness more difficult to pardon than the invectives of the Saxon doctor. “We ought to esteem you a vessel of honor, and we do so with joy,” said he, “notwithstanding your faults.” Pamphlet followed pamphlet, Luther always writing with the same impetuosity, and Zwingle with unalterable coolness and irony.

Such were the doctors whom the landgrave undertook to reconcile.

Already, during the sitting of the Diet of Spires, Philip of Hesse, who was afflicted at hearing the papists continually repeating, “You boast of your attachment to the pure Word of God, and yet you

are nevertheless disunited, had made overtures to Zwingle in writing. He now went farther, and invited the theologians of the different parties to meet at Marburg. These invitations met with various receptions. Zwingle, whose heart was large and fraternal, answered the landgrave's call; but it was rejected by Luther, who discovered leagues and battles behind this pretended concord.

It seemed, however, that great difficulties would detain Zwingle. The road from Zurich to Marburg lay through the territories of the emperor and of other enemies to the Reformation; the landgrave himself did not conceal the dangers of the journey; but in order to obviate these difficulties, he promised an escort from Strasburg to Hesse, and for the rest "the protection of God." These precautions were not of a nature to reassure the Zurichers.

Reasons of another kind detained Luther and Melancthon. "It is not right," said they, "that the landgrave has so much to do with the Zwinglians.

Their error is of such a nature that people of acute minds are easily tainted by it. Reason loves what it understands, particularly when learned men clothe their ideas in a scriptural dress." Melancthon did not stop here, but put forth the very extraordinary notion of selecting papists as judges of the discussion. "If there were no impartial judges," said he, "the Zwinglians would have a good chance of boasting of victory." Thus, according to Melancthon, papists would be impartial judges when the real presence was the subject of discussion! He went still farther. "Let the elector," he wrote on the 14th May to the Prince Electoral, "refuse to permit our journey to Marburg, so that we may be able to allege this excuse." The elector would not lend himself to so disgraceful a proceeding; and the reformers of Wittenberg found themselves compelled to accede to the request of Philip of Hesse. But they did so with these words: "If the Swiss do not yield to us, all your trouble will be lost;" and they wrote to the theologians among their friends who were convoked by the prince: "Stay away if you can; your absence will be very useful to us." Zwingle,

on the contrary, who would have gone to the end of the world, made every exertion to obtain permission from the magistrates of Zurich to visit Marburg. “I am convinced,” said he to the secret council, “that if we doctors meet face to face, the splendor of truth will illuminate our eyes.” But the council, that had only just signed the first religious peace, and who feared to see war burst out afresh positively refused to allow the departure of the reformer.

Upon this Zwingle decided for himself. He felt that his presence was necessary for the maintenance of peace in Zurich; but the welfare of all Christendom summoned him to Marburg. Accordingly, raising his eyes towards heaven, he resolved to depart, exclaiming, “O God! Thou hast never abandoned us; Thou wilt perform thy will for thine own glory.” During the night of the 31st August, Zwingle, who was unwilling to wait for the landgrave’s safe-conduct, prepared for his journey. Rodolph Collins, the Greek professor, was alone to accompany him. The reformer wrote to the Smaller and to the Great Council: “If I leave

without informing you, it is not, most wise lords, because I despise your authority; but, knowing the love you bear towards me, I foresee that your anxiety will oppose my going." As he was writing these words, a fourth message arrived from the landgrave, more pressing still than the preceding ones. The reformer sent the prince's letter to the burgomaster with his own; he then quitted his house privily by night, concealing his departure both from friends, whose importunity he feared, and from enemies, whose snares he had good cause to dread. He did not even tell his wife where he was going, lest it should distress her. He and Collins then mounted two horses that had been hired for the purpose, and rode off rapidly in the direction of Basle.

During the day the rumor of Zwingle's absence spread through Zurich, and his enemies were elated. "He has fled the country," said they; "he has run away with a pack of scoundrels!" "As he was crossing the river at Bruck," said others, "the boat upset and he was drowned." "The devil," affirmed many with a malicious smile, "appeared to him

bodily and carried him off." — "There was no end to their stories," says Bullinger. But the council immediately resolved on acceding to the wish of the reformer. On the very day of his departure they appointed one of the councillors, Ulrich Funck, to accompany him to Marburg, who forthwith set out with one domestic and an arquebusier. Strasburg and Basle in like manner sent statesmen in company with their theologians, under the idea that this conference would doubtless have, also, a political object.

Zwingle arrived safely at Basle, and embarked on the river on the 6th September with Oecolampadius and several merchants. In thirteen hours they reached Strasburg, where the two reformers lodged in the house of Matthew Zell, the cathedral preacher. Catherine, the pastor's wife, prepared the dishes in the kitchen, waited at table, according to the ancient German manners, and then sitting down near Zwingle, listened attentively, and spoke with so much piety and knowledge, that the latter soon ranked her above many doctors.

