

to contend for the innate bondage of the will, for he disposes of those scriptural passages which imply the freedom of the will, by asserting that God secretly intends the reverse of what he expresses in his revealed will, and that the apostles spoke of such a freedom only by way of irony.*

Bossuet, no friend of either Luther or Reformers, or reform, says, "The outrageous language of Luther did not constitute his greatest excesses in those books he wrote against Erasmus. The doctrine itself was horrible: for he not only concluded that free will was totally extinguished in mankind since their fall—a common error in the new reformation—but, moreover, that it is impossible any should be free but God; that his presence and divine providence, eternal and inevitable will of God, who thunderstrikes and breaks to pieces all free will: that the name of free will is a name which appertains to God alone, incompatible either with man, with angel, or any other creature."

"From these principles he was obliged to make God the author of crimes; nor did he conceal the thing, saying in express terms, that 'free will is a vain title; that God works the evil in us, as well as the good; that the great perfection of faith consists in believing God to be just, although, necessarily by his will, he renders us worthy of damnation, so as to seem to take pleasure in the torments of the wretched.'"†

We could easily give other statements from Luther, quoted by *Bossuet*, to show that the prince of Reformers was then in the dark on this important subject.

While *Dr. Mosheim* on the other hand says, and we believe with just as much truth, "The theological system that now prevails in the Lutheran academies, is not of the same tenor or spirit with that which was adopted in the infancy of the Reformation. As time and experience are necessary to bring all things to perfection, so the doctrine of the Lutheran Church changed, imperceptibly and by degrees, its original form, and was improved and perfected in many respects. This will appear both evident and striking to those who are acquainted with the history of the doctrines relating to the interpretation of Scripture, free will, predestination, and other points, and who compare the Lutheran

* Page 379.

† See *Bossuet's History of the Variations of the Protestant Church*, vol. I, book 2, sect. 17.