

heaviest ecclesiastical censures all who presumed to teach a contrary doctrine. Such a clear decision of the sovereign pontiff against him might have been fatal to Luther's cause, but for the death of the emperor Maximilian, on January 17 1519. Both the principles and interest of Maximilian had prompted him to support the authority of Rome; but in consequence of his death the vicariate of that part of Germany which is governed by the Saxon laws devolved to the elector of Saxony. Under the shelter of his friendly administration, Luther enjoyed tranquillity; and his opinions took such root in different places, that they could never afterward be eradicated. As the election of an emperor was a point more interesting to Pope Leo X. than a theological controversy which he did not understand, and of which he could not foresee the consequences, he was extremely solicitous not to irritate a prince of such considerable influence in the electoral college as Frederic, and discovered a great unwillingness to pronounce the sentence of excommunication against Luther, which his adversaries continually demanded with the most clamorous importunity.

A suspension of proceeding against Luther took place for eighteen months, though perpetual negotiations were carried on during the interval to bring the matter to an amicable issue. The manner in which they were conducted having given the reformer many opportunities of observing the corruptions of the court of Rome, its obstinacy in adhering to established errors, and its indifference about truth, however clearly proposed or strongly proved, he began in 1520, to utter doubts with regard to the divine original of the papal authority, which he publicly disputed with Eckius, his most learned and formidable antagonist.

The papal authority being once suspected, Luther proceeded in his inquiries and attacks from one doctrine to another, till at last he began to shake the firmest foundations on which the wealth and power of the church were established. Leo then perceived that there were no hopes of reclaiming such "an incorrigible heretic," and therefore prepared to pronounce the sentence of excommunication against him. The college of cardinals was often assembled to prepare the sentence with due deliberation; and the ablest canonists were consulted how it might be expressed with unexceptionable formality. At last it was issued on the fifteenth of June, 1520. Forty-one propositions, extracted out of Luther's works were therein condemned as heretical, scandalous and offensive to pious ears; all persons were forbidden to read his writings, upon pain of excommunication, such as had any of them in their custody were commanded to commit them to the flames; he himself, if within sixty days he did not publicly recant his errors and burn his books was pronounced an obstinate heretic, excommunicated, or delivered to Satan. All secular princes were required, under pain of incurring the same censure, to seize his person, that he might be punished as his crimes deserved.

Luther was not in the least disconcerted. He renewed his appeal to a general council; declared the pope to be that antichrist or man of sin, whose appearance is foretold in the New Testament; declaimed against his tyranny with still greater vehemence; and at last, by way of retaliation, having assembled all the professors and students in the university of Wittemberg with great pomp, and in the presence of a vast multitude of spectators, he cast the volumes of the canon law with the bull of excommunication into the flames.—The manner in which that action was justified gave still more offence than the action itself. Having collected from the canon law some of the most extravagant propositions with regard to the plenitude and omnipotence of the pope's power, as well as the subordination of all secular jurisdiction to his authority, he published them with a commentary, pointing out the impety of such tenets, and their evident tendency to subvert all civil government.

On the accession of Charles V. to the empire, Luther was in a dangerous situation. To secure the pope's friendship, Charles determined to treat him with great severity. His eagerness to gain his point rendered him not averse to gratify the papal legate in Germany; who insisted, that without any delay or formal deliberation, the diet then sitting at Worms ought to condemn a

man whom the pope had already excommunicated as an incorrigible heretic. Such an abrupt manner of proceeding, however, being deemed unprecedented and unjust by the members of the diet they required Luther to appear in person, and declare whether he adhered to those opinions which had drawn upon him the censures of the church. Not only the emperor, but all the princes through whose territories he had to pass, granted him a safe-conduct, and Charles wrote to him requiring his immediate attendance on the diet, and renewing his promises of protection from any injury or violence. Luther did not hesitate one moment about yielding obedience; and set out for Worms, attended by the herald who had brought the emperor's letter and safe-conduct. While on his journey, many of his friends, remembering the fate of Huss under similar circumstances, and notwithstanding the same security of an imperial safe-conduct, advised and entreated him not to rush wantonly into the midst of danger; but Luther, superior to such terrors, silenced them with this reply, "I am lawfully called to appear in that city; and thither I will go in the name of the Lord, though as many devils as there are tiles on the houses are there combined against me."