After discussing with the magistrates the means of resisting the Romish league, and the organization to be given to the christian confederacy, Zwingle quitted Strasburg; and he and his friends, conducted along byroads, through forests, over mountains and valleys, by secret but sure paths, at length reached Marburg, escorted by forty Hessian cavaliers. Luther, on his side, accompanied by Melancthon, Cruciger, and Jonas, had stopped on the Hessian frontier, declaring that nothing should induce him to cross it without a safe-conduct from the landgrave. This document being obtained, Luther arrived at Alsfeld, where the scholars, kneeling under the reformer's windows, chanted their pious hymns. He entered Marburg on the 30th September, a day after the arrival of the Swiss. Both parties went to inns; but they had scarcely alighted, before the landgrave invited them to come and lodge in the castle, thinking by this means to bring the opposing bodies closer together. Philip entertained them in a manner truly royal. "Ah!" said the pious Jonas, as he wandered through the halls of the palace, "it is not in honor of the Muses, but in honor of God and

of his Christ, that we are so munificently treated in these forests of Hesse!” After dinner, on the first day, Oecolampadius, Hedio, and Bucer, desirous of entering into the prince’s views, went and saluted Luther. The latter conversed affectionately with Oecolampadius in the castle-court; but Bucer, with whom he had once been very intimate, and who was now on Zwingle’s side, having approached him, Luther said to him, smiling and making a sign with his hand: “As for you, you are a good-for-nothing fellow and a knave!” The unhappy Carlstadt, who had begun this dispute, was at that time in Friesland, preaching the spiritual presence of Christ, and living in such destitution that he had been forced to sell his Hebrew Bible to procure bread. The trial had crushed his pride, and he wrote to the landgrave: “We are but one body, one house, one people, one sacerdotal race; we live and die by one and the same Savior. For this reason, I, poor and in exile, humbly pray your highness, by the blood of Jesus Christ, to allow me to be present at the disputation.” But how bring Luther and Carlstadt face to face? and yet how repel the unhappy man? The landgrave, to extricate himself

from this difficulty, referred him to the Saxon reformer. Carlstadt did not appear.

Philip of Hesse desired that, previously to the public conference, the theologians should have a private interview. It was however considered dangerous, says a contemporary, for Zwingle and Luther, who were both naturally violent, to contend with one another at the very beginning; and as Oecolampadius and Melancthon were the mildest, they were apportioned to the roughest champions. On Friday, the 1st October, after divine service, Luther and Oecolampadius were conducted into one chamber, and Zwingle and Melancthon into another. The combatants were then left to struggle two and two.

The principal contest took place in the room of Zwingle and Melancthon.

“It is affirmed,” said Melancthon to Zwingle, “that some among you speak of God after the manner of the Jews, as if Christ was not essentially God.” “I think on the Holy Trinity,” replied

Zwingle, “with the Council of Nice and the Athanasian creed.” “Councils! creeds! What does that mean?” asked Melancthon. “Have you not continually repeated that you recognize no other authority than that of Scripture?” “We have never rejected the councils,” replied the Swiss reformer, “when they are based on the authority of the Word of God. The four first councils are truly sacred as regards doctrine, and none of the faithful have ever rejected them.” This important declaration, handed down to us by Oecolampadius, characterizes the reformed theology. “But you teach,” resumed Melancthon, “like Thomas Munster, that the Holy Ghost acts quite alone, independently of the sacraments and of the Word of God.” “The Holy Ghost,” replied Zwingle, “works in us justification by the Word, but by the Word preached and understood, by the soul and the marrow of the Word, by the mind and will of God clothed in human language.” “At least,” continued Melancthon, “you deny original sin, and make sin consist only in actual and external works, like the Pelagians, the philosophers, and the Papists.” This was the principal difficulty. “Since man naturally

loves himself," replied Zwingle, "instead of loving God; in that there is a crime, a sin that condemns him." He had more than once before expressed the same opinion; and yet Melancthon exulted on hearing him: "Our adversaries," said he afterwards, "have given way on all these points!" Luther had pursued the same method with Oecolampadius as Melancthon with Zwingle. The discussion had in particular turned on baptism. Luther complained that the Swiss would not acknowledge that by this simple sacrament a man became a member of the Church. "It is true," said Oecolampadius, "that we require faith — either an actual or a future faith.

Why should we deny it? Who is a Christian, if it be not he who believes in Christ? However, I should be unwilling to deny that the water of baptism is in a certain sense a water of regeneration; for by it he, whom the Church knew not, becomes its child." These four theologians were in the very heat of their discussions, when domestics came to inform them that the prince's dinner was on the table.

They immediately arose, and Zwingle and Melancthon meeting Luther and Oecolampadius, who were also quitting their chamber, the latter approached Zwingle, and whispered mournfully in his ear: “I have fallen a second time into the hands of Dr. Eck.” In the language of the reformers nothing stronger could be said.

It does not appear that the conference between Luther and Oecolampadius was resumed after dinner. Luther’s manner held out very little hope; but Melancthon and Zwingle returned to the discussion, and the Zurich doctor finding the Wittenberg professor escape him like an eel, as he said, and take “like Proteus a thousand different forms,” seized a pen in order to fix his antagonist. Zwingle committed to writing whatever Melancthon dictated, and then wrote his reply, giving it to the other to read. In this manner they spent six hours, three in the morning and three in the afternoon. They prepared for the general conference.

Zwingle requested that it should be an open

one; this Luther resisted. It was eventually resolved that the princes, nobles, deputies, and theologians, should be admitted; but a great crowd of citizens, and even many scholars and gentlemen, who had come from Frankfort, from the Rhine districts, from Strasburg, from Basle and other Swiss towns, were excluded. Brentz speaks of fifty or sixty hearers; Zwingle of twenty-four only. On a gentle elevation, watered by the Lahn, is situated an old castle, overlooking the city of Marburg; in the distance may be seen the beautiful valley of the Lahn, and beyond, the mountain-tops rising one above another, until they are lost in the horizon. It was beneath the vaults and Gothic arches of an antique chamber in this castle, known as the Knights Hall, that the conference was to take place.

On Saturday morning (2nd October) the landgrave took his seat in the hall, surrounded by his court, but in so plain a dress that no one would have taken him for a prince. He wished to avoid all appearance of acting the part of a Constantine in the affairs of the Church. Before him was a table which Luther, Zwingle, Melancthon, and

Oecolampadius approached. Luther, taking a piece of chalk, bent over the velvet cloth which covered it, and steadily wrote four words in large characters. All eyes followed the movement of his hand, and soon they read Hoc Est Corpus Meum. Luther wished to have this declaration continually before him, that it might strengthen his own faith, and be a sign to his adversaries.

