

# The Life of Martin Luther

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## INTRODUCTION

TO

### THE LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER

The sixteenth century was the most remarkable and splendid age of the world, both as it respects the great and exalted men, and the important events which it produced. The most important of all events, which render the sixteenth century the most splendid period since the era of the Saviour of the world, is the Reformation to which that century gave birth. Welcome must this change have been to all Germany, a country where the liberty of the subject, and the freedom of conscience seemed to be at home; where liberty, since the time of the Romans till this very moment, knew how mightily to protect her rights against every attempt of tyrants, against the most subtle artifice of usurpers, and against the encroachments of despotism and oppression.

From Germany proceeded the power which caused Rome, the once proud mistress of almost the whole known world, to tremble, even when she was at the zenith of her potency. And from Germany also proceeded the power which shook the triple crown of the most artful religious and temporal usurper at more modern Rome, and brought her to the very brink of inevitable ruin. In such a country as Germany, darkness could not long abide, nor tyrants with impunity long exercise their intolerable profligacies. It was in Germany, where the morning dawn of a pure worship of the Supreme Being, and of a wise liberty of conscience was destined to arise. But it was only in Italy, a country which, in other respects, was the seat of the greatest mental refinement, where a burning climate heats the blood to the production of the wildest and most inordinate passions; in Italy, the mind could be so far subdued and debased, the feelings of liberty so far depressed, that man literally crept in the very dust, and willingly bent his neck to the yoke which superstition and the lust of dominion riveted. To a romantic people, which, by a warm and agreeable atmosphere, a luxurious and ever young and ever smiling nature, and the most manifold fascinations of art, is kept in an eternal enjoyment of the pleasures of sense, a religion was better suited, whose magnificent pomp, whose abundance of riddles and secrets allure the fancy, and whose doctrines insinuate themselves into the soul by means of forms ingeniously contrived by the painter's art.

But very different was the character of the Germans. They breathed not that warm and voluptuous air which inflames the blood; which so powerfully excites man to the fruition of the pleasures of sense, and

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which enervates both the mind and the body. The Germans were not constantly surrounded by romantic sceneries of nature, nor did they continually behold a multiplicity of paintings, which, while they reflect honour on the ingenuity of the artist, fetter the senses, impede the exercise of the understanding, and lead to idolatry and the loss of liberty. For the corruption of religion is not

the only evil that prevails in a country presenting so many objects which enchain the senses, and exclude serious reflection, but the loss of both civil and religious liberty is the natural consequence of such a state of things. When man resigns himself to the gratification of his senses, he has neither time nor inclination to employ his reason on matters of great moment, nor does he really attach any value to them, for instead of delighting his senses, they require that exertion of reason, which through want of an exercise of the understanding, becomes painful to him, and is consequently soon relinquished. Wherever this is the case, a tyrant, of whatever description, will not find it difficult to sway the sceptre of despotism over a people, and deprive them of both their political and religious rights. Such an evil existed in Italy in its fullest extent. But far otherwise was the case in Germany, where, as before observed, the enchantments of the senses did not so much abound; where matters of importance received due consideration; where a colder climate invigorated both the minds and the bodies of its inhabitants, and armed them with resolution to assert their rights. And it was consequently in that country, where the usurpations of the Pontiff of Rome received a powerful check, and where the wide-spread, and no longer supportable evils of a corrupt hierarchy, were sought to be remedied by a radical change of religion.

At the period of the Reformation, the corruption of the clergy, and the shameful abuses by which they had debased the holy and beneficent religion of Jesus had been carried to the utmost extreme. The seductive artifices, preparations and schemes of the court of Rome, for the purpose of establishing her supremacy, that she might domineer over the high and the low, over kings and subjects; that she might bestow countries and nations by arbitrary will; carry all gold and silver to Rome; and exercise absolute authority over the consciences of men, and (as she attempted to do) even over heaven; these were matters too palpable and outrageous not to excite attention or to be any longer endured. The terrible and corrupting principle, that the people ought to be kept in a state of blindness, was every where reduced to practice. The holiness and infallibility of the pope were preached as indispensable articles of creed, in order to avoid the loss of eternal happiness. The divinity which was proclaimed was not a comforter, nor deliverer, but an image erected for the spreading of terror; an idol which could not be appeased by any other means, than by gifts and offerings, and the punctual observance of such things as the selfishness and domineering spirit of the clergy prescribed. From the Vatican of Rome, issued the terrific flashes of lightning which accompanied the bans and anathemas that were fulminated on those who vindicated the freedom of religious faith, that sacred right of man. The power of darkness, ignorance, and

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superstition governed with absolute sway. The true doctrines of Christ were but little understood, and still less practised. Almost every clergyman was the priest of superstition, the servant of sensuality, and the devotee of the chase and of drunkenness. Among a thousand of them, there was hardly one who either knew the truth or was her friend. And even that one, if perchance he did exist, was too timid and feeble; too soon pronounced a heretic, exiled or murdered, to have it in his power to oppose the current of corruption and communicate to others his better knowledge of the truth. A certain outward pomp, the adoration of pictures, the marching in solemn processions, the worship of consecrated objects, the reading and hearing of mass; half Latin sermons, rosaries, and a number of other follies; meritorious deeds as they were called, a blind, slavish attachment to every thing which the Romish church believed; the insipid recital of forms of faith, all these were called the worship of God. Cloisters, in which idle monks and nuns gluttonously fed themselves, to the great burden of the community; where they wasted their lives

in dreams, and carried on works of darkness, were deemed holy edifices. The liberty of investigating religious truths was wholly unknown. The sources of truth were denied to the people, and the avenues leading to her sacred altar were barred. Blind laymen followed their blind clerical leaders, and the light of truth could not be endured by either.

Since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Norbertines, the Premonstratenses, and afterwards, the vile disciples of the filthy St. Francis of Assisio in Italy, the faithful servants of superstition; and the base Dominicans, watched over the darkness which shrouded the nations. Having power on their side, they barricaded the avenues to truth, and brought on her votaries a melancholy fate. Prodigious was the increase of abbeys and cloisters, which seized on the fat of the land, and consumed what the husbandman had earned by the sweat of his brow. Of 20,000 acres of land, the cloisters possessed at least 8,000 acres. These monastic lands were exempt from public taxes, and yet the cultivators of them were obliged to pay taxes for the occupation of them. The canons and secular priests were paid by the peasantry; and the cloisters sold their spiritual livings to their creatures. Heavy indeed was the burden already to the country; but far more pressing and grievous did it become by the vast number of mendicant monks, who robbed the husbandman of the fruits of his hard labour; and, with the booty thus acquired, built the most superb monasteries, wherein during one half of the year they revelled in luxury; and during the remaining half year they travelled about the country and made rich collections, which they wasted in every species of criminal pleasure and wantonness. The collections made by these itinerant holy beggars, were, to the inhabitants, a heavier exaction than the taxes which they were obliged to pay to their princes; those collections were greater than even the contributions levied by an enemy from a conquered country. On these tours through a country, those begging monks acted in the capacity of spies and bloodhounds; they eagerly inquired into every circumstance, to discover those who were unfaithful to the church, and

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to spy out what the general sentiment was concerning the pope and the prince. And if even the prince was not according to their wishes, sufficiently submissive and slavish to the priests, they preached to the people disloyalty to him. But they were not merely burdens and traitors to their country; but they were also addicted to the grossest vices and sensuality, and were corrupters of the public morals. In their passage through a country, they cooled the libidinous ardour, which in the lap of luxury they had cherished during one half of the year, and debauched married women and virgins. By soliciting a compliance with their lustful desires under the cloak of religion, and by making promises of absolution, even innocence, fortified by the strongest sentiments of honour and conjugal fidelity, fell a prey to those wandering pious debauchees. In the very cloisters so much discord prevailed, and such gross indecencies were carried on by the monks and nuns, that it is impossible without blushing to relate them. Their lewd and vicious practices were so notorious and universally known, that they were no longer a novelty, and had ceased to be topics of conversation. The cloisters often contended with the public brothels for the prize of superiority in acts of lewdness. The instruction given in schools, consisted in nothing more than in teaching the ave Maria, rosaries, and, at the utmost, reading and writing. But the infusion of sensible and moral ideas into the minds of youth, was absolutely forbidden to their instructors, and considered as a sin meriting the punishment of death. To the monks was assigned he superintendency of the whole business of schools. Whoever reads the records of the monastic archives, will be astonished at the vast number of prosecutions which he will therein find to have been instituted against many of the monks, at the complaints preferred against them by the

inhabitants of places, who often had been obliged to have recourse to such an alternative. There we find the one accused of having seduced and debauched another man's wife, a single woman, or a nun; another, because he has read forbidden books; another, for his disobedience to the pope and papal church; another, for his non-conformity to the discipline of the church. The evil must indeed have been very great, when it was found necessary, in order to deter them from any more making suggestions of a lascivious nature to females, even at the confessionary, to threaten them with the punishment of a physical disability to pursue their unchaste practices. A certain monk, named John Schiphower, made the following bitter complaint concerning the ignorance and immoral behaviour of the monks of his time: "They are hardly able," he says, "without confusion to sing the requiem, and yet, like horned cattle, they rear themselves up, and undertake to oppose learned men, and continuing in their asses' behaviour, still think themselves to be men of consequence. Let the bishops answer for it, who intrust to such people the pasturing of the flock of Christ. It is only after being taught by experience, that a person can be brought to believe with what errors and fables the sermons abound which they preach to the people. The manner in which they lead their lives is equally objectionable. They much better understand how to draw liquor from goblets, than information from books. With drinking

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and carousing companions, they sit in taverns; carry on gaming and illicit amours, and daily intoxicate themselves. And these are--priests! they are indeed so called: but they are--asses!"

One of the worst abuses of Christianity corrupted by popery, at that time, was the doctrine of indulgences. At Rome, a certain fundamental principle of the papal church was established and introduced among the catholics, that the successors of St. Peter, as vicegerents of Christ on earth, and keepers of the immensely rich treasure of the infinite merits of Christ and all the saints, from the holy St. Ursula, together with the eleven thousand virgins, down to the very last canonized mendicant monk, had the power of distributing this treasure according to the wants of each individual, and of thus rendering absolution effectual to every one who was guilty of sin. Every species of sin was forgiven according to a certain tax imposed on consideration of such pardon; and by this means, the money of Europe flowed into the coffers of the pontiff. At first the popes presumed to do no more than to remit barely the temporal punishments, which the canonical laws annexed to sins of a certain description. At length they extended their judicial power beyond the confines of the grave also, and forgave or mitigated punishments to be received even after death, however, always in proportion to the amount of money paid for such pardons or mitigations of punishment. The papal emissaries traversed every part of Germany with their indulgences, and were received with extraordinary demonstrations of respect. The following circumstance may serve as an example of the honour which, on such occasions, was shown to them. At the commencement of the fifteenth century, Cardinal Raymundus travelled through Germany, by consent of the emperor, and in the summer of 1502 arrived at Bremen. He was met by the archbishop at the gate of the city, where a procession was formed on the occasion, and, with burning tapers, monstresses, and songs, the holy cardinal was conducted into the city. The streets were strewn with grass; the houses were hung with gold embroidered Flemish wares and tapestry, and decorated with green twigs from the trees. All the bells were rung, and the musicians of the city played in concert, with posaunes, trumpets, French-horns, clarionets, and flutes. And although the cardinal did not set a high price on his holy commodity, for a person might, for twelve to eighteen groats, purchase a letter of indulgence, yet in Bremen he collected the sum of six thousand seven hundred and forty Rhenish gilders, a great sum for that time.

Emissaries of that description were also at Achen, Cologne, Wesel, Frankfort, and, in short, all the cities of Germany. Hitherto, at the distribution of such indulgences, the absolving penance and confession of sins was a matter which necessarily preceded the granting of indulgences. But inasmuch as the required confession of sins deterred many a one from purchasing a letter of indulgence, the monk named Tetzel, soon afterwards made his appearance, and without imposing such a condition, offered his wares for sale.

But if we have reasons to be astonished at the superstition of that people, and the base impositions practised on them by the Romish church, in times which preceded the reformation, what shall we say, when in these modern and much boasted enlightened times, after having

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enjoyed the glorious light of that reformation, a portion of mankind are still superstitious enough to be the willing dupes of such deceptions. For a proof of this, we need only to advert to a late circumstance in regard to indulgences. The pope's legate in France, Cardinal Caprara, as lately as the year 1802, in a very lively manner reminded us Protestants of this almost forgotten papal indulgence. In his proclamation of the 9th of April, in the same year, by which, in the name of the pope, he grants absolution, the following is mentioned among other things; "The pope opens to you all spiritual treasures, of which the Supreme Being (!!!) has appointed him the giver and dispensator. By virtue, therefore, of the apostolical power, we proclaim to you the absolution in the form of a jubilee, which his holiness has been pleased to appoint for the Catholics generally who inhabit the extensive territory of the French republic. The granting of absolution shall last thirty days. During these days, the holy father, in the name of the Lord, (in the name of the Lord!!!) grants absolution and full forgiveness of all sins, after the manner in which, in the years of jubilee, it is granted, to all persons believing in Jesus Christ, who, with devotion of heart, after the reception of the holy sacrament, will visit those churches which the archbishop, bishop, &c. &c., shall point out for each diocese. The faithful are at liberty to choose what clergyman they please to whom they will confess their sins," &c. Do not such declarations throw us back again to the sixteenth century, when the reformation commenced?

WE will now return from this digression, to the period when Tetzel unconditionally offered for sale his letters of indulgence.

But further than this, shamelessness could not proceed; to a higher degree superstition could not rise; nor could the latter escape an attack. The inconsistent; unchristian, insipid nature of the Romish mode of divine worship; the frauds practised by the priests, and the stupid power of the monks, must necessarily have been perceived in their true appearance, and acknowledged in regard to their sad operations and dreadful consequences. The free opinions and more correct ideas, which long before already had been expressed by the Waldenses and Wicklifites, by the Hussites, the Taborites, and the Bohemian brethren, now found a genial soil. John Huss and Hieronimus of Prague, who at Costnitz, in the year 1414, contrary to the safe-conduct granted to them by the Emperor Sigismund, were burned, had already sown seed which now began to vegetate. Hieronimus Savanacla had already been the forerunner of the reformers. Out of the school of the excellent Alexander Hagijs of Deventer, came Desiderius Erasmus, Herman Buschius, and several other learned men, who possessed good and clear heads, and courageous and noble hearts. Their light spread itself abroad over the plains of Germany, like the rays of an enlivening vernal sun, which rises to awaken blossoms, and to ripen the fruits of the earth. To the arts and sciences they communicated new life, and laid the foundation for better information, and a more correct knowledge of religion. It was now that the voice of truth caused herself to be more

loudly heard. The auspicious period had arrived, when truth again returned from heaven to earth. Luther, at Wittenberg, in Saxony and Zwingli, at Einsiedel, in Switzerland, made their appearance. Those

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men spoke, and suddenly was the voice of discontent against the Catholics universally heard. The Reformation commenced.

At this critical time, it was a most fortunate circumstance for Germany, that her princes were not voluptuaries, that they were not abandoned villains. They needed not the foul indulgences of priests to heal their wounded, terrified consciences; they needed not the eulogiums of the base, in order to cover their scandalous deeds. It was lucky for Germany that her counts, princes, dukes, and archdukes, were not giddy-brained grandees; that they did not merely laugh at the absurd frauds committed by the priests, as did formerly the considerate heads at the court of Charles the Bald. No, they took the matter into more serious consideration, and called vices by their proper names. They used their utmost endeavours to restrain the levity, the folly, and the scandalous practice of duping mankind. They did not shut their ears to the complaints of the oppressed, nor to the voice of truth. The princely table had not disqualified them to reflect on truth and error, as it had so many enervated princes. Wine, the chase, and voluptuousness had no fettering charms for them; nor could the artifice of the monks render them the slaves of the priests. Almost all electors, dukes, and other princes, declared themselves to be in favour of the Reformation. Many of them were the most confidential friends of Luther, Zwingli, Melancthon, Oecolampadius, and other learned reformers, with whom those princes carried on epistolary correspondences, and consulted the reformers as to the best means of introducing the Reformation into their own dominions. In almost every place, this important religious change was eagerly adopted. In the natural world, it is necessary only that the gradually collected inflammable matter should be touched, and an earthquake, or lightning and thunder, instantaneously burst forth, which cause the most mighty and dreadful convulsions in the frame of nature: And such was likewise the case with regard to the Reformation. From Wittenberg and Switzerland came the powerful shock, which caused a general agitation. Eagerly did men avail themselves of the rays of light which every where beamed forth. The world was prepared for this event, and in some parts of it the explosion occasioned great convulsions.

It was only the house of Austria which at this eventful period remained the faithful adherent to the pope, and the subservient pimp of superstition. Indescribable was the misery which that house brought upon all Germany, and millions of Germans did she murder to stop the progress of truth; to protect blessed ignorance and stupidity; to exercise the most shameful and oppressive tyranny, and to favour the priesthood and its vile deceptions. The Romish clergy had always been the prop of despotism. The captivity of the human mind tended to the increase and aggrandizement of the power of princes; and we have seen, that, like the Roman clergy, they reaped advantages from the imbecility of men's minds, and from a prevalence of sensuality.

Religion has but too often and too successfully been used as a necessary and precious instrument with which to facilitate the oppression of the subject. And a blind submission to tyrannical power likewise prepares the minds of men for a blind, convenient religious creed; and with usury does the hierarchy return her services to despotism. The bishops

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and prelates were zealous procurators of majesty, and were always ready to sacrifice the interest of the subject to the benefit of the church. It was a happy circumstance for Germany, that at the commencement of the Reformation, there sat men on the imperial throne, who neither lacked for talents, nor submitted entirely to the mandates of the people. At the beginning of this momentous crisis of religious affairs, Maximilian wore the imperial crown. This prince, after having been cured of some natural infirmities, which probably originated in a bad education, was at length found to unite in himself very great talents. His education had been neglected through the avarice and indolence of his imperial father, Frederick the III., and, until the tenth year of his age, he was considered to be very stupid and simple, but he was soon after admired as the wonder of the age in which he lived. He was master of several languages, wrote and spoke them fluently; he was at first brave and active, and, in short, discovered qualities which procured him great respect. He married the most wealthy princess of his time, Maria, the only heiress of Charles the Brave, of Burgundy. With her he received the seventeen United Provinces of the Netherlands, and laid the foundation of the formidable power of the house of Austria. Maximilian had from the Netherlanders learned what men dare to risk in behalf of a good cause, and with what invincible courage they contend for their noblest rights. The injuries which Maximilian had done to the political constitution of these Netherlanders, to such a degree roused their republican spirit, that they sought to get his person into their power, and in this attempt they succeeded at Burges, where for ten weeks they kept him confined as a prisoner in the castle at that place, and before his face executed some of his principal ministers of state.

Maximilian undertook nothing against the reformers. He saw the gigantic fall of the clergy, and became sensible of the necessity of an entire change in the church. His love of the chase prevented him from doing more towards it than he did, and he died with the following declaration: "If God does not provide better for poor Christianity than I, wretched chamois hunter, and the sottish Julius at Rome, then will she be in a truly forlorn condition." Already the conclave at Rome trembled, and perceived its inevitable fall hastening on, when the German princes chose for their emperor, Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony. But when Frederick refused to accept of the imperial crown, and in his stead, the nephew of Maximilian, Charles V., was, in the year 1519, through the mediation of this Elector of Saxony, chosen emperor, the hopes of the papal conclave were revived, and the pontiff collected the whole force of his influence to persuade the newly elected emperor, that pious offspring from the house of Austria, to assist in the pious work of exterminating the heretics. The most terrible principles, the basest artifices, accompanying the most unconscientious promises, and the most cunning devices of every kind, calculated to excite the emperor to a war against the Protestants, were industriously applied. Charles V. was indisputably the most powerful prince of that period, and no power in Europe dared to enter into a war with him. He was, according to the presentiment entertained by the German princes, the instrument for the accomplishment of all the evils and indescribable

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miseries which the odious house of Austria would bring on the most flourishing countries and empires.

