

YOU may have observed that all the disputes about religion came hitherto from the priest, for Pietro Valdo, the merchant of Lyons, who passes for the author of the sect of the Vaudois, was not so, but only assembled together his brethera, and encouraged them to persist in what they had begun. He himself was the follower of the doctrine of Berenger, of Charles bishop of Turin, and of several others of the same opinion; and it was not till after Luther's time that such crowds of laymen began to take up the business of teachers, in consequence of the various translations of the Bible, which, as they differed in their interpretations, gave rise to as many different opinions as there were different passages to explain.

The Lutherans were for having new versions of the Bible, in all the modern languages, and that these versions should be purged from all the inaccuracies and errors with which the Vulgate is charged. In fact, when the council set about printing the common version, the six persons appointed to superintend the work, discovered no less than 8000 faults in the old version, and several learned men pretended there were many more; so that at length the council declared the Vulgate version to be authentic, without being at the pains of the proposed correction. The present German Bible was translated by Luther from the original Hebrew; but it is said he knew very little of Hebrew, and that his translation is much more faulty than the Vulgate.

Luther insisted that all monastic vows should be set aside, because not of primitive institution; that priests should be allowed to marry, because some of the apostles had wives married; that the laity should partake of the cup, because Jesus said, *Drink all of ye*; that no worship should be paid to images, because Christ worshipp'd no image. In a word, he agreed with the church of Rome in no one point but that of the trinity, baptism, the incarnation, and the resurrection; points which, nevertheless, had been formerly subjects of the sharpest disputes, and some of them had been actually controverted in late days, so that there is no one point of devotion concerning which mankind have not been divided at one time or another.

Had both sides confined themselves to invectives and abuse, Luther would have done less hurt to the church of Rome than Erasmus; but some bold doctors having joined Luther, raised their voices, and began to exclaim not only against the dogma's of schools, but also against the right which the popes, ever since the time of Gregory VII. had assumed to themselves, of disposing of kingdoms. They likewise inveighed against the shameful traffick made of every thing belonging to religion, against publick and private oppression, and both in their writings, and from pulpits, drew a moving picture of five hundred years of prosecution. They represented Germany bathed in blood, through the quarrels between the diadem and the tiara, the people treated like wild beasts, and heaven opened or shut for money, by wretches guilty of incest, murder, and poisoning. With what face, said they, could Alexander VI. the horror and scandal of human kind, dare to call himself the vicar of God? or how could Leo X. sunk into the most shameful pleasure, presume to take that title?

The people were at length awakened by these repeated cries, and the German doctors stirred up a greater hatred against new Rome than ever Varus had done against the old in the same country.

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