Behind these four theologians were seated their friends, — Hedio, Sturm, Funck, Frey, Eberhard, Thane, Jonas, Cruciger, and others besides. Jonas cast an inquiring glance upon the Swiss: “Zwingle,” said he, “has a certain rusticity and arrogance; if he is well versed in letters, it is in spite of Minerva and of the muses. In Oecolampadius there is a natural goodness and admirable meekness. Hedio seems to have as much liberality as kindness; but Bucer possesses the cunning of a fox, that knows how to give himself an air of sense and prudence.” Men of moderate sentiments often meet with worse treatment than those of the extreme parties.

Other feelings animated those who contemplated this assembly from a distance. The great men who had led the people in their footsteps on the plains of Saxony, on the banks of the Rhine, and in the lofty valleys of Switzerland, were there met face to face: the chiefs of Christendom who had separated from Rome, were come together to see if they could remain one. Accordingly, from all parts of Germany, prayers and anxious looks were directed towards Marburg. “Illustrious princes of the Word,” cried the evangelical Church through the mouth of the poet Cordus, “penetrating Luther, mild Oecolampadius, magnanimous Zwingle, pious Snepf, eloquent Melancthon, courageous Bucer, candid Hedio, excellent Osiander, valiant Brentz, amiable Jonas, fiery Craton, Maenus, whose soul is stronger than his body, great Dionysius, and you Myconius — all you whom Prince Philip, that illustrious hero, has summoned, ministers and bishops, whom the christian cities have sent to terminate the schism, and 1269 to show us the way of truth; the suppliant Church falls weeping at your feet, and begs you by the bowels of Jesus Christ to bring this matter to a happy issue, that the world

may acknowledge in your resolution the work of the Holy Ghost himself." The landgrave's chancellor, John Feige, having reminded them in the prince's name that the object of this colloquy was the re-establishment of union, "I protest," said Luther, "that I differ from my adversaries with regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and that I shall always differ from them. Christ has said, This is my body. Let them show me that a body is not a body. I reject reason, common sense, carnal arguments, and mathematical proofs. God is above mathematics. We have the Word of God; we must adore it and perform it!" "It cannot be denied," said Oecolampadius, "that there are figures of speech in the Word of God; as John is Elias, the rock was Christ, I am the vine. The expression This is my body, is a figure of the same kind." Luther granted that there were figures in the Bible, but denied that this last expression was figurative.

All the various parties, however, of which the Christian Church is composed, see a figure in these words. In fact, the Romanists declare that This is

my body signifies not only “my body,” but also “my blood,” “my soul,” and even “my Divinity,” and “Christ wholly.” These words, therefore according to Rome, are a synecdoche, a figure by which a part is taken for the whole. And, as regards the Lutherans, the figure is still more evident. Whether it be synecdoche, metaphor, or metonymy, there is still a figure.

In order to prove it, Oecolampadius employed this syllogism: — “What Christ rejected in the sixth chapter of St. John, he could not admit in the words of the Eucharist.

“Now Christ, who said to the people of Capernaum, The flesh profiteth nothing, rejected by those very words the oral manducation of his body.

“Therefore he did not establish it at the institution of his Supper.” Luther — “I deny the minor (the second of these propositions); Christ has not rejected all oral manducation, but only a material manducation, like that of the flesh of oxen

or of swine." Oecolampadius — "There is danger in attributing too much to mere matter." Luther — "Everything that God commands becomes spirit and life. If we lift up a straw, by the Lord's order, in that very action we perform a spiritual work. We must pay attention to him who speaks, and not to what he says. God speaks: Men, worms, listen! — God commands: let the world obey! and let us all together fall down and humbly kiss the Word." Oecolampadius — "But since we have the spiritual eating, what need of the bodily one?" Luther — "I do not ask what need we have of it; but I see it written, Eat, this is my body. We must therefore believe and do. We must do — we must do! — If God should order me to eat dung, I would do it, with the assurance that it would be salutary." At this point Zwingle interfered in the discussion.

"We must explain Scripture by Scripture," said he. "We cannot admit two kinds of corporeal manducation, as if Jesus had spoken of eating, and the Capernaites of tearing in pieces, for the same word is employed in both cases. Jesus says that to eat his flesh corporeally profiteth nothing (John

6:63); whence it would result that he had given us in the Supper a thing that would be useless to us. — Besides, there are certain words that seem to me rather childish, — the dung, for instance. The oracles of the demons were obscure, not so are those of Jesus Christ." Luther — "When Christ says the flesh profiteth nothing, he speaks not of his own flesh, but of ours." Zwingle — "The soul is fed with the Spirit and not with the Flesh." Luther — "It is with the mouth that we eat the body; the soul does not eat it." Zwingle — "Christ's body is therefore a corporeal nourishment, and not a spiritual." Luther — "You are captious." Zwingle — "Not so; but you utter contradictory things." Luther — "If God should present me wild apples, I should eat them spiritually. In the Eucharist, the mouth receives the body of Christ, and the soul believes in his words." Zwingle then quoted a great number of passages from the Holy Scriptures, in which the sign is described by the very thing signified; and thence concluded that, considering our Lord's declaration in St. John, The flesh profiteth nothing, we must explain the words of the Eucharist in a similar

manner.