This dangerous preponderance of power naturally awakened the suspicious which always accompany a sense of feebleness. Never did the German princes evince more sensibility to preserve inviolate their political constitution, never did they entertain more serious doubts concerning the prerogatives of the emperor, and never did they propose more precautionary articles to be introduced into the act of capitulation to be signed by the candidate for the imperial

dignity, previously to his election, than at this critical time. A long consultation was held at Achen, concerning the means by which the German constitution might be preserved inviolate against so menacing a power. At length a fundamental principle was afterwards extended and made more definite, yet it was by every successively elected emperor acknowledged in the name of the German empire. These articles, to be subscribed by every newly elected emperor, are known and distinguished by the title of "Capitulation of Election." In consequence of these proceedings, Charles was, on the 23rd of October, in the year 1520, with the greatest splendour and pomp, crowned emperor at the city of Achen. The sweet intoxication of a monarch, who is surprised by his investiture with the greatest power; the joyful giddiness which in many others, in similar situations, opens the soul to every soft sensation, and from which mankind have gained many beneficial institutions, in Charles, however, took a different turn, and inclined him to a melancholy side. He indeed interested himself in behalf of religion, yet not because he knew and respected her, but because she was actively employed in promoting his own interest. For the sake of defending certain dogmas, he caused fire and sword furiously to rage against thousands of victims, while he himself, in the person of the pope, derided the very principles for which he sacrificed so much human blood. He indeed possessed a strong mind, but so much worse a man he was. He was deliberately a barbarian.

But the other German princes possessed more exalted minds. Although the splendid military achievements of Charles eclipsed the fame of many of these princes, who may justly be ranked among the noblest characters described in history; yet the more quiet and less renowned deeds more sensibly touched our hearts; and in the sequel their actions procured greater blessings. In their hearts those princes gave huzzas of approbation to the bold exertions of Luther, Zwingle, Melancthon and Oecolampadius, to overthrow the empire of ignorance. Eagerly did they read the writings of these eminent men, which at that time excited much attention, and which in a condensed brevity contained the principal articles of the Christian doctrines, expressed with extraordinary clearness, and in beautiful language. Those reformers with equal civility and dignity, with equal gentleness and energy, requested the best geniuses of Europe to enter into an investigation of the truth. In their respective countries, the Reformers actually went to work, took hold of the matter where it was necessary to be taken hold of, reformed the clergy, gave to the external worship of God a regulation suited to

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the new doctrines; every where selected and ordained such capable men preachers, as had adopted the rational religion; dismissed former preachers who refused to accept of such doctrines; drove the monks and nuns out of their cloisters, and sequestered their revenues. In all cities and villages; in every corner of Germany, the doctrines spread by the reformers, were heard to be preached, and the German hymns which they composed were sung, and substituted in the room of the unintelligible Latin jargon. The doctrines of good works as they were called; such as pilgrimages, rosaries, the singing of the Ave Maria, of hearing mass, of purgatory, invoking the saints, &c. &c.; all these were examined and rejected. The laymen were assured of the use of the cup at the communion. The reformers also contended against the doctrine of transubstantiation, or the change of the sacramental bread and wine into Christ's real body and blood. And they finally denied that the chief bishop, or pontiff of Rome, was entitled to the highest power in the church. The whole institution of the monks, and the celibacy of the spiritual orders, appeared to them as a purposely instituted bulwark, erected for the defence of the priesthood, and the preservation of ignorance and superstition. An entire change of the whole ecclesiastical

constitution was therefore unavoidable. Confiding in the goodness of their cause, the public opinion, and the support of the princes, many preachers now ventured openly to preach against monkery, and to challenge the monks to public disputations. But among the whole multitude of monks there were very few who ventured so much as even to come into their sight. this was a great triumph indeed for the new doctrines; and the victory obtained by the reformers over the monks, was loudly praised by the public. "The monks," for thus the sermons at that time usually commenced, "flee before the light. Every one longs for the new doctrines! So be it then! May the light of the new doctrines be kindled to our fellow-citizens; may the superstition, the errors, and the follies of the monks be unveiled," &c. After this manner did the advocates of reform loudly preach; and joyfully did the congregations accompany the sermons with the singing of German hymns. But what laid the most solid foundation for the new religious principles, was the circumstance of the continually increasing and generally diffused acquaintance with that fountain of knowledge, the religion of Jesus, produced by Luther's translation of the Bible into the German language. When this task was accomplished, then free access to the scriptures, that source of light and knowledge, was opened to all orders of society, from the highest to the lowest.

The more light the hearers received from the sermons preached according to the new doctrines, the more was the wrath of the monks and their adherents inflamed. As during a violent thunder storm, gusts of wind, lightning, and peals of thunder succeed each other in rapid succession; so did the triple crowned primate of the church thunder from the Vatican of Rome; so did he in terrible wrath hurl down his thunder bolts, his bans and his anathemas upon the reformers, their friends and adherents; but all in vain. Those fulminations and curses of excommunication were at length so little heeded, that the papers which proclaimed them were publicly burned. The power and interference

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of the emperor were now demanded to punish the disobedience and impiety of the heretics. For this purpose, a solemn diet was appointed to be held at the city of Worms, whither Luther was cited to answer for his conduct. Men trembled at the approaching fate of this courageous man; and thought that they already saw fulfilled in him, what one hundred years before had, at Cosenitz, been done to John Huss, and Hieronymus of Prague. The friends of Luther endeavoured to dissuade him from going to Worms. "And even if," was the language of that great man, "and even if there were as many devils in that city, as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses therein, yet will I go there." Luther undauntedly appeared at the diet, with a Bible under his arm; and so forcibly and truly did he vindicate both himself and his tenets, that no one could refute him. But notwithstanding this, the emperor demanded from him a recantation of the doctrines which he had taught; and when Luther refused to comply with this demand, he was indeed permitted in safety to depart; but yet it was declared by the diet, that the act of outlawry which had been passed against him was still in force. Perhaps a fate similar to that of Huss would have befallen him, if the emperor had not promised him personal safety. The Elector of Saxony then took the anathematized Luther under his protection, and assigned to him as a secure retreat, the castle of Wartburg in Thuringia, where he employed himself in the translation of the Bible.

It was now that the blessed work of the Reformation had almost taken an unfavorable turn. As the true object of this religious change was by many misunderstood, the erroneously interpreted, the change produced a violent fermentation in the heads of the peasants. Thomas Muentzer, combined with Storch and Steubner, in the year 1524, excited the famous peasants'

war in Suabia, Franconia, and other parts of Germany. Each of them in his own way contributed to bring about this war; and their three different plans, according to previous concert, ended in the accomplishment of their object. Storch was ignorant, and therefore boasted of his having received a divine revelation. Steubner was learned, and hence he abused the Bible. Muentzer was neither ignorant nor learned, but on that account audacious and violent. The dam which for so many centuries had obstructed the human understanding from its attainment to truth, was now too suddenly removed for the rushing torrent not to deviate from its natural and accustomed channel. The revived spirit of freedom and inquiry, which ought to have remained within the limits of religious questions, now began to examine the political rights of kings and other princes. Although at first, nothing more had been intended than to break asunder the iron fetters of religious despotism, it was at length resolved also to dissolve the most just and necessary bonds by which civil society is connected together. The sacred writings which then were in general circulation, were used to supply so much poison to the wildest fanaticism, as light and aliment to the love of truth. The good cause had chosen the bad way of rebellion; and now ensued what always ensue, as long as human nature remains the same. The reformers had zealously opposed the adoration of saints. Every audacious thief therefore,

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who had broken into churches and cloisters, and robbed their altars, was called one of the reformed. Faction, the spirit of plunder; fanaticism, and disorderly behaviour of every kind, assumed the colours of the Reformation, as their common banner. The most monstrous malefactors, before their judges, acknowledged themselves to belong to the new sect. The Reformers had sunk the Roman bishops to the level of fallible humanity. But a desperate banditti, excited by hunger, now wished to destroy all difference of rank. Violent were the speeches which Thomas Muentzer delivered to the people; however the accusation which he made against the princes of those times, were according to the evidence furnished by contemporaneous writers, and by Luther himself, but too well grounded. "They are called," thus Muentzer spoke to the people, "they are called princes and gracious lords; but they are in reality nothing but tyrants and bloodhounds, who disregard and despise you: who exhaust you by assessments and grievous exactions, and suck you out to your very bones; and who afterwards lavishly squander your sweat and blood in the perpetration of scandalous sins; in the exhibition of pomp, and in the enjoyment of voluptuous pleasures." But, alas! the consequence of all this was, that a thousand peasants fell victims to the fury and treachery of their oppressors. No one is more inhuman, nor more irreconcilable than the tyrant is to him who has made an unsuccessful attempt to throw off his galling yoke. That the Reformation might not be injured by these unfortunate disturbances, all her friends united their utmost endeavours to quell the insurrection. Luther himself declared this tumult to be a work of the devil, who in order to impede the progress of the Reformation, which destroyed his own, and the pope's kingdom, had set on foot this rebellion through the instrumentality of evangelical brethren and preachers of the faith. Better princes were sensible that the blame of the civil was not to be attributed to the peasants, but to those who continually imposed on them new and oppressive burdens. Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, when he marched against the rebellious peasants, was candid enough to acknowledge, that he would excuse neither his own faults, nor those of other princes; because no faults could be amended, as long as men were unwilling to confess them. The Suabians, Franconians, Hessians, Thuringians, Alsacers, Lorrainers, and Palatines, sought to be freed from their grievances; and to this end drew up the following bill of rights: "1. That they would themselves choose their own

clergymen; 2. That they would wish to have the tithes which had hitherto belonged to their princes or the state, to be applied to the best interests of the country, or to the relief of the poor; 3. That they would no longer submit to be the property of their princes; 4. That those chase-grounds, fisheries, forests, and common lands, which the powerful had unjustly appropriated to themselves, should be restored for common use; 5. That they would no longer suffer new feudal services and contributions to be imposed on them; 6. That punishments should be awarded according to law and equity, but not according to favour or hatred." How exceedingly does a denial of these requests contradict the natural rights of mankind, and the welfare of states! But how distant was still the happy period, when princes who really think in a magnanimous and

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princely manner, anticipate the just requests of their subjects, and seek to make their condition as happy as possible.

In the contest which ensued, the peasants were beaten at Frankenhausen, Muentzer was made prisoner and beheaded, and his head fixed on a pole set up.

In the year 1529, Charles ordered a new diet to be held at Spires. At the close of this diet, a solemn act was subscribed, which, by a majority of votes, condemned the new doctrines and all further innovations, and specially prohibited the abolition of mass. Those states of the empire which were in favour of the new doctrines, declared that they were unable to understand how they could justly dare to submit to a resolution formed by a majority of votes, in regard to a matter which respected their own salvation and that of their subjects. They therefore entered their protest against this resolution of the diet,--a step, which afterwards gave them the name of Protestants. And inasmuch as in distant parts of the empire they were painted in the blackest colours, and cried down as men who believed in neither God, nor in a future state, they found it necessary, for the sake of removing those prejudices, in a plain and perspicuous manner, to place before the eyes of the world, a new confession of their faith, (as far as it differed from the former mischievous doctrines,) and which, according to the best information on the subject they then possessed, they held to be true, and founded on the Bible. This confession of faith, consisting of twenty-one articles, they in the year 1530, publicly laid before the diet held at Augsburg. For the maintenance of their Protestantism, and for their own protection against the Catholic states of the empire, they concluded an alliance at Schmalkalden, in the marquisate of Heneburg, near the Thuringian forest. The Elector of Saxony, and the Landgrave of Hesse were the most powerful members of this confederacy, and on whom the less powerful members placed their whole dependence. The Catholic states on their part, in the year 1538, opposed to the Schmalkaldish alliance, their own confederacy, commonly called the Holy Alliance, concluded at Nuremberg. And being supported by this league, Charles V. now ventured to enter on the execution of the grand scheme of suppressing the Protestant confederates, and of making himself sole arbiter of all Germany. When, in the year 1546, the Protestants had reason to fear that the execution of this scheme was nigh at hand, they took the field with a respectable force. However, their army soon separated, after the Elector of Saxony had been obliged to leave it, in order to return home and defend his own country against Prince Moritz of Saxony. Charles, availing himself of this circumstance, in the year following, prepared himself to attack the single members of the Schmalkaldish confederacy, and the Elector of Saxony was to be the first victim to be offered on the altar of his ambition. This elector, who was the head of the Protestant confederacy, the fatal battle of Muehlberg, lost both the field, and his own personal liberty. The Landgrave of Hesse also fell into the hands of the emperor. The consequence of this was, that the emperor, in the year

1548, felt himself strong enough to enforce certain articles of union, which were to remain in force until an ecclesiastical court should put an end to the religious controversies.

According to the articles of this interim, as it was called, all the

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seven sacraments were to be observed, and mass, together with all abolished papal ceremonies, were to be revived, and again brought into use. Even the Romish doctrine of the presence of the body and blood of Christ at the communion, or the doctrine of transubstantiation, as it was called, was proposed to be re-adopted; and, on the part of the Catholics, the only concession which was made to the Protestants, was the use of the cup (or wine) at the Lord's supper, the abolition of some holy days, and a permission to clergymen to retain their wives, till the decision of the council on that subject should be made known. This jarring mixture of Protestantism and Catholicism was sent to every state of the empire to be subscribed. The interim caused great disturbances, oppressions, and persecutions. Many Protestants were even obliged to flee from Germany; it was very fortunate for them that there still remained a place where the Protestant religion enjoyed complete liberty. In the reign of Edward VI., Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canerbury, was the great promoter of the Reformation in England. The Reformation had commenced in Great Britain, in the reign of Henry VIII., who is so famous for his cruelty towards his consorts, and for his writings against Luther, touching the seven sacraments, and who received from the pope the title of Defender of the Faith. Cranmer, in the name of Edward, invited over to England, Martin Bucer, Paul Fagius, and Immanuel Tremelius, who, by reason of the troubles that existed during the interim, could no longer stay in Strasburg. These men, on their arrival in England, recommended the Polish noblemen, John Von Lasco, who was consequently also invited to England, from East Friesland. The number of the friends of truth daily increased in England. Martin Mikron, Gualter Delenus, and others from Flanders, Brabant, the Netherlands, and Germany, in great numbers shipped for England, took up their residence in different cities, formed themselves into independent congregations, and in the exercise of the true worship of God, set an example worthy of imitation, to the native English. Through the solicitation made in their behalf by the Duke of Suffolk, it was even allowed to the Netherlanders to hold their religious exercises in the city of London, in one of the churches which belonged to the Augustine monks. At the side of this Dutch congregation, the other congregations, composed of refugees from the continent, also flourished, received public protection, obtained churches, and were admitted to all rights and privileges. Valerandus Pollanus, a Netherlandish nobleman from Ryssel in Flanders, founded both a French and an Italian church.

In the year 1552, the interim was brought to a close. The brave Moritz, who at that time was Elector of Saxony, and from whom the emperor thought he had nothing to fear, suddenly turned his weapons against him, and drove him to such extremities, that the emperor was obliged to comply with the conditions prescribed to him by Moritz. The emperor was also forced to release from confinement, John Frederick, the former Elector of Saxony, who had been taken prisoner at Muehlberg, and deprived of his electoral dignity; and likewise Philip, the Landgrave of Hesse, who had also been taken prisoner, as was before related: and the celebrated treaty of Passan was effected. By this treaty, the emperor promised never again to injure either their religious mode of worship, nor the rights and privileges of the Protestants,

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but that he would within half a year from that time, appoint a diet to be convened, for the purpose of putting an end to the religious controversies which had prevailed. This important treaty laid the foundation for the subsequent religious peace concluded at Augsburg, and at once changed the whole hitherto and condition of the Protestants. Oppression now ceased; the Protestants, the Protestant princes, and the states of Germany, now strengthened themselves in the rights and privileges which they had obtained, and in the public exercises of a pure worship of God. The banished evangelical preachers were recalled by their respective congregations, or others, entertaining the same sentiments, substituted in their stead. Many a small congregation increased to a large one; and in other places, new and flourishing congregations were formed.

According to the treaty of Passau, a diet, as has already been mentioned, was to have been held within six months, but it was delayed till the year 1555. On the 6th of February, in that year, Ferdinand, the King of Rome, opened the diet. After a great variety of matters had been agitated, there was at length, on the 25th of September, in that year, a complete religious peace concluded by the diet. The principal articles of that peace were: "That the emperor, the King of Rome, the electors and other states of the empire, should not in any manner whatever, impose hardships on any of the states who assented to the confession of Augsburg, on account of the religious doctrines contained in that confession of faith, nor on the practice of those doctrines; but should leave those states, as well as their respective subjects, in the quiet enjoyment of their religious belief, the ceremonies and regulations observed in their churches, and likewise of their property. That the religious controversies should be ended only by Christian and friendly negotiations. That archbishops, bishops, prelates, and other divines, who should in future confess themselves to belong to the confession of Augsburg, should, (which however was objected to be the evangelical states of the empire,) lose their archbishopricks, bishopricks, prelacies, benefices, and the revenues therewith connected. That the ecclesiastical livings which had been sequestered, and had not been in the possession of any of the clergy at the time of the conclusion of the treaty of Passau, nor afterwards, should remain in the possession of those to whom they had reverted. That the ecclesiastical courts of bishops were abolished in regard to religious matters affecting the members of the confession at Augsburg. That the free knighthoods should be considered to be included in this peace, so that in regard to the new religion alluded to, they should not be oppressed nor aggrieved by any one. And that in all the free and imperial cities, likewise, wherein there should be professors of both religions, they should in future live together in a peaceable and unmolested manner; that neither party should create any difficulty to the other; but that each party should leave the other in the peaceable and quiet possession of its religion, faith, religious ceremonies and regulations, as well as property."

By this peace, the Protestants in Germany obtained the long wished for liberty of conscience; and being now freed from the grievous yoke of a foreign pontifical power, they could publicly, and without molestation, regulate and perform their religious worship according to the precepts of the Bible. They would indeed have been very glad to see that

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all restraint had universally been removed; and that every one had been permitted to choose which of the two religions he pleased. But this object they could not accomplish; and it was with much difficulty, that on the day immediately preceding that on which the religious peace was made, they received from the Roman king, the declaration in behalf of their religious brethren who inhabited Catholic countries, and whose princes professed the Catholic religion, that knighthoods, cities, and communes, which in such countries acknowledged themselves to be

attached to the confession of Augsburg, should not be forced to relinquish that confession.

Sad changes, in the mean time, took place in Great Britain, in the English church. While the situation of the German Protestants took a change so much to their advantage, their brethren in England and in the Netherlands sighed under great persecutions; where, on the part of the Catholics, no means were left untried, to force the Protestants either to a union with themselves, or to condemn them as heretics, and where the flames of a stupid papal fanaticism fiercely raged. Edward VI., King of England, died in the bloom of his youth, in the sixteenth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign, on the 6th of July, 1553; a prince, if we consider his years, elevated above all praise, and was the wonder of his time. With him died the Reformation in England; and the foreigners resident there, by his death, lost their protection. It was in vain that attempts were made to raise to the throne his cousin Lady Jane Grey, who was so deserving of the diadem, and who had been nominated in the will of Edward. The will of Henry VIII. was in favour of Mary, the deceased young king's eldest sister; which circumstance gave validity to her pretensions to the throne, and deprived Lady Jane Grey of both the throne and her life.

