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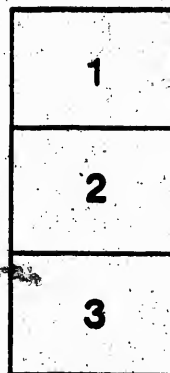
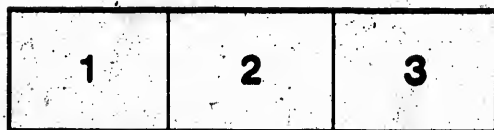
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THE REFORMATION;

—BY THE—

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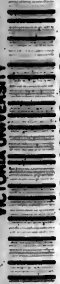
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LUTHER AND THE REFORMATION;

THE SUBSTANCE OF

TWO LECTURES,

DELIVERED BY THE

REV. T. S. CARTWRIGHT,

IN HAMILTON AND OTHER PLACES, AND

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The papacy, as it existed from the tenth to sixteenth century, was a colossal despotism—a gigantic system of superstition and fraud. It originated in corrupt ambition; it aspired to universal homage. Many of the doctrines it inculcated, and many of the ceremonies it observed, implied a perversion of Holy Scripture, and a departure from the practices of the early Christian Church; while in its general tendency and influence it ignored the right of private judgment, denied the claims of individual liberty, and superinduced a state of intellectual bondage and social demoralization. The age preceding the Reformation is signalized in history for its ignorance and pollution. As though the prediction of the Jewish prophet had received a second verification, "Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." The Bible was a sealed book; spiritual religion had been extinguished by heresy and superstition; in the monasteries immorality was rampant; in the Church the Pope was exalted above the Saviour; and throughout all classes of society, as well in the court as in the cottage, there was a condition of abject fear, and of religious destitution and drear.

It was nearly two hundred years before Luther appeared upon the scene that John Wycliffe raised his voice—had laboured hard and suffered long, to expose the errors, and annihilate the influence of the papacy in the English Church and nation. His spirit had been caught, his example followed, by John Huss and Jerome, of Prague, who, in Bohemia and other places, scattered widely the seeds of reform, and struggled bravely to erect a rampart of defence against the further encroachments of the papal power. Their labours seemed fruitless of all, save persecution. The Pope retained a cruel ascendancy; alike in Church and State. Around his throne were gathered a crowd of malignant priests, waiting to do his bidding, and panting for the blood of the Lollards and Hussites; and perhaps never, amidst all the darkness and discomfort of the middle ages, had Europe presented a more deplorable condition than when Leo X. ascended the pontifical chair, and Martin Luther began his crusade against the errors of the Church.

There were needed a giant mind and a lion heart to grapple with the

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Luther and the Reformation.

evils of society, and to brave the dangers which might ensue. A nature of the common stamp was unequal to the task. It was not a crisis for the vacillating and timid. Only an original, extraordinary character, could meet the emergency, and supply the public want. In Luther the requisite endowments met; and allowing that he possessed nothing pre-ternatural, no special gift of prophecy, no miraculous attestation of a divine mission, as had the prophets of the Old and the apostles of the New Testament, still he was invested with a moral omnipotence, no less than with an intellectual superiority, which enabled him to frown upon corruption and error, and which prepared him to become the champion of their exposure and death.

In every age, and in every place, characters appear who seem made for anything rather than reformers. They constitute the bulk of society. Of what consequence to them are the errors and absurdities which prevail around them? They are unwilling to perceive, or unable to correct them. What is called "properly constituted authority" may go to almost any lengths in violating the forms of justice and the rights of individuals, so long as it leaves untouched their property and persons. Such individuals claim to be considered the conservators of public institutions; and with an affectation of surprise and dread, they look upon the man who has the temerity to call in question established usages, or to denounce prevailing errors. This spirit was predominant in the days of Luther: it formed one of the grand obstacles with which he had to contend. If a few more devout and thoughtful members of the Church were convinced that some change was necessary in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs, it never occurred to them to question the right of the Pope to do absolutely as he pleased; and that Luther should presume to do so, was a shock to their nervous system, and an outrage upon their sense of propriety, which made them shrink from him as from a fiend incarnate. The remnant of this spirit still starts up before us, to bar our progress in political movements and in religious projects; and we need, all of us, more of the heroic courage and moral power which enabled Luther to brave the wrath of the Pope and the censure of friends, to trample down the prejudices of the past, and to assert liberty and truth for every age and every man. There are more cowards than heroes in society. In matters of conscience we are sometimes afraid to speak—we dare not act. A refined sentimentality is robbing the age of its heroism and manhood. We must break loose from the thralldom of tradition and custom, if we are to leave our impress upon the age, and play manfully our part in the coming struggles of the Church. It is immaterial what our contemporaries may think, or what our forefathers may have been or done. The standard of our faith is the Bible; the rule of our lives must be liberty and truth; and in the maintenance of these we must stand erect in all the consciousness of manhood, and think, and speak, and write, and act, with an enthusiasm and courage which have shouted victory at the stake, and which never know defeat.

The early education of Luther was a suitable preparation for his future work. It was not in vain that he had toiled with his father in the woods, and moved among the mining associations of Mansfeld. His plays and frolics on the banks of the Wipper, the thrashings he received and the sufferings he endured, all tended to develop the elements of his character, and to make him the hero of the Reformation.

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As everybody knows, Luther was born in humble circumstances, and spent much of his youthful life in privation and hardship. His father was a miner; his mother the daughter of a citizen of Eisenach, respectably but poor. According to Luther himself, his father often cut wood, and his mother carried it on her back, that they might earn the means of an honest living, and provide for the education of their sons. Both were devout in the observance of religious rites; and both struggled bravely to train up their children in the way they should go.

In the homes of poverty and the loins of labour there is something pre-eminently favourable to the formation of great characters. Many of our moral heroes have been moulded in this school, and owe much of their future eminence and success to the influences which there began imperceptibly to work upon them. As D'Aubigne puts it, the reformer Zwingli emerged from a shepherd's hut among the Alps; Melancthon, the theologian of the Reformation, from an armourer's shop; and Luther from the cottage of a poor miner. In modern days, one name stands prominently forward in illustration of this remark. From a cottage home in Scotland, and from amidst the toil and din of factory life, David Livingstone was raised up to astound and benefit the world by his travels and researches. The luxury of palaces seems unsuited to vigorous mental effort. It is seldom that brilliant courtiers become the leaders of great reforms. Their regular, easy-going lives, fit them rather for silent acquiescence than for battle and for storm; and when great revolutions have to be produced in either the principles of the Church or the customs of society, the rough and ready work must be done by those who have been inured to conflict and toil.

In his earliest years, Luther escaped the enfeebling influences of idleness and luxury. From youth to manhood he was familiar with scenes, and contended with obstacles, which gave acuteness to his understanding, energy to his purpose, and strength to his emotion, and which formed in part the secret of his future brilliant success. While residing with his father he acquired the elements of an ordinary education. At fourteen years of age he left Mansfeld, in company with one John Reinick, to visit Magdeburgh, the seat of an Archbishop, and where were established some of the most celebrated schools of the middle ages. An affecting scene it was, as the boys left their native village and humble homes, without much money, but with many bright hopes, sorrow in their hearts, and eyes brimful with tears. Still more affecting was the recital of their future privations and wants. In the schools of Magdeburgh it was customary for the students to pay for their own maintenance and education out of the alms bestowed upon them by the rich, under whose windows they sang about twice a week, or from what they earned by psalmody in the church choir. They wore indeed, as a French historian says, schools of trial, of abnegation, and of sorrow; in which a severe discipline was administered, but from which some of the brightest lights of Germany have issued,—made more pure and brilliant by the struggles through which they passed. Luther had a sweet, melodious voice, and was ever passionately fond of music; but, during his residence in Magdeburgh, he failed to obtain enough by singing to compensate his master for more than a year's education. Instead of money he often received harsh words; he sometimes went

without food; and more than once, overwhelmed with grief, he shed bitter burning tears. Disappointed and disheartened, he left Magdeburgh, and alone pursued his way to Eisenach. The same ill-fate at first depressed him. After two or three rude rebuffs, he raised his voice in touching melody beneath another window. A lady was attracted by the sound; and charmed by his accents, and affected by his poverty, she threw the poor scholar a few pieces of copper coin. Luther eagerly picked them up, and, with the instinct of gratitude, raised his eyes to his benefactress. She saw he was weeping. In the tears which trickled down his cheeks, she read the struggle of his soul. It was enough for her generous nature. A sign was given that the boy should enter the house. His wants were supplied; and Luther found a home where the brightest example of piety was exhibited, and the happiest stimulus applied. This excellent woman should be immortalized in history. In the chronicles of Eisenach she is denominated the "pious Shunnamite." Her name was Ursula; she was the wife of Conrad Cotta. In after years Luther never felt ashamed of his early poverty. It was no disgrace to have been poor. The Emmanuel By unremitting attention to his studies, Luther rapidly excelled in every branch of education brought before him; and having, as Melancthon says, tasted the delights of literature, he cast his eyes upon Erfurth. In Erfurth there was a celebrated university. The scholastic theology was profoundly studied; the ancient classics were assiduously read. With all the ardour of passion, Luther applied himself to both; and more than one of his biographers, quoting the opinion of Melancthon, has expressed regret that he did not meet with professors of a milder type, and that he did not from the first apply himself to those tranquillizing doctrines of a true philosophy, which might have softened the asperities of his character.

