

By and by, the familiarity between Luther and the Devil increased. "Early this morning," Luther tells us in his "Tischreden," "when I awoke the fiend came and began disputing with me. 'Thou art a great sinner,' said he. I replied, 'Caust not tell me something new, Satan?'"

Luther was inclined to believe in the Devil's power of assisting wizards and witches in their evil designs. Following St. Augustine's authority, he conceded the possibility of *incubi* and *succubæ*, because Satan loves to decoy young girls in the shape of handsome young men. He also accepted the superstition of changelings, and declared that witches should suffer death; but, when once confronted with a real case, he insisted, when his counsel was sought, on the most scrupulous circumspection. He wrote to the judge:

"I request you to explore everything with exactness, so as to leave no trace of fraud . . . for I have experienced so many deccits, frauds, artifices, lies, treacheries, etc., that I can scarcely make up my mind to believe. Therefore, see and convince yourself to your own satisfaction, lest you be mistaken and I may be mistaken through you."*

Although it is true that Luther's views of the Devil were as childish as those of his contemporaries, it would be rash to denounce the Reformation for having done nothing to suppress the barbarous superstition of demonology. Luther's God-conception was purer and nobler than the God-conception of the leading churchmen and Popes of his time, and thus his faith, in spite of its crudities, led, after all, to purer conceptions, which were destined gradually to overcome the old traditional dualism.

Luther demanded that Christ must not only be recognized as the Savior of mankind, but that every man should be able to say: "He has come to save me personally and individually." Luther thus carried the religious life into the very hearts of men, and declared that there was no salvation in ceremonies, absolution, or sacraments; unless one had individually, in one's own nature and being, vanquished the temptations of Satan. The most dangerous idols, according to Luther, are the pulpit and the altar, for sacraments and ceremonies cannot save. They are symbols instituted to assist us. Those who believe that ceremonies possess any power of their own are still under the influence of the pagan notion that evils can be averted by sacrifices and exorcisms.

LUTHER'S SUCCESSORS.

While Luther instinctively abhorred persecutions of any kind, he still retained those beliefs which were the ultimate cause of witch persecution. We must, therefore, not be astonished to see even in Protestant countries a revival of the horrors which had been inaugurated by the Inquisition.

The most curious work of Protestant demonology is the "Theatrum Diabolorum," by Sigmund Feyerabend, a voluminous collection of the

* "Angeli Annales Marchiæ Brandenburgicæ," p. 326 (quoted by Soldan, p. 302). The original reads: "Rogo te, omnia velis certissime explorare, ne subit aliquid doli . . . Nam ego tot fucis, dolis, technis, mendaciis, artibus, etc., hactenus sum exagitatus ut cogar difficilis esse ad credendum. . . . Quare vide et prospice tibi quoque ne fallare et ego per te fallar."

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