Mary was strongly devoted to popery, yet she promised that she would cause no changes or innovations in the religion introduced in the reign of Edward VI.; but that she would be contented with the private enjoyment of her own religion. But it was soon perceived how insincere she had been in her promises. In order to strengthen her party, and to assure herself of the throne, her hypocritical mouth made the promise; but after having gained her object, she wholly disregarded her engagements, and in a faithless and cruel manner gave up all spirit of toleration. The popish party, in the course of a few weeks, obtained a complete ascendancy, and the bishops, who during the former reign, had been displaced, were now reinstated. A blind religious zeal, and a bitter, boundless spirit of revenge, being combined with power, the whole force of darkness was employed in destroying the Protestants. The purer and more beautiful worship of God established during the reign of Edward, was prohibited under the severest threats, and entirely discontinued; and popery was restored, to complete the shocking work of persecution and destruction. The constant and sincere friend of truth was imprisoned, led to the scaffold or to the stake, and if a foreigner, sent back across the sea. The most learned, pious, and virtuous Englishmen, if they evinced the least independence of mind, and spoke in favour of the Reformation, were consigned to the flames enkindled by the most infuriate fanaticism that ever disgraced human nature. This cruel persecution began by the martyrdom of Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester,

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and Rogers, Prebendary of St. Paul's. And Goldsmith says: "Bonner, Bishop of London, bloated at once with rage and luxury, let loose his vengeance without restraint, and seemed to take a pleasure in the pains of the unhappy sufferers; while the queen, by her letters, exhorted him to pursue the pious work without pity or interruption. Soon after, in obedience to her command, Ridley, Bishop of London, and the venerable Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, were condemned together. Ridley had been one of the ablest champions for the Reformation; his piety, learning, and solidity of judgment, being admired by his friends and dreaded by his enemies."

Those innocent victims of the cruel bigotry of Mary, and her no less bigoted and cruel advisers, were executed together. After being brought to the stake, they mutually comforted each other, and suffered with unexampled fortitude. That pious resignation and firmness which they displayed in the hour of death, furnished a complete proof of their being fully convinced of the justice of the cause in which they had been engaged.

"It was computed," Goldsmith says, "that during this persecution, two hundred and

seventy-seven persons suffered by fire, besides those punished by imprisonment, fines and confiscations. Among those who suffered by fire, were five bishops, twenty-one clergymen, eight lay-gentlemen, eighty-four tradesmen, one hundred husbandmen, fifty-five women, and four children."

Foreigners were at the commencement of these cruel proceedings more mildly treated than the native English, and were permitted to leave the country and return home. But after a while, Mary showed neither lenity nor indulgence to any; all were indiscriminately made to feel the hand of persecution. Even the bones of Bucer, who died not long after his arrival in England, were dug up, and publicly burned. Foreigners were now obliged to flee from that country. In the year 1554, Valerandus Polanus, together with most of the strangers fled, and with them, several English families. The change which had taken place in Germany, the treaty of Passau, and the religious liberty acquired by the Protestants in that country, now favoured the refugees from England, in a manner highly agreeable to their wishes. Valerandus Polanus, with a part of the Wolloonish and Flemish congregations, betook himself to Frankfort on the Maine, others went to Hanau, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. That part of these refugees who arrived at Frankfort, met with a very friendly reception; were invested with the rights and privileges of citizens, and on the 19th of March, 1554, obtained a church for their religious exercises. They now wrote to those of their religious brethren, who were still scattered about in England: informed them of the friendly manner in which they had been received at Frankfort, and advised them to come over to them: in consequence of which, many also went over to them. It was in this manner that the first French, English, and Dutch congregations arose at Frankfort. The most distinguished men among the English who fled thither for refuge, were Edmund Sutton, William Williams, William Whittingham, and Thomas Wood.

Such were the inestimable advantages and blessings which resulted from the formal religious peace concluded at Augsburg in the year 1555. This peace confirmed the liberty of conscience, and by means of this liberty

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the Reformation was spread far and wide. The persecuted who fled from France, England, and the Netherlands, to seek an asylum in foreign climes, now received in Germany the kindest welcome, and were treated as brethren. They received that freedom of conscience, that noblest birthright of man, for which, in their own native countries, they had sighed and supplicated in vain.

But always will humanity shudder at the blind and relentless fury of papal persecution exhibited in Albion, were not only, as we have seen, the native sons of that far famed isle, were by a ruthless and superstitious queen, sent to the scaffold or to the stake, or immured within the gloomy walls of a dungeon; but from whence she also drove those, who during the former reign had fled thither, as to a place of refuge against persecutions experienced at home, for adjuring the despotic power of the pontiff of Rome. But the victory obtained by the brave Moritz, over the cruel and ambitious Charles in Germany, broke the fetters of despotism, and humbled the arrogant pretensions of the pope, who had assumed omnipotent power on earth; before whom the greatest potentates almost prostrated themselves in the dust, and who could once at pleasure dethrone kings and emperors.

But religious liberty was not restored to the continent only; in England likewise, the once ascendant power of the popery fell to decay with the death of merciless Mary. At the accession of Elizabeth to the throne, the glorious light of reason again dawned on the oppressed, and

dissipated the gloom. There also, man recovered the freedom of conscience, under the reign of this wise queen, and the Protestant ascendancy was restored to the state in which it was during the reign of Edward the VI., and even to a more flourishing condition. And it will not be risking too much to say, that the benign influence of the Reformation, gradually extended in different degrees to almost every part of the civilized world.

Although it ought to be candidly acknowledged, that much praise is justly due to several good princes, and other virtuous and eminent men, for the active and meritorious part they took in promoting the work of the Reformation after it had been commenced; yet it was Luther and Zuingle, and other reformers even preceding them, who laid the foundation of this religious change, which forms so important an epoch in the annals of the world. To Luther and Zuingle, above the rest of their immediate associates, are we especially indebted for their ardent, unwearied, and perilous exertions to effect this change. Zuingle, alas! was unfortunate, he fell in battle, a martyr for the cause of truth. But Luther was more successful. He had the satisfaction of witnessing the accomplishment of his object. And the consciousness of his having acted so distinguished a part in settling on a firm and permanent basis, that liberty of conscience, and that rational religion which we now enjoy, must have greatly tended to sweeten the latter part of his life. Had it not been for the exertions of Luther and his associates, to release the world from papal bondage, we would most probably still wear the shackles of popery. Bloody religious wars indeed broke out after the death of Luther; and no pains were spared to destroy the fruits of his labours; but the utmost efforts of antichrist were all in vain; the Protestant religion was too the latest posterity, may it continue to prevail and bless mankind.

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## **LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER,**

**by**

**John Frederick William Tischer.**

**Abridged.**

### **CHAPTER I.**

#### **Birth and Education of Martin Luther**

As a bright morning dawn is not always the precursor of a splendid day, and a cloudless sky, so is an illustrious pedigree no indication of renowned deeds and great talents. The great instructress of mankind, the history of the world, presents us with exalted and beneficent men, who descended from parents of low degree, and whose own noble actions raised them to celebrity.

A striking proof of this fact, we behold in the Great Luther, whose parents were poor and humble. His father, John Luther, a miner, and his mother Margaret, the daughter of one Lindeman, resided in the village of Moere, between Eisenach and Salzungen. In the year 1483, they took a journey to Eisleben to attend the annual fair, where he was born on the 10th of November at 11 o'clock at night. He was baptized on the calendar day called Martinus, and according to the custom of those times, to name the children after their baptismal day, he was

consequently named Martin Luther. He was yet very young, when his father moved with his family to Mansfield, for the purpose of seeking employment in the celebrated mines which then were at the place. It was there that the father was held in the highest esteem on account of his strict observance of the moral duties, and his pious behaviour: which virtues he manifested in an especial manner, by the extraordinary care he bestowed on his son. He was therefore not only a good man; but was also what many forget to be, a good father. And inasmuch as he would lose no time in having his son trained to virtue, he carried him in his arms to school at Mansfield, and committed him to the care of his preceptor, with the strongest injunctions to be strict in his discipline with him; and his instructor was consequently so severe, that

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Luther himself once confessed, he had on a certain occasion been fifteen times in succession thoroughly chastised with a rod. When he was in the fourteenth year of his age his father sent him to Magdeburg, and as he there found no assistance to promote the education of his son, he in the following year sent him to Eisenach. He there joined the choir of academical scholars, and was obliged, with other poor students, to earn his bread by singing before the doors of houses. And this bread music, as Luther himself termed the singing before the doors, hardly afforded him his necessary support, and this mortifying necessity was embittered by the circumstance, that he was often obliged to take up with refusals and taunting replies, which he received instead of the hoped for donation of bread.

It is a maxim, the correctness of which is confirmed by experience, that when the unjust treatment given to any person has been pursued to the utmost degree of humiliation, it then moves with pity the hearts of even those who had only in a smaller degree humbled the unfortunate subject of their insults. Hard language and bitter reproaches heaped on him at several doors had one day filled him with shame, and entirely dejected the mind of young Luther, when the worthy wife of an upright citizen, whose name was Conrad Cotta, penetrated with pity, called him into the house, and refreshed the hungry youth with food. History, with gratitude, preserves and records this long forgotten name of his benefactor, conscious that he was an instrument in the hand of providence, to cherish a talent, which afterwards yielded such excellent fruits.

And you, who may chance to read this narrative, do you know how many great deeds that youth, to whom you show acts of kindness, may one day perform. It is sufficient to say, that this good woman was so exceedingly pleased with young Luther, that she, after having obtained the consent of her husband, determined to take him entirely into her house, and to provide for him food and clothing, that he might without interruption and care for his support the more zealously pursue his studies. And this he also did, and having during his scholastic years spent his time in the most advantageous manner in study, he left Eisenach, where he had stayed three years, and went to Erfurt in the year 1501, to the university. And there too, he did not fail to apply his time in the best manner, and to acquire that knowledge of things which might contribute to make him a useful man. In his youth already, he more especially began to awaken in his mind pious and religious feelings, and commenced each day with prayer and raising his heart to God. And hence he always repeated the saying: "He who prays as he ought has already half finished his studies and his labours." The man who knows how he who is engaged in prayer discovers in himself dormant powers of mind, and confident of the efficacy of prayer, not only becomes inclined to use them, but also feels that he is pledged to exert them, will readily agree in opinion with Luther. He every morning awoke very early, and seldom suffered himself to be surprised in bed by the sun; because he knew very well, that he who is awake during the morning hours lives

almost one-third longer than he who sleeps them away. His close application to study was perhaps also

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the cause, why especially in his younger years he had a spare and pale visage. Books were his most agreeable companions, and the perusal of them his most pleasant employment. On a certain occasion, when in the library at Erfurt he was taking a look at the books, a Bible happened to be the first volume on which he laid his hands. He hardly trusted his own eyes, when to his astonishment he found it to contain more than he had expected. "When I was twenty years of age," he once wrote to some person, "I had not yet seen a Bible. I thought the whole Bible contained only those gospels and epistles which were read on Sundays. At length I found a Bible in the library at Erfurt, which I read with the greatest admiration." So great was the ignorance of those times, that even the learned were unacquainted with the Bible. How much gratitude do we owe to providence which permits us to live in better times! His indefatigable industry at that time already procured him honour and respect with all who knew him. He indeed became interrupted in his studies for some time, by a severe sickness, which however was not followed by any serious consequences. An old and respectable clergyman paid him a visit while he lay sick, and bade him to be comforted, for God would not let him die, but would yet make a great man of him. For, added he, whom he loves, him he early visits with affliction, in which patient people learn a great deal. However little this man could claim the character of a prophet, yet the active and lively spirit of young Luther inspired him with the hope of much future good. In short, Luther found himself so much cheered and strengthened by those encouraging expressions, that from thenceforth he exerted all his powers to fulfil the wishes of the old clergyman.

## CHAPTER II.

### His Determination to Become a Monk.

After Luther had enriched himself with much information, and had cultivated his mind according to the manner of those times, he, in the year 1505, became a master of arts, whereupon he began to be useful to others by the instructions he gave them. "I do not consider," Luther then wrote, "the honour of being a master of arts to be any thing extraordinary, but however that may be, I will now by unceasing study take care not to put the German masters of the arts to shame, through my own ignorance." It was the wish of his father that he should devote himself to the study of the law, and he had also fully resolved to yield obedience to his father in this respect. However, certain circumstances intervened, which changed his determination, and which in a particular manner occasioned him to turn his attention to the study of divinity. And even if his sickness, which caused him to place his mind more on God and on religion, than on any other object, had no particular share in producing this resolution, yet the death of one of his best friends, who sank down at his side, being struck by lightning, in

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a peculiar manner fixed this determination. According to the account given by others, his bosom friend was surprised by night, and was stabbed, while a terrible thunder storm gathered over the city, and his house was struck by lightning. This sudden occurrence shock his warm and

melancholy temperament to such a degree, that he, being led astray by false ideas of religion, considered this catastrophe as a call from heaven to devote himself to God, and as he was quite beside himself through the fright he had received, he instantly made a vow to become a monk. The silly belief, which was prevalent at that time, that a person could in this situation of total seclusion and separation from worldly occupations and modes of life, far better and more fervently serve God, than in any other condition, was alone the cause of this resolution. He writes himself: "I did not fondly nor willingly become a monk, and much less from a desire to indulge myself in gluttony, but when I was suddenly surrounded by the terrors and fears of death, I took a reluctant oath, and made a forced vow." His resolve was quickly made, and as quickly carried into execution.

He discovered his intention to no one, and with much satisfaction yet spent an evening with some of his friends whom he had invited, and on the following day took with him only a few books, and went into an Augustinian Cloister, into which he was received without any difficulty. After he had already taken this step, he informed his friends, in writing, of his altered situation, and bade them farewell, as if he had now forsaken the whole world. His friends, who were naturally astonished at this undertaking, in vain sought to persuade him to relinquish a monastic life. But on one took it harder than his father, who told him to reflect "whether he ought to lose sight of the fourth commandment, which says, Honour thy father and thy mother."\* He belonged to that usual description of fathers, who, without consulting the inclinations and capacities of their children, appoint them for a profession and course of life, which appears proper to themselves. When Luther himself already had children, he wrote, "I do not wish to force my sons to any particular profession or business. I think I have done enough for them, if I have educated them in the fear and love of God. The rest is not my business." But how extremely the father, who does not appear to have been a friend to the monastic life, was offended by the determination of the son, Luther himself furnishes as a proof, the circumstance, that after this event, his father called him only du,+ whereas he had before out, out of respect for his learning, honoured him with the word ihr.+ The offended father, whose repeated solicitations to change his purpose were fruitless, at length acquiesced in his son's resolve, and quietly waited to see what could be effected by time, which often has in its train repentance for rash undertakings. For repentance, occasion was soon found. The course of life led by the monks, their manners and behaviour, their hypocrisy, and the whole regulation of

\*This, with the Lutherans, is the fourth commandment, with other denominations, the fifth.

+The German word du, signifies, you; and is a pronoun used in addressing in feriors. The word ihr, has the same signification, and is a plural pronoun, used out of more respect in addressing one's self to another.

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the cloister were disagreeable to him. He plainly saw that the monastic life was contrary to the design of the Creator, and the destiny of man. There lacked but very little, and the fire of his towering mind would have been extinguished, and the germ of his great talents destroyed. He had already fallen into a sort of gloomy heaviness and sorrow of mind, of which he indeed complained to his father confessor: but who dismissed him with the assurance that the present state of his mind would be changed by the lapse of time. And besides all this, he was in the beginning obliged in the cloister to perform the lowest offices, and at one time to serve as a doorkeeper, at another, according to the custom of those times, with a bag in his hands, to beg

alms for the cloister, by which services he was to his great chagrin very much interrupted in his studies. But notwithstanding all this, he endeavoured to profit by the leisure time which still remained to him, and to spend it in reading the Bible, by which means he prepared himself for the great work which he afterwards accomplished. He at the same time punctually observed whatever he had to perform as a monk, which attention to his monastic employments he now considered as his duty. "It is true," he writes, "I have been a pious monk, and so strictly did I observe the duties of the order to which I belonged, that I dare not mention it. And if ever any monk has ever entered the kingdom of heaven by monkery, then I also would have entered it; and of the truth of this, all my fellow monks who were acquainted with me will bear me testimony." He carried his conscientiousness in these things so far that, when through study he had neglected some hours of prayer, he shut himself up in his cell for several days, to regain the time which had been lost. And thus was he, at this early period in his life, the conscientious man, who punctually performed whatever he considered to be his duty. His gloominess of mind in the mean time increased; so that his health, and even his life would have been sacrificed, had he any longer continued in this situation. And to the melancholy state of his mind, was super-added the circumstance, that his brethren of the cloister, instead of encouraging him, and procuring for him some alleviation, only endeavoured still more to depress his spirits. A monk so learned, so capable, so conscientious, and so far surpassing all other monks, they had never yet had in the cloister. What then could be more natural, than that he should become an object of envy and suspicion, whose society they avoided?

### **CHAPTER III.**

#### **Luther Called to wittenberg.**

Under these circumstances it so happened, that he was suddenly rescued from his sorrowful condition. The friend and well wisher of Luther, was a nobleman by the name of Von Staupitz, a respectable man, who not only presided over the augustinian monks in Germany, but who also fully enjoyed the favour and confidence of the Elector of

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Saxony, Frederick the Wise. Among other things, this elector, who, in the year 1502, established a university at Wittenberg, proposed to him that he should provide good teachers for that university. Von Staupitz, who knew Luther to be a well informed and useful man, recommended him, and in the year 1508, himself appointed him for that institution, as a public teacher of philosophy. Luther left Erfurt, and as a young man of twenty-five years of age, arrived at Wittenberg. It was there that his mind, overcharged with new employments, and having for some time been diverted from theological sciences, gained new strength, and was prevented from indulging itself in its usual gloomy reflections. His former vivacity now returned, and he zealously cherished this new branch of erudition, however little he was inclined to it. One event rapidly succeeded another. He had not been long at Wittenberg, before a church living was offered to him. But of this offer he did not accept, until after much persuasion had been used with him. It was in vain, that he at one time plead in excuse his feeble health; at another, his want of ability, to get rid of his call. "It is no trifling matter," he said, "publicly to speak and preach to the people." So high and important did he deem public offices in general, and especially that of a teacher of religion. So much consideration did he use, before he accepted of it. In the mean time,

however, he applied his time principally to the perusal of the Bible, and continually sought to obtain a more correct knowledge of the true meaning of Christianity, and to enter more deeply into its genuine spirit. His uprightness as well as his great learning, soon procured for him universal love and esteem. Staupitz gave a peculiar proof of the confidence he placed in Luther, by commissioning him in affairs which related to the Augustinian order, to take a journey to Rome, for the purpose of submitting to the pope for his decision, certain controversies which prevailed in that order. On receiving this charge, Luther, in company with another monk, went to Rome. Before he had reached the frontiers of Italy, he happened to meet with some other monks, who, contrary to their rules, were eating flesh on Friday. Luther, who still adhered to all papal ordinances, admonished them to abstain from that practice, and to consider that it was interdicted by the church of Rome. The strict observance of the rules of his order still appeared to him as important as the fulfilment of the Christian moral law. He still believed the pope to be entitled to boundless reverence and unconditional obedience. Those monks were not a little frightened on being detected by so zealous an adherent of the pope, and came to the resolution of secretly assassinating Luther, because they were very apprehensive that he would inform against them, and cause them to be punished. But Luther fortunately received information of their design, and escaped their hands. He was however very much out of health during the remainder of his journey, and it was only when he recollected the saying, "the righteous shall live by his faith," which he used to term his strength-administering words, that he forgot his bodily pains. At length he arrived at Rome, and happily accomplished the business with which he had been intrusted, that is, with no less integrity than prudence. But what was of more importance to him than the successful termination of his mission, was