It was in the University of Erfurth that Luther first became acquainted with the Bible. He was twenty years of age, and had been a student for two years. In connection with the Erfurth, as with every German University, there was a valuable library, consisting principally of ancient manuscripts, embellished with miniature, and embossed with silver and gold. A new era was dawning upon literature, as upon religion. The art of printing had been discovered by Guttenberg, and Mayence and Cologne began to multiply copies of the sacred books. At an enormous expence the University of Erfurth had purchased a few Latin copies of the Bible. They were rarely shown to visitors, even on great occasions. It was the habit of Luther, during his moments of relaxation, to visit the University library, that he might enrich his mind with its accumulated treasures. In one of these visits he chanced to stumble upon a copy of the Scriptures. It seemed to him a new book; he had seen nothing like it before. His only acquaintance with the Bible was in the mutilated form in which fragments were presented in the devotional books of the Church. The Bible is now a common book. It is scattered broadcast through the world. We find it in every library; it adorns every drawing-room; our children lisp its stories; the poor inhale its breath; and onward, like a stream, it flows through every land, undermining the embankments of ignorance and superstition, and diffusing on every hand the fragrant odour and delicious fruit of a sound faith, of a pure worship, and of an elevating

education. We had rather part with all than lose that precious Book. A gloomy heritage our life would be without its light and power.

But in Luther's youthful days the Bible was popularly unknown. Even grave professors and learned priests were ignorant of its truths. The curiosity of Luther was aroused by his newly found treasure. With unrestrained emotion, he opened the book to read. It was the story of Samuel and Hannah on which his eye alighted. There was a simplicity, a beauty, a tenderness about the narrative, all peculiar and new, which filled his imagination and overpowered his soul. He could scarcely restrain his tears. "O, my God! I could not wish for any richer possession than such a book as this!" at length broke from his quivering lips. At present unfamiliar with the Greek and Hebrew, he could not read the Bible in the languages in which it had been originally written. But day after day he returned to the library, took down the same book, read the same story, then found a new one, then read and re-read the whole until he absorbed it into his very nature and feasted upon it as his daily food. A new light was dawning upon his mind; a new impulse was moving in his heart. As D'Aubigne says, "The reformation lay hid in that Bible." It took precedence of every other book; it claimed to exercise unlimited control.

At this crisis an incident occurred which gave a colouring and shape to Luther's future plans. An intimate friend named Alexis was struck dead by his side, some writers say by assassination, others by a thunder-bolt. It is certain that Luther was alarmed, and that as he trembled for his own safety, he was overtaken by a storm. Above the rolling thunder he heard a voice which said, "To the Cloister! To the Cloister!" He invoked the succour of St. Anne; he vowed to embrace a religious life. A few evenings after he invited his chosen friends to share his simple repast. They were happy in mutual love; music enlivened the scene. But in the midst of their gaiety, Luther proclaimed his vow. His friends remonstrated; he was deaf to their appeals; and quitting the chamber without bidding them adieu, he left his furniture and his books, and taking with him his Plautus and his Virgil—an epic poem and a comedy, as one writer says—strange picture of his then strange state of mind—he hurried through the darkness of night to the gate of the Augustinian Convent, "Open, in the name of God!" said Luther. "What do you want?" demanded the brother in charge. "To consecrate myself to God," was the reply. "Amen!" answered the friar, as he opened the gate; and in another moment Luther was separated from the world, his parents, and his friends. The next day he sent back to the University the insignia of his degree, the robe and the ring he had received in 1503.

A profound sensation was produced by Luther's flight. The professors were distressed; his father was enraged. The former sent a deputation to persuade him to recall his vow; he refused to see them. The latter disappointed in the expectation he had formed of his son attaining brilliant distinction, and per chance forming a lucrative marriage, wrote him an angry letter, in which he withdrew his favour, and disinherited him of his love. Still, Luther remained inflexible in his purpose. He heard the voice of God, and could no longer confer with flesh and blood. It was a mysterious power which moved his soul; it was a hand omnipotent which shaped his path. The work awaiting him in the future

required familiarity with the written word; the struggles which were to crown his life demanded earnest preparation in communion with God. He knew not as yet the nature of the process through which he passed,—was unconscious of the destiny so soon to be disclosed. The Deity was moulding him in His own image, implanting within him the germs of a divine life, burning into his very soul the faith, the hope, the courage, the love, which formed the elements of his heroism, and which laid deep the foundation of Reform; and when the appointed time arrived,—when the corruptions of the Church were hourly with the age, and the universal mind began to upbraid with inquiry and thought,—he came forth from his retreat, like Moses descending from the mount, reflecting in his image the glory of the Invisible, and bearing in his hand the tables of the Law; and with that dusty old volume he had found upon the library shelf at Erfurth as his basis and his fulcrum, he moved and shook the world in a manner of which Galileo had never dreamed. And the same mysterious power attaches to the Bible now. It still breathes the voice of the Omnipotent, and unites in one the human and divine; and wherever its influence permeates the soul, and its doctrines become the foundation of human faith and the guide of human life, it still proves itself, as in days of yore, the harbinger and safeguard of liberty and peace, of prosperity and power, in the family, in the Church, in the nation,—in the civil as in the religious affairs of life. There could have been no Reformation without this glorious old Bible, then so imperfectly understood; and despite the sneers of a few sceptical philosophers, who now delight to style it a worn out fable, it still holds on its conquering way, it still fulfils its heaven-born mission, it still shakes the world by its silent energy and its still small voice; and this it will do till every vestige of superstition has been removed, and till humanity, renewed in the image of its Creator, shall enjoy the blissful calm, and sing the inspiring song, which made Eden in the days of old the vestibule of heaven.

The convent life of Luther was an earnest struggle to be good. He had felt the pangs of conscience and the misery of sin. No particular crime had been or could be charged against him. As a student his conduct was most exemplary. His companions loved him; the professors were proud of him. In only one instance had he knowingly acted in disregard of his father's wishes, and that was in assuming monastic vows. Yet he was haunted with impressions of guilt, terrified at the prospect of future wrath. A conviction had seized his mind that he was covered with a spiritual leprosy, that he was tormented with an inward devil. It coloured all his views, embittered all his pleasures, directed all his plans. An impenetrable cloud hung over him; he groaned in agony; and as he read his books, and pursued his labors, and applied himself to his devotions, it was with a restless desire for peace, and with a feeling which bordered on despair.

For a mind in such a ferment only one remedy can avail. It is useless to trust exclusively in things external. Nothing short of the Omnipotent can still the tempest of the soul. Only the voice of Jesus, as it sounded o'er the Galilean lake, can speak in tones which winds and devils must obey—"Peace, be still," "It is I, be not afraid!" The refuge of the contrite sinner is in the cross of Calvary. On that cross the Lamb of God was slain; and by his precious death redemption has

been bought. From Calvary stream rays of light to cheer our sorrowing minds; from Calvary flow words of peace which bid us not despair. It was thither Luther should have gone, and with his weeping eyes and trembling soul, have looked upon the Deity-Incarnate. . . . He afterwards did this, and immediately "a joy unspeakable" filled his mind. But in the early stages of his spiritual struggle he had no clear perception of the plan of salvation as unfolded in the Bible. All the doctrines of theology, and all the members of the Church, were limited in their views by traditions which for generations past had been gathering o'er the Church. The common idea of a religious life was in the seclusion of the Convent. It was only by fasts and penances, by severe flagellations of body, by gloomy dejection of mind, and by austere devotion of life, that the penitent could hope for pardon and peace. The delusion took full possession of the mind of Luther. He entered the Augustinian Convent with a clear persuasion that there was no other door through which he could enter heaven, and with an earnest resolve to prove himself worthy of the illustrious brotherhood, and of his future heaven.

The convents of the middle ages are not to be indiscriminately condemned. There were many deplorable evils connected with them. They were often marked by idleness and luxury, by tyranny and lust. Many of their inmates were contemptible hypocrites, with shallow brains and polluted souls, too idle to work, and too ignorant to teach. Such "houses" were a curse to the land, and a reproach upon the Church. But the principle on which monastic institutions were based was not originally bad. In some cases they realized the idea of their founders, and became at once asylums for the destitute, and schools for the preservation and growth of art, and literature, and religion. . . . Their revival, however, in our day, and in this our land, is undesirable. The phases of society, and the requirements of the Church, have undergone a change; and allowing even a life of religious seclusion and spiritual contemplation to have thrown around it a sacred and fascinating charm, we want men and women with zeal and courage to enable them to grapple boldly with the evils of society, rather than Simon Stylites or Sister Marys, who, contrary to the laws of nature and of God, make themselves oblivious to the world around them.

