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THE DEVIL-CONCEPTION IN PROTESTANT COUNTRIES.

BY DR. PAUL CARUS, CHICAGO.

LUTHER'S NOTION OF THE DEVIL.

THE Reformation, although in many respects a great advance, changed little the belief in the Devil. Luther was, in his demonology, a real child of his time. He saw the Devil everywhere; he struggled with him constantly, and overcame him by his confidence in God. He sang of him:

"And were this world with devils filled
That threaten to undo us;
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.

"Our ancient vicious foe
Still seeks to work his woe.
His craft and power are great,
And armed with cruel hate:
On earth is not his equal.

"The Prince of this world
His banner has unfurled;
But he can harm none,
For he is all undone:
One little word defeats him."

The Devil was to Luther a real, living power, a concrete personality, and he used to characterize him as "the good Lord's hangman," and the instrument of his anger and punishment (Walch, "Tischreden, v. 849; v. 1109; viii. 1234; x. 1257; xii. 481 and 2043). God needs the Devil for a servant, and utilizes his malignity for the procreation of the good (x. 1259).

Luther's belief in the Devil was not only very realistic, but also almost childishly ingenuous. When at work, he was prepared for his incessant interference, and when going to rest, he expected to be disturbed by him. Luther was not afraid of him, yet the efforts he made in conquering the Evil One are sufficient evidence that he regarded him as very powerful. He protested he would go to Worms, though every tile on the roofs of the city were a devil; he saw the fiend grinning at him while he translated the Bible, and threw the inkstand at his Satanic Majesty.*

* The story has been doubted, yet, considering the character of Luther, it is not only possible, but probable. If Luther did not throw the inkstand at the Devil, the anecdote is *bona fide*. It characterizes excellently his attitude towards Satan.