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the accurate knowledge he had acquired by this opportunity, of the constitution of Rome, and of the Italian clergy. His reverence for the pope was then already diminished, after having become more accurately acquainted with the dissolute manners of the palace, the licentious lives of the priests, the small respect for religion, and the difference among them, between the appearances and the reality of religion. Among other things he was displeased with the want of seriousness and solemnity, as well as with the rapidity, with which the clergy at Rome read their public prayers. These are his words: "I had hardly finished reading a mass, when they had already read a dozen of them, just as if a person were praying for wages." And it may with truth be asserted that at Rome, the foundation was laid for his future abhorrence of all popery. In Rome, the first sparks of doubt flew into his soul, which, perhaps, while he was unconscious of it, but faintly glimmered, but which, with the first opportunity that might present itself, were destined to rise up into a flaming fire. He afterwards himself confessed how advantageous this journey had been to him, and assured those to whom he mentioned the matter, that he would not for a thousand guilders that he had not taken a journey to Rome. By this journey and the happy accomplishment of the objects of his mission, he besides gained the love of Staupitz in a still higher degree. And when his learning continued to become more universally known, and the elector himself had heard him preach, he was obliged, at the request of Staupitz, to resolve to become a doctor of divinity. And although the elector promised to defray the expenses of his appointment, yet he felt no inclination for this office. Among the many other scruples which his modesty suggested, he alleged his youthfulness, (for he was only twenty-nine years of age,) and his sickly condition, saying that he was a weakly, sick brother, who would not live much longer, and that it would be better to seek for such as were capable and healthy. Staupitz replied in a jocular manner: "Our

God will soon have much to do in heaven and on earth, and will therefore stand in need of many young and industrious doctors, by means of which he may accomplish his purposes." He therefore, in the year 1512, received the title of Doctor of Divinity, and considered this acquired honour as a new motive why he ought still more to store his mind with useful knowledge. To this end he applied himself with the utmost industry to the study of the Hebrew and Greek languages, that by means of them he might not only himself better understand the Old and New Testament, which were hitherto known from only a Latin translation, but that he might also impart instruction therein to others. Whoever entered with him into a learned conversation, him he directed to the Bible, and thereby showed the necessity of drawing all knowledge concerning God and Jesus, from this only fountain. For otherwise, he thought a person would never obtain any certain conviction of mind, and that the mere quotation of the opinions of others, the mere assumption of their assertions without proofs, could produce no conviction. Such, too, was the purport of his sermons. But because in this respect he differed from many brethren of his order, who paid but little regard to the religious instruction contained in the Bible, but so much the more to useless

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fables and fictions, insipid trifles and absurdities, he was at that time already doomed to experience their hatred and aversion. And the less able they were to oppose the grounds he had taken, by any solid reasons, so much greater was their antipathy against him. And experience frequently teaches, that the less able men are to justify themselves, the more will they seek refuge in base acts of persecution and revenge. Luther also soon found opportunities to effect many useful changes among his brethren of the Augustinian order. Von Staupitz, who was invested with the chief presidency over forty Thuringian and Meissenian cloisters, was obliged to undertake a journey for the transaction of public affairs intrusted to him by his prince, and committed to Luther the superintendence over these cloisters during his absence. Luther was requested by Staupitz to visit them all, and to make any inquiry into their regulations. It was here already, that he imparted new doctrines and truths to the minds of men, and also acquired a more accurate knowledge of the wants and defects which prevailed in those monasteries. He particularly made it his business in those places, to which on that occasion he went, to establish schools, which at that time were but seldom to be found. "Without schools," he said, "mankind become bears and wolves. Things cannot in this respect remain as they are. We will therefore exert ourselves, and appoint school-masters. If I were not a preacher, I know of no profession on earth of which I would be fonder than that of a preceptor. But men must no pay regard to the compensation merely, which is annexed to that employment, nor to the esteem in which it is held by the world, but to its value in the sight of God." He enjoined on the monks, the diligent perusal of the Bible, and to that, above all things, to unite a holy and virtuous life. And through his advice, the exceedingly useful alteration was effected, that now, less useful books were no longer permitted to be read to the fraternity in the cloisters, but the Bible alone. This was already one step farther towards the subsequent greater change. Upon the whole, if we closely observe how both Luther and the persons with whom he was intimately connected, were prepared, and, as it were, involuntarily led to the accomplishment of the reformation which followed, we cannot deny that it was the work of Providence. To direct and conduct all this, there was absolutely more than human power required.

The manner in which this great work was effected, entirely resembled the wise means by which God brings to pass his other designs. It is only by degrees, only step by step, and never by

a single leap, that great occurrences develop themselves, when God directs them. Not sudden is the transition from day to night, nor from winter to summer; and not all at once did Luther become a reformer. A thousand intervening small circumstances and changes, which were hardly observable, and which escaped the sight of mortal eyes, were destined to precede this event; but each of those circumstances, small as it was, was a nearer approach to the accomplishment of the great whole. Thus governs the Eternal Being!

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## CHAPTER IV.

### Luther Opposes Tetzel.

What made Luther a great man was his unshaken reliance on God, and a boldness which dreaded no human being, however elevated his rank or station in society might be. This is the first requisite in a teacher of truth. Whatever he considered to be true, that he also freely spoke and taught, even if he had to fear that thereby he might offend this or that great man. Such was his character at that time already. A proof of which the following history furnishes. The Elector of Saxony had issued a decree, which Luther considered to be of very pernicious tendency. He therefore wrote to one of the electoral counsellors as follows: "Your elector is delighted with many things which have a splendid appearance, but which are displeasing to God. I do not deny that the man is extremely shrewd in worldly affairs, but I look on him as being almost sevenfold blind in things which respect God and the welfare of souls. I do not wish to have this supposed to have been said in a private corner, as if I were a slanderer, nor do I wish you to keep it a secret; but on the contrary, I am rather prepared to tell him this to his face." The elector was informed of these bold declarations, and, what is very singular, only continued to esteem him more and more on that account. When the elector shortly afterwards made him a present of some cloth for new garments, which at the time was considered as a present of great value, he wrote to the father confessor of this elector, as follows: "I am thankful for the clothing, and it is better cloth than is suitable for a friar's cloak; if it were not a gift from a prince, I would not wear it. The information you give me, that the illustrious prince often, and with feelings of friendship, thinks of me, does, indeed, afford me no joy. But I pray that the Lord God may reward his humility with honour. For I am not worthy of being thought of by any person, much less by a prince." Luther, in the year 1517, also became acquainted with George, Duke of Saxony, when he preached a sermon before him at Dresden, a city which, at that time, did not belong to the electorate; on which occasion he however drew upon himself undeserved spleen and malice. The words of his text were: "Ye know not what ye pray for," and he discoursed concerning many foolish wishes and supplications which many persons make to God, without really knowing what is good and profitable for them. But inasmuch as he in his sermon opposed many prevailing errors, and many passages of his sermon were falsely construed as scoffs and reproachful allusions against the court, he did not receive that approbation from the duke which was expected. On the contrary, the duke, from that time, became his enemy, and afterwards, during the reformation, by every means in his power, opposed him.

And this great change or reformation was brought many degrees nigher, in 1517, through the following occurrence: A Dominican monk, by the name of John Tetzel, had, from the pope, Leo the X., received

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permission to preach the doctrine of indulgences. The custom of subjecting him who had committed gross misdemeanors and crimes, to various ecclesiastical punishments, had at that time been introduced. By means of indulgences, the offenders were absolved from their punishments, on paying a certain sum of money. But this practice was not accompanied by the opinion, that through the pecuniary penance the punishment of God could be escaped. But Pope Julius the Second had already abused the granting of indulgences, for the purpose of collecting the vast sums of money required for the building of the magnificent St. Peter's church at Rome, and empowered certain persons to recommend the virtue of indulgences, and, like merchants, to offer this holy commodity for sale. The reigning pope, Leo, was not less avaricious of money, for he loved great pomp and expense. No wonder, then, that he ordered this infamous traffic to be continued. One of the persons commissioned by him for this purpose, was the above mentioned Tetzel, but who was the most shameless of the whole of them. This man persuaded the ignorant people of that time, that whoever should, after the commission of sins, bring him good money, would immediately be acquitted from all future punishments of God. It is reported that whenever he attempted to practise this fraud, he used the following profane expressions: "As soon as the money jingles in the coffer, the soul jumps into heaven." He at least praised his wares so highly, and in so shameless a manner, that all the people, in the full hope of obtaining pardon for their sins, streamed to him and filled his coffer. This prevented all true repentance and amendment of life, and was diametrically opposite to Christianity and the precepts of Jesus, but yet very flattering and agreeable to credulous people, who wished to persevere in their sins, with an undisturbed and quiet conscience. And he actually extended his commerce in this way as far as to Zerbst and Jueterbog,\* and advanced nigh to Wittenberg. However, that was the place where he met with opposition. Many of the inhabitants of Wittenberg had already provided themselves with letters of indulgence. Some of them came to the confessional of Luther, and indeed very freely confessed to him their heinous sins, but he could discover in them neither remorse nor symptoms of amendment. Luther, who was surprised at this circumstance, accused them of their unconcern of mind, and refused to grant them absolution. But when they had reference to their letters of indulgence, and endeavoured to quiet their consciences with them, he declared expressly, that those indulgences could have no efficacy in that respect; and that, without an actual reformation of life, God had never promised to forgive sins. What he then told them, he afterwards publicly repeated in one of his sermons; and in proof of his assertions, quoted the following scriptural passage: "Unless ye repent, ye will likewise all perish." Those people, therefore, who had fared so badly with their letters of indulgence before Luther, went back to Tetzel, and complained

\*At the latter place the great chest is still shown, in which Tetzel is said to have kept his money, if the fable is true. The author of this biography, formerly superintendant at Jueterbog, caused this chest to be removed out of the church, to which this relic of superstition was at least no ornament, to a private place, where it may, together with the name of its former unworthy owner, rest in eternal oblivion.

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of the unprofitable disbursement of their money. This circumstance so enraged Tetzel, that he vented against Luther the most opprobrious language. And still to maintain his authority, he

caused large piles of wood to be erected and set on fire at Jueterbog, intending thereby to signify, that he had received orders from the pope to burn all those who should dare to oppose him, and the most holy sale of indulgences. Luther, who was not dismayed by this threat, in order to oppose Tetzal in such a scandalous business, at first wrote to some of the bishops, and prayed them to put a stop to this evil, and not suffer the people to be led into such errors. But some of them did not reply to him at all, and others declared that they did not dare to act contrary to the mandate of the pope. And such is, even at the present day, often the case. The fear of man prevents many from doing such laudable deeds as they themselves acknowledge to be good, and would otherwise gladly perform. But not so our Luther. When he saw that no assistance was to be expected from that quarter, he attempted by his own means to effect his object. He therefore risked the bold step, drew up ninety-five theses on the 31st of October, 1517, posted them up at the palace-chapel at Wittenberg, and offered publicly to discuss the matter with every one who should not acknowledge the truth of those theses. These brief positions contained nothing more than the truth, that absolution did not procure from God the pardon of sins; and that forgiveness could be obtained by true repentance only, and a return from vice to virtue and righteousness. What happened? None of them ventured to enter into a controversy with him concerning this matter, while the greater part of sensible men fully coincided with him in his opinion. And every one was astonished at his intrepidity in acting in direct opposition to the pope, and thought they could already see poor Luther burning on the pile of persecution. For that he would accomplish his object no one believed. Many of his friends said to him: "My dear brother, creep into your cell, and chant: Have mercy on me!" Among others, one of them said to him, "My dear brother Martin, if you can abolish purgatory, and the sale of indulgences, then you are a truly great man." In short, whoever loved Luther, begged and supplicated him for the sake of his own welfare, not to expose himself to such evident danger, but to revoke all he had done. But what appears impossible to small and cowardly souls, that is, however, possible for a man of courage and decision. Luther had scarcely posted up those theses, when they were universally known. In the course of a fortnight almost all Germany had become acquainted with this event. The report of this occurrence was spread over every country with incredible rapidity. The greatness of the undertaking itself, and the general complaint against indulgences, which none, however, dared to attack, were the cause of the rapid circulation of this news. For no man who loved his native country could be pleased with indulgences, if he only considered what large sums of money were, by means of the sale of them carried out of the country to Rome. Luther caused the proofs, by which the grounds he had taken could be supported, to be printed, and sent them, together with a respectful letter, to the pope. He did not at that time intend, as has been laid to his charge, to oppose the pope himself. His only intention was to put an end to the

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sale of indulgences. The pope himself, Leo the X., did not consider his conduct as a formal opposition, but viewed the whole affair as a dissension only among the monks. He even praised the excellent talents of Luther, and attributed the complaint preferred against Luther by the Dominicans, to that envy and jealousy with which at that time Dominicans and Augustinians, two entirely different orders of monks, persecuted each other. Luther himself, in this attack on the traffic carried on with indulgences, was so very far from harbouring any corrupt designs, that nothing but the pure love of truth stimulated him to take this step. And the accusation which was made against him, that hatred merely against the order of the Dominicans, and envy against Tetzal, who was enriching himself, had induced him to take this step, is a work of malignancy

slander, which of itself falls to the ground, if the rest of Luther's behaviour is contrasted with it. Let us hear what Luther himself says on this occasion. "Whoever intends to undertake a good thing, let him be careful to commence and risk the doing of it with a reliance in the goodness of God, and by no means to confide in the aid and comfort of man. And further, he should fear neither man nor the whole world. For this verse will not lie: It is good to trust in the Lord. But he who is unwilling, nor dares to trust and confide in God, would do better not to undertake anything which is divine and salutary, with a reliance on human aid. As to my attack on indulgences, the whole world stares at it, and thinks I had undertaken a thing too great for me: to this I answer: dear people, if this thing is not begun in the name of God, the attempt will fail; but if it is commenced in his name, then let him see to it, and direct the matter as it shall seem good to him." And in another place, he says: "As to what respects my enraged enemies, who threaten me in so violent a manner, and pursue and endeavour to ensnare me, I know not what to answer, except that he who is poor has nothing to fear. I have neither money nor goods, nor do I desire any. If I have had a good report and honour, it is sufficient. This mere paltry body, weakened by a sense of constant dangers and misfortunes which await me, is all that remains, if they destroy this little frame, by insidious or forcible means (to do God a service,) they will surely do me no great injury, they will then only shorten my life by an hour or two, and so much the sooner help me into heaven. I will praise and magnify Jesus as long as I live. But if any person should be unwilling with me to sing to his praise, and give thanks to him, it is not my concern. Let him, if it pleases him better, howl by himself." Are we not constrained to love the man, who, amidst his dangers, thus thought and spoke in behalf of the cause of truth?

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## CHAPTER V.

### **The Further Consequences of Luther's opposition to Tetzel--His Journey to Augsburg.**

Luther now expected that the pope would perceive the reasonableness of the matter in which he was engaged, and would cause justice to be done to him. But he says, "When I expected a blessing, thunder and lightning were fulminated against me. Tetzel was acquitted, and I was obliged to suffer myself to be devoured." And to this persecution the Dominicans contributed the principle share. Inasmuch as Tetzel, one of their chief supporters, had met with such opposition from him, they thought it to be their duty to avenge his cause, and made his controversy that of their whole order. Even when it already appeared as if the whole affair would soon be laid aside, they, by their importunate entreaties, and by incensing the pope against him, brought matters to that pass, that Luther was cited to Rome, to defend himself in regard to his conduct. The pope himself wrote to the Elector of Saxony, requesting him to have Luther arrested and sent to him, to be treated as a child of rebellion. The elector now clearly perceived, that if he should permit Luther to be taken to Rome, his enemies would never suffer him to return. But as he knew Luther to be a learned, pious, and zealous man, who would be the author of much future good, he considered it to be his duty to espouse his cause. The elector's design did, however, not extend so far, as by any violent means to counteract the pope, nor to separate himself and his electorate from the Romish church, although he knew well how necessary and indispensable it was to extirpate many errors and abuses in religion. It is sufficient to say, that he now took his subject under his own protection; and desired of the pope, that Luther might not be examined and tried at Rome, but in Germany. The pope consented to this request, and ordered that Luther should

appear at Augsburg, before his legate, Cajetanus. And, extraordinary enough was this circumstance, as Cajetanus, who also was a Dominican, was appointed a judge in his own case. It requires but little sagacity to perceive the injustice of this procedure. But the elector assented to this glaring impropriety, and Luther was, in the year 1518, obliged to repair to Augsburg to defend himself. However, as it was to be feared that Luther might be assailed on his way thither, and that, instead of permitting him quietly to pursue his journey to Augsburg, he might, with the utmost secrecy, be sent to the nether world, the elector not only furnished him with two counsellors to accompany him, but also induced the emperor to grant him a safe conduct and protection against the dangers to which he was exposed. And what many, if situated as Luther was, would not have ventured, he however did, by entering on this dangerous journey, and that with the utmost cheerfulness and confidence; saying: "I am a debtor of Jesus Christ, who has declared to me also: 'I will show him what he must suffer for my name's sake' My house is set in order. My honour and good name are rent in

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pieces. All that is left to me is my feeble and brittle body. If they destroy it, they will make me one or two hours of my life the poorer. But of my soul, they will not be able to rob me." With these thoughts, he departed for Augsburg, and notwithstanding some ill health, which his constant grief and vexation had produced, he safely arrived at Augsburg. Cajetanus, indeed, received him in a very friendly manner, but desired him to revoke some of the theses which he had published. Luther immediately expressed his willingness to do it, provided it could be pointed out to him wherein he had erred. And now the controversy commenced. Luther had recourse to the Bible in support of his positions, and his opponent relied on the authority of the pope. How could this dispute be terminated, when the disputants could not agree on the points of controversy? Cajetanus, likewise, by virtue of the right which the stronger party possesses over the weaker, desired him to recant what he had done, and when Luther could not consent to do that, he dismissed him with these words: "Go, and do not come again, unless you should be willing to make a recantation." Luther hereupon offered to end the controversy, and promised to be silent, provided the same silence were imposed on his antagonists. But of such a course there was no inclination manifested. After this, he had recourse to a method which really did honour to his prudence and integrity: he appealed from the ill-advised pope to the pope himself, provided he would, in regard to his case, consent to become more accurately informed. In one word, he appealed to the impartial judgment of the pope, who, he was confident, would justify him, if he did not listen to the clamour of his enemies; but would give a decision according to his better knowledge of the matter. But this, too, was of no avail. In the mean time, Luther's friends did not consider him safe at Augsburg, inasmuch as he had already, by a decree of the pope, been condemned as a heretic. They, therefore, at Augsburg, favoured his escape through a small portal, when in one day, being accompanied by a person who was sent with him as a guide to conduct him on the way, he rode eight German miles, and reached Nuerenberg, and thence continued his journey to Wittenberg. As his first appeal was fruitless, he thought it necessary to take a more important step, to avoid being totally crushed. He, namely, appealed from the pope to a general council of the clergy; and expressed a wish to submit the decision of his case to the united judgment of all the clerical orders. And to such a decision he was the more entitled, as a single individual, the pope, had unjustly assumed the power of deciding concerning truth and error in religious doctrines. This must, indeed, have highly displeased the pope, who was, by this means, no longer to be a judge in his own case. This measure, however, was necessary for Luther's

personal safety and his life. In the mean time, he did not cease not only to instruct and preach at Wittenberg, but also, by his writings, more extensively to explain and establish his opinions.

But his useful labours were on the point of being suspended. It appeared almost as if no place in Germany any longer afforded him protection and safety, when his own prince hesitated whether he should any longer tolerate him within his own territory. Frederick the Wise,

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a prince, whose scrupulous caution on this occasion could hardly be distinguished from timidity, was almost totally prejudiced against Luther by the adherents of the pope; and nearly persuaded that the protection of so notorious a heretic was inconsistent with the splendour of his fame. This prince foreseeing the hatred which he would draw on himself from all quarters, among princes and bishops, had sent an order to the university at Wittenberg, commanding him who had been accused of heresy, to defend himself against the charge; and in case the accused should not obey the mandate, he would be obliged to withdraw from him his protection. Luther indeed immediately sent his defence to the elector; but at the same time resolved, that if justice should not be done to him, he would leave Wittenberg, and go to France. The university had hardly received intelligence of these things, when it unanimously declared itself to the elector in favour of Luther, and in a pressing manner solicited the elector not to deprive that institution of such a bright ornament. Both the written defence of Luther, and the intercession of the university, so very powerfully operated on the honest heart of the elector, that, being influenced by the love of justice, he ordered him to remain at Wittenberg, and assured him that he might safely rely on his protection.