It is not to be regretted that Luther became the inmate of a convent. His novitiate was another step in preparation for the grand drama of the age. He thereby acquired a familiarity with the inner workings of the Church, and a power of self-discipline and control, without which he could not have become the leader of reform. The testimony of his enemies is that he was studious and devout; that he spent long nights in prayer, that he watered the convent floor with his tears. He was exposed indeed to many humiliating restrictions, and had exacted from him the most servile labours. It was his duty to sweep out the dormitories, to wind up the clock, to open and close the chapel doors. With a wallet on his back he was sent through the town to beg from house to house; and often did he return weary and foot-sore, but courageous and resigned. In this there was nothing to daunt his courage; in this there was much to fortify his mind. His prayer was to be holy; his cry was for peace. He became more rigid in his fasts, more severe in his mortifications, until the color faded from his cheeks, and his native energy declined,

and he walked through the corridors like a spectre, and once even was found on the floor of his cell powerless from exhaustion, in a kind of ecstasy or trance. Yet the holiness, the satisfaction, the peace, he sought was not enjoyed. A darker cloud came over him. The devil seemed, as with the young man in the Gospel, to "tear him in pieces;" he saw opening before him the very hell from which he shrank; and in the agony of despair he cried out, in the language of one greater than himself, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

In this condition he was one day found by Staupitz, the Vicar-General of the Order. Staupitz was a man pre-eminently fitted to sympathise and guide. His nature was gentle; his mind was well-informed. He had himself passed through a conflict similar to that of Luther; he understood the theory of the Gospel; he enjoyed the blessing of spiritual peace. In conversation with Luther, he explained to him the nature of true repentance and urged him to an implicit reliance in the Great Atonement of the Cross. It sounded as new language in Luther's ears; it opened up a new prospect before his mind. More devoutly he studied the Holy Scriptures; more assiduously he read the works of St. Augustine. One day, as he walked in the convent grounds, he was met by a pious old monk, who inquired into the cause of his apparent dejection, who exhorted him to "believe," and who quoted the testimony of St. Bernard that when a sinner believes in Christ he receives the assurance of the Holy Ghost put into his heart that his sins are forgiven. It was the turning point of his career. The great crisis had been reached; the saving change was now produced. He saw before him the refuge from the storm; he heard behind him the voice which proclaimed his safety. As a drowning man catches at the rope, so Luther clung to the cross. A heavenly light broke in upon his mind; a "peace which passeth understanding" sprang up within his soul. He was "a new creature in Christ Jesus,"—standing upon new ground, realizing new sensations, exulting in new prospects. One word had prepared the way for the wondrous change. The talisman was faith. Without faith he waged a ceaseless war with the devil, and walked in the grim of shadow of despair; with faith he trampled the devil beneath his feet, and became a hero and a victor. It was not a speculative fancy, or a metaphysical abstraction. There was a living power within which linked his soul with Christ as the all-sufficient Saviour. He could not define the *modus operandi* of the work; he could not undervalue the ordinances which Christ had instituted in His Church, and which became the medium of His manifestation to the believing sinner. But he was conscious of reality in the change, because he had the evidence within; and without magnifying faith beyond its proper sphere, as the instrumental cause of pardon, he could appropriate the words of the inspired Paul, "I believed, and therefore have I spoken."

And this is the true preparation for all useful labor in the Church. We are not fitted for offices of spiritual trust,—we cannot become faithful representatives of Christ,—until we have realized His faith and are imbued with His Spirit. There is power in holiness, as there is vitality in faith. The closer our communion with God, the greater will be our influence with our fellowmen. We may still shake the world by prayer and faith. In the absence of these energising powers,

we can accomplish little moral good. The vital force will be restricted, and more outward forms will fail to supply the want. It is still true that Christ is the only source of pardon,—still true that the Holy Spirit is the efficient agent of the new birth,—still true that faith is the essential condition on which God has promised to work in us and by us,—and still true that all the outward ordinances of the Church are so many channels for the communication of Divine grace, or so many means for promoting vital union and communion with Christ, but which by themselves, unattended by the Spirit's power, are inoperative to salvation.

We are somewhat in danger of mystifying or ignoring these fundamental truths. There is a tendency amongst us to relapse into the superstition of the darker ages. The "revival of catholic doctrine," and of "primitive usage,"—of which so much has latterly been said, and in which I unfeignedly rejoice,—is too much allied with the dogmas and relics of a corrupt branch of the universal Church. It is foreign to my purpose to discuss any of the phases of the great ritualistic controversy which is now agitating the public mind. In many respects it is a controversy productive of untold mischief, in others of incalculable good. But apart altogether from this, I do insist that faith in Christ, as a living, all-sufficient Saviour, and obedience to His law, as the outward evidence of faith, are the prime requisites of a holy heart and a useful life; and that in the absence of these no gorgeous decoration of churches, no punctilious observance of religious ceremonial, no mellifluous strains of music, no sacred veneration for the past, no self-denying zeal, and no disinterested effort, will ever avail either to our own salvation, or to the moral reformation of the world. There must be a divine life within us. That life can be realized and sustained only by faith in Christ, under the operation of His Spirit, and through the ordinances of His Word; and in these days of doubt, of conflict, of error, of change, we need as specially applicable to the world's necessities, not a religion of empty platitudes, or of incongruous dogmas, or of rigorous exactions, or of sickly sentimentality, but a religion of knowledge, of faith, of love, of power, which sympathises in every sorrow, and provides for every want, and which secures for every sinner a free, a full, an eternal salvation. Any other religion is untrue to the Gospel, and unsuited to the age; with this to nerve our courage and inspire our plans, we may revolutionize the Church, and turn the world upside down.

The struggle was now about to open for which the preparation had begun. There were as yet no outward symptoms of the gathering storm. A delusive calm was resting on the Church, as when to the casual observer Vesuvius is sleeping. It is characteristic of the Divine Government to prepare for great events by silent means. The Reformation in its ultimate issues resulted from various causes. Some of these were independent of Luther, and independent of each other,—were as much literary and political as ecclesiastical and religious; but in the process of their development, Luther became the agent in the hands of Heaven to influence and direct. His own preparation was imperceptible and slow. It affected first his personal experience; it related next to his public position. By the agency of the truth his mind had been enlightened and renewed; by startling expositions of that truth he was now to influence the minds of others. Having served his novitiate, he was admitted in due form to the full order of the priesthood. It was a

momentous period of his life; all the associations were tender and impressive.

This, however, was only the stepping stone to a wider sphere. Upon the recommendation of Staupitz, he was appointed by the Elector Fredrick to the chair of philosophy in the newly founded University of Wittenberg. It was an appointment he hardly coveted, since he had little relish for the Aristotelian philosophy. But the summons of the Elector was too imperative to be refused, and in such an office he might wield a potent power. The finger of the Deity indeed was visible; it was a wise arrangement which brought him thus early into contact with the rising mind of Germany. Next to the pulpit the University is supreme in the moral as in the intellectual life of a nation. Almost without control a professor can create the thought, and shape the plans of the future. In the pulpit we work upon the masses, and stimulate to action; in the school we form the character, and prepare for duty. The two combined are almost omnipotent in the inculcation of error, or the defence of truth. He is a giant for good or evil who knows how to expound at the desk and enforce from the pulpit. It was Luther's duty to do both. His appointment as philosophical professor, was followed by authority to deliver divinity lectures, and by his election to preach in the chapel of his convent, and in the city pulpit of Wittenberg. The youth of the age, and the nobility and peasantry of the nation, were thus brought within his reach. And soon his reputation began to spread, his influence to tell. In lectures and discourses he inaugurated a new style. There was a boldness of thought, an originality of conception, a beauty of diction, a power of illustration, a plainness, an earnestness, a tenderness of manner, which arrested attention and produced effect. He poured contempt on the philosophy of the schools; he set at naught the dicta of Aristotle; he proclaimed the Word of God as the only infallible standard, as the only true light, whose utterances were for every soul, and whose doctrines should be interpreted independently of human authority and church tradition. The youth of Wittenberg gathered round him; monks and professors sat in silence before him; princes admired his eloquence; the people applauded his courage. It was as the streaming forth of new light—as the opening up of a new fountain—as the depositing of new seed—as a resurrection of dry bones. . . . In Wittenberg the Church began to throb with life; the vibration shook the empire.

So in every moral crisis, in every religious movement, the pulpit and the school should join their hands, and lead the van. We cannot dispense with their teaching; we should not underrate their power. Both have often failed in the maintenance of truth, and in the inculcation of virtue, since as before the Reformation; but it has been for want of spirit, and devotion, and power, in the men who have been thrust into the leading offices. There is no reason abstractedly why the pulpit should decline in influence, or why the school should diminish its charms. No field can be wider, no subjects nobler, no attractions brighter, and no inducements stronger, than those of the preacher and the professor. The entire range of literature, of history, of philosophy, of science, is available for their work. It is their's to probe the conscience, to rouse the passions, to mould the character, to steer the life; and in doing this every theme and incident may apply,—from the holiness of God to the degradation of sin, from the joys of heaven to the woes of hell.

