

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

LUTHER AT THE DIET OF WORMS.

On the 16th of April, at ten in the morning, the cart entered Worms, bringing Luther in his monk's dress, followed and attended by a crowd of cavaliers. The town's people were all out to see the person with whose name Germany was ringing. As the cart passed through the gates the warder on the walls blew a blast upon his trumpet. The elector had provided a residence. As he alighted, one who bore him no good-will, noted the "demonic eyes" with which he glanced about him. That evening a few nobles called to see him, who had been loud in their complaints of churchmen's exactions at the Diet. Of the princes, one only came, an ardent, noble-minded youth, of small influence as yet, but of high-spirited purpose, Philip Landgrave of Hesse. Instinct, more than knowledge, drew him to Luther's side. "Dear doctor," he said, "if you are right, the Lord God stand by you."

Luther needed God to stand by him; for in all the great gathering he could count on few assured friends. The princes of the Empire were resolved that he should have fair play; but they were little inclined so far to favour a disturber of the public peace. The Diet sat in the bishop's palace, and the next evening Luther appeared. The presence in which he found himself would have tried the nerves of the bravest of men; the Emperor, sternly hostile, with his retinue of Spanish priests and nobles, the archbishops and bishops, all of opinion that the stake was the only fitting place for so insolent a heretic, the dukes, and barons whose stern eyes were little likely to reveal their sympathy, if sympathy any of them felt. One of them only, George of Frendsherg, had touched Luther on the shoulder as he passed through the ante-room. "Little Monk, little Monk," he said, "thou hast work before thee, that I, and many a man whose trade is war, never faced the like of. If thy heart is right and thy cause good, go on in God's name. He will not forsake thee."

A pile of books stood on a table when he was brought forward. An officer of the court read the titles, asked if he acknowledged them and whether he was ready to retract them. Luther was nervous, not without cause. He answered in a low voice that the books were his. To the other question he could not reply at once. He demanded time. His first appearance had not left a favourable impression; he was allowed a night to consider.

The next morning, April eighteenth, he had recovered himself; he came in fresh, courageous and collected. His old enemy, Eck, was this time the spokesman against him, and asked what he was prepared to do.

He said firmly that his writings were of three kinds—some on simple Gospel truth, which all admitted; and which of course he could not retract; some against papal laws and customs, which had tried the consciences of Christians and had been used as excuses to oppress and spoil the German people. If he retracted these he would cover himself with shame. In a third sort he had attacked particular persons, and perhaps had been too violent. Even here he declined to retract simply; but would admit his fault, if fault could be proved.

He gave his answers in a clear, strong voice, in Latin first, and then in German. There was a pause, and then Eck said that he had spoken disrespectfully; his heresies had been already condemned at the Council of Constance. Let him retract on these special points, and he should have consideration for the rest. He required a plain yes or no from him, "without horns." The taunt roused his blood. His full, brave self was in his reply. "I will give you an answer," he said, "which has neither horns nor teeth. Popes have erred and councils have erred. Prove to me out of Scripture that I am wrong, and I submit. Till then my conscience binds me. Here I stand. I can do no more. God help me. Amen."

All day long the storm raged. Night had fallen and torches were lighted in the hall before the sitting closed. Luther was dismissed at last. It was supposed, and perhaps intended, that he was to be taken to a dungeon. But the hearts of the lay members of the Diet had been touched by the courage which he had shown. They would not permit a hand to be laid on him. Duke Eric, of Brunswick, handed to him a

tankard of beer, which he had himself half drained. When he had reached his lodging again, he flung up his hands. "I am through!" he cried: "I am through! If I had a thousand beads, they should be struck off, one by one, before I would retract." The same evening the elector Frederick sent for him, and told him he had done well and bravely.

But though he had escaped so far, he was not acquitted. Charles conceived that he could be now dealt with as an obstinate heretic. At the next session (the day following) he informed the Diet that he would send Luther home to Wittenberg, there to be punished as the Church required. The utmost that his friends could obtain was that further efforts should be made. The Archbishop of Treves was allowed to tell him that if he would acknowledge the infallibility of councils he might be permitted to doubt the infallibility of the Pope. But Luther stood simply upon Scripture. There, and there only, was infallibility. The elector ordered him home at once, till the Diet should decide upon his fate; and he was directed to be silent on the way, with significant reference to his Erfurt sermon. A majority in the Diet it was now clear, would pronounce for his death. If he was sentenced by the great council of the Empire, the elector would be no longer able openly to protect him. It was decided that he should disappear, and disappear so completely that no trace of him should be discernible. On his way back through the Thuringian forest, three or four miles from Altenstein, a party of armed men started out of the wood, set upon his carriage, seized and carried him to Wartburg Castle. There he remained, passing by the name of the Ritter George, and supposed to be some captive knight. The secret was so well kept that even the elector's brother was ignorant of his hiding place. Luther was as completely lost as if the earth had swallowed him. Some said that he was with Von Sickingen; others that he had been murdered. Authentic tidings of him there were none. On the 8th of May the Edict of Worms was issued, placing him under the ban of the Empire; but he had become "as the air, invulnerable," and the face of the world had changed before he came back to it.