## CHAPTER VI.

### **Charles Von Miltitz Endeavours to Compose the Differences.**

Pope Leo X., who, on the whole, had rather connived at the conduct of the enemies of Luther, than acted from his own determination, now endeavoured to have the differences composed in an amicable manner. He therefore sent one of his chamberlains to Saxony, who was to correct the errors committed by Cajetan, and who, in short, was peaceably to terminate the matter. And this was Charles Von Miltitz, a Saxon nobleman, who, towards the close of the year 1518, actually arrived in Saxony for this very purpose; and who at the same time was commissioned to present the elector with the Golden Rose, a peculiar mark of the gracious disposition of the pope towards him. Miltitz was a prudent and benevolent nobleman, and in every respect the very man to whom such a mission could be intrusted with a prospect of success. He came to the elector, and represented to him, that the people were by Luther excited against indulgences, by which means the authority of the pope was diminished; that Tetzel had, however, by his licentious behaviour, given occasion to it. At the same time he requested permission of him to have an interview with Luther at Altenburg. This took place, and Luther appeared at the last mentioned city. Miltitz opened the matter in a very friendly manner. They soon agreed that both parties should in future neither write nor preach concerning the subject in dispute. In addition to this, Miltitz severely censured Tetzel in regard to his fraudulent practices, and forbade him in future to do the like again. Luther promised not only to let the matter rest, but also

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drew up a writing, directed to the pope, in which he not only promised to be silent, but also of a new entirely submitted himself to the pope and his edicts. The following is an extract from it.

Most Holy Father--Necessity again compels me, the most unworthy of men, and dust of the earth, to address your holiness. I protest before God and all his creatures, that I never intended, and to this day do not seriously intend, in any manner whatever to attack either the Church of Rome, or the power of your holiness, or by any artifice to detract from either. I therefore hope that your holiness will not believe those malicious slanderers, who falsely represent the behaviour of other people. I also gladly promise your holiness, what I only can bring to pass in this affair, that I will put a stop to all controversies respecting indulgences: and that I will let them rest, and be entirely silent on the subject. Upon condition, however, that my opponents shall cease with their insolent boastings, and inflated but scandalous language against me. For this alone was my object, that the Roman Catholic church, our mother, should not be stained by the infamy of foreign avarice, and that the people might not be led into such errors touching indulgences.

Altenburg, March 31, 1519."

This letter sufficiently proves the sentiments which Luther at this time entertained. It also really appeared as if all matters in dispute were already laid aside, that the affair would have no further consequence, when suddenly a circumstance took place, which altered the whole state of affairs.

## **CHAPTER VII.**

### **Luther Actually Commences the Reformation.**

Although Luther still highly revered the pope, yet a great proportion of the respect which he once entertained for him was lost. And what greatly contributed to this diminution of esteem for the pontiff, was both the injustice of his conduct, and the circumstance that Luther began to inquire into the grounds of his power. He carried on with his good friends a learned epistolary correspondence, by which they entered into an investigation whether the pope was really entitled to the divine authority which he assumed; and whether a person had a right to appeal to him only for a decision, when in doubts concerning religious matters. He searched the scriptures, and found no reason why he ought any longer to believe in the pope. For a long time he remained uncertain and doubtful, until at length he arrived at certainty; and of this, too, he made an open confession. This was occasioned by his vehement contention with one Eck, a public teacher of religion at Leipzig, on the 27th of June, 1519. This was in fact the occurrence which suddenly again threw every thing into a fermentation. This Eck was a quarrelsome

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man, who sought for contention; and besides, was an enemy of Luther. And hence it will appear why he was so fond of continuing a controversy with Luther. He challenged Luther to meet him at Leipzig, for the purpose of publicly disputing with him concerning certain doctrines which Luther had propagated. The love of truth impelled the latter to appear at Leipzig. They disputed on the question whether the power and authority of the pope was derived from God or man. Luther showed that God had not ordained the pope the head of the church. He also suggested

some doubts with regard to indulgences and the doctrine of purgatory, which he would not plainly reject, but however said, that for them, also, he could find no proofs in the Bible. Both of these were principle and leading doctrines in the Romish church. According to the creed of that church, the souls of the deceased must go into purgatory, from which they cannot sooner be freed, and enter into happiness, than till they shall have been therein cleansed from all vices and sins which might yet cleave to them. Hence it was the custom among the Roman Catholics, to desire the priests to make supplications for their deceased friends, that their continuance in purgatory might not be of long duration. During this disputation Luther was so open and undaunted, that his antagonist, Eck, lost a great deal of the fame he had hitherto acquired, and Luther, on the contrary, gained much applause. Many, who had formerly sided with neither party in this controversy, now became his friends. Eck, therefore, thought he had the more cause to avenge himself on Luther. The method he took for that purpose was that which is usual to vile and contemptible souls. If they cannot bring a true accusation against a person, they have recourse to falsehoods and fictions, for the purpose of injuring others. What at that time was related of Luther, is laughable indeed; but it however serves to furnish an idea of the hatred and persecution to which Luther was subjected. It was alleged against him that he was possessed of a devil, who made him so skillful in writing and disputation, that his opponents could not prevail over him. Luther wore a ring on his finger, in which, it was believed, the supposed devil sat. A person does not know whether most to be astonished at their ignorance in believing that the devil could yet possess any one, or at their malice. But inasmuch as many did however not believe these slanders, Eck, was well from religious hatred, as from a learned jealousy, tried another method by which entirely to put down Luther, because the first had not the desired effect. He went to Rome, and succeeded in persuading the pope to issue a very severe decree against Luther. Many theses from his writings were introduced into this bull, (as the papal edicts are called,) and condemned for being heretical; and besides, every one was forbidden to read Luther's writings; and he was ordered within sixty days to recant all he had written and taught, which, if he omitted to do, he and his adherents were to be put to the ban, that is, not only excommunicated from the Christian church, but also subjected to the dangers of outlawry, when any one who should find them might, with impunity, murder them. In this manner had the Catholics for a long time already treated those teachers of the truth, of whom they intended to rid themselves. By virtue of this bull, all the magistrates were empowered to cause Luther to be arrested,

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and to send him to Rome to receive his punishment. Eck now triumphantly returned to Germany, and believed he had already given his enemy the last fatal blow. He procured this bull to be put up in every place, to excite every one against Luther. But this procedure had an opposite tendency. Every one viewed this edict as the work of Eck's hatred and persecution against Luther, and many minds were inclined to the side of innocence. In electoral Saxony, this bull was forbidden to be put up, and in many other places it met with but little approbation. Charles Von Miltitz blamed this violent step so much the more, as he now saw his own intention to have the matter amicably settled defeated. Luther, however, remained undaunted. "These wretched men," he said, "rave against me, and seek to take my life, but Christ lives and reigns. Let him see to what they do." When his enemies treated him so severely, and were governed by neither justice nor propriety in their conduct towards him, could he be blamed for resorting to all such means as were indispensably necessary for his security, and the preservation of his life? Was he not obliged to oppose such a violent and tyrannical power, from which he had no justice to expect?

Was he not obliged to abide by those truths which he and many others considered very useful and salutary? And Luther actually did so. He supposed it to be his duty no longer to spare the pope. He published against him many writings, in which he called him the Antichrist, (the enemy of Jesus Christ,) who took under his protection, errors, crimes, and superstition, and who opposed and was hostile to Christianity. Nor did the pope, on his side, leave any means untried to put down Luther. He used his utmost influence with the Elector of Saxony and the Emperor Charles, not only to cause the writings of Luther to be burned, but also to have him delivered up at Rome. Nor did he neglect the use of base and small means to accomplish his ends. He offered to one of the most learned men of that time, many offices and great emoluments, if he would resolve to write against Luther. But this man is said to have replied to the pope: "That one single leaf of Luther's writings gave him more instruction than all former wisdom." An attempt was even made to bribe Luther with money. It is related that two thousand guilders were promised secretly to be paid to him; and in addition to this, great offices and titles of honour would be conferred on him, if he would promise to be silent. But that the emissaries who had been commissioned to make these overtures to him, had been obliged to depart from him with this confession; "The German brute disregards both money and dignities." Whether this report to be true or false, so much is certain, that it does not contradict probability, when we reflect that the means by which ordinary persons have so often been gained over would not have been neglected. And now let any one place himself in Luther's situation. On the one hand, constant inquietude, persecution, danger, and death, if he should continue to preach the truth; and on the other, money, ease, honour, and tranquility, if he would discontinue. Which of these opposite situations would many a one have chosen? Perhaps, and we may say, certainly, yes, certainly, many would without hesitation have declared in favour of the latter. But not so did our Luther. God and the truth

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were to him of more value than all other considerations. To free his fellow-creatures from their errors, from their subjection and thralldom to the pope, to this end he felt that he was called by God--this he considered to be his most sacred duty.

But let us return to our history. When it was perceived that no means were available to bring him over, it was believed that Luther's undertaking could be stopped and defeated by burning his writings at Colen and other places, for it was not without reason that his enemies feared that the perusal of his writings might draw many people to his side. Luther did the same, less, perhaps, from the motive of retaliation, than from that of showing that he now at once intended by force to separate and rid himself from the pope and all his edicts. Being accompanied by a great number of students and some teachers at the university, he, in solemn procession, moved through the gate called the Elsterhor, at Wittenberg, and ordered the procession to form itself into a circle on an open place before that gate, raised a small pile of wood, and laid on it the whole collection of papal decrees, and also the bull lately issued against him, and burned the whole, while he delivered an impressive address to the assembly. This was a solemn declaration, that he now rejected the authority of the pope, and renounced all obedience to him. There have been frequent disputes respecting the propriety of this transaction. Not only have the enemies of Luther accused him of having, by this deed, transgressed the limits of his duty as a subject to the pope, who was his sovereign, but even his friends have also frequently found it difficult to justify this step. However little I feel disposed to defend each single act of our Luther,--for as great as he was, still he remained a man;--yet this undertaking was, in some degree, a necessary defence against the previous outrage, of a similar nature, committed by his enemies, and perhaps the only means of

counteracting the popish persecutions against him.

The noise which his writings had made, now reached every place. The prohibition against the reading of them had the very opposite effect, as is always the consequence in similar cases. Every one read and studied them. All Germany learned from them how unjustifiable the power of the pope was; how many errors the doctrines of the Romish church contained, and how very necessary a universal change and revolution was in religious opinions. Some hundreds of noblemen in Franconia and Suabia offered their protection to Luther, when it appeared as if the Elector of Saxony, irritated by the late transactions of Luther, would no longer espouse his cause. All this inspired Luther with new courage, and gave him new strength, insomuch that he could now bid defiance to all dangers. It really appeared as if he became more intrepid in proportion as the storm threatened from all sides to burst forth upon him. Persecutions which would have deterred ordinary spirits from the accomplishment of their ends, had no other effect on him than to make him the more unyielding, and inclined to redouble his zeal. Luther himself relates, that at a certain time, as he was returning to his cloister, from the university, where he had been reading his lectures, a traveller approached, and asked him, "How he could be so bold as to accost every person in so friendly a manner, and give him his hand. That

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some one might have a weapon with him, and murder him." Luther replied, "How could any one escape who should commit such an act? He would put his own life in jeopardy, and have to die for it." "If I should murder you," continued the stranger, "and should even myself perish for the deed, the pope would make me a saint, and you a heretic, whom he would deliver over to the devil." Hereupon the stranger left the city. It is also related that a foreigner had been found in his kitchen, who had a small pistol concealed in his sleeve, and who asked Luther in front of the cloister, "Why he walked alone." "I am in the hands of God," Luther replied to him, "he is my shield and protection, what can man do to me?" Whereupon the assassin turned pale, and tremblingly passed through the gate of the city. At that time Luther was also apprehensive that he would be poisoned, so exceedingly did his enemies hate his life. He at least received warnings from many places to be on his guard. He received written information from Breslaw, that two thousand ducats had been offered to a certain physician if he would try his skill upon Luther. There likewise often came suspicious persons to him, whom he however avoided as much as possible. He relates that when he once sat at table in a certain person's house, after having eaten a little, he was seized with violent vomiting, and thrown into a profuse perspiration, which, however, had not been followed by any further bad consequences. And although some of these rumours may have been unfounded, yet the dubious situation in which he was then placed, not knowing on whose friendship he could depend, as well as the hatred and bitter resentment of his enemies, at least render it probable that such suspicions were not ill-founded.

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### Luther Appears at Worms in the Year 1521.

The pope, who saw his power and authority so violently attacked, now perceived no other means of extricating himself from his difficulties, than to entreat the emperor, Charles the V., in a more pressing manner than ever before, to have the punishment denounced by the ban inflicted on Luther and his adherents. The emperor, an intelligent and politic prince, found himself

reduced to a serious dilemma by this requisition. On the one hand he did not wish to displease the pope, with whom he stood in such relations as to need his favour. And if he should on this occasion not oblige him, he was certain of losing his friendship. On the other hand, without the assumption that his love of justice withheld him from yielding to the desire of the pope, his own interest dictated measures which were in opposition to those of the pope. He but too clearly saw how absolutely necessary it was to limit the arrogant pretensions and claims, the plunderings and violent proceedings of the papal court. And to this may be added, that he had become emperor through the assistance of the Elector of Saxony, the friend of Luther, to whom on that account he owed gratitude. If he should carry into

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execution the papal decree, he had to fear that the elector, who in some measure protected Luther, would thereby become offended. After weighing all these considerations, he did not think it prudent to break friendship with either party, and summoned Luther to appear before the diet at Worms, (which, as it happened, was held in the year 1521,) to take his trial. But by adopting this alternative, he satisfied neither party. The pope, who did not wish an investigation to be first made, but wanted the punishment to be immediately inflicted, was displeased by this measure. And the elector, as he believed he foresaw nothing with greater certainty, than that the journey and the vindication would cost Luther his head, at first refused to accept of the proposal. At length, however, both parties assented to it, after a safe conduct for his journey had been provided for Luther. Luther himself seemed to be animated with the greatest courage. Among other things he wrote to the elector as follows: "I will when I am cited, if it shall be in my power, rather procure myself to be carried there sick, if I shall not be able to go there in good health. For if the emperor calls me thither, there is no doubt that I am called by God. If they intend to conduct the business in a violent manner, it must be intrusted to God. He who preserved the three men in the fiery furnace, still lives and reigns. But if he will not save me, there is only a mere trifle at stake, my head. For in this affair, danger or safety ought not to be regarded, and it is our duty rather to take heed that we may not desert the gospel which we have once adopted, nor leave it exposed to the derision of those ungodly men, but courageously shed our blood in its defence." And on another occasion he writes to one of his friends: "Do not imagine that I shall recant in the least degree. But I will reply to the emperor. If it were intended that I should appear before him for the mere purpose of making a recantation, I would not go; for I could as well here recant, if that were the only object. But if he calls me before him to take my life, and by reason of my answer shall consider me as an enemy of the empire, I shall offer to go to the diet. For by the grace of Christ, I shall not flee, nor leave his word in danger." With these sentiments, Luther commenced his journey to Worms, on the 4th of April, 1521. An imperial herald, and several learned men accompanied him in his journey. When on the way, he saw the papal decree of his excommunication, and the ban which had been issued against him, put up in some of the cities through which he passed, the imperial herald asked him, "Will you proceed, doctor?" "Yes," he answered, "notwithstanding their having put me to the ban." When he arrived at a city, the people ran to meet him, to see the wonderful man who was so bold as to oppose the pope, and who was considered as a small divinity. He every where received the assurance that he would fare like John Huss, who, an hundred years before, had been burned at Costnitz, on account of his attacks on popery. He was advised secretly to return, and not expose himself to the fury of his enemies. However, this was his answer: "Christ lives, and we will therefore enter Worms in defiance of all the gates of hell, and of those spirits who reign in the air. And if they were to kindle a fire, whose

flames between Wittenberg and Worms reached up to heaven, yet will I, because I have been called, make my

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appearance, and put myself between the teeth of my enemies, acknowledge Christ, and as to the rest, leave it to his care and direction." When he had nearly reached Worms, his friends, aware of the hatred and bitterness of his enemies, advised him by letter not to go to that place. "No," he cried, "and if there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses, yet would I enter that city." An exclamation which could only be made by a man whose heart and confidence were placed on God. Luther had hardly arrived at Worms, when he was cited to appear before the diet on the following day, at four o'clock in the afternoon. He first strengthened himself with a fervent prayer, which elevated his heart, and which he sent to his God, and then concluding with the following words, went to the diet: "O God! thou art not dead! thou livest! But I will go and die! Righteous is the cause, and thine it is. This is resolved on, in thy name!"

The concourse of people was on this occasion so great that it was found necessary to lead him through secret passages to the town-hall, where the diet was assembled. Every one wanted to see Luther, and it was with difficulty that the military guard which stood without, could prevent the people from forcibly entering the town-hall. As he was going into it, a knight patted him on the shoulder, and said, "Little monk, little monk, you are now going to undertake something greater than I and others of my rank have ever done, even in our hottest military engagements. If your opinions are correct, and you feel an assurance that they are, then go on in the name of God, and be of good cheer, God will not forsake you." Some of the members of the diet, who were on his side, also encouraged him, with this passage of scripture: "When they deliver you up, take not thought, how or what ye shall speak." Mat. x. 19. Such expressions must surely have had a peculiar tendency to strengthen his resolution. In the diet these two questions were put to him: 1. Whether he would acknowledge himself to be the author of all the books which had been printed in his name? 2. Whether he would revoke them, or not? To the first question his advocate answered: "That he wished the titles of the books to be named." When this was done, Luther freely acknowledged them to be his. But with regard to the second question he requested time for consideration till the following day. On his return from the hall where the diet was assembled, many princes who were convinced of the truth of his positions, exhorted him by no means to be disheartened, and, as they expressed themselves, not to be afraid of those who kill the body; but are not able to destroy the soul. On the following day he again appeared before the diet, and in a speech of two hours' length, made a declaration to this effect: that his books were of different and distinct kinds. In some of them he had merely treated of religion, and these he could not recant. In others he had attacked the false doctrines of the Romish church. And these also he could not resolve to recall. And in others he laid too severely attacked private persons. And if in the latter he had done them injustice, he had only attempted to maintain the justice of his cause. With this answer the diet was not satisfied. They demanded of him to speak explicitly, and answer yes or no to the question whether he would recant his books or not. Hereupon Luther replied in a truly exacted manner.

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"Except I can be convinced by clear and conclusive reasoning, or by proofs taken from the Holy Scriptures, I neither can nor will recant, because it is neither safe nor advisable to do any thing

which is against my conscience. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise, so help me God! Amen." All who were present, and particularly the emperor, admired the intrepidity with which he uttered these words. And when after this question had been repeatedly put to him, he still gave the same answer, he was dismissed from the assembly under a strong escort. Some of the members of the diet indeed afterwards took pains to change his resolve, but this too did not succeed. The emperor finally came to this decision: "That since Luther would not recede a single inch from his errors, he would pursue him and his adherents with the ban and act of outlawry, of the empire; yet he would not break the promise he had made to him, of a safe-conduct, but cause him to be safely conveyed back to the place from whence he had come. It was indeed attempted to persuade the emperor to refuse to Luther the safe-conduct for this singular reason: "that he was under no obligations to keep his promise to a heretic." However, to this the emperor replied: "What a person promises he ought to keep. And even if the whole world should lie, yet ought not an emperor to lie." Luther, therefore, on the 26th of April, 1521, departed from Worms, under a strong escort, after having received from princes and other persons of high distinction, extraordinary proofs of good will and favour. Princes of the highest rank visited him at his lodgings. The Elector of Treves had even invited him to his table, where however the extraordinary circumstance took place, that at the very moment when Luther was putting the wine glass to his lips it burst. Conjectures of every kind, especially that of the possibility of poison having been introduced into the glass, gained possession of the minds of all who were present in the moment of surprise. But Luther with much composure of mind put down the glass, and said, "the liquor was not bestowed on me: the bursting of the glass was perhaps occasioned by the sudden transition from coldness to warmth produced in the glass by the wine.