The voice of the pulpit must ring clear and loud; the power of the school must be deep and firm, in the exposure of error, in the denunciation of vice, in the maintenance of truth, in the enforcement of virtue, and in the stimulus to every good work. It is sometimes said that the pulpit is offete, that sermons are insipid, that the schools are dead, that the Church has lost its power. There is perhaps too much reason for the complaint. We had better not disguise the fact that we have degenerated in much of our public teaching, and in much of our public worship. There is not life enough in our services; there is not power enough in our word. These are not the days for learned dulness, for respectable formality, for dry essays, for abstract dissertations, for freezing devotion, for insipid sentimentality. We want sermons bristling with thought; we want services instinct with life. All the resources of genius, all the treasures of learning, all the charms of oratory, all the fascinations of art, may come to our aid. But as supplemental to these, we must have the fire of plety, and the inspiration of the Spirit, by which in living forms, and in overwhelming power, the truth may be brought into direct contact with the mind and conscience of humanity, and through which, as in the days of Jesus, we may see the devils cast out, and the unbelieving and impenitent clothed, and sitting in their right mind.

As another unconscious step in the onward movement, Luther was despatched to Rome. The sphere of his observation was thereby enlarged. It was necessary he should become acquainted with the condition of the outer world, and still more with the general practices of the Church. He had hitherto moved within a narrow sphere. All his sympathies entwined around the Church. So far he had no reason to suspect it of imposture and fraud. His zeal indeed was such, that according to his own confession, he was willing to kindle with his own hands the fire which might consume Erasmus, or any other heretic who should call in question the supremacy of the Pope. Yet the reformation to be produced was a reformation of abuses without, no less than of doctrines within. There was a corrupt faith to begin with, and that by a natural process would produce a corrupt life. By devout study, Luther had gained a correct knowledge of the theory of salvation; by careful observation, he was now to apprehend the revolting errors of the Church.

The mission on which Luther was despatched to Rome was ostensibly to adjust certain differences which had sprung up between the Vicar-General and some of the Convents of his Order; it supplied indirectly the means for the exposure of the whole system. Luther started upon his journey with the brightest anticipations. Who had not heard of the glory of the Eternal City?—of the sanctity of the Vicar of Christ?—of the devotion of the Convents and Churches, which like so many fountains sent forth the streams of life?—and who could be surrounded with these, live among them, gaze upon them, feel their presence, inhale their influence, without a corresponding refinement of taste and elevation of feeling? Such was Luther's expectation, as it had been the dream of multitudes before him. He was doomed to a bitter disappointment. The contrast between what he expected and what he realized, was greater than words could express. Along the entire route from Germany to Rome he found cause for surprise and shame. Many of the Convents were the abodes of luxury and sensuality. There was unblushing profanity; there was unmitigated idleness.

After a fatiguing journey, he came within sight of the seven-hilled city—so fondly called by some the “queen of the earth and of the Church.” His heart shook with emotion;—his eyes filled with tears;—he fell upon his knees;—he kissed the earth;—he broke out in the wildest expressions of veneration and love;—he hastened to join in the devotions of the Church, and to present the credentials of his mission. Everywhere he was received with respect; but everywhere he saw evidence to dispel the illusion of his mind. The grandeur of ancient Rome had departed: the condition of modern Rome was corrupt. Julius II was the reigning pontiff, and his character was not above reproach. The priests in general were idle, ignorant, and profane. There was no devotion in the Church; there was no reverence in the Convent. “It is incredible,” said Luther, “what sins and atrocities are committed in Rome. They must be seen and heard to be believed.” “The nearer,” said Macchiavelli, “we approach the capital of Christendom—meaning Rome—the less do we find of the Christian spirit in the people. . . . We Italians are principally indebted to the priests for having become impious and profligate.” Luther was literally distressed at the immoralities he witnessed. There was an entire change in the current of his feelings. At a later period he said, he would not have missed seeing Rome for a hundred thousand florins.

In returning to Wittenberg, Luther became a more profound student of the Divine Word, and a more earnest expounder of its truths. As a doctor of divinity he sought to realize correct principles of interpretation, and to apply the doctrines and precepts of Scripture thereby deduced, to the recognized tenets of the schools. In doing this he exposed afresh the errors of Pelagianism, and re-asserted the arguments of St. Augustine and the Fathers. The propositions affirmed, and the proofs adduced, arrested attention, stimulated inquiry, led to discussion, and thus prepared the way for that doctrinal revolution without which there could have been no external reformation. It is possible that many of his prolegomena were too abstract for the popular mind. The discussion of metaphysical and recondite themes could hardly enlist the public sympathy; and yet a correct interpretation of the Bible, and a right apprehension of the doctrines therein revealed, were intimately associated with—were absolutely necessary to, the correction of the outer-abuses beneath which the Church groaned. It was a reformation of doctrine as well as of practice. Luther could never have made the truth bear with such prominence and power upon the errors of the Church, if he had not first realized that truth in his own nature, as well by his logical faculty as by his spiritual consciousness. There can be no true devotion without a sound faith. The one essentially implies the other; and in these days of latitudinarian theology—when the dogmatic character of the Bible is ignored, and the obligation of a clearly defined faith is repudiated—it seems necessary to re-affirm the fundamental principles of religion, that a super-natural revelation was needed, that such a revelation is contained in the Holy Bible—and that by its dicta we are and must be bound. Without a recognition of the supreme authority of the Bible in matters of faith and practice we have no basis on which to work; and only in so far as Luther made the Bible his foundation and guide, was he prepared for the mission on which he had almost unconsciously entered.

The controversy on Indulgences became the match which ignited the

train. All the preparation had been begun, all the events were made ready, by that invisible agency which works in nature, which controls our individual will, and subordinates human passion to the divine glory. And when Tetzel appeared upon the scene with his infamous doctrine and unblushing effrontery, it was only as the spark which kindled the blaze, or only as the tocsin sound which called into action the weapons waiting to fight the battle of the Lord. The traffic in Indulgences was a revolting burlesque on Christianity and the Church. If there be one truth more clearly revealed in Holy Scripture than another, it is this: that God alone can forgive sin. It is the essential prerogative of the Deity, which He has not,—and which reverently be it spoken—He cannot delegate to any human authority whatsoever. The duly ordained and appointed ministers of Christ may pronounce forgiveness of sins, in His name and by His authority, upon the compliance of the sinner with the recognized conditions of salvation,—or in the words of the Book of Common Prayer, “To all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto Him.” But that any man—no matter what his personal gifts or official position—should assume to himself the power to remit, in his own name, and at his own discretion, the penalty of sin; and to guarantee the eternal salvation of the soul, on the payment of a few paltry coins into the coffers of the Church,—is an act of presumption and blasphemy unwarranted by Scripture, and repugnant to right reason. Yet such was the prerogative assumed by the Holy Pontiff; and by him delegated to those whom he chose to appoint as his ministers or agents.

There was now a special need for the sale of Indulgences. Money was wanted. Leo X. had succeeded Julius II. in the pontifical chair, and had found the kingdom impoverished by the wars of his predecessor. The magnificent church of St. Peter at Rome had been begun, but funds were lacking for its completion. In addition to this, Albert, Archbishop of Mentz, was indebted to the Pope to the extent of some \$45,000, which he had not the means to pay. . . . In this emergency, the Pope proclaimed a general indulgence. It was let out on the true forming principle to the Archbishop; and since a third person was required for its success, John Tetzel was chosen as the mission preacher, or, more strictly speaking, as the itinerating vender, in the unholy traffic. By this plan the funds of both the Pope and the Archbishop might be replenished, if not the devotion of the people, and the purity of the Church increased.

There was here a singular combination of character. The greatest possible difference existed between the three men who thus became prominent in the preliminary steps of the Reformation. Leo X. was in many respects all that could be desired. The pontifical throne had seldom been so worthily filled. A son of the celebrated Lorenzo de Medici, he combined in a remarkable degree many of the virtues and vices of that illustrious family. With refined tastes and an accomplished mind, he united a virtuous disposition and a benignant rule. He gave encouragement to literature and art, and was not averse to ecclesiastical reform. But his love of money and his delight in war, his thirst for pleasure and his extravagance of living, warped the better principles of his nature, and rendered him indifferent to the higher duties of his office; and like his predecessors, while usurping the prerogatives of the Deity, he sought by threatening to inspire the fear and evoke the obedience,

which by piety and love he failed to win. The character of the Archbishop Albert is not on the whole to be despised, It had some commendable traits. He was free from the grosser vices of the age; and if not either a literary enthusiast, or a religious devotee, he was humane and gentle. He understood little, and perhaps cared less about the spiritual nature and solemn responsibility of his office. It is said that in his quiet easy going way, he was favorably inclined towards the reformation. Yet the extravagance of his habits, and the exigency of his position, compelled him to sanction proceedings or adopt plans, from which his conscience and judgement revolted.

The character of John Tetzel has been variously drawn, and probably some abatement should be made from the descriptions of both friends and foes. We can hardly admit him to be the profound scholar and enthusiastic theologian portrayed by Söckendorf, and Roman Catholic writers; while there is too much reason to suspect of exaggeration the picture of his immorality and profligacy painted by D'Aubigne, and other protestant historians of the Reformation. Tetzel was simply a zealous ecclesiastic, with vulgar tastes and impudent manners, having little refinement, and great enthusiasm, and better suited than any other man in the Church or the Empire for the nefarious business, in which he was employed. Each of these characters had an appointed sphere; and each became, indirectly at least, an agent of reform.

