

covetousness before the eyes of the people, the new preachers said to them, "Freely we have received, freely do we give." The idea often published by the new preachers from the pulpit, that Rome had formerly sent the Germans a corrupted gospel, and that now for the first time Germany heard the Word of Christ in its heavenly and primal beauty, produced a deep impression on men's minds. And the noble thought of the equality of all men, of a universal brotherhood in Jesus Christ, laid strong hold upon those souls which for so long a period had groaned beneath the yoke of feudalism and of the papacy of the Middle Ages.

Often would unlearned Christians, with the New Testament in their hands, undertake to justify the doctrine of the Reformation. The Catholics who remained faithful to Rome withdrew in affright; for to priests and monks alone had been assigned the task of studying sacred literature. The latter were therefore compelled to come forward; the conference began; but ere long, overwhelmed by the declarations of Holy Scripture cited by these laymen, the priests and monks knew not how to reply. "Unhappily Luther had persuaded his followers," says Cochlaus, "to put no faith in any other oracle than the Holy Scriptures." A shout was raised in the assembly, and proclaimed the scandalous ignorance of these old theologians, who had hitherto been reputed such great scholars by their own party.

Men of the lowest station, and even the weaker sex, with the aid of God's Word, persuaded and led away men's hearts. Extraordinary works are the result of extraordinary times. At Ingolstadt under the eyes of Dr. Eck a young weaver read Luther's works to the assembled crowd. In this very city, the university having resolved to compel a disciple of Melancthon to retract, a woman, named Argula de Stanfen, undertook his defence, and challenged the doctors to a public disputation. Women and children, artisans and soldiers, knew more of the Bible than the doctors of the schools or the priests of the altars.

The ancient edifice was crumbling under the load of superstition and ignorance; the new one was rising on the foundations of faith and knowledge. New elements entered deep into the lives of the people. Torpor and dullness were in all parts succeeded by a spirit of inquiry and a thirst for instruction. An active, enlightened and living faith took the place of superstitious devotion and ascetic meditations. Works of piety succeeded bigoted observances and penances. The pulpit prevailed over the ceremonies of the altar; and the ancient and sovereign authority of God's Word was at length restored in the Church.

The printing-press, that powerful machine discovered in the 15th century, came to the support of all these exertions, and its terrible missiles were continually battering the walls of the enemy.

The impulse which the Reformation gave to popular literature in Germany was immense. Whilst in the year 1513 only 35 publications had appeared, and 37 in 1517, the number of books increased with astonishing rapidity after the appearance of Luther's theses. In 1518 we find 71 different works; in 1519, 111; in 1520,

208, in 1521, 211; in 1522, 347; and in 1523, 498. And where were all these published? for the most part in Wittemberg. And who were their authors? Generally Luther and his friends. In 1522, 130 of the reformer's writings were published; and in the year following, 183. In this same year only 20 Roman Catholic publications appeared. The literature of Germany thus saw the light in the midst of struggles and contemporaneously with her religion. Already it appeared learned, profound, full of daring and life, as later times have seen it. The national spirit showed itself for the first time, and at the very moment of its birth received the baptism of fire from Christian enthusiasm.

What Luther and his friends composed others circulated. Monks, convinced of the unlawfulness of monastic obligations, desirous of exchanging a long life of slothfulness for one of active exertion, but too ignorant to proclaim the Word of God, travelled through the provinces, visiting hamlets and cottages, where they sold the books of Luther and his friends. Germany soon swarmed with these bold colporteurs. Printers and booksellers eagerly welcomed every writing in defence of the Reformation; but they rejected the books of the opposite party, as generally full of ignorance and barbarism. If any one of them ventured to sell a book in favour of the papacy, and offered it for sale in the fairs of Frankfort or elsewhere, merchants, purchasers and men of letters overwhelmed him with ridicule and sarcasm. It was in vain that the emperor and princes had published severe edicts against the writings of the reformers. As soon as an inquisitorial visit was to be paid, the dealers, who had received secret intimation, concealed the books that it was intended to proscribe; ever eager for what is prohibited, immediately bought them up, and read them with the greater avidity. It was not only in Germany that such scenes were passing; Luther's writings were translated into French, Spanish, English and Italian, and circulated among these nations.*

NO MAN can be uniformly a good preacher, who is not habitually perusing the Scriptures as his book of delights.

It is a shame for a minister not to be acquainted with all the heads of theology, all the great schools of opinion and all the famous distinctions, and he will not learn them well unless he preaches upon them.

The democracy must be reached—people must be made to feel that the heart of the minister is with them. Common people require this. Age requires it. Young men require it.

FAITH.—Faith takes God at His word, and depends upon Him for the whole of salvation. God is good, and therefore He will not, He is true and faithful, therefore He can not, deceive me. I believe that He speaks as He means, and will do what He says; for which reason let me be strong in faith, giving honour to God, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.—*Ryland.*

* Merle d'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation."