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LUTHER AND THE REFORMATION.

The church established at Rome by the Apostle Paul had departed from its primitive simplicity, the truth and purity which once characterized it had become a thing of the past. The wolf had entered in shepherd's garb and was rending the flock. Instead of the simple, truth-loving servant of Christ might be seen the priest, with bloated face and bleared eyes, his life and character in glaring contrast to the picture of the Lord's minister given us in the Words, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." Nor is this to be wondered at, when we consider the fact that the bible had now been set aside, the leaders of the church no longer pretending to walk by its rules, or to fashion their lives according to its models. The ribald song, the night's debauch, aye, and even the red hand of murder, were things by no means unknown to these pretended religious guides. Darkness and superstition, like the shadow of some awful pestilence, overspread the land. The more ignorant the people the more firmly did the Catholic Church become established, for its foun-

dations were laid in utter darkness. The Pope sat in the place of the Most High, receiving the honour due to Jehovah. The Princes of Christendom, educated in the bosom of "holy mother church," had all its prejudices, early instilled into their minds by the devoted clergy. Is it any wonder that these despots of the church, dazzled by the brightness of their own splendor, overlooked the omens of coming evil already visible? Education had begun to shed its benign rays upon the darkness of the people. The former enormities of the various Popes were not forgotten, but their memories were treasured up against the day of retribution. The materials were at hand; it needed but the hand of the architect to collect them and rear the monument of truth. Such was the state of things when Luther appeared upon the scene. Luther's first appearance as a poor monk, often begging bread by the wayside, gave little promise of the great career of a world's reformer. These hardships, however, only prepared him: the better for those struggles, through which he in after years had to pass. Having once become convinced that it was his duty to consecrate his life to God's service, he did not hesitate for one moment, but entered the monastery against the most earnest protestations of his friends, that he might there perform acts of devotion such as he thought would fit him for the other world. What words can describe the awful struggling of that soul after light? What skillful hand can paint the darkness that shrouded his soul like a deep pall? Devoted to his church with a zeal that amounted to absolute fanaticism, he performed all the duties incumbent upon him and fulfilled his monastic vows with an enthusiasm that would have done honor to a devotee; but with all his fastings and penance not one ray of heavenly light broke in to dispel the darkness. There was nothing in the whole round of the Catholic religion that could give him peace; but within those walls was the one book, which alone could satisfy the cravings of his soul. Who shall say it was mere chance that led Luther to enter that monastery? As Luther read that bible the light broke in upon his mind and revealed to him his awful state; and if his struggles were intense before, they were tenfold greater now. Naturally of a