Appointed by the Archbishop as the special preacher of Indulgences, Tetzel resolved that no effort should be wanting, and no scheme left untried to render his mission a success. Accordingly he commenced his peregrinations through the Empire, and plied his trade with all the art of a most accomplished quack. It was intended to visit every village and town, and to offer on the authority of the Pope absolution for every sin which had been or which might be committed, on the payment of the required sum. The sensation produced by the traffic was immense. In entering the great towns a procession was formed, headed by the clergy, magistrates and council, and swelled by men, women and children of every grade. The bells of the churches rang, banners waved, and music sounded. Tetzel himself rode in a magnificent chariot, having before him a velvet cushion, on which was laid the Bull of the Pope. The church, in which divine service was performed was handsomely decorated. A large cross, bearing the papal arms, was erected in front of the altar; on either side wax lights were burning; the organ poured forth its soft melodious tones; while incense and flowers wafted a sweet perfume. Every seat was occupied; every face beamed with eager expectation; every mind throbbled in emotion; and when amidst the breathless silence of the crowd, the service was begun, and the lofty strains of the *Te Deum* resounded through the Church, a scene of enthusiasm was often witnessed which no painter's pencil can adequately describe, and which no Church, save that of Rome, can reproduce. In the appointed order, and in solemn form, the Papal Bull was read. A sermon followed on the merit of Indulgences, in which the necessity and advantage of the traffic were enforced, and in which appeals were made to the faith, the fear, the love, of the excited crowd. Then Tetzel, or his Secretary, would raise his voice in stentorian tones, crying out "Buy, Buy!" at the same time throwing a copper coin into the plate, in which were hundreds of certificates, signed and sealed, and ready for delivery. The excitement grew in-

tense; each was anxious to perform an act of kindness for the dead; a general rush was made to the stand; and gold, and silver, and copper coins were showered like hailstones at the feet of Tetzel.

This was repeated wherever a crowd could be assembled; the excitement ran like wildfire; fabulous sums of money were obtained; and often at the close of the day's proceedings Tetzel would repair to the public inn, where, regardless of his office and associations, he became merry as a clown.

It was a revolting transaction. Never had such dishonor been done to Christ and his religion. The pious members of the Church blushed for shame; a few became indignant. . . . It was Luther's duty to expose the iniquity and fraud. At first, according to his own confession, he hardly knew what the Indulgences meant, and was indifferent to Tetzel's mission. But when he saw a prospectus of them proudly bearing the name and guarantee of the Archbishop of Mentz, and when he heard reports of the scandal caused by the language and conduct of Tetzel, he was led to enquire and reflect. At once the conviction seized him that the traffic was an unholy and blasphemous proceeding,—dishonoring to Christ, a perversion of His gospel, and an injury to the souls of men. It was time to speak. His conscience and duty were involved. As Michelet says, "He ran great risk in speaking; but if he held his tongue, he believed his damnation certain." There is no foundation for the insinuation of his enemies that he was influenced by jealousy; because the sale had been entrusted to a Dominican rather than to an Augustinian friar. His entire conduct is a contradiction of the charge. A nobler principle actuated his mind. It was the Spirit which summoned him to protest and warn. His first move was to request, in legal form, his own diocesan, the Bishop of Brandenburg, to silence Tetzel. When this failed, he announced a sermon, and published his propositions. The design of these was to expose the fallacy on which Indulgences were based, and to show that nothing short of true repentance and holiness, produced by faith in Christ and obedience to His law, under the operation of His Spirit, could avail to the salvation of the soul. We cannot say that all his points were well taken and defined. There was some superfluity of expression; there was some ambiguity of idea. As Luther himself afterward said, he might have proved some points better, and perhaps omitted others. But, defective as they were, they contained the germs of the Reformation—the essence of the gospel. The underlying principle was sound. That principle was, that grace alone could change the heart, and life, and that the infusion of grace was the special act of God; that there was, could be, no salvation out of Christ, and that to say otherwise was blasphemy. We repeat this principle. Its observance will counteract many prevailing errors.

When Luther's sermon and theses were published, they fell as a thunder-bolt at the feet of Tetzel. He foamed with rage, and committing the propositions to the flames, he threatened a like fate to their author. In the gathering storm, however, Tetzel became powerless as a child. A voice had spoken which resounded through the Vatican; a power moved which shook the empire. "This immolation of liberty to grace, of man to God, of the finite to the infinite, was recognized by the people as the true national religion, the faith which Gottschalk had professed in the days of Charlemagne, in the very cradle of German Christianity,

the faith of Tauler, and of all the mystics of the Low Countries. The people threw themselves wildly and greedily on the religious food, from which they had been weaned since the fourteenth century. The propositions were printed by countless thousands, devoured, circulated, hawked about. Luther was alarmed at his own success."

The excitement reached the Pope. In its early stages he pronounced it a matter of rivalry between jealous friars. Not so the emperor Maximilian, who foresaw in it a graver import and wider issue. As in duty bound, Luther addressed a respectful letter to Leo X., in which he promised to submit unreservedly to his decision. He had so far conceived no hostility to the Holy Father. It had never entered his mind to call in question the supremacy of the Pope. "I acknowledge your voice," he said, "to be the voice of Christ, who reigns and speaks in you." The adherents of the papacy had themselves to thank for a prolongation of the contest, and for the phase it now assumed. It was they who forced on him a discussion of the Pope's supremacy, of the authority of the canon law, of the nature of the sacraments, and of the obligation of monastic vows. We, of course, recognize in all an undercurrent of divine power. The Will Supreme prepared the events and shaped their course; and both Luther and his enemies were all but unconscious agents in carrying into effect what had been predetermined. Their individual responsibility, however, was the same: they acted by free volition.

A vindication of the papal doctrine of Indulgences was published by an aged Dominican named Sylvestro de Prierio. It called forth from Luther a furious and overwhelming reply. At length Leo X. was aroused from his luxurious pleasures. He cited Luther to appear at Rome within sixty days. There was danger to be feared; ominous sounds were heard; throats were uttered; plots were devised. It was unwise to attempt the journey without a safe conduct from the Emperor. The Elector interposed to secure a hearing of the case before Cardinal Cajetan, the papal legate at Augsburg. Numerous conferences were held, in which the Cardinal rather attempted to persuade Luther to retract than to refute his propositions. "Ten different times," says Luther, "I tried to speak, but he stopped me each time, thundering and usurping the sole right of speaking." From Cajetan, the case was transferred to Miltitz, who had ampler powers, and was more confident of success. We cannot follow the course of these conferences. They ended as was to be expected, when tyranny and passion usurped the place of reason and argument. Luther saw more clearly the rottenness of the papal system; he felt more deeply the imprugnability of his position. From Cajetan and Miltitz he appealed to the Pope, and again from the Pope to a general council of the Church.

Leo became indignant, and, urged on by his Cardinals, prepared against Luther a bull of excommunication. It enumerated forty-one propositions taken from Luther's works. These were condemned as heretical and scandalous; all persons, whatsoever were prohibited, under pain of excommunication, from reading his works; Luther was required to retract his errors within sixty days; and all secular princes were ordered to seize his person, and punish him as he deserved. This was a high-handed proceeding: it was characteristic of the papal power. A less courageous heart would have quailed in the struggle; and Luther, supported by a less powerful hand than that of Fredrick,

would have been committed to the flames. The only effect of the Pope's bull, was to increase the zeal of Luther, and the enthusiasm of the people. "Now," he remarked, "a serious struggle has commenced. Hitherto I have only had child's play with the Pope; I now begin the work in earnest, in the name of God." He at once issued a pamphlet *Against the Execrable Bull of Antichrist*. There was no longer any doubt in his mind that the Pope was a usurper of the throne and prerogative of God. The Scriptures gave no warrant to his high pretensions and arbitrary power. In the practices of the early Church even, nothing analagous could be found to the present state of things. The Vicar of Christ on earth should be tolerant and gentle: Luther saw in Leo the incarnation of tyranny and deceit. He made a wise distinction between Leo in his personal character and the Pope in his official capacity. The former he praised as "Daniel in the lion's den," as "Ezekiel among scorpions;" the latter he denounced as "the mighty hunter, the Nimrod of the Roman episcopacy." In his judgment the whole ecclesiastical system was based upon imposture and fraud, and sustained by ignorance and oppression.