The reception which he met with at Worms, might have been reckoned a full reward of all his labors, if vanity and the love of applause had been the principles by which he was influenced. Great crowds assembled to behold him than had appeared at the emperor's public entry, his apartments were daily filled with princes and personages of the highest rank; and he was treated with a homage more sincere, as well as more flattering than any which pre-eminence in birth or condition can command. At his appearance before the diet, he behaved with great decency, and with equal firmness. He readily acknowledged an excess of acrimony, and vehemence in his controversial writings; but refused to retract his opinions unless he were convinced of their falshood, or to consent to their being tried by any other rule than the word of God. When neither threats nor entreaties could prevail on him to depart from his resolution, some of the ecclesiastics proposed to imitate the example of the council of Constance and by punishing the "pestilent heretic" who was in their power, to deliver the church at once from such an evil. But the members of the diet refusing to expose the German integrity to fresh reproach, by a second violation of public faith, and Charles being no less unwilling to bring a stain upon the beginning of his administration by such an ignominious action, Luther was permitted to depart in safety. A few days after he left the city, he was denounced as an obstinate and excommunicated criminal, and deprived of all the privileges which he enjoyed as a subject of the empire. Every prince was required to seize his person, as soon as the term specified in his protection should be expired.

As Luther, on his return from Worms, was passing near Altenstein in Thuringia, a number of horsemen in masks rushed suddenly out of a wood, where the elector had appointed them to lie in wait for him, and carried him to the castle of Wartburg.

Weary at length of his retirement, Luther again appeared publicly at Wittemberg, upon the sixth of March, 1522, and made open war upon the pope and his prelates.

The same year 1522, he wrote a letter to the assembly of the state of Bomeia, in which he assured them that he was laboring to establish their doctrine in Germany, and exhorted them not to return to the communion of the church of Rome, and he also published a translation of the New Testament in the German tongue, which was afterward corrected by himself and Melancthon.—That translation having been printed several times, and being in every-body's hands, Ferdinand archduke of Austria, the emperor's brother, issued a very severe edict, to hinder the further publication of it; and forbade all the subjects of his imperial majesty to have any copies of it, or of Luther's other books. Other princes followed his example; upon which Luther wrote a treatise "Of the Secular Power," in which he accused them of tyranny and impiety.

In the year 1523, Luther wrote against vows of virginity; and soon after Catharine Bora and eight other nuns eloped from the convent at Nunschen, and were conducted to Wittemberg.

In October, 1521, Luther flung off the monas-

tic habit; which was a very proper preparative to his marriage with Catharine Bora. His conduct in marrying was severely censured; but Luther boldly defended his act.

Luther was thus employed in defence of the Christian religion till his death, which happened in the year 1546. That year, accompanied by Melancthon, he paid a visit to his own country, which he had not seen for many years. Soon after he was called thither again by the earls of Mansfeldt, to compose some differences which had arisen about their boundaries. Preaching his last sermon there at Wittemberg, upon the seventeenth of January, he started on the twenty third; and at Hall in Saxony lodged with Justus Jonas, with whom he stayed three days. When he entered the territories of the earls of Mansfeldt, he was received in a very honourable manner, but was at the same time very ill. He died upon the eighteenth of February, in the sixty-third year of his age. A little before he expired, he admonished those that were about him to pray to God for the propagation of the Gospel, "because the council of Trent and the pope would devise strange things against it."

"Thus lived," "died in faith," and triumphed, one of the most honourable servants of Christ, and one of the most exalted benefactors of the human family whose names are recorded in the annals of the church and world.

### THE SPIRIT OF POPERY UN-CHANGED.

Many of our readers suppose that the increased light of the few last centuries has essentially changed the Roman catholic character—that the ignorance and persecuting spirit which characterized it in the earlier and dark ages has given place, through the influence of Bible truth and improvement in the arts and sciences, to a purer faith and more exemplary practice. They credit the testimony of ancient history respecting the corruptions of the papal church, and her abominations in practice in past ages, but believe her opposition to the Bible for the most part has ceased, and with it their enmities toward those who cherish its precepts. The truth is, we give our attention so little to what the catholics say and do in this kind of protestantism, that we are ignorant of their present character, and are likely to remain so, unless we are careful to collate facts on this subject, and attentively study their history. Such is our facility for obtaining information upon every subject, both at home and abroad, that much light is thrown upon our minds, disabasing our people of those favorable impressions which they had received of the catholic character in the nineteenth century. Recent developments are disclosing to us, both at home and abroad, the secret opposition of all faithful catholics to the Bible, and that the same persecuting spirit which once possessed them is not yet eradicated from their bosoms, but in countries where the catholics are the dominant party, and in sections of our own where they outnumber our native population, they not only persecute and destroy heretics, as they call all protestants, but burn their bibles, which they regard as the prime cause of prevailing heresy.

Now, if there are any who suppose that the church of Rome is not in the nineteenth century what she was in dark ages; that she is not opposed to the word of God, and will not persecute and punish those who cherish it, I refer them to facts now published to the civilized world, in proof of their error. On the 11th of January, 1837, the emperor of Austria gave orders to about 500 of his subjects, living in the valley of Zellerthal, who by reading the Scriptures had become protestant, and thrown off the papal yoke, "That they must return to the Catholic church, or leave their fatherland: not tolerate any protestant com.rol." that is the place of their very year in which he gave the o. all of this devoted band of ab. compelled to leave their hon. birth, the scenes of the their ancestors, and Sacred Scripture rit, had rene Rome, and hierarchy.