## CHAPTER IX.

### Luther's Abode at the Castle of Wartburg.

On his journey home, Luther no less enjoyed the love and confidence of all who saw him. He every where met with a friendly reception, and it was plainly to be seen that the one half of Germany was already inclining to his side. While on his way home, he was visiting those part of the country which belong to Eisenach, his native district, and just as he was entering the forest of Thuringia, he was attacked by two knights dressed in disguise, when Luther's brother, who was with him in the wagon, was so terrified at the sight of two rapidly approaching horsemen, that he threw himself out of the wagon, and without showing any concern for his brother's fate, with all possible haste betook himself

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to flight, while the horsemen pulled Luther out of the wagon, dressed him in the habiliments of a knight, placed him on a horse, and hastened away with him. Both unexpected and frightful was this occurrence. At least those who had accompanied Luther in the wagon were thereby thrown into such consternation, that they lost all their presence of mind to pursue the horsemen. In the mean time the men who had thus captured Luther, for a long while led him to and fro in the forest till the approach of night, when they took the road leading to the castle of Wartburg, near Eisenach, where they arrived at midnight. Here they delivered up their prisoner, and gave the strictest orders to the superintendant of the castle to treat this stranger well. However this whole affair was the work of the Elector of Saxony, who wished to put Luther, who had been previously

prepared for the incident, into a place of security, and to prevent any further bold steps to which he might be impelled by the warmth of his natural temper. And this was the only method to save his life, for he was not only put to the ban by the people, but was also proscribed by a resolution of the diet. And whoever was declared an outlaw by the states of the empire, him every one was privileged to abuse, and even to kill with impunity. The elector himself found it necessary to keep Luther's retreat to the castle a profound secret, so that except a few of his counsellors, no one knew it. At the castle he was known only by the name of Sir George. Not only at the diet, but in all other places, it was believed that Luther had actually been taken prisoner, and perhaps was killed. And the more his enemies vainly enjoyed the pleasure derived from the supposition of his death, the more his friends lamented his loss. But when suspicions were entertained that he was still living, every effort was made at Rome, not only to discover the place of his retreat, but they even burned his books, together with himself, in effigy. "I care not," said Luther, when he heard this circumstance, "if they burn me and all my books; the people are now in possession of the Holy Scriptures. These alone will open their eyes." It was believed that the emperor himself was privy to the capture of Luther, and that he had even assisted in concerting that scheme. And this is by no means improbable. For although this prince, to please the pope, assented to the act of outlawry, yet he never insisted on it, that this decree should be carried into execution. He rather contributed his share to the diminution of the pope's authority, and to the abridgment of his power, and was pleased to see that Luther commenced this work.

In the mean time Luther was not idle at the fortress. He improved his knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages, and what is one of his most meritorious deeds, he there commenced his translation of the New Testament. Had Luther at that time done nothing more than by this translation put the Bible into the hands of the common people, this alone would have constituted one of the greatest and most praiseworthy men. In order to form an accurate estimate of this merit, it is necessary to take a retrospective view of those times. Even the learned themselves, at that period, knew but little of the Bible, and the common were, indeed, occasionally a few of the historical facts recorded in them

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related to the people, and some badly executed and indecent paintings, descriptive of those facts, hung up in the monasteries. And this was all the knowledge they possessed of the Bible. The first care of Luther, therefore, was to see that Bibles were distributed among the people, that they might see the truth of his doctrines, and regulate their lives according to the precepts contained in the Bible. And besides this, he wrote many sermons, and attacked many abuses of religion, for instance, auricular confessions and monastic vows. Auricular confession consisted in this: Every one was obliged to mention to his confessor each and every gross sin, if he wished to receive pardon for it. But this practice not only had no foundation in the Holy Scriptures, but also occasioned many unpleasant feelings. And, according to the monastic vow, many young people of both sexes, by an oath bound themselves during their lives, to live abstracted from the world, to spend their whole time in praying and singing, and to remain in a state of celibacy. Those who devoted themselves to such a life were the monks and nuns, of whom there was at that time so great a number. Their manner of life was contrary both to the design of the Creator, who formed us for industry and for the doing of good, and exceedingly burdensome to the rest of mankind, who were obliged to feed and support those idle persons. Luther saw this evil and publicly denounced it. He also in other respects, by written counsels, promoted the progress of the Reformation, for which due preparation had already been made in many places.

## CHAPTER X.

### Luther Goes to Wittenberg and by His Influence Quiets Some Disturbances.

Luther had now been upwards of three-quarters of a year at Wartburg, when at Wittenberg, and in places adjacent thereto, some disturbances arose which required his presence. For some time already, he had wished to leave the still retirement of his present abode, because it was more agreeable to his inclination publicly to instruct and teach, and to be useful to the people. His sedentary life at the castle had likewise actually occasioned him some sickness. He sometimes, indeed, was brought into the open and fresh air, being accompanied by some noblemen, and was dressed in a horseman's habit, that no one might know him. However, this was not sufficient for the preservation of his health. He therefore availed himself of the first opportunity to leave this place, when at Wittenberg certain dissensions had arisen, which he only was able to quiet. The Augustinian friars had at that place reformed many abuses, and among others, the silent masses, and the taking of only one part of the sacrament at the Lord's supper; for the Roman Catholics only eat the bread in receiving the Lord's supper, and the priest drinks the wine in the name of the whole congregation, which, notwithstanding,

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is contrary to the command of Christ. However, some were not satisfied with this change, but went farther, and wished at once to abolish all papal customs. Being accompanied by a great number of students as well as others, they entered the palace chapel at Wittenberg, destroyed the images of the saints, and pulled down the altars which were in that church, and drove out the clergymen who were performing the religious ceremonies. Besides other restless and enthusiastic persons who had come to Wittenberg, the ringleader of them was especially one Carlstadt, a man otherwise good, but of a warm and hasty temper. This occurrence produced a great ferment, so that the congregation wrote to Luther, and begged him for the advice in this matter, and, if possible, to come himself. And this he also did, contrary, indeed, to the wishes of the elector, who believed him still to be in great danger. It was sufficient for him to know that he was needed at Wittenberg, and thought if he should longer delay going there, all he had hitherto done in the cause of religion would be in vain. And he judged very correctly, that it was not prudent to commence the work of reformation by the abrogation of external ceremonies and customs. He thought it better in the first place, to enlighten the understanding of the people; then they would themselves perceive how unnecessary and pernicious certain established ceremonies were. With these sentiments he arrived at Wittenberg, on the 1st of March, 1522, and, by preaching a few sermons, restored order and quietness. To such a height had Luther's authority at that time already risen. The enthusiasts, among whom Nicholas Storch, and especial the celebrated Thomas Muentzer, peculiarly distinguished themselves, were obliged, after Luther had in vain endeavoured to convince them of the falsity of their pretended revelations, to leave the city, as disturbers of the peace and movers of commotions injurious to the order of society; the restless Carlstadt, on the contrary, was, by proper representations, partly quieted, and partly indulged in cases wherein his extravagant opinions were less detrimental, at the same time, however, giving him a prudent check. This was a moderation which the more redounds to the honour of Luther, the less it is on other occasions to be met with in fiery and rash tempers, and the more he has usually been accused of a contrary disposition. The remainder of the year 1522 he spent in the

translation of the New Testament, which, on the 21st of September, in the same year, he finished. It was now an easy thing for every one to compare the doctrines of Luther with those of the Bible. And, in truth, the Reformation would never have so happily progressed, if the German Bible had not been its precursor, and contributed so much to its propagation. The whole translation of the Bible was not published entire till the year 1534. But besides this version of the Scriptures, he not only wrote many other tracts, but also diligently taught and preached, so that he may justly be numbered amongst the most industrious men that ever lived. He was not well pleased when he received invitations from his friends, because it deprived him of so much of that time which he might have devoted to his labours.

As much as this industry was entitled to praise, so censurable might it have appeared in him, if at that time he had begun to write in a some

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what harsh and severe manner against his opponents. It is not absolutely necessary to be his friend, to do him the justice to say, that he was as much provoked to it by his enemies, as impelled and animated by his zeal for the promotion of truth and good doctrines. If we recollect the malignant persecutions which so often threatened his reputation and even his life; if we paint to ourselves the poignant feelings of grief produced in the heart of Luther by that injustice which was done both to him and to the cause of truth: and, finally, if we take a retrospective view of the manners of those times, in which it was necessary to speak in rough language in order to be understood, and when milder manners were but little in vogue, we shall then find the violent expressions in his writings pardonable, and be obliged to admire that high degree of intrepidity for which he was distinguished, which, however, was the fruit of his confidence in God. But I do not know how better to justify him than he does himself. Here follows his own confession concerning the severity of his writings:--"I cannot deny that I am more severe than I ought to be. But as they know the irritability of my temper, they ought not to provoke me. How difficult it is to moderate the pen, you may judge of yourselves: You will yourselves never convert the sword into down, nor war into peace. And this is the very reason why I feel so much reluctance to express myself publicly. And the more difficult it is for me to hold a milder pen, the more am I entangled and drawn into controversies; yet for no other reason, than because I reprobate the abominable calumnies which they vent against me and the word of God. And even if my natural warmth and sharp pen did not excite me, still the great injustice they do to me, would enrage a heart of stone; but much more me, who do not hold a dull pen, and who must, beyond all measure, suffer from these monsters. What do you think of Christ? Did he not sharply inveigh against the Jews when he called them an evil and adulterous generation; a generation of vipers; hypocrites, and children of the wicked one? Though I may transgress the rules of politeness, yet am I honest and upright with them; and think that therein I have an advantage over my enemies, who write against me in the most artful and insidious manner."

During this year there was much related concerning the temptations which Luther should have suffered from Satan. It is said, for instance, that he had thrown his ink-stand at the devil, when he tried to interrupt Luther in his studies. It is unnecessary in our times to say a single word concerning this affair. These things are only here mentioned for the purpose of contradicting them, if the reader should have happened to hear of them. Every one knows that in those times mankind were fond of indulging themselves in the relation of such stories and fables; when, besides, it was not unfrequently the case, that men believed certain persons were in close alliance with the devil. Even pious, and, in other respects, good people, did not hesitate to attribute to

Satan the bad thoughts which arose in their minds. Happy it is for us, that we, for the most part, have shaken off such superstition. But let us return to our Luther.

In the years 1522 and '53, he received encouragement from all quarters to proceed in the work he had commenced. Many cities and

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countries sent delegates to him for instruction and advice. People came even from far distant countries, and desired to be taught by him. And many cities declared in favour of his doctrines. In Wittenberg even, he eradicated many abuses, and every where endeavoured to give to public worship a better form and regulation. He particularly abolished the pernicious and unnatural interdiction of the Catholic church, by which a clergyman was forbidden to marry. The first minister of the Gospel, who entered into the matrimonial state, was a preacher at Kamberg, near Wittenberg. But what at that time gave Luther the greatest trouble, was the conduct of the aforesaid Carstadt, who, regardless of all better instruction, again gave himself up to his fanaticism. And though he did not at Wittenberg dare to undertake any more of his rash and inconsiderate proceedings, yet he raised many disturbances in other places. Admonition, entreaty, and warnings, to restrain and lead him into the right way, were all in vain, until at length he was banished from the country.

## CHAPTER XI.

### Luther Opposes the Rebellious Peasants.

But still greater anxiety of mind was caused to Luther by the celebrated war excited by the peasants, and which broke out in the year 1525. The foundation for this war had been laid in the year 1524, by one Thomas Muentzer. This man had, under pretence of the evangelical liberty preached by Luther, at Zwicken and Alstadt, excited every species of discontent and insurrection against the government, and thereby already incurred Luther's displeasure. He now wished to go to Muehlhausen, and there occasion similar troubles, which unfortunately he effected. Many peasants in Alsace, Suabia, Franconia, and Thuringia formed a conspiracy, stormed the convents, burned and demolished the castles of many noblemen, and renounced all further obedience to their lords and magistrates. They refused to pay any more public rates, and wanted to wrest the estates from the landholders, and convert them to their own use. It is very true that the peasantry were then more oppressed than at the present time. They were in reality almost slaves, who by their utmost toil could barely sustain their lives, and had hardly any possessions. It was now that there arose in them a wish to obtain some relief from the oppression they suffered. To this was added the circumstance, that many among them were inclined to the doctrines of Luther. He had in some of his doctrines urged the right of being freed from slavery to the pope, and of enjoying the liberty of conscience. That to every one it ought to be allowed according to his own opinion, to profess whatever religion he pleased, and that no one ought to be persecuted and abused, because in religious truths he entertained opinions and notions differing from those of others. These his doctrines concerning freedom in religious opinions, those people, who only directed their thoughts to worldly goods and advantages,

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misconceived, and wished also to extend to their political rights, and to the relation which subsists between the subject and the prince. Their real object was to be free, to be free from taxes and feudal services. To these evils was superadded the influence of some mad enthusiasts, who led these people into still greater errors. Even Luther's name, although his doctrines furnished no pretext for it, was used to justify their conduct, inasmuch as they erroneously quoted his opinions. He, into whose mind nothing of the kind had ever entered, and who had a very different object in view in his doctrines touching liberty, was not a little astonished when he heard of these transactions. The first thing he now did was, by a written declaration, publicly to censure the conduct of these intemperate enthusiasts. And when he found that this measure was of no avail, he not only admonished the princes to exert their utmost endeavours to quell these disturbances, but himself undertook a journey to Thuringia, because he believed that he would be able to effect more by his presence than by his writings. So little did Luther justify insurrection against the lawful authority. And tranquility was actually soon restored. Some of the princes marched with several thousand men against such a combined mass of insurgents, which had increased to the number of eight thousand men, but who were unprovided with arms and other means of defence. Peace was offered to them on condition of their delivering up their ringleaders, and returning to their homes. This offer they would have embraced had not Muentzer, who has already been mentioned, dissuaded them from it. And to this end he took advantage of their superstition, and induced them to believe that the rainbow which happened to make its appearance in the sky at that very time, was a sure token that they would be victorious. They therefore risked an attack, in which, instead of their making the least defence, they sang the following hymn, "Come, Holy Ghost," &c., in the hope that heaven alone would protect them. Thus are wretched, ignorant people often led astray by their deceivers, who usually seek to profit by the superstition of the people. The multitude was dispersed, Muentzer was taken and beheaded, and thus an end put to the rebellion.

## **CHAPTER XII.**

### **Luther Publicly Introduces the Evangelical Religion into Saxony.**

Whilst these transactions took place, Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, died at the castle of Lochau, now called Annaburg, near Wittenberg, on the 3rd of May, 1525. His death produced great changes. Although he was the friend of Luther, and not averse to his religious doctrines, yet he at least outwardly continued to be devoted to the Roman Catholic religion, and would by no means permit any changes to be made in it by violence. But entirely different were the thoughts of his brother, John the Steadfast, who succeeded him in the government. This prince proceeded more rashly and publicly approved of

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the religious tenets of Luther. In short, nothing more remained to be done, than that the doctrines in whose favour the minds of all were already disposed, should receive the additional sanction of becoming publicly established. And this event now took place. The form of public worship was improved, the many useless ceremonies discontinued, and the bishops were divested of all authority which they had hitherto so exceedingly abused. Among other things, the ridiculous practice was set aside of reading Latin prayers in the churches, from the reading of which the common people neither do nor can receive any religious impressions; and, instead of the Latin,

German prayers were introduced, which latter were more intelligible to them. Luther now appointed none but evangelical ministers, the first of whom was named George Roerer. He, for his own part, now laid aside his monk's habit, and exchanged it for a minister's garb.

At this time he did another act which at once terminated his monastic life; he entered into the matrimonial state. This was a step which excited much attention. He had before already encouraged many former monks and preachers to marry, but never till now had any thoughts of doing it himself. When the elector and many others advised him to do the same, he replied: "Very well, I am prepared to pave the way by my own example." But what gave occasion for his marrying, was more particularly this: In the year 1523 already, he had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with a young lady of noble extraction, named Catharine Von Bore. This young lady had been a nun in the nunnery near Grimma, and had fled from it, together with eight other young women of noble birth. As well disgust at the monastic life, as more correct notions of things propagated by Luther, may have led them to take this step. They went to Wittenberg, where they were supported at the expense of the elector. Catharine Von Bore was of a religious turn of mind, and often consulted Luther concerning virtue and the fear of God. Luther advised her to marry, and for this purpose in vain proposed to her two persons between whom to choose a husband for herself. As his father and others now pressed him to marry, because his example would operate on others, as he had himself recommended and enjoined the married state, and was obliged to hear censures on account of his celibacy; and finally, as this young woman united in herself personal charms and virtues, to which he was not indifferent, he, in the month of June, in the year 1525, resolved to become her husband. He really considered it to be his duty to show the injustice of monastic vows, and, in this respect, to lead the way, and no fear of opinions of the world could prevent him. However none of his other actions has been so much censured and calumniated as this. The Roman Catholics accused him of incontinency, lustfulness, and of base views. But when it is considered that Luther was then already a man of forty-two years of age; that he had never expressed a wish to break his monastic vow of continence, and that the rest of his innocent and laborious course of life affords no cause for such a suspicion, all these accusations fall to the ground. He was, indeed, at first uneasy for having taken this step in the midst of so many more important concerns. His uneasiness was, however, soon removed, as this marriage not only turned out to

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make him very happy and contented, but also did not hinder him in his avocations and labours. For he remained indefatigable in giving both oral and written instructions. A new proof of his unintermitted activity was, that in the year 1527, he advised the Elector of Saxony to order the schools and churches in his dominions to be visited. This was absolutely necessary for the restoration of order. In them there was no superintendence, nor were they under any determinate rules. Luther himself, accompanied by some of the counsellors of the elector, travelled through the whole of the electoral circle, and a part of Messen. Wherever they came, they endeavoured to draw the attention of people to the goodness of God, which had now been shown to them by the Reformation. If they met with any who still continued to adhere to Catholic ceremonies and opinions, they enjoined it on them as a duty, to reflect on the matter, to discard their old opinions and customs, and willingly to follow the new light which they had received. Their object was to come to the assistance of the ignorant by kind admonition and advice. They made it their particular business to inquire into the capacities and moral qualifications and conduct of the preachers. Those who were incapable of usefully discharging the duties of their stations, and

were at the same time too old to gain a living by other employments, were, during their lives, provided with a maintenance: but their places were supplied with others, who were more capable and better men. And besides, there were more teachers appointed, and a greater number of schools established, and the revenues arising from the sequestered monasteries were appropriated to their salaries. He found the ignorance of both the common people and of the preachers, astonishingly great. Being moved by this circumstance, he resolved to write both his catechisms; which, in a brief and comprehensive manner, contained the chief doctrines of religion. This was truly for those times a performance of great merit, for which we cannot sufficiently thank him. For even if there are now books to be had which may more advantageously and with greater ease be used in giving religious instruction to youth, yet were his labours at that time sufficient to answer the purpose. A better knowledge of religion was thereby spread abroad, love to the Reformation was in a greater degree cherished and strengthened, and uncommon advantages procured. Still, it was not his intention and when he composed his catechism, that it should, during all succeeding centuries, remain the constant book of instruction for youth in cities and villages. But on the contrary, he said, "Those who come after me may do it better." If others should, therefore, now begin to write more intelligible and complete religious books for the instruction of youth, such works ought to be thankfully accepted.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### Luther's Journey to Marburg and Coburg.