Many hearers were struck by these arguments. Among the Marburg professors sat the Frenchman Lambert; his tall and spare frame was violently agitated. He had been at first of Luther's opinion, and was then hesitating between the two reformers. As he went to the conference, he said: "I desire to be a sheet of blank paper, on which the finger of God may write his truth." Erelong he exclaimed, after hearing Zwingle and Oecolampadius: "Yes! the Spirit, 'tis that which vivifies!" When this conversion was known, the Wittenbergers, shrugging their shoulders, called it "Gallic fickleness." "What!" replied Lambert, "was St. Paul fickle because he was converted from Pharisaism? And have we ourselves been fickle in abandoning the lost sects of popery?" Luther was, however, by no means shaken. "This is my body," repeated he, pointing with his finger to the words written before him.

"This is my body. The devil himself shall not drive me from that. To seek to understand it, is to

fall away from the faith." "But, doctor," said Zwingle, "St. John explains how Christ's body is eaten, and you will be obliged at last to leave off singing always the same song." "You make use of unmannerly expressions," replied Luther. The Wittenbergers themselves called Zwingle's argument "his old song." Zwingle continued without being disconcerted: "I ask you, doctor, whether Christ in the sixth chapter of St. John did not wish to reply to the question that had been put to him?" Luther — "Master Zwingle, you wish to stop my mouth by the arrogancy of your language. That passage has nothing to do here." Zwingle, hastily — "Pardon me, doctor, that passage breaks your neck." Luther — "Do not boast so much! You are in Hesse, and not in Switzerland. In this country we do not break people's necks." Then turning towards his friends, Luther complained bitterly of Zwingle; as if the latter had really wished to break his neck. "He makes use of camp terms and blood-stained words," said he. Luther forgot that he had employed a similar expression in speaking of Carlstadt.

Zwingle resumed: “In Switzerland also there is strict justice, and we break no man’s neck without trial. That expression signifies merely that your cause is lost and hopeless.” Great agitation prevailed in the Knight’s Hall. The roughness of the Swiss and the obstinacy of the Saxon had come into collision. The landgrave, fearing to behold the failure of his project of conciliation, nodded assent to Zwingle’s explanation. “Doctor,” said he to Luther, “you should not be offended at such common expressions.” It was in vain: the agitated sea could not again be calmed. The prince therefore arose, and they all repaired to the banqueting hall. After dinner they resumed their tasks.

“I believe,” said Luther, “that Christ’s body is in heaven, but I also believe that it is in the sacrament. It concerns me little whether it be against nature, provided that it be not against faith. Christ is substantially in the sacrament, such as he was born of the Virgin.” Oecolampadius, quoting a passage from St. Paul: “We know not Jesus Christ after the flesh.” Luther — “After the flesh means, in this passage, after our carnal affections.”

Oecolampadius — “You will not allow that there is a metaphor in these words, This is my body, and yet you admit a synecdoche.” Luther — “Metaphor permits the existence of a sign only; but it is not so with synecdoche. If a man says he wishes to drink a bottle, we understand that he means the beer in the bottle. Christ’s body is in the bread, as a sword in the scabbard, or as the Holy Ghost in the dove.” The discussion was proceeding in this manner, when Osiander, pastor of Nuremberg, Stephen Agricola, pastor of Augsburg, and Brentz, pastor of Halle in Swabia, author of the famous Syngramma, entered the hall. These also had been invited by the landgrave. But Brentz, to whom Luther had written that he should take care not to appear had no doubt by his indecision retarded his own departure as well as that of his friends. Places were assigned them near Luther and Melancthon. “Listen, and speak if necessary,” they were told. They took but little advantage of this permission. “All of us, except Luther,” said Melancthon, “were silent personages.” The struggle continued.

When Zwingle saw that exegesis was not

sufficient for Luther, he added dogmatical theology to it, and, subsidiarily, natural philosophy.

“I oppose you,” said he, “with this article of our faith: Ascendit in coelum — he ascended into heaven. If Christ is in heaven as regards his body, how can he be in the bread? The Word of God teaches us that he was like his brethren in all things (Hebrews 2:17). He therefore cannot be in several places at once.” Luther — “Were I desirous of reasoning thus, I would undertake to prove that Jesus Christ had a wife; that he had black eyes, and lived in our good country of Germany. I care little about mathematics.” “There is no question of mathematics here,” said Zwingle, “but of St.

Paul, who writes to the Philippians, morphe doulou labon.” Luther, interrupting him — “Read it to us in Latin or in German, not in Greek.” Zwingle (in Latin) — “Pardon me: for twelve years past I have made use of the Greek Testament only.” Then continuing to read the passage, he concluded from it that Christ’s humanity is of a finite nature like our own.

Luther, pointing to the words written before him — “Most dear sirs, since my Lord Jesus Christ says, Hoc est corpus meum, I believe that his body is really there.” Here the scene grew animated. Zwingle started from his chair, sprung towards Luther, and said, striking the table before him: “You maintain then, doctor, that Christ’s body is locally in the Eucharist; for you say Christ’s body is really there — there — there,” repeated Zwingle. “There is an adverb of place. Christ’s body is then of such a nature as to exist in a place. If it is in a place, it is in heaven, whence it follows that it is not in the bread.” Luther — “I repeat that I have nothing to do with mathematical proofs. As soon as the words of consecration are pronounced over the bread, the body is there, however wicked be the priest who pronounces them.” Zwingle — “You are thus re-establishing Popery.” Luther — “This is not done through the priest’s merits, but because of Christ’s ordinance. I will not, when Christ’s body is in question, hear speak of a particular place. I absolutely will not.” Zwingle — “Must every thing, then, exist precisely as you will it?” The

landgrave perceived that the discussion was growing hot; and as the repast was waiting, he broke off the contest. The conference was continued on the next day Sunday, the 3rd October, perhaps because of an epidemic (the Sweating Sickness) that had just broken out at Marburg, and which did not allow any great prolongation of the colloquy. Luther, returning to the discussion of the previous evening, said: “Christ’s body is in the sacrament, but it is not there as in a place.” Zwingle — “Then it is not there at all.” Luther — “Sophists say, that a body may very well be in several places at once. The universe is a body, and yet we cannot assert that it is in a particular place.” Zwingle — “Ah! you speak of sophists, doctor; are you really after all obliged to return to the onions and fleshpots of Egypt? As for what you say, that the universe is in no particular place, I beg all intelligent men to weigh this proof.” Then Zwingle, who, whatever Luther may have said, had more than one arrow in his quiver, after establishing his proposition by exegesis and philosophy, resolved on confirming it by the testimony of the Fathers of the Church.

