

The Assembly declared in favour of the resolution by a majority of 2100 to 6.—These six are the party referred to by Nitzsch, as seeking union in the way of keeping all confessions in abeyance.

On the plains of Germany we behold the oldest banner of the Reformation, so long laid aside and forgotten, again lifted up—We see the Protestant hosts, hitherto spread over the field in rival and hostile encampments, beginning again to rally beneath that banner, and to form themselves into one united phalanx. Let us hope that the arms which have been so long turned against one another by the Lutherans and Reformists, may now be turned against Rome.

Before attempting to estimate the gain to the Protestant cause resulting from this declaration of the *Kirchentag*, let us refresh the memories of our readers on the Augsburg confession.

At the Diet of Worms, Luther stood alone. But nine years later, on the 25th of June, 1530, the foremost of the German electors, princes, and cities, boldly confessed the same cause in presence of the Emperor, Charles V., at Augsburg. So, prodigiously had the Reformation progressed in that short space. The day already indicated is the date of the Augsburg confession. "This," says D'Aubigne, "was destined to be the greatest day of the Reformation, and one of the most glorious in the history of christianity and of mankind."

The Augsburg confession includes a summary of all the leading doctrines of salvation. This confession contains one mighty defect, which we shall afterwards specify.—With this exception, its enumeration of the leading doctrines of the gospel is characterized by clearness, simplicity, and soundness. Especially does it contain the Bible doctrine respecting the Trinity, the fall, the atonement, justification by faith alone, remission of sins through Christ's satisfaction, the renewing grace of the Spirit, the resurrection, and eternal glory. Such are the heads of the document drawn up by Melancthon, and read by the chancery Bayer, on the eventful 25th of June, 1530, before Charles V. and his assembled prelates, princes, warriors, and statesmen, in the chapel of the Palatine palace.

These doctrines were not new, though they sounded as new to the men who listened in breathless silence to the reading of them in the Palatine chapel. They were fifteen hundred years old. They had been preached by Paul and Peter and John, long before they were taught by Luther, or written by Melancthon, or read in the presence of the empire by Bayer. Romanists have often maintained that the doctrines embodied in the Protestant confessions are not older than the date of the Reformation. The great schism of the sixteenth century, they say, created all these doctrines. What an

absurdity! Is the man who first discovers the stars after a long continued fog, the creator of the stars? When openings were made in the thick darkness of Popery, men saw once more the bright lights in the firmament of revelation. But it was not the Reformers who placed these lights there, but God himself. The Augsburg confession did not create it; it only professed it.

The Word of God alone is without error. All creeds and professions are fallible. One great error, we have said, lurked in this otherwise noble confession of the truth.—Article X. is to the following effect—"That the body and blood of Christ are really present and administered in the Lord's Supper to those who partake of it". It is with reference to this article that the *Kirchentag* as added the explanation already quoted, to the effect that the adoption of the Augsburg confession by the different bodies forming the *Kirchentag*, as their common symbol, shall not be held as prejudicing the peculiar views of these bodies with reference to Article X. of that confession. It is well known that the Lutheran and Reformed churches take different views on the subject of this article. The views of Luther were but little removed from the doctrine of transubstantiation; and the introduction of the corporeal presence into the Augsburg confession produced a schism among the reformers which was one of the main causes of throwing back the progress of the Reformation. This great error is still the chief stumbling-block in the way of union. The attempt to get over this difficulty bears on the face of it something like a contradiction. It looks as if, at the moment of uniting in the same confession of faith, they declare that they still hold by all their distinctive views; but candidly construed, and with reference to all circumstances, the import of their declaration, we doubt not, is that they agree in the substance of the Augsburg confession, and the truths it contains; and as to points not embraced in that confession, or on which other Protestant confessions hold a different language, they reserve to themselves the right of adhering to the articles of their respective communions.

Still, with all these abatements, we are disposed to think that the gain of the Protestant cause is considerable. The great duty of union has been recognised. The eyes of all religious bodies in Germany have been turned to the oldest and in some respects one of the noblest confessions of Protestantism. A substantial agreement in the great truths of that confession has been proclaimed by a body of more than two thousand persons, mostly pastors. A basis has been laid for co-operation, and, by the blessing of the Divine Spirit, agreement may in no long time be attained on those points on which there is still diversity of sentiment. In the present movement there has been nothing of State interference, and