The appearance of Luther before the Diet on this occasion is one of the finest, perhaps it is the very finest scene in human history. Many a man has encountered death bravely for a cause which he knows to be just, when he is sustained by the sympathy of thousands, of whom he is at the moment the champion and the representative. But it is one thing to suffer and another to encounter, face to face and single-handed, the array of spiritual and temporal authorities which are ruling supreme. Luther's very cause was yet unshaped and undetermined, and the minds of those who had admired and followed him were hanging in suspense for the issue of the trial.—*J. A. Froude.*

STRONG FOUNDATIONS.

A story is told of Lepaux, a member of the French Directory, that with much thought and study he had invented a new religion, to be called "Theophilanthropy," a kind of organized Rousseauism, and that, being disappointed in its not being readily approved and adopted, complained to Talleyrand of the difficulty he found in introducing it.

"I am not surprised," said Talleyrand, "at the difficulty you find in your effort. It is no easy matter to introduce a new religion. But there is one thing I would advise you to do, and then, perhaps, you might succeed."

"What is it? what is it?" asked the other, with eagerness.

"It is this," said Talleyrand, "go and be crucified, and then be buried, and then arise again on the third day, and then go on working miracles, raising the dead, and healing all manner of diseases, and casting out devils, and then it is possible that you might accomplish your end!" And the philosopher, crest-fallen and confounded, went away silent.

The anecdote shows, in a fresh and striking light, how firm are the foundation on which Christianity and the faith of the Christian rest. "Ransack all history," says an able writer, "and you cannot find a single event more satisfactorily and clearly proved than the resurrection of Christ from the dead." And says another, a distinguished jurist: "If human evidence ever has proved, or ever can prove anything, then the miracles of Christ are beyond a shadow of a doubt."

And yet the miracles and resurrection of Christ prove His divinity; and as Napoleon said: "His divinity once admitted, Christianity appears with the precision and clearness of algebra; it has the connection and unity of a science."

And on this strong foundation it is that Christianity and the Christian faith rest. And how absolutely immovable that foundation is, how absolutely convincing the evidence from this source, we hardly realize until, like Talleyrand, we call on the objector himself to be crucified, himself to rise from the dead, and himself to work miracles, as Christ did throughout Jerusalem and all Judea, in the presence of thousands and tens of thousands, both enemies and friends.

It is a most assuring as well as comforting thought, that his external evidence from without can never be shaken while human testimony has value or meaning. And when we add to this the internal evidence—the fact that thousands and millions of Christians have felt, in their own experience, that the Gospel is true, just as the hungry man knows he is fed, or the thirsty when he has drunk; just as we know the existence of the sun because we see its light and feel its heat—then the foundation on which as Christians we rest, stands doubly sure to the soul. Heaven and earth may pass away, but God's Word and all that rests upon it shall abide forever.—*American Messenger.*

POWER OF CONSISTENCY.

Life gives force to oratory. The sermon that is backed by a consistent man is the most effective. A writer in the "Christian Union" tells an anecdote of Dr. Lyman Beecher, which illustrates the power of the life that harmonizes with the preacher's sermons.

One Monday morning he took his market-basket on his arm and went to Faneuil Hall Market to get provisions for dinner. He was followed and watched, as he often was, by a young man who was the chorister of the Universalist church.

The minister soon came to the fish-market. Here Dr. Beecher picked up a fine looking fish and asked the fisherman if it was fresh and sweet.

"Certainly," replied the man, "for I caught it myself yesterday," which was Sunday.

Dr. Beecher at once dropped the fish, saying, "Then I don't want it," and went on without another word.

The young man who was watching him was instantly convinced of the minister's honesty and sincerity in practising the principles which he preached, became a regular attendant and a true convert, and for more than a quarter of a century was known as Deacon Thomas Holis, the druggist.

He was a prominent official in the church, and a valued director in the benevolent and charitable institutions of the city until his death.

EPITAPHS.

Lies on tombstones are painfully plentiful. It is sin to extol men when dead for virtues which they unsparingly trampled upon when alive; to draw an oblivious mantle over the vices with which they were linked arm-in-arm, and to celebrate their goodness as if they had been models of integrity. It is an insult to the marble to make its polished surface bear a chiselled falsehood. It is an affront to the Bible to quote its treasured utterances over those who ran in the devil's leash during life, and around whose dying bed the black clouds of eternal disaster gathered and the rumblings of a terrific storm were heard. Of one whose life was notorious for crime, yet of whom it was said that "he fell asleep in the Lord," Carlyle says indignantly, "Asleep in the Lord? If such a mass of laziness and lust fell asleep in the Lord, who, fanciest thou, is it that falleth asleep elsewhere?"

IT WILL BE HEARD.

The New York "Retailer," a liquor organ, tells the truth when it says, "Everywhere and in every State the liquor question is pushed to the front. It has not been dragged in by politicians, but it forces itself in spite of politicians. It is prohibition in one place, taxation in another, Sunday suppression in another. Under the general head of Temperance, this, now the foremost question, is breaking through party lines, overruling time-serving politicians, and demanding to be heard."

Yes! The temperance question has come and come to stay. Politicians cannot comprehend what they