It is possible Luther did not sufficiently discriminate between the constitution of the Church as defined in Scripture, and the *forged decretals* by which its authority was now upheld. The Church had undoubtedly a divine origin; the episcopacy was the uniform mode of government from the days of the apostles. What had need to be corrected were the errors of later growth, which made the Pope supreme, and the Church corrupt. Luther now went vigorously to the work, although in his excessive zeal, he was in danger of touching some of the primary principles with too rough a hand. The public voice cheered him on; and when at the city gate of Wittenberg, in presence of the professors and students of the University, and an immense crowd of spectators, he committed to the flames the bull of the pope, and the decretals of the Church, he stood forth as the most prominent, fearless man in Christendom, and thereby struck a chord which vibrated in every European home. "Enthusiasm was at its height. Nobles and people, castles and free towns, rivalled each other in zeal and enthusiasm for Luther. At Nuremberg, at Strasburg, and even at Mentz, his smallest pamphlets were emulously caught up as fast as they appeared. The sheets were hurried and smuggled into the shops, all wet from the press, and were greedily devoured by the aspiring *litterateurs* of the German Companionship, by the poetic timon, the learned cordwainers; the good Hans-Sachs shook off his wanted vulgarity, left his shoe unfinished, wrote his best verses, his best production, and sang with bated breath the nightingale of Wittenberg, whose voice resounded everywhere. Nothing seconded Luther more powerfully than the zeal of the printers and booksellers in behalf of the new ideas. The works which were favourable to him were printed by the printers with minutest care, and often at their own expense, and many copies were struck off. Many old monks, too, who had returned to a secular life, lived on Luther's works, and hawked them through Germany."*

A grand crisis had arrived. The storm was in full blast. There was the rumble of distant thunder. Men's hearts were falling them for fear. What move shall be made next? When will the commotion cease?

* M. Michalet.

Where,—in what shall we find safety and peace? were the inquiries which spontaneously sprung up in every mind.

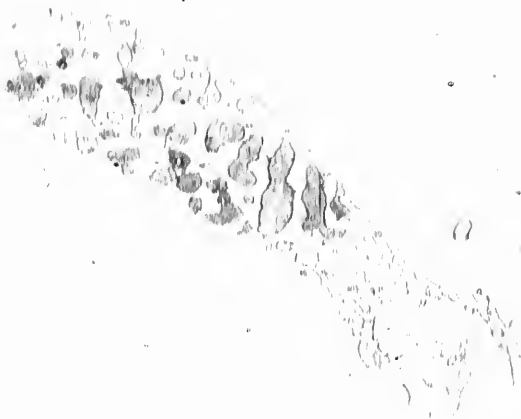
Charles V. had just ascended the Imperial Throne. His election was inspiring to the papal party, who expected to find in him the success which Maximilian had refused, and who had been in mortal dread lest Frederick the Elector of Saxony, should wear the imperial purple. The new emperor was only twenty-one years of age. "His sceptre stretched over the half of Europe, and across the great sea to the golden realm of Mexico." All his sympathies were with the Church; and it required perhaps but little argument to induce him to adopt harsh measures for the suppression of Luther and the agitation he had begun. Luther was, therefore, summoned to appear at the Diet of Worms, which was then in session, and which formed the first administrative act of Charles. A safe conduct had been provided; and nothing daunted by the prospect of either Diet or dungeon, Luther resolved to obey the summons. Many of his friends were alarmed for his safety; some would have dissuade him from going. He was made of sterner stuff than to play the coward now the crisis had arrived. "Expect everything from me," he said, "but flight and recantation! I cannot fly, still less can I recant." In company with the Elector Frederick, he started on his journey, but not arriving in time, his opinions were condemned unheard, and he was ordered to return. A second summons was issued, and again Luther started. Along the entire route he was greeted by anxious friends. There were grave fears that he would fall a victim to the malice of his foes. Some reminded him of the fate of John Huss. There were tears of sympathy; there were prayers for help. His purpose remained unshaken. "If they make a fire that will extend from Worms to Wittemberg, and reach even to the sky, I will walk across it, in the name of the Lord!" was his reply to one timid-hearted friend. As he approached Worms, the rumour became current that no respect would be paid to the conduct of a heretic. Again he was urged to suspend his journey and fly. "Fly," said he to Spalatin; "no, no; I will go; I will enter the city in the name of Jesus Christ, even though there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs." This was the courage of a hero; in such a resolution there was victory itself. And Luther was not without friends in the imperial city. Hutten and Busch warmly espoused his cause; and from the mere humanitarian standpoint their influence was great. A crowd of admirers and supporters surrounded the intrepid monk when the fact of his presence was known. He entered the city amid tumultuous greetings, and melted into the streets. By order of the Elector, lodgings had been provided for him, and in retirement and safety he waited the summons of the Emperor, and received the visits of his friends.

He had not long to wait. Almost before he had recovered from the fatigue of his journey, he was ordered to appear before the Diet. It was the most critical moment of his life; it was a most solemn event in the history of the Church. No similar scene had been witnessed since St. Paul stood before the throne of the imperial Cæsar, or since the Great Teacher appeared at Pilate's bar. The struggles of the past were revived; the destiny of the future was centred in that scene. All the estates of the empire were represented; all the dignitaries of the Church were there; all the passions of human nature were roused; all the prejudices of religious strife were stirred; all the pomp of

perial majesty was displayed. The Emperor sat upon a throne specially prepared for him, most gorgeously arrayed—the impersonation of grandeur and power. Around him were seated the Archduke Ferdinand, 6 Electors of the Empire, 24 Dukes, 8 Margraves, 30 Archbishops and Bishops, 7 Ambassadors, 10 Deputies of free towns, and many Princes, Counts, Barons and Legates; amounting in all to about 200. The hall was densely crowded with spectators—some warmly excited in behalf, others bitterly opposed to Luther. Every avenue leading to the building was blocked up with people. Hundreds had climbed upon the housetops, and hundreds more surrounded the lodgings of the reformer. In sympathy and spirit the whole of Christendom gazed upon the scene.

When Luther appeared, the assembled crowd beheld him with silent emotion, then raised a hearty cheer. He was dressed in the habit of his Order, wearing a plain black gown, and carrying the Bible in his hand. As he entered the outer court of the hall, old Friendsberg, the Commander of the Emperor's body guard, gently laid his iron gauntlet upon his shoulder, and exclaimed: "Poor monk, this is a bold work you attempt. On the word of a gentleman, neither I, nor any other general here, has been engaged in such a perilous affair; and yet we have been in some trying situations. But if you have faith in your doctrine, go forward in the name of God." "Yes," replied Luther, "in the name of God I advance." In another moment he was introduced to the august assembly. With mingled feelings of admiration and fear, he bowed before his judges. A breathless silence reigned throughout the hall. Luther stood motionless as a statue. As a spirit newly risen, he seemed lost in recollection, and unconscious of surrounding things. The Emperor gazed on in wonder; the Deputies and Princes rose from their chairs to survey the figure, and contemplate the scene. Many were moved by sympathy; some were burning with revenge. "Courage, brother!" whispered a voice; "fear not them that kill the body, and have not power to kill the soul." In a louder tone another said: "When ye stand before kings, think not what ye shall say; for it shall be given you in that hour." A pile of books lay before him on a table. By command of the Emperor, he was asked whether he had written those books, and whether he was prepared to retract their contents. On hearing their titles read, he candidly acknowledged his authorship.

The second question, he said, required time for consideration. It was granted. Many thought the request indicated alarm, and were prepared for a recantation. They were sorely disappointed when the Diet re-assembled. During the recess, Luther held conference with his friends; above all, he had communion with God. Listen to his prayer, breathed in the solitude of his room:—"O God! O thou my God! assist me against all the wisdom of the world. Thou hast chosen me for the work. Stand by my side; and though the world should be filled with devils, though my body, which however is the work of thy hands, should bite the dust, be racked on the wheels, cut in pieces, ground to powder, my soul is thine. Yes, thy word is my pledge." His faith had been renewed; his courage was revived. More calm, more collected, more confiding, he was more than a match for his judges. When appealed to for his decision, in hope that he would retract, he replied in a tone of candour and simplicity, of majesty and power, which excited general surprise. He explained the character of his works, defended the doc-



trines he had taught, defined his position in the struggle which had begun, refused to retract the sentiments he held, invoked the protection of Heaven; left himself to the mercy of his judges. It was an imposing scene; and when amidst the eager excitement of the Court, Luther exclaimed, "I acknowledge no other authority than that of Scripture; I cannot and will not retract; here I am; I cannot do otherwise; God help me!" there was reached a point of true sublimity and moral grandeur which had seldom been equalled, and never surpassed. The work was done. Like a rock against which the tide has dashed in vain, the reformer stood unmoved. His enemies were furious in their wrath; his friends were enthusiastic in their praise; and again, as in the earlier ages of the Church, the wise were taken in their own craftiness, and the counsels of the wicked proved of none effect.

The Reformation was now fairly launched. It had a boisterous sea on which to sail; its progress was oftentimes impeded by tempestuous storms. Luther, humanly speaking, was the moving spirit, the presiding genius. After the Diet of Worms, his presence and agency seemed more necessary than before. His power had been felt in the august assembly; the emperor was not unconscious of the impression he had made; and both pope, and cardinals, and bishops, dreaded to leave his influence unchecked. Hence with the papal party it became a matter of grave dispute whether his safe-conduct should not be withdrawn, and whether he should not at once be committed to the civil power, or left to the fury of the mob, as a heretic or a fiend.

There is nothing more pusillanimous and senseless than persecution. It is the invariable resort of tyranny, and a sure indication of decay. Truth has nothing to fear from exposure and assault. When a system cannot stand upon its own merits, and must either employ instruments of torture, or anathematize those who refuse obedience to its demands, it is a fair presumption either that its principles are unsound, or that its adherents are cowards. Yet persecution fails invariably in its object. It may prove the malignity and power of the oppressor, but it also ensures sympathy for the oppressed; and as by a law of nature, or a decree of Providence, the system it is sought to crush becomes more elastic and successful. It was so in the apostolic days; it was so during the persecutions of the Roman Emperors in the first four centuries; and it was so with the Reformation.