“Listen,” said he, “to what Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspa in Numidia, said, in the fifth century, to Trasamond, king of the Vandals: “The Son of God took the attributes of true humanity, and did not lose those of true divinity. Born in time, according to his mother, he lives in eternity according to the divinity that he holds from the Father: coming from man, he is man, and consequently in a place; proceeding from the Father, he is God, and consequently present in every place. According to his human nature, he was absent from heaven while he was upon earth, and quitted the earth when he ascended into heaven; but, according to his divine nature, he remained in heaven, when he came down thence, and did not abandon the earth when he returned thither.” But Luther still replied: “It is written, This is my body.” Zwingle, becoming impatient, said, “All that is idle wrangling. An obstinate disputant might also maintain this expression of our Savior to his mother, Behold thy son, pointing to St. John. Vain would be every explanation, he would continue crying No, no! He said Ecce filius tuus, Behold thy son, behold thy

son! Listen to a new testimony; it is from the great Augustine: ‘Let us not think,’ says he, ‘that Christ, according to his human form, is present in every place; let us beware, in our endeavor to establish his divinity, of taking away his truth from his body. Christ is now everywhere present, like God; and yet, in consequence of his real body, he is in a definite part of heaven.” “St. Augustine,” replied Luther, “is not here speaking of the Eucharist. Christ’s body is not in the Eucharist, as in a place.” Oecolampadius saw that he might take advantage of this assertion of Luther’s. “The body of Christ,” said he, “is not locally in the Eucharist, therefore no real body is there; for every one knows that the essence of a body is its existence in a place.” Here finished the morning’s discussion.

Oecolampadius, upon reflection, felt convinced that Luther’s assertion might be looked upon as an approximation. “I remember,” said he after dinner, “that the doctor conceded this morning that Christ’s body was not in the sacrament as in a place. Let us therefore inquire amicably what is the nature of Christ’s bodily presence.” “You will not

make me take a step further," exclaimed Luther, who saw where they wished to drag him; "you have Fulgentius and Augustine on your side, but all the other Fathers are on ours." Oecolampadius, who seemed to the Wittenbergers to be vexatiously precise, then said, "Name these doctors. We will take upon ourselves to prove that they are of our opinion." "We will not name them to you," said Luther. "It was in his youth," added he, "that Augustine wrote what you have quoted; and, besides, he is an obscure author." Then, retreating to the ground which he had resolved never to quit, he was no longer content to point his finger at the inscription, Hoc est corpus meum, but seized the velvet cover on which the words were written, tore it off the table, held it up in front of Zwingle and Oecolampadius, and placing it before their eyes, "See!" said he, "see! This is our text: you have not yet driven us from it, as you had boasted, and we care for no other proofs." "If this be the case," said Oecolampadius, "we had better leave off the discussion. But I will first declare, that, if we quote the Fathers, it is only to free our doctrine from the reproach of novelty, and not to support our cause

by their authority.” No better definition can be given of the legitimate use of the doctors of the Church.

There was no reason, in fact, for prolonging the conference. “As Luther was of an intractable and imerious disposition,” says one of those papists who Melancthon wished to be judges, “He did not cease form calling upon the Swiss to submit simply to his opinion.” The chancellor, alarmed at such a termination of the colloquy, exhorted the theologians to come to some understanding. “I know but one means for that,” said Luther; “and this it is: Let our adversaries believe as we do.” “We cannot,” answered the Swiss. “Well then,” rejoined Luther, “I abandon you to God’s judgment, and pray that he will enlighten you.” “We will do the same,” added Oecolampadius.

While these words were passing, Zwingle sat silent, motionless, and deeply moved; and the liveliness of his affections, of which he had given more than one proof during the conference, was then manifested in a very different manner. He

burst into tears in the presence of all.

The conference was ended. It had been in reality more tranquil than the documents seem to show, or perhaps the chroniclers appreciated such matters differently from ourselves. “With the exception of a few sallies, all had passed off quietly, in a courteous manner, and with very great gentleness,” says an eye-witness. “During the colloquy no other words than these were heard: ‘Sir, and very dear friend, your charity,’ or other similar expressions. Not a word of schism or of heresy. It might have been said that Luther and Zwingle were brothers, and not adversaries.” This is the testimony of Brentz. But these flowers concealed an abyss, and Jonas, also an eye-witness, styles the conference “a very sharp contest.” The contagion that had suddenly broken out in Marburg was creating frightful ravages, and filled everybody with alarm. All were anxious to leave the city. “Sirs,” remarked the landgrave, “you cannot separate thus.” And desirous of giving the doctors an opportunity of meeting one another with minds unoccupied by theological debates, he invited them

to his table.

This was Sunday night.

Philip of Hesse had all along shown the most constant attention, and each one imagined him to be on his side. “I would rather place my trust in the simple words of Christ, than in the subtle thoughts of man,” was a remark he made, according to Jonas; but Zwingle affirmed that this prince entertained the same opinions as himself, although with regard to certain persons he dissembled the change. Luther, sensible of the weakness of his defense as to the declarations of the Fathers, transmitted a note to Philip, in which several passages were pointed out from Hilary, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Irenaeus, and Ambrose, which he thought were in his favor.