While Luther was in Saxony spreading greater light and knowledge, and undertook to effect changes in the ecclesiastical constitutions, another respectable and meritorious man, in Switzerland, exerted himself to accomplish an object which was nearly similar to that which engaged the attention of Luther. The name of that man was Ulrich Zwingli, who was in some measure the author of the reformed churches. He, like Luther, was zealously employed in effecting the abolition of many abuses in the Romish church. As gratifying as it must be to the friend of man to observe how he, in almost every respect, coincided in opinion with Luther, so much the more painful must it be to him, that two men, whose exertions tended to the accomplishment of the same purpose, should be divided by one single opinion, namely, the doctrine respecting the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Luther himself exceedingly lamented this circumstance, but yet would not deviate from that, which, according to his honest convictions, he deemed to be true. And his opponent was equally tenacious of his own opinion. This difference, the excellent Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, Philip the Magnanimous, endeavoured to compose. This was a prince who had with the same lively zeal declared himself in favour of the innovations in the ecclesiastical constitution, with which he was animated in the cause of religion and virtue. His wisdom thought it had discovered a method by which Luther and Zwingli might become united. He appointed that they should in the year 1529 have an interview with each other at Magdeburg, and converse on their opinions. This meeting took place. Luther and Zwingli disputed long on those points respecting which they differed, but could not agree, as is usually the case with people who entertain different opinions. However, as they thought alike in all other things, they agreed so far, that they would always treat each other in a friendly manner, and would unitedly defend their doctrines against the Romish church. As little as this conference accomplished the object of the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, yet it produced this advantage: that all

prevailing animosities between the two parties ceased. Both these men, indeed, and their respective adherents, remained disunited, and Reformed and Lutherans now became separate and distinct parties. But this very circumstance, that these parties differed from each other in only a single doctrinal point, in the doctrine concerning the Lord's supper, must have animated them with so much the more love and friendship towards each other. Luther himself thought so, and promised them the utmost love and friendship. His journey to Marburg was, therefore, productive of some advantage; but far more important was his journey to Coburg, in the year 1530.

The emperor, Charles the V., had been crowned in the beginning of this very year, when the pope also sought to bring him over to his interest, with the view of weakening and suppressing those new religious parties. He advised the emperor to use forcible means, and with weapons in his hands, to bring back again those stubborn Lutherans to the

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Romish church. The emperor, however, thought it more advisable to appoint a diet, composed of all the states of Germany, to be convened at Augsburg. Here he wished to investigate the matter, and hear the complaints of both sides. This was a new misfortune which impended over Luther and his doctrines. It was to be feared that all his exertions in the work of the Reformation might prove to have been made in vain. The elector himself hesitated whether he should submit himself to the diet, and asked Luther whether it was right to oppose the emperor by force, touching the doctrines in dispute. However, Luther gave his opinion positively against such a measure, because he did not wish that the introduction of the new religious truths should give occasion to war and the streaming of blood. Among other things he wrote to the elector as follows: "I would rather die ten times than be conscious that our gospel had been the cause of any bloodshed or butchering, which had happened on our account, because we ought to be those who suffer, and who, as the psalmist says in the forty-fourth Psalm, are given as sheep appointed for slaughter, not to revenge or defend ourselves, but submit to the wrath of God. But that your serene highness should have reason to apprehend danger, is of no consequence. Our Lord Jesus Christ is powerful enough; he can find ways and means to avert the danger. He can confound the machinations of those impious princes. Hitherto God has ever graciously helped your highness out of danger, and inspired your highness with the true and dignified spirit of a prince. Now will he in future be less kind to us, if we only confide in him, and supplicate his aid. We know it for a certainty, and have experienced it from the evident assistance of God, that the cause which we espouse is not ours, but the cause of God. This indeed is our triumph and our consolation. I therefore humbly pray and advise your serene highness to be comforted and undaunted in such danger. We will effect more by prayer and supplication to God, than they with all their threats. However, that we may keep our hands clean from blood, and the infringement of the laws, if the emperor perseveres in his resolution, and calls me and those who are engaged with me in the same cause, before him, we will by the help of God make our appearance, and not involve your serene highness in any danger. For it is not my desire that your highness should defend either my own creed, or that of others, nor ought it to be desired; but every one ought to defend his own creed, and not expose another to danger by his belief or disbelief, if things once come to that pass, that our sovereign the emperor should intend to use violent means against us." Do these declarations alone not render Luther worthy of being beloved, even if he had not before already been loved? Do they not at least do honour to the goodness of his heart? In the mean while the advice of Luther had the good effect that the elector did not resort to forcible means of opposition, but determined to go to the diet. Hereupon he ordered Luther and the other divines at Wittenberg to draw up in

writing, the principal doctrines of religion, whence arose the seventeen articles of Turgau, as they are called. He took these along with him to Augsburg, and likewise some of the divines. But Luther he left at Coburg, because Augsburg did not appear to him to be sufficiently safe for so notorious and proscribed a

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person. The Catholic states of the empire were not a little astonished when they saw the elector at Augsburg. They had not supposed that he possessed the courage to risk an appearance at that place. But a man possessed of the intrepidity and firmness which characterized the elector, fears no danger. The elector had taken with him a man who, next to Luther, had the greatest merit in bringing about the Reformation. This was the celebrated Melancthon, Luther's colleague, and a professor at Wittenberg, a man possessed of an excellent heart, and of extensive learning. It has always been said that Luther's energy and undauntedness, and Melancthon's caution and moderation were requisite to promote the Reformation. And this is not a mistaken opinion. Melancthon's mildness moderated Luther's warmth, and Luther's warmth gave vigour and resolution to Melancthon's mildness. The one stood in need of the other. To this excellent man, Melancthon, was committed the task of drawing up the Confession of Augsburg, or the Evangelical Confession of Faith, which bears this title, because at Augsburg it was presented to the states of the empire. It contained a brief confession of what the adherents of Luther believed in matters of religion, and of that wherein they differed from the Romish church. The reason why the penning of this Confession was not committed to Luther, but to Melancthon, was, that it was feared that the former would do it with his usual severity and bluntness, and by that means still more irritate the Catholics. When this Confession was drawn up, it was handed to Luther for his perusal, and he was asked whether he had any thing to suggest concerning it. But he was satisfied with the whole of it. He only remarked, "I cannot step so gently and softly as Melancthon." It was intended at that time to make one more attempt to pacify the Catholics by mild and gentle means. However, the sequel taught them that nothing was to be effected by moderation. The Confession was delivered to the diet, in Latin and German, on the 25th June, 1530, and read in the German language, and was soon translated into almost all European languages, and sent into every country. Many objections were raised against it, and on the side of the papists, every one opposed it. Some of the popish princes, however, after they had heard this Confession read, intimated that "there was nothing exceptionable in the matter, but it was not to be endured, that Luther, a wretched monk, should dictate to them." As if truth were not truth, whether it came out of the mouth of a great or a common man. In short, the Elector of Saxony was threatened that unless he would renounce and relinquish the newly adopted Lutheran religion, the emperor would attack him with an armed force, and deprive him of all his titles and his provinces. Yes, and even rob him of his life. All the complaints of the Lutherans were fruitless. It was in vain that they protested that they did not think and believe otherwise than the Bible taught. Power and not right was consulted on this occasion. The diet came to the severe resolution, that every thing which had been changed in the doctrines and ceremonies in the Romish church, should be restored to its original state, and that the emperor and all Catholic princes should, with all their might, suppress the new religious creed. With this resolve ended the diet, and the princes returned home. This was indeed

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a sorrowful event for the poor Lutheran, and was calculated to throw them into utter despondency. But what inspired the adherents of Luther, and even the elector himself, with fortitude, were the letters which Luther wrote to them from Coburg; for it is highly probable that they would finally have yielded to the Catholics, if he had not continually encouraged them to remain constant. I cannot here omit to give an extract from a letter written by him to Melancthon, with whom my readers are already acquainted, and who, agreeably to his mild character, desired nothing more ardently than a reconciliation. "I heartily hate the great anxiety, " thus he writes, "with which you torment yourself. That this solicitude should have gained such an ascendancy in your heart is not to be attributed to the great cause in which we are engaged, but to our unbelief. And even if the cause is a great one, he is also great who commenced it, and who conducts it, for it is not our cause. Why then do you so continually grieve? If the matter is unjust, then let us recant. But if it is just, why do we make God a liar in so great a promise, when it is his will that we should be contented and cheerful? You manifest as much care as if you were able to effect any thing by it. What can the devil do more than kill us? As for myself, so far as it respects this matter, I am not much concerned. Whether this unconcern proceeds from my ignorance, or from the spirit, that is best known to our Lord Jesus Christ. I have a better hope than I had expected I should have. If our capacities are not adequate to the undertaking, then let the object be accomplished by others. If I shall hear that the business stands ill with you, I shall hardly be able to refrain from hastening to you, in order to see how frightfully the devil shows his teeth." When Melancthon afterwards asked Luther how much ought to be yielded to the Catholics, the latter replied as follows: "My opinion is, that too much has already been conceded in the Confession which was delivered. If they will not accept of that and be satisfied with it, then I do not know what more I could do. I am employed in this matter day and night; I think, consider, and search all the Holy Scriptures, and by this means I continually become more and more convinced of the truth of our doctrines. And besides this, my courage daily increases, so that if it is the will of God, I will yield up no more, be the consequence what it may." the letter also which he at that time wrote to the elector, is so full of noble confidence, that a part of it may not improperly be introduced in this place. "I beech your highness to be of good cheer. Christ is there, and will confess you before his Father, as you now confess him before this evil generation. I know that God is our dear God and Father, and therefore am I confident that he will help us. But should he not afford us his aid, then the danger is his as well as ours. What we have done we are in duty bound to do; I hope, therefore, that our heavenly Father will protect you. I diligently and earnestly pray for your serene highness. Were it possible for me to do more, I should consider it my duty to perform it." Such and similar letters, which Luther wrote to his friends at Augsburg, contributed much to preserve their constancy and firmness in the defence of the doctrines which they had adopted.

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#### **CHAPTER XIV.**

##### **Luther's Doctrines Continue to Become More Extensively Propagated and Established.**

The severe imperial decree which was passed at the diet held at Augsburg, rendered the circumstances in which Luther and his adherents were placed very critical. The Elector of Saxony, and the rest of the Lutheran princes, were indeed permitted without molestation to enter on their journey's home from Augsburg; they, however, but too clearly, and with too much

certainty, foresaw the dangers which threatened them. In this dangerous situation those princes, in the year 1531, at Schmalkalden, concluded an alliance, by which they entered into an agreement to preserve themselves and their subjects in the religion they had embraced; and to defend themselves against the whole power of the Romish church. This was indeed a measure which a regard to their own safety required, but which however accelerated the subsequent bloody scenes. Luther was dissatisfied with this confederacy, for he foresaw, that thereby the Catholics would become still more irritated, and that a religious war would be inevitable. My readers are already acquainted with the sentiments of Luther on this point, from his letter above introduced. He was absolutely opposed to the shedding of blood for the sake of religion. He always abhorred a religious war, and constantly prayed God to avert such an event. His wish was only in part fulfilled. As long indeed as he lived, there broke out no religious war; but after his death, one which was the more furious and bloody. In the mean time, this precaution of the Lutherans was also necessary to give more firmness and strength to their determined purpose to defend their common interest. And this close union and league of the Lutheran princes among each other also had the immediated good effect, that through the mediation of the patriotic Electors of Mentz and of the Palatinate, a religious union was in the year 1532, actually formed at Nuerenberg, by which security was in the mean time promised to the Lutherans. The Catholics however reserved the right of having the religious controversies, which hitherto prevailed, decided by a general council of the clergy. For the former was rather the work of necessity, on account of the increasing danger of an invasion from the Turks, which at one time required all the other cares to be laid aside; than the fruit of toleration towards those who dissented in religious opinions. And the latter, the decision of a general council of the clergy, would in all probably be partial and advantageous to the Romish church, which subsequent experience sufficiently proved. But, although the party which espoused the evangelical doctrines had no full confidence in a general council of the clergy, yet they always endeavoured in some measure to prepare themselves for this event. When therefore the pope, in the year 1536, proclaimed such a convention, which was to have been held at Mantua, a city in Italy, they resolved, at that meeting, more strictly

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to declare and to defend their doctrines. The confession which had been delivered at Augsburg, contained the principal part of what they believed and considered to be true. However, under the circumstances of those times, it was written in a tone far too mild and submissive. It contained nothing concerning the pope, against whom however there were so many complaints. It was now, that the Lutherans had more assurance and energy. They no longer feared any one, since all hope of reconciliation with the Romish church had vanished. Luther was therefore requested to draw up a new confession of the evangelical doctrines, which was not to be composed in a style so sparing and yielding as the former was, and which should expose all the abuses which yet prevailed in the Catholic church. This task Luther performed. He therefore drew up the Schmalkaldish articles. They were so called, because at Schmalkalden they were approved and subscribed by the evangelical states of the empire, and contain also what was yet wanting in the Confession of Augsburg. The general council of the clergy, which the pope had by proclamation ordered to be convened, and before which the Schmalkaldish articles were to be laid, was indeed not convened. In the mean time those articles were however of service, the more closely to unite with each other the Evangelical States, for so the Lutherans called themselves.

Under this solicitude, their tenets continued to become more extensively propagated. Dresden,

Meissen, and Leipzig, together with the adjacent territories, did at that time not belong to the Electorate of Saxony, as they now do, but were subject to George the Duke of Saxony. This was indeed a prince who loved religion and virtue, but who, as we have already above seen, was not well affected towards Luther and his doctrines. He considered him to be a heretic or false teacher, and was decidedly opposed to the Reformation, although he perceived that some amendment was necessary in the Romish church. But Luther did not to him appear to be the man calculated to undertake such changes. Slanders and personal abuse may have contributed to inspire him with this prejudice against Luther. But yet the greater part of his subjects were in favour of the Reformation; and the light of the new religious knowledge which Luther had kindled in the neighbouring electorate, had already shed its genial rays over the Magravate of Meissen. The duke indeed, did every thing in his power to root out the Reformation and Luther's doctrines within his dominions. Even punishment and other severe means were applied to this end; but in vain. But no power and no punishments can eradicate doctrines which are considered to be true and good. The more force there is used to root them out, the more deeply they become grounded in the minds of men. The poor oppressed subjects who suffered for the sake of truth applied to Luther, and begged him for consolation and a mitigation of their grief. Luther encouraged them in patience and endurance under adversity, which alone became a true Christian. Upon the whole, general fame ascribed to Luther the ability of being a good comforter. And whoever has a read his letters cannot deny him this merit. But a man who possesses sufficient resources of comfort for himself, is also able to impart consolation to others. In this situation was the country

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of Duke George for the space of twenty years, when in the year 1539, he died, and his successor, Henry the Pious, who had for a long time already adopted the evangelical religion, came to the administration. This prince, now gave full scope to the Reformation, which at this time had to encounter but few obstacles, as almost the whole country was evangelically minded. Luther preached at Leipzig, and that with such effect that the rest of the Catholics soon came over to his side, and the Reformation was firmly established.

This, however, was not the only country which embraced the doctrines of Luther. Whole kingdoms, such as Sweden and Denmark, and many other countries and cities, became happy through the Reformation. And it must in fact have contributed not a little to the tranquillity of Luther's mind, under his many sufferings and dangers, to see, that his labours produced so much advantage. Many noble minded and honest persons see that their indefatigable exertions are crowned with very little or no success at all. To many, even amidst the annihilation of the fruits of their labours, and the pressure of persecutions and sufferings, it must afford a consolation to be sensible that they suffer innocently, and for the cause of truth and virtue. How great was the advantage which Luther had over such excellent men, who find comfort only in their own feelings.

## CHAPTER XV.

### **The Residence of Luther's Life, to the Time of His Death, in 1546.**

This great man had now nearly completed his work. The remainder of his life was indeed not so remarkable as the former part of it. However, he unweariedly proceeded to spread and establish the doctrines of religion to the period of his death, which, under his continual cares and

sufferings, was to him a very desirable event. He never became inactive or idle. He still continued to impart written and oral information to such as needed his instruction and consolation. He still wished to promote the object which, during so many years, had employed him. For although the diet, which in the year 1541 was held at Nuerenberg, gave hopes of a union between the Protestants and Catholics, yet the general council of the clergy held at Trent in the year 1545, offered him a new opportunity of writing against the abuses and animosities of the Romish church. And this he did with a fire and vehemence which would the less be expected from an old man, nearly approaching the verge of the grave, the more his treatise against popery, in point of energy, surpasses the writings of his earlier years. He foresaw, that this assembly would do nothing else than condemn the evangelical doctrines, and establish the old papal errors. And his suspicions were confirmed. For so far was the aim missed, that instead of the two parties approximating nigher to a reconciliation, their bitterness against each other continually increased, and the breach between them was widened.

The most unfavourable circumstance of this period was, that Luther

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continued to become more sickly and feeble. And this was no wonder, if we consider what labours he performed, what dangers and griefs he endured during his life. When at Wittenberg he delivered his last lecture, he concluded it in these words: "This, now, is my work! God grant, that those who come after me may do it better. I can do no more, I am too feeble. Pray to God for me, to grant me a good and happy hour of death." He at that time caused a sixth edition of the translation of the Bible to be printed, and also wrote many other tracts, which was really to be wondered at in his sickly state of body. He had nearly lost an eye, and suffered great pain from it. He at that time wrote to a friend as follows: "I, who am an old, worn out, exhausted, cold, and now also one-eyed man, expected, at length, to have a little rest. But I still continue to be overcharged with writing, speaking, and acting. But Christ is to me all in all, and it is he who is both able and willing to accomplish his object. Let him be praised forever." Under these circumstances, he formed the resolution of spending the short time he yet expected to live in peace, on an estate in the country, far from all noise and molestation; and in his still retirement to take a distant share in the continually progressing work of the Reformation. His dislike of the constant discussions caused him to seek this retreat. To this end, he chose the estate called Zollsdorf, not far distant from Borna. But Wittenberg so greatly felt the loss of this man, that the whole university applied to the elector, and humbly besought him to endeavour to persuade Luther to return to Wittenberg. This prince did not long delay. He immediately sent some of his counsellors to him, with a request that he would change his purpose. The elector himself wrote to him, from which it may sufficiently be seen, how great his attachment and love were to Luther. This induced Luther to return to Wittenberg. He did, however, not long remain there. A new work occasioned him to leave Wittenberg. Some differences had arisen between the Counts of Mansfeld. Some of them had embraced the evangelical doctrines, and the rest remained Catholics. A quarrel now ensued between them, respecting the title to certain mines in that country. For the adjustment of these claims, Luther's mediation and good counsel were requested. He, therefore, undertook a journey to Eisleben, and endeavoured to compose the differences. On his journey already, he was attacked by a disease, from which he however so far recovered that he was enabled to preach there four times. He was on other occasions also still active, and benefitted many by his instructions. Yet he always felt weak, insomuch that he said: "When I shall have reconciled the Counts of Mansfeld, I will go home, lie down in my coffin, and give my

body for food to the worms." But on the 17th of February, his debility sensibly increased. He was obliged to lie down to take some rest, he still spoke a great deal concerning death and a blissful futurity, where we would all in the assembly of the blessed, find and know each other again, and concluded with these words: "I have been baptized here at Eisleben. How would it be if I were to die here?" After this, he walked to the open window, as it always was his custom to do, when he rose from his bed, or before he laid himself down to sleep, and among other things, prayed: "O Lord God, I call upon thee

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in the name of thy Son, whom I have preached, that thou wouldst still listen to my petition, and preserve my native country in true religion, and the right confession of thy word." After he had done praying, he began more violently to complain that he felt such fearful oppression in his breast. Count Albrecht of Mansfeld and his countess, as well as many other persons of distinction, hastened to him, and tried every means to ease his anguish. He now gave his hand to all those who stood around him, wished them good night, and spoke as follows: "Lord, into thy hands I recommend my spirit. My friends, pray to God in behalf of his gospel, that it may be well with it, for the wicked pope is violently enraged against it." After this he slept for some time very quickly and soundly, but not long. When he awoke, the oppressive pain in his breast increased. They rubbed him with warm cloths, and applied every medical aid which promised relief. But it was all in vain! He once more raised himself up, and articulated the following words: "I am dying, but we have a God who helps, and a Lord who delivers from death." He then laid himself down again, closed his eyes, and spoke no more. But when one of the bystanders yet asked him this one question: "Reverend father, will you die in the faith of the doctrines which you have preached?" he loudly and distinctly, as if the question inspired him with new life, pronounced the words: "Yes! yes!" But these were the last words he uttered. His cheeks turned pale, his hands and feet became cold, he breathed heavily, and--to that God whom he so faithfully served here, his spirit ascended. He died at two o'clock in the morning of the 18th of February. All who were present wept and lamented. And who could refrain from shedding a tear at the sight of the ruined remains which once encompassed so good and great a mind? They immediately hastened to inform the elector of the death of Luther. This prince exceedingly mourned for the loss of that man. The pang which he felt forced from him these words: "I wish that the Counts of Mansfeld had left the old, exhausted man, undisturbed with their disputes." The Counts of Mansfeld were very desirous that he should be buried at Eisleben, the place of his birth. However, the elector ordered that his remains should be brought from Eisleben to Wittenberg, which took place. He, at the same time, gave the necessary orders to the university of Wittenberg, to receive and inter him in a suitable manner. It may with truth be asserted, that it has seldom happened than any person has been buried with such universal mourning, and such deep-felt sorrow. While the corpse was brought from Eisleben to Wittenberg, whole cities and villages went to meet it, and evince their gratitude to the man for his never to be forgotten services, and to give him along to eternity their last farewell. All the bells were rung wherever his relics passed, and in every church there was preaching and prayer, and the university at Wittenberg also did every thing which could honour his death, and buried him in the palace chapel at Wittenberg. "That his funeral rites may be respectably performed," the elector then wrote to the university, "It is my will that Luther's epitaph be engraved on two plates of brass, one of which is to cover his tomb, and the other to be fastened in the wall of the palace chapel." I adduce this as a proof how highly the elector valued

and respected Luther. Every one may to this day contemplate tis monument of Luther in the palace chapel at Wittenberg, and thereby recall to memory this great man.