There seemed some necessity that Luther should retire for a season from the strife. He was not only in danger of violence from his foes, but the marked prominence he had gained exposed him to a measure of adulation from friends, which might have proved detrimental to his spiritual life. It was of the highest importance to preserve the divine character of the work. Luther was only the agent of Heaven. Without the intervention of the Deity, it was simply impossible that the current of human thought and feeling could be so visibly and quickly changed. They take a short-sighted and most unphilosophical view of history who contend that the Reformation was the result of human means, without a recognition of the Divinity at all.

Luther suddenly disappeared. In returning from the Diet, he was overpowered by a body of horsemen, and carried to the castle of the Wartburg. This was a strong fortress, in a solitary condition, and belonging to the Elector Frederick. By the Elector's order, Luther was

clothed in the armour of a knight, and provided with every comfort compatible with his safety, and the secrecy of his retreat. A profound sensation filled the public mind when the fact of Luther's disappearance became known. The report at first was hardly credited; then opposing conjectures were indulged, and contradictory statements made, and severe reflections uttered. His absence produced a greater commotion than his presence. . . . It was seldom such a tribute had been paid to the character of an individual; it was seldom still that any religious movement could so profoundly stir the passions of the heart and evoke a general outburst of sympathetic grief. And in what shall we trace the cause of this excitement? It is found in part in the character of the man, and in part in the nature of his work. Had Luther been the unprincipled hypocrite his enemies have portrayed him, or had the Reformation no other origin than human passion, there could have been no such painful sensation in consequence of his supposed imprisonment or death. The instincts of the people seldom go astray. Luther had proved himself a conscientious and honest man, as pure in motive as he was bold in action; and at once appreciating his character and feeling the value of his work, the people mourned for him as for the loss of their leader, their benefactor, and their friend.

The captivity of Luther was primarily serviceable to himself. He needed rest, as well for the body as the mind. By meditation and prayer, his religious life was quickened; by the studies in which he engaged, by the books he wrote, and, above all, by the translation of the Scriptures into the common tongue, he confirmed his own and gave impetus to the faith of others. In the castle of the Wartburg he sometimes compared himself to St. John, at Patmos; and verily as the beloved disciple was placed in banishment that he might receive the revelation of the last times, and write them in a book, so the intrepid reformer was secluded from the world that he might translate for the people the revelations which had been aforesaid made. Without a translation of the Bible, the Reformation would have been incomplete, if not impossible; and without this seclusion no such translation could be made. By the internal struggles through which he passed he was prepared for the outer conflicts he had to wage; and by placing the Bible in the hands of the people he provided for them an instrument by which God could silently carry on His work, when the human agents were removed. "The Bible was brought forward, and Luther held a secondary place; God shewed himself, and man was seen as nothing."

There is no regenerator of society like the Bible. As leaven, its truths ferment and spread: In the mission work of the Church, the *written Word* is almost supreme. We must not, can not, dispense with the living teacher and the outward ordinances. But in cases where the missionary cannot go, the Bible may gain access, and by instilling its truths into the mind, silently begin the work of conviction and reform. . . . And equally so in the scholastic projects of the age, we must recognize this Bible power. Our lesson books in history and science fade beneath its charms. It might not be wise to make the Bible a common text book in our public schools; but it should never be excluded from them.

In the educational questions which are rising to the surface in Great Britain, in the United States, in Canada, this is a point which must

Luther and the Reformation.

receive special attention. There are those in all countries who favour a godless education. They have no reverence for the Deity, and no veneration for His Word. Their idea of education is bounded by the physical influences of earth. The prerogative of conscience, and the obligation of virtue, are disregarded. They would educate their children as intellectual machines, forgetful of the fact that they are moral agents,—spiritual beings,—and should be trained up with a due regard to morality and heaven. I enter a protest against such defective views. An education so one-sided and partial is worse than inefficient,—it is a curse. To fulfil its mission, and prove of lasting service to humanity, our educational system must develope and train the whole nature. We are not prepared, even for the duties of this life, by giving prominence to one part of our faculties to the exclusion of another. The rules of arithmetic and the principles of grammar, the facts of history and the discoveries of science, the severe discipline required by mathematics and the transcendent beauties unfolded by the Greek and Roman classics, have all their proper place. I hope no one is unmindful of them: I am not disposed to depreciate their influence. But is there no soul, no conscience, no judgment, no eternity? and is there no need for truth and honesty, for faith and devotion, for holiness and heaven? And whence are these elements of a moral character—to say nothing of a Christian life—to be derived save from the teachings of the Bible? Should we not, therefore, make our children as early acquainted with that Bible as practicable? and should we not give it a still wider circulation through the earth? As in the pulpit we make it the standard of our appeal, so in the school we should make it the guide of our youth; and whether among the young or the old, in civilized or in heathen lands, its influence will be as the refreshing dew, as the fertilizing shower, as the genial rays of the sun. In translating the Bible for the people, Luther placed in their hands the mightiest weapon against the corruptions of the Church and for the reformation of the age; and in exact proportion as its narratives were read, its principles believed, its precepts and ordinances observed, the Reformation spread, was consolidated and triumphant.

The work of Luther in the Wartburg was completed. His health recruited—his spirits revived—his resources enlarged—his influence increased, he was prepared like Elijah of old to issue from his hiding place, and again to speak in tones of majesty and power. There was special need for his presence. During his absence in the Wartburg, diverse opinions sprang up among the reformers which became the ground of future trouble. When Luther re-appeared, the disturbances were for the moment hushed. But new events gathered round him to try his temper and fire his zeal. It was not enough that he should be assailed by all the power of the papal fraternity on the Continent; Henry VIII, of England, entered the lists against him. His treatise on the *Seven Sacraments of the Church*, called forth from Luther a severe reply. Melancthon would have dissuaded him from writing; but no, said Luther, "I will show myself more terrible than the ferocious beasts who are continually butting me with their horns." The royal author had called him by a few rather ugly names. Not the least euphonious of these were—"ape," "infernal wolf," "venomous viper," "limb of the devil!" Luther poured out in reply a torrent of indignant sarcasm, mingled with cogent reasoning and apt illustration, which

made the lofty Tudor write upon his throne, and which called to his aid Sir Thomas More, Chancellor of the Kingdom, and Fisher, Bishop of Rochester.

The breach now became wider between Luther and the Pope. All hope of reconciliation was extinguished. In rapid succession the reformer sent forth treatises and letters upon the principal questions in dispute, which gave impetus to the work, and which made his pen more powerful than any sword in Christendom. It is simply impossible within present limits to analyse these works, or to follow in detail the events which now rapidly crowded on each other. The remark must suffice that like a violent stream—almost with the rapidity of lightning—the Reformation spread from village to town, from city to nation, until its influence was felt at every Court, and the general aspect of the Church and the Continent was changed.

In the writings of Luther there were evidences of a great mind, and of a generous soul. They were not indeed free from grave defects;—the style was sometimes rugged and uncouth; his reasoning was often partial and unsound. Yet in all he evinced a conscientious preference for truth, and an earnest desire to communicate to others the knowledge he had himself acquired. His acquaintance with the philosophy of the schools, his study of the patristic theology, his penetrating judgement, his logical power, his ready wit, his keen satire, his copious diction, his impassioned eloquence, rendered him a formidable opponent, and enabled him to argue and persuade as few men of that age were able to do.

The enemies of Luther even have borne testimony to his literary attainments and intellectual power. According to the jesuit Mainbourg, he possessed a quick and penetrating genius, was indefatigable in his studies, and acquired great knowledge of languages, and of the writings of the ancient fathers; while Varillasius, a French historian, declared that no man either of his own time or since, spoke or wrote the German language, or understood its niceties better than Luther. This may have been a reason, why his works became so popular. The people understood him. In the estimation of Melancthon, he was *omnia in omnibus*—complete in everything, a very miracle among men. He appears indeed to have possessed an almost unexampled facility in composition. His productions teemed from the press as by magic. Heaps of them were burnt in Germany, in England, in Rome; but the want was soon supplied, and as every new work appeared it was immediately translated into French, Spanish, Italian, and English.

It may be difficult, perhaps impossible, to coincide with all the opinions he advanced, or with all the arguments by which he upheld them. He sometimes took a contracted view of the greatest subjects. The influence of his early education, indeed, was visible throughout. In many of his discussions on Free Will, on the Real Presence, on Justification by Faith, on Ordination and Monastic Vows, &c., he seemed to speak and write as a man who had only vaguely apprehended the truth. His temper was often irritable, his language too severe; he became imperious in his will, and impetuous in his deeds. Yet many of his failings were produced by the struggles in which he had engaged; and when removed from the din of controversy and the strife of tongues,—amidst the associations of home, and in intercourse with friends,—he was eminently genial and pleasant. It is an easy matter to find fault.