The time of departure drew near, and nothing had been done. The landgrave toiled earnestly at the union, as Luther wrote to his wife. He invited the theologians one after another into his closet; he pressed, entreated, warned, exhorted, and conjured

them. “Think,” said he, “of the salvation of the christian republic, and remove all discord from its bosom.” Never had general at the head of an army taken such pains to win a battle.

A final meeting took place, and undoubtedly the Church has seldom witnessed one of greater solemnity. Luther and Zwingle, Saxony and Switzerland, met for the last time. The sweating sickness was carrying off men around them by thousands; Charles the Fifth and the pope were uniting in Italy; Ferdinand and the Roman-catholic princes were preparing to tear in pieces the Protest of Spires; the thunder-cloud became more threatening every day; union alone seemed capable of saving the Protestants, and the hour of departure was about to strike — an hour that would separate them perhaps for ever.

“Let us confess our union in all things in which we agree,” said Zwingle; “and as for the rest, let us remember that we are brothers. There will never be peace between the churches if, while we maintain the grand doctrine of salvation by faith, we cannot

differ on secondary points.” Such is, in fact, the true principle of christian union. The sixteenth century was still too deeply sunk in scholasticism to understand this: let us hope that the nineteenth century will comprehend it better.

“Yes, yes!” exclaimed the landgrave; “you agree! Give then a testimony of your unity, and recognize one another as brothers.” — “There is no one upon earth with whom I more desire to be united, than with you,” said Zwingle, approaching the Wittenberg doctors. Oecolampadius, Bucer, and Hedio said the same.

“Acknowledge them! acknowledge them as brothers!” continued the landgrave. Their hearts were moved; they were on the eve of unity: Zwingle, bursting into tears,in the presence of the prince, the courtiers, and divines (it is Luther himself who records this), approached Luther, and held out his hand. The two families of the Reformation were about to be united: long quarrels were about to be stifled in their cradle; but Luther rejected the hand that was offered him: “You have

a different spirit from ours," said he. These words communicated to the Swiss, as it were, an electric shock. Their hearts sunk each time Luther repeated them, and he did so frequently. He himself is our informant.

A brief consultation took place among the Wittenberg doctors. Luther, Melancthon, Agricola, Brentz, Jonas, and Osiander, conferred together.

Convinced that their peculiar doctrine on the eucharist, was essential to salvation, they considered all those who rejected it as without the pale of the faith. "What folly!" said Melancthon, who afterwards nearly coincided with Zwingle's sentiments: "they condemn us, and yet they desire we should consider them as our brothers!" "What versatility!" added Brentz: "they accused us but lately of worshipping a bread-god, and they now ask for communion with us!" Then, turning towards Zwingle and his friends, the Wittenbergers said: "You do not belong to the communion of the Christian Church; we cannot acknowledge you as brethren!" The Swiss were far from partaking of

this sectarian spirit. “We think,” said Bucer, “that your doctrine strikes at the glory of Jesus Christ, who now reigns at the right hand of the Father. But seeing that in all things you acknowledge your dependence on the Lord, we look at your conscience, which compels you to receive the doctrine you profess, and we do not doubt that you belong to Christ.” “And we,” said Luther — “we declare to you once more that our conscience opposes our receiving you as brethren.” — “If such is the case,” replied Bucer, “it would be folly to ask it.” “I am exceedingly astonished that you wish to consider me as your brother,” pursued Luther. “It shows clearly that you do not attach much importance to your own doctrine.” “Take your choice,” said Bucer, proposing a dilemma to the reformer: “either you should not acknowledge as brethren those who differ from you in any point — and if so, you will not find a single brother in your own ranks — or else you will receive some of those who differ from you, and then you ought to receive us.” The Swiss had exhausted their solicitations. “We are conscious,” said they, “of having acted as if in the presence of God. Posterity

will be our witness.” They were on the point of retiring: Luther remained like a rock, to the landgrave’s great indignation.

The Hessian divines, Kraft, Lambert, Snepf, Lonicer, and Melander, united their exertions to those of the prince.

Luther was staggered, and conferred anew with his colleagues. “Let us beware,” said he to his friends, “of wiping our noses too roughly, lest blood should come.” Then turning to Zwingle and Oecolampadius, they said: “We acknowledge you as friends; we do not consider you as brothers and members of Christ’s Church. But we do not exclude you from that universal charity which we owe even to our enemies.” The hearts of Zwingle, Oecolampadius, and Bucer, were ready to burst, for this concession was almost a new insult. “Let us carefully avoid all harsh and violent words and writings,” said they; “and let each one defend himself without railing.” Luther then advanced towards the Swiss, and said: “We consent, and I offer you the hand of peace and charity.” The

Swiss rushed in great emotion towards the Wittenbergers, and all shook hands. Luther himself was softened: christian charity resumed her rights in his heart. “Assuredly,” said he, “a great portion of the scandal is taken away by the suppression of our fierce debates; we could not have hoped for so much. May Christ’s hand remove the last obstacle that separates us. There is now a friendly concord between us, and if we persevere in prayer, brotherhood will come.” It was desirable to confirm this important result by a report. “We must let the christian world know,” said the landgrave, “that, except the manner of the presence of the body and blood in the eucharist, you are agreed in all the articles of faith.” This was resolved on; but who should be charged with drawing up the paper? All eyes were turned upon Luther. The Swiss themselves appealed to his impartiality.

