

him ask the church. The church is divinely authorized to pronounce what is true. Its councils and visible head are infallible—yield implicitly to it." Nay, says the Protestant. The church is after all but an assembly of fallible men; its councils are not such as to warrant implicit faith therein; but we have a book recording the history of God's religious dealings with man, and containing the revelations made to men who spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost. The Bible, not the church, is the organ of religious truth and the infallible rule of faith.

Luther had been brought up in the community ever claiming to be *the church*; its system of penances and self-enforced denials he tried earnestly that the burden on his soul might be rolled away. To him, at least, the church gave no rest—it was too human, its acknowledged head a cultivated man of wealth, pleasure, and agnosticism. A strange infallibility for a sin-sick weary soul. But he found a treasure in a dusty book—that same book is often covered with dust now—and he read therein the history of man's fall and God's redemption, the Holy Ghost (in the words of the old Belgic confession) bearing witness to his conscience that the words of that book came from God. Thus the Scriptures testified and justified their own sacred authority and sanctity, seeing that even the blind may clearly behold and, as it were, feel the fulfilling and accomplishment of all things prophesied in those writings. Here was infallible ground—the Word which liveth and abideth for ever.

Only gradually did Luther treasure up in his heart the truths from his old Latin Bible. The story of Harrah and Samuel first attracted his attention by its pathos and sweetness. Home affection had a peculiar charm for him, but as he read the deeper problems of his soul were touched and solved. He found how man could be just with God, and the heart find peace in Christ and His righteousness. There is a peculiar feeling of confidence with which a traveller views the vessel that without break or strain has carried him through rough seas *under stormy skies*, and given him comfort withal. It was no spasmodic love-at-first-sight that Luther had for the Scriptures; indeed, a kind of weird curiosity scanned first the time-stained leaves—he embarked upon their study as many have

stepped upon an ocean-steamer's deck—with light and curious step—but they proved a vessel staunch and true, bore him over untrodden tracks bravely, and landed him securely in his Redeemer's hands. The infallible church failed, but the Book, the Word of his God endured for ever. Said Luther: "Day and night this Word occupied my mind. Finally an all-merciful God granted me to see that Paul and the gospel proclaim a righteousness which is bestowed upon us through God's grace. For God forgives the sins of those who believe in His Word of grace, justifies them and presents them with eternal life. With this the gates of paradise were opened, and the import of the divine Word of salvation clearly revealed."

"My conscience is bound by God's Word—it is neither advisable nor safe to act contrary to conscience thus bound. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen."

Luther assuredly hid God's Word in his heart; it did not lie loosely round him as his monkish garb; it was not worn as a phylactery or chaplet—hung around the neck or bound with throngs—but in his heart, interwoven with his very being, which thus became so stable that the gates of hell could not prevail against him. "If thou have the Word in thy mouth only, it shall be taken from thee; if thou shalt have it in thy book only, thou shalt miss it when thou hast most to do with it; but if thou lay it up in thy heart, as Mary did the word of the angel, no enemy shall be able to take it from thee, and thou shalt find it a comfortable treasure in time of thy need." It was not the Word on the monastery shelf or in the monkish cell, but in the heart that made the Luther of Christendom. Luther, the son of the German miner, had ever been a genial, strong man in cell or house—but it was Luther with the Word of God hidden in his heart that shook Europe and laid the foundation of Protestant Evangelical faith. It is thus the young man may cleanse his way, the aged walk securely—thus may our life be, not flickering or as a vain-beating of the air, but sure, steady, persevering to the end.

WHERE is a man more thoroughly himself than at home? Men with Titan power may court battle, live in opposition, and use righteousness as an instrument of suc-