Every great character has some defects. We may, perchance, detect a spot upon the sun itself. But in all his opinions and labours, I believe Luther was thoroughly conscientious and sincere, as candid in judgment as he was courageous in action. His desire was to know, and then to communicate the truth. If he had wished to lead the people astray, he had the fairest opportunity to do so. But in matters of faith, and in the ceremonies of worship, his supreme authority was the Word of God. It was the standard of his appeal, the guide of his life; when tried by this touchstone, he did not go very far wrong; and estimated according to the highest principles on which character is formed, he is worthy to be ranked among the noblest and bravest of his kind.

My limits preclude an examination of the peculiar tenets which were held and taught by Luther and the Reformers generally, and of the differences of opinion which soon began to develope themselves among them. It is in many respects a most useful, yet most painful subject; and in the consideration of which there is need for a discriminating charity. The Reformers had not all the advantages we possess. They were as men groping in the dark. The incubus of superstition had weighed heavily upon them. It was hardly possible to avoid a few errors. They committed many grave mistakes. Still, on the whole, they were far-seeing men, and as courageous as they were wise. Their aim was to restore the Church to Apostolic doctrine and primitive usage. With all the difficulties through which they struggled, and with all the blunders they made, they succeeded in a remarkable degree; and, allowing even that the Reformation was incomplete,—that it was attended with inconvenience and encompassed with error,—still it was a grand, social and religious change, and next to the introduction of Christianity itself, was the most important movement that had taken place in the history of the Church or of the world.

It is, perhaps, difficult to estimate fully the influence of the Reformation. We cannot do it without contrasting the condition of the Church and of Society before the Reformation with their condition since. In the former period ignorance and superstition reigned triumphant; in the latter, knowledge runs to and fro, and a pure faith finds expression in a more spiritual and less symbolical service. A wondrous change indeed has been produced. There is everywhere and in everything evidence of life and growth. The progress of art, of literature, of science; the advancement of religion, and the improvement in politics, all attest the operation of a super-human power. It might not be just to attribute every social and political change which has taken place in Europe during the last three hundred years to the principles diffused and the influence exerted by the Reformation. Yet it was during that glorious struggle that the human mind was emancipated,—that an intellectual freedom and a moral supremacy, were asserted for all nations and for all men; and if to-day we possess an open Bible and a pure worship—if we can exult in civil liberty and a sound education—if we enjoy social equality and domestic comfort—and if in ten thousand streams and forms the blessings of a Divine Christianity encircle our path and flow through the world, it is in no small degree due to the labors and sacrifices of those majestic old men who,—whatever their failings,—were giants in their day,—who counted not their lives dear

unto them,—who went bravely to the dungeon and the stake in testimony of their zeal and love, and of whom Martin Luther was one of the most illustrious and brave.

We should be careful to follow the example they have set, and prove ourselves worthy of the heritage they have left. A solemn responsibility is ours. In a more special sense than to the ancient Jews, it is true, that to us have been committed the "oracles of God." These oracles are sealed by the blood of our forefathers, no less than by the authority of our Lord. They demand consistency and courage in their preservation and defence. If we prove faithless to the trust, great will be our condemnation and woe. There is danger ahead! In a modified form we may have to fight over again the Reformation battle. The times are ominous of storm. In both the nations and the Church, principles are promulgated which tend to undermine the foundation of the faith, and to impede the progress and influence of truth. The papal power is struggling to regain its lost ascendancy. While in its ancient strongholds on the Continent of Europe, Popery is declining, in Great Britain and America it is rapidly gaining in number and power. At this moment the Church of Rome presents the most singular spectacle exhibited by it since the Reformation period. Within the walls of the "eternal city" a grand Council is assembled, to discuss questions and to decree dogmas, which affect its own particular communion, and indirectly the whole civilized world. It is folly to attach undue importance to this meeting. An "Ecumenical Council" it is not; and whatever decisions it may arrive at, they can have no legal authority, and will be binding on none save those who choose voluntary to submit to them. Yet the assembling of such a Council must be taken as a "sign of the times;" and in the questions it has opened, in the passions it has stirred, in the protests it has provoked, in the conclusions it may form, and in the influence it may exert, it will undoubtedly prove the precursor if not the means of a great ecclesiastical and revolutionary change. It is our duty to watch the proceedings, and to prepare for the issue, especially as they may affect liberty of conscience and the soundness of our faith. . . . Papal Infallibility is a gross absurdity, contradictory of Scripture, and repugnant to reason, and deserving contempt rather than argument in its refutation.

But not alone from the Church of Rome is the danger to be apprehended. We have enemies amongst ourselves, as a branch of the Reformed Church. On the one hand scepticism assails the character of the Bible; on the other formality and superstition are eating out the life of the Church. Our safety is in an honest and unshrinking maintenance of the principles of the Reformation,—in the reception of Holy Scripture as the complete rule of faith and practice, and in the observance of the appointed formularies of the Church, as laid down in the Book of Common Prayer, without diminution or addition, with integrity and zeal: "Here is firm footing; here is solid rock; this can sustain us; all is sea besides." Are we ready for the conflict, should a conflict come? Can we emulate the zeal of sainted martyrs, and shout victory in death? . . . There is a present work to do which demands all our energy and zeal; and the faithful performance of this will be the noblest preparation for any contingency which may arise. We have ignorance to instruct; we have unbelief to refute; we

have vice to destroy; we have misery to remove. The great masses of our fellow men must be won to Christ, to the Bible, and to the Church. In doing this we should have the hero's courage and the martyr's fire; and by free and open churches;—by daily and attractive service;—by earnest and faithful preaching;—by devoted and sympathetic visitation among the people in their homes;—and by the zealous adoption of all such means as Christ would have sanctioned, and his Apostles used, we may perpetuate the Reformation work, and render our Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

"Men of Israel, help!" "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come over unto me!"

NOTE.—The following extract from Macaulay's "History of England" is one out of a number of passages, I had marked for quotation, as confirmatory of some of the opinions I have advanced, and as illustrative of the influence of the Reformation. My space will not admit of more. In another form, and at another time, I shall probably resume the subject:

"Those who hold that the influence of the Church of Rome in the Dark Ages was, on the whole, beneficial to mankind, may yet, with perfect consistency, regard the Reformation as an inestimable blessing. The leading strings which preserve an infant, would impede the full-grown man; and so the very means by which the human mind is, in one stage of its progress, supported and propelled, may, in another stage, be mere hindrances. There is a point in the life both of an individual and of a society, at which submission and faith, such as at a later period would be justly called servility and credulity, are useful qualities. The child who teachably and unpuberly listens to the instructions of his elders is likely to improve rapidly; but the man who should receive with childlike contentment the tutelage of the clergy. The childhood of the European nations was passed when naturally and properly belonging to intellectual superiority. The priests, with all their faults, were by far the wisest portion of society. It was, therefore, on the whole, good that they should be respected and obeyed. The encroachments of the ecclesiastical power on the province of the civil power produced much more happiness than misery, while the ecclesiastical power was in the hands of the noble class that had studied history, philosophy, and public law, and while the civil power was in the hands of savage chiefs, who could not read their own grants and edicts. But a change took place. Knowledge gradually spread among laymen. At the commencement of the sixteenth century many of them were in every intellectual attainment fully equal to the most enlightened of their spiritual pastors. Thenceforward that dominion which, during the Dark Ages, had been, in spite of many abuses, a legitimate and salutary guardianship, became an unjust and noxious tyranny.

From the time when the barbarians overran the Western Empire to the time of the revival of letters, the influence of the Church of Rome had been generally favorable to science, to civilization, and to good government; but during the last three centuries, to stunt the growth of the human mind has been her chief object. Throughout Christendom, whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of life, has been made in spite of her, and has every where been in inverse proportion to her power. The loveliest and most fertile provinces of Europe have, under her rule, been sunk in poverty, in political servitude, and in intellectual torpor, while Protestant countries, once proverbial for sterility and barbarism, have been turned by skill and industry into gardens, and can boast of a long list of heroes and statesmen, philosophers and poets. Whoever, knowing what Italy and Scotland naturally are, and what four hundred years ago, they actually were, shall now compare the country round Rome with the country round Edinburgh, will be able to form some judgement as to the tendency of papal domination. The descent of Spain, once the first among monarchies, to the lowest depths of degradation; the elevation of Holland, in spite of many natural disadvantages, to a position such as no commonwealth so small has ever reached; the Roman passes in Germany from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant principality, teach the same lesson. A Roman Catholic to a Protestant canton, in Ireland from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant county, the same law prevails. The Protestants of the United States have left far behind them the Roman Catholics of Mexico, Peru, and Brazil. The Roman Catholics of Lower Canada remain inert, while the whole continent round them is in a ferment with Protestant activity and enterprise. The French have doubtless shown an energy and an intelligence which, even when misdirected, have justly entitled them to be called a great people. But this apparent exception, when examined, will be found to confirm the rule; for in no country that is called Roman Catholic has the Roman Catholic Church, during several generations, possessed so little authority as in France.

It is difficult to say whether England owes more to the Roman Catholic religion or to the Reformation. For the amalgamation of races and for the abolition of villanage, she is chiefly indebted to the influence which the priesthood in the Middle Ages exercised over the laity. For political and intellectual freedom, and for all the blessings which political and intellectual freedom have brought in their train, she is chiefly indebted to the great rebellion of the laity against the priesthood."

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