Luther retired to his closet, lost in thought, uneasy, and finding the task very difficult. “On the one hand,” said he, “I should like to spare their weakness, but, on the other, I would not in the least degree strike at the holy doctrine of Christ.” He did

not know how to set about it, and his anguish increased. He got free at last. “I will draw up the articles,” said he, “in the most accurate manner. Do I not know that whatever I may write, they will never sign them?” Erelong fifteen articles were committed to paper, and Luther, holding them in his hand, repaired to the theologians of the two parties.

These articles are of importance. The two doctrines that were evolved in Switzerland and in Saxony, independently of each other, were brought together and compared. If they were of man, there would be found in them a servile uniformity, or a remarkable opposition. This was not the case. A great unity was found between the German and the Swiss Reformations, for they both proceeded from the same Divine teaching; and a diversity on secondary points, for it was by man’s instrumentality that God had effected them.

Luther took his paper, and reading the first article, said: “First, we believe that there is one sole, true, and natural God, creator of heaven and

earth and of all creatures; and that this same God, one in essence and in nature, is three-fold in person, that is to say, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as was declared in the Nicene Council, and as all the Christian Church professes." To this the Swiss gave their assent.

They were agreed also on the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ; on his death and resurrection, on original sin, justification by faith, the operation of the Holy Ghost and of the Word of God, baptism, good works, confession, civil order, and tradition.

Thus far all were united. The Wittenbergers could not recover from their astonishment. The two parties had rejected, on the one hand, the errors of the papists, who make religion little more than an outward form; and, on the other, those of the Enthusiasts, who speak exclusively of internal feelings; and they were found drawn up under the same banners between these two camps. But the moment was come that would separate them. Luther had kept till the last the article on the

Eucharist.

The reformer resumed: “We all believe with regard to the Lord’s Supper, that it ought to be celebrated in both kinds, according to the primitive institution; that the mass is not a work by which a Christian obtains pardon for another man, whether dead or alive; that the sacrament of the altar is the sacrament of the very body and very blood of Jesus Christ; and that the spiritual manducation of this body and blood is specially necessary to every true Christian.” It was now the turn of the Swiss to be astonished. Luther continued: “In like manner, as to the use of the sacrament, we are agreed that, like the Word, it was ordained of Almighty God, in order that weak consciences might be excited by the Holy Ghost to faith and charity.” The joy of the Swiss was redoubled. Luther continued: “And although at present we are not agreed on the question whether the real body and blood of Christ are corporeally present in the bread and wine, yet both the interested parties shall cherish more and more a truly christian charity for one another, so far as conscience permits; and we will all earnestly

implore the Lord to condescend by his Spirit to confirm us in the sound doctrine." The Swiss obtained what they had asked: unity in diversity. It was immediately resolved to hold a solemn meeting for the signature of the articles.

They were read over again. Oecolampadius, Zwingle, Bucer, and Hedio, signed them first on one copy; while Luther, Melancthon, Jonas, Osiander, Brentz, and Agricola, wrote their names on the other; both parties then subscribed the copy of their adversaries, and this important document was sent to the press. Thus the Reformation had made a sensible step at Marburg. The opinion of Zwingle on the spiritual presence, and of Luther on the bodily presence, are both found in christian antiquity; but both the extreme doctrines have been always rejected: that of the Rationalists, on the one hand, who behold in the Eucharist nothing but a simple commemoration; and of the Papists, on the other, who adore in it a transubstantiation. These are both errors; while the doctrines of Luther and Zwingle, and the medium taken by Calvin, already maintained by some of the Fathers, were

considered in ancient times as different views of the same truth. If Luther had yielded, it might have been feared that the Church would fall into the extreme of rationalism; if Zwingle, that it would rush into the extreme of popery. It is a salutary thing for the Church that these different views should be entertained; but it is a pernicious thing for individuals to attach themselves to one of them in such a manner as to anathematize the other. “There is only this little stumbling-block,” wrote Melancthon, “that embarrasses the Church of our Lord.” All, — Romanists and Evangelicals, Saxons and Swiss, — admitted the presence, and even the real presence of Christ; but here was the essential point of separation: Is this presence effected by the faith of the communicant, or by the opus operatum of the priest? The germs of Popery, Sacerdotalism, Puseyism, are inevitably contained in this latter thesis. If it is maintained that a wicked priest (as has been said) operates this real presence of Christ by three words, we enter the church of the pope. Luther appeared sometimes to admit this doctrine, but he has often spoken in a more spiritual manner; and taking this great man in his best moments, we

behold merely an essential unity and a secondary diversity in the two parties of the Reformation. Undoubtedly the Lord has left to his Church outward ordinances; but he has not attached salvation to them. The essential point is the connection of the faithful with the Word, with the Holy Ghost, with the Head of the Church. This is the great truth which the Swiss Reform proclaims, and which Lutheranism itself recognizes.

After the Marburg conference, the controversy became more moderate.

There was another advantage. The evangelical divines at Marburg marked with one accord their separation from the Papacy. Zwingle was not without fear (unfounded, no doubt) with regard to Luther: these fears were dispersed. “Now that we are agreed,” said he, “the Papists will no longer hope that Luther will ever be one of them.” The Marburg articles were the first bulwark erected in common by the reformers against Rome.

It was not, then, in vain that, after the Protest of

Spires, Philip of Hesse endeavored, at Marburg, to bring together the friends of the Gospel. But, if the religious object was partially attained, the political object almost entirely failed. They could not arrive at a confederation of Switzerland and Germany. Nevertheless, Philip of Hesse and Zwingle, with a view to this, had numerous secret conversations, which made the Saxons uneasy, as they were not less opposed to Zwingle's politics than to his theology.

"When you have reformed the peasant's cap," said Jonas to him, "you will also claim to reform the sable hat of princes." The landgrave having collected all the doctors at his table on the last day, they shook hands in a friendly manner, and each one thought of leaving the town.

On Tuesday the 5th October, Philip of Hesse quitted Marburg early, and in the afternoon of the same day Luther departed, accompanied by his colleagues; but he did not go forth as a conqueror. A spirit of dejection and alarm had taken possession of his mind. He writhed in the dust, like

a worm, according to his own expression. He fancied he should never see his wife and children again, and cried out that he, “the consoler of so many tortured souls, was now without any consolations!” This state might partly arise from Luther’s want of brotherly feeling; but it had other causes also. Soliman had come to fulfill a promise made to King Ferdinand. The latter having demanded, in 1528, the surrender of Belgrade, the sultan had haughtily replied, that he would bring the keys himself to Vienna. In fact, the Grand Turk, crossing the frontiers of Germany, had invaded countries “on which the hoofs of the Mussulman war-horses had never trod,” and eight days before the conference at Marburg, he had covered with his innumerable tents the plain and the fertile hills in the midst of which rise the walls of Vienna. The struggle had begun under ground, the two parties having dug deep galleries beneath the ramparts.

Three different times the Turkish mines were exploded; the walls were thrown down; “the balls flew through the air like a flight of small birds,”

says a Turkish historian; “and there was a horrible banquet, at which the genii of death joyously drained their glasses.” Luther did not keep in the background. He had already written against the Turks, and now he published a Battle-Sermon. “Mahomet,” said he, “exalts Christ as being without sin; but he denies that he was the true God; he is therefore His enemy. Alas! to this hour the world is such that it seems everywhere to rain disciples of Mahomet. Two men ought to oppose the Turks: the first is Christian, that is to say, Prayer; the second is Charles, that is to say, The sword.” And in another place, “I know my dear Germans well, fat and well-fed swine as they are; no sooner is the danger removed, than they think only of eating and sleeping. Wretched man! if thou dost not take up arms, the Turk will come; he will carry thee away into his Turkey; he will there sell thee like a dog; and thou shalt serve him night and day, under the rod and the cudgel, for a glass of water and a morsel of bread. Think on this; be converted, and implore the Lord not to give thee the Turk for thy schoolmaster.” The two arms pointed out by Luther were, in reality, vigorously

employed; and Soliman, perceiving at last that he was not the “soul of the universe,” as his poets had styled him, but that there was a strength in the world superior to his own, raised the siege of Vienna on the 16th October; and “the shadow of God over the two worlds,” as he called himself, “disappeared and vanished in the Bosphorus.” But Luther imagined that, when retiring from before the walls of Vienna, “the Turk, or at least his god, who is the devil,” had rushed upon him; and that it was this enemy of Christ and of Christ’s servants that he was destined to combat and vanquish in his frightful agony. There is an immediate reaction of the violated law upon him who violates it. Now Luther had transgressed the royal law, which is charity, and he suffered the penalty. At last he re-entered Wittenberg, and flung himself into the arms of his friends, “tormented by the angel of death.” Let us not, however, overlook the essential qualities of a reformer that Luther manifested at Marburg, there are in God’s work, as in a drama, different parts. What various characters we see among the Apostles and among the Reformers! It has been said that the same characters and the same

parts were assigned to St. Peter and to Luther, at the time of the Formation and of the Reformation of the Church. They were both in fact men of the initiative, who start forward quite alone, but around whom an army soon collects at the sight of the standard which they wave. But there was perhaps in the reformer a characteristic not existing to the same degree in the apostle: this was firmness.

As for Zwingle, he quitted Marburg in alarm at Luther’s intolerance.

“Lutheranism,” wrote he to the landgrave, “will lie as heavy upon us as popery.” He reached Zurich on the 19th October. “The truth,” said he to his friends, “has prevailed so manifestly, that if ever any one has been defeated before all the world, it is Luther, although he constantly exclaimed that he was invincible.” On his side, Luther spoke in a similar strain.

“It is through fear of their fellow-citizens,” added he, “that the Swiss, although vanquished, are unwilling to retract.” If it should be asked on which

side the victory really was, perhaps we ought to say that Luther assumed the air of a conqueror, but Zwingle was so in reality. The conference propagated through all Germany the doctrine of the Swiss, which had been little known there until then, and it was adopted by an immense number of persons. Among these were Laffards, first rector of St. Martin's school at Brunswick, Dionysius Melander, Justus Lening, Hartmann, Ibach, and many others. The landgrave himself, a short time before his death, declared that this conference had induced him to renounce the oral manducation of Christ. Still the dominant principle at this celebrated epoch was unity. The adversaries are the best judges. The Roman-catholics were exasperated that the Lutherans and Zwinglians had agreed on all the essential points of faith. "They have a fellowfeeling against the Catholic Church," said they, "as Herod and Pilate against Jesus Christ." The enthusiastic sects said the same, and the extreme hierarchical as well as the extreme radical party deprecated alike the unity of Marburg.

Erelong a greater agitation eclipsed all these

rumors, and events which threatened the whole evangelical body, proclaimed its great and intimate union with new force. The emperor, it was everywhere said, exasperated by the Protest of Spires, had landed at Genoa with the pomp of a conqueror. After having sworn at Barcelona to reduce the heretics under the power of the pope, he was going to visit this pontiff, humbly to bend the knee before him; and he would rise only to cross the Alps and accomplish his terrible designs. “The Emperor Charles,” said Luther, a few days after the landing of this prince, “has determined to show himself more cruel against us than the Turk himself, and he has already uttered the most horrible threats. Behold the hour of Christ’s agony and weakness.

Let us pray for all those who will soon have to endure captivity and death.” Such was the news that then agitated all Germany. The grand question was, whether the Protest of Spires could be maintained against the power of the emperor and of the pope. This was seen in the year.