His widow survived him till the year 1552, and derived her sustenance from the bounty of others, as Luther had left her but very little. This circumstance is sufficient to confute the accusation of his enemies, who asserted that he wished to enrich himself by the Reformation. He left behind him four children, two of his daughters having died before him. Of the children who survived him, one of his daughters, named Margaret, was married to George Von Kunheim, a Prussian counsellor: his eldest son, John, studied the law, and died at Koenigsberg, in the year 1575; the second son, Martin, indeed devoted himself to the study of divinity, but died in the year 1565, without having filled any public office as a minister; his third son, Paul, alone propagated his family, and rose to such celebrity in the medical art, that he became the family physician of the Elector of Saxony. He died in the year 1593. One of the last of his male issue, was Martin Gottob Luther, who, in the year 1759, died at Dresdon.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### **For what We Are Chiefly Indebted to Luther.**

Thus was this man even in death, and possessed of a vigorous soul. He left this world, after he had produced a change in religion the greatest and most remarkable since the days of Christ. May his ashes repose in peace. By us at least his character and his deeds will never be forgotten, nor will they ever be effaced from our memories. He was a good and a great man. He was a benefactor of mankind. But it is now time to speak of what Luther has actually gained and procured for us. Many of my readers may indeed be acquainted with Luther's name, but not with his merits; at least, they may be unable to appreciate them in their whole extent. What then has Luther actually accomplished? He purified our knowledge concerning God and religion; he improved the outward form of the worship of God; established the real deserts of virtue; restored to government its rights, and to every person his religious liberty; he opened to literature and true science a more unfettered course; and became a promoter of industry, and of the happiness of the subject.

These are the six principal points by which Luther gained for himself imperishable fame. When Luther commenced his career, and began to instruct, religion was filled with incredible errors and false doctrines. It was no more the religion which Jesus and his disciples had taught. Many doctrines were banished from it, and new tenets supplied in their stead. Doctrines had been substituted, for which the Bible furnished no pretence. The Holy Scriptures were not read, they were wholly unknown and disregarded. The clergy industriously kept the people in ignorance, and propagated superstitious notions, because

they heaped great gain from these practices. Some of them entertained the pernicious opinion, that to enlighten the lower orders of society, and to disseminate among them a better insight into things, was contrary to their private interest. Luther, like a hero, boldly took the field against this host of ignorance, superstition, and errors. Whatever he considered to be false he rejected. The

rubbish of errors he removed out of the way. His guide was the Holy Scriptures. Whatever they did not contain he disapproved. He adhered to that only which he believed he had found in the Bible. For the purpose of exposing and combating all these errors, which then universally prevailed, he directed every one to his book, with the firm declaration that he positively would not acknowledge any other judge. That all divines and popes might have erred, but that the Bible was the only fountain from which mankind could draw instruction and knowledge. No other person perhaps ever had so much respect and reverence for the Scriptures as he had. At least no one more frequently recommended them, nor oftener appealed to them. And consequently, under the lamentable ecclesiastical system which was then in force, he considered nothing so indispensably necessary, as to place in the hands of the people a German translation of the Bible, by which means they might themselves emerge from their ignorance and superstition.

The external worship of God is an excellent means by which to acquire instruction and information; and upon this object, Luther bestowed the utmost care. He banished from the churches the use of the Latin language, which the common people could not understand, and from which they could derive no benefit. He caused the Latin prayers and hymns to give place to the German. The sermons which were preached again conveyed good sense and instruction. Before this salutary change had been effected, useless things were preached from the pulpit, of which the people understood nothing, or at least from which they could derive no benefit for the understanding and the heart. The whole of preaching had consisted in a relation of insipid fables and fictions. To sum up the matter, religion and the Bible were not taught, and could not be taught, because the clergy themselves did not understand them. They were destitute of Bibles, and much less had they so studied the Holy Scriptures, as to be capable of teaching them to others. Luther, to his great chagrin, saw this, and introduced a different mode of preaching, by means of which a correct knowledge of God and of Jesus, a love of virtue and honesty, patience under suffering, and consolation under all the incidents of life, are disseminated; in a word, by which real benefit and edification are imparted. He preached himself, both often and with warmth, wholly in an artless manner, but with so much the more effect, and in a way which was calculated to make an impression on the minds of his hearers. And those who know how much good teachers of religion may effect by such a mode of preaching, will readily acknowledge it to have been a matter of great merit in Luther, that he paid so much attention to public worship. But he did still more. He also abolished many church ceremonies to which the people ascribed a meritorious authority. The imperstitious rites and trifles exhibited in the churches, whereby the

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mind is drawn from a serious reflection on God and religion, and prevented from being led to more essential things, were set aside; and only the least injurious of them were preserved, because he did not think it advisable at once to take from the people the whole of that to which they had been accustomed. He, as a man who was acquainted with the human heart, knew too well how exceedingly man is governed by external objects, and how often they are a means whereby he is led to those of a more exalted nature. Vocal music is calculated to excite the feelings, and soften and elevate the heart, and by its energetic strains to communicate strength to the bosom, and produce a quite different state of feeling. At that time men were destitute of good spiritual songs. He composed some, which are still esteemed the best in our old hymn books. They are written in a style eminently characteristic of that zeal and love to God which constantly animated him. And by all these means he provided for the dissemination of piety.

But yet in the performance of all these things, he took special care to teach that piety did not

consist in the mere observance of external ceremonies, but in real purity of heart and innocence of life. The whole of religion at that period consisted in men's paying to the clergy certain rates; in requesting frequent prayers to be made for them in the churches; in now and then prattling a prayer themselves, without the accordance of the heart, in frequent absolution of their sins, and in the observance of those things which appertain to the outward worship of God. It is a matter of doubt whether we ought more to pity the poor people, who were persuaded to this superstition, or more to detest those who purposely led them into this terrible error; for every one must be sensible that the mere observance of religious ceremonies, as little embraces the real nature of virtue, as it can procure the approbation of the Supreme Being. Actually to relinquish vices, to purify the heart from all sinful affections, to do good, to keep the commandments, which the Creator prescribed to us, to imitate Christ, to love mankind, and to live according to our destiny: of these things those poor people were ignorant, at least the common people. In this indescribable state of wretchedness, the greater part of men then lived. Luther now came and asserted, that the principal thing was a genuine, lively faith, and that piety consisted in the change of the heart, effected by a superior power. Without reformation of life, he said, all external symbols and attention to religion were of no value; and that by the bare performance of church ceremonies, no person could secure the approbation of God. He therefore, as it were, revived true piety among the people, whereas before they believed they had only to observe the ceremonies and useless requirements of the clergy, to lead a moral life, as well pleasing to God. In both his Catechisms, he with a nervous brevity discussed the duties of every day life, that the common people might know what was requisite for leading a virtuous life. He was far from encouraging that monkish virtue which seeks a merit in torturing and mortifying the members of the body, and in renouncing all innocent recreations, he much rather censured all moroseness and supercilious contempt of rational enjoyments, to which an invitation is proclaimed throughout all the works of creation.

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In the same degree that Luther revived true piety, he also restored their rights to the princes and the magistrates, and to all men their liberty. At that period, the princes had but little authority in their dominions. They were subject to the mandated of the clergy, and as it were, subjects of a part of their own subjects. If the pope pleased, he could even dethrone princes. And history furnishes examples of German emperors falling down at the feet of the pope, and being obliged to supplicate him for mercy. The clergy in general paid no obedience to their princes. And if the prince did not comply with all their demands, and did not profusely enrich them with revenues and other contributions, they excited the people to rebellion, and persuaded them no longer to yield obedience to their rulers, because they were not good Christians and did not love and honour the church. Religion was always obliged to yield them a pretext in whatever they undertook. The clergy had not only assumed all authority in ecclesiastical affairs, but had been intermeddled in things which did not in the remotest manner concern them, and thereby abridged the rights of the princes. Instead of the latter, the former gave laws, and inflicted punishments. The one half of a country usually belonged to the clergy, without their paying any taxes, or contributing any thing to the necessities of the state. It is indescribable how many possessions, and how much wealth they had seized into their own hands. They stuffed themselves, if we may so speak, with the fat of the poor people. The princes were obliged to submit to the impoverishment of their dominions, when the clergy imposed taxes, and drew immense sums to Rome. To oppose this hierarchy was not advisable, for then they incurred the danger of losing both

their territories and their subjects. The clergy, without difficulty, absolved the people from their plighted allegiance to their sovereign, and this indeed in the name of the most holy religion, by which means it soon happened, that the prince was pushed from his throne, and driven into exile. Such was the deplorable situation of things when Luther arose. But he sought to demolish the fabric of this power of the clergy, of which he was likewise a member. He at once pulled down all its props by appealing to the Bible. For the accomplishment of this, there was indeed a courage required, which little souls neither do, nor can possess. But by such a courage he was distinguished. He showed from the Holy Scriptures, what power they grant to rulers, and that the clergy had by no means a right to deprive them of this power. He led back the clergy to the object of their appointment, which consists in giving instruction, affording consolation and peace of mind; but not in the exercise of dominion and the issuing of decrees. On the other hand he imposed it as a duty on the subjects, to yield obedience to the magistrates: and in regard to this duty, he furnished the most instructive example in his own conduct. He continued to make the most impetuous attacks on the power of the clergy, until he degrees they were forced to retire within their own limits. For at that time only some of the rulers had resolution enough to exercise their rights according to the advice of Luther. Others who continued to adhere to the Romish church, were either too conscientious, or too fearful to do it. Too conscientious, for the clergy persuaded them that whoever opposed them, committed

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an offence against religion; and too timid, for it was not a small undertaking to attack them. But in later times, even popish rulers have thrown off this yoke, and regained the possession of their rights. This is a fruit for which they were to the Reformation. Luther's declaration, that he had enlightened and adorned worldly authorities, that is, that he had restored to them their former rights, is undeniably true. But if at that time the clergy domineered over governments, they exercised still more authority over the poor people. What they said and commanded of necessity took place. The least suspicion of opposition and disobedience to their mandates, rendered the people unhappy. They exercised authority over the minds of the people; inasmuch as every person was obliged, in confessing his sins, to name specially every vice of which he was guilty, if he wished for pardon. By this means they became acquainted with every thing that happened, and were enabled to regulate their measures accordingly. Many a one who had uttered a single word against them, was secretly assassinated. Whoever proposed a doctrine, which, though contained in the Bible, did not accord with their principles and interests, was punished as the greatest malefactor; whereas the greatest criminal escaped with impunity if he only flattered them, suffered himself to be used by them as an instrument, or gave them money enough. Every one was obliged to appear to believe what was told to him. And if only a single doubt was expressed by any one concerning what was taught him, he was thrust out of the church and led to the stake. There was no such thing as examination, no investigation, no inquiry to be so much as even thought of, whether that was true which was enjoined to be believed. Under this galling yoke, in this state of slavery, several centuries before the appearance of Luther had sighed, and without him would perhaps for a long time to come, yet have continued to sigh. Luther made his appearance, and bade defiance to these practices. And the Almighty hand of God used him as an instrument to root out these scandalous abominations, and to overturn this horrible tyranny. We cannot here deny the hand of providence, and the powerful aid of God, when we reflect with how many raging enemies he had to contend, and with how many difficulties he had to struggle. Luther showed what men ought long ago to have known: that every person ought in religious

matters to be allowed to think and believe freely, if religion and virtue were to be preserved; that the consciences of men ought not to be burdened with the belief of things, which they are not permitted to investigate. He insisted on it, that every person had a right to inquire into the truth of that which was preached and taught to him in religion, and to regulate his belief according to his inquiry. That as it was a duty in every other case to look for arguments and proofs, so it was likewise necessary in religion. That nothing ought to be believed, which had not its foundation in the Holy Scriptures, and that if teachers and divines wished any thing to be believed, every one had a right to ask them whether what they taught was consonant to the Bible or not. It is this, that the means by that Christian liberty, concerning which he has so frequently and so impressively spoken. This freedom of conscience, this privilege to examine and to reflect, he obtained for us. And if Luther had done nothing

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more, than procured for us this most precious and supreme good of man, this hereditary right of every rational being, even then his services for us would be extraordinary great and beneficent.

If this is evident, that which follows is not less so. He opened to literature and true science a more free course. As a great and comprehensive genius, and endowed with a very strong memory, and quickness of decision, he not only availed himself of the fragments of the ancient Grecian and Roman literature, which at that time began to revive, for the true interpretation of the Bible, but likewise at a period when mankind was but little inclined to scrutinize and to write, gave to the best geniuses an impulse, which, without him, they never would have received. If, after him men arose, who successively continued to extend their happy ideas; if, after him, jurists, physicians, natural philosophers, historians, and other learned men constantly searched deeper into the fundamental principles of their sciences, and made no secret at all of the truths they had discovered--yet it was Luther on whose foundation they built, on whose shoulders they mounted. He was the first who shook off the yoke of dread for human power, and in this attempt he was so fortunate as to succeed. Before he entered the lists, every teacher of the truth saw no other reward for his victory over error than the flaming pile. After him it was more easy to tread the way which had already been paved by another. From the time of the Reformation, those even who inhabited Catholic countries, thanked him for the great alleviation he had procured for them from papal oppression; and the pope, being now warned by such striking examples, received a much milder deference, and was obliged from time to time to concede more of her rights to the human understanding. To this may be added, that although Luther was not professedly a writer for the common people, yet at that period no one excelled him in the art of adapting composition to their capacity. That the people at least leaned to read; that schools were established where they received some, even if only a little information; that at least the morning dawn dispelled the gloom of night which then obscured the human intellect: this was the work of our Luther.

And finally, is it not our duty to sate that the Reformation promoted industry, and the welfare of the common people? For could any thing be more prejudicial to the happiness of the people; could any greater restraint be laid on their industry, or greater obstacle opposed to it, than the hitherto idle monastic life, by which not only so many thousands were withdrawn from the state which so much needed the hand of labour, but also consumed what the industry of the rest produced? Wherever this ecclesiastical change had been adopted, there the superfluous holy-days, the pilgrimages which consumed so much time and money, and other customs which encouraged the spirit of idleness, were abolished; there the industry of the people was increased and redoubled; there no more money was sent into foreign countries for the purchase of

indulgences; there new life animated industry, and renewed prosperity attended every occupation. Catholic countries even saw the necessity of imitating the activity and enterprising spirit of the Protestants, that they might not be too far outstripped by them.

There is still another point of view in which Luther rendered a great

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service to mankind. However, the points which have already been mentioned, and in regard of which he became our benefactor, are the most important. But besides those advantages which we have derived from him, how great was his merit in regard to the German language, which he raised from barbarity, and by means of his translation of the Bible, first moulded and refined. I must confess that I have dwelt rather long on the merits of Luther. But it was necessary to know for what our gratitude is really due to the man who effected so important a change.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### **The Character and Domestic Circumstances of Luther.**

From what has been related, we may already draw an inference concerning the character and heart of Luther. A pious mind, bold resolution, a lively confidence in God, an energetic zeal for what is good and true, and elevation of mind which rose superior to all the hatred and persecution of man; all these qualities shone out through each of his actions. He had scarcely cast his eyes on the many abuses and errors which prevailed, and had hardly taken a cursory view of the whole extend of the work which he had to perform, when he already ventured to commence it. He bade defiance to every danger, disregarded all human power, triumphed over all obstacles, remained steadfast in the accomplishment of his purpose, and finished whatever he had begun. A person cannot sufficiently admire the fire of his mind, and his towering understanding, which soared beyond most of the errors which were then predominant. It was not a small thing all at once to acquire an insight into the prevailing errors of those times, and to survey them in their whole compass. But it was still more to make so prudent a choice of means by which to encounter them all. And the greatest and most hazardous thing was steadily to abide by those means until his object was accomplished. It is true that the vehemence of his mind often became tempestuous and uncontrollable, and in his writings we frequently meet with strong expressions. However, not to mention that in those time the tone of speaking and writing was indeed not the most refined, those also perhaps do not judge incorrectly, who assert that Luther's warmth was indispensable to the work of Reformation. And he confesses that it had been very difficult for him to moderate his fiery temperament. In the course of this work I have already introduced a letter, from which it is evident how clearly he saw that by the hard and severe language which he used against his enemies, he sometimes went too far, and thereby perhaps gave occasion to greater animosity against himself. But no one who might wish to engage in a similar contest could justify himself by an appeal to the example of Luther. Luther contended in behalf of God and the cause of religion, and was therefore obliged in hard terms to expose the then reigning vices, that the people might see that they had been led astray. "I must," said he, "root out stumps and dig out stones, cut away the thorns and bushes,

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and first beat and prepare the way." And even if his violence against the enemies of true religion was a fault, yet the consequence has taught us that it was in a certain degree necessary and beneficial. And was not this fault overbalanced by a thousand virtues and excellent qualities? But however warm a temper Luther possessed, yet no one could be more easily reconciled than he. He was a stranger to revenge. Of this a single proof will be sufficient. A certain person by the name of Carlstadt, and extremely turbulent and boisterous man, of whom we have already made mention, had not only in various ways disturbed the public peace, but had also in a particular manner offended against Luther, until he was at length, by order of the elector, banished from the country. Being thereby reduced to many straits, he again wrote to Luther, and requested him to intercede on his behalf with the elector, and procure permission for him to return. No one was more ready than Luther to befriend him, notwithstanding the former injuries he had received from Carlstadt. To Luther's intercession only, he was indebted for his pardon, as unworthy of it as he afterwards rendered himself.

Concerning the patience and firmness of Luther, I have already spoken. These are virtues not to be found in every head and heart: he possessed them in an eminent degree. God, and the truth which he preached concerning him, he prized above all other things. To this he sacrificed every other object. Money, riches, and ease, were in his estimation of small value. Hence his enemies, who by means of these things wanted to alienate him from his constancy, often enough complained of his indifference to worldly possessions and riches. This was really a great eulogy out of the mouths of his enemies, who felt no disposition to say any thing to his advantage. And they spoke the truth in this respect. Every attempt to cause him to recant proved unsuccessful. He never aspired after money or wealth. His small salary was never sufficient fully to gratify his benevolent disposition. "I pray you," he wrote to one of the electoral counsellors, "not only to perform a work of compassion towards the poor nuns who have fled from the cloisters; but that you likewise beg some money for me from the rich people at court, that I may be able to provide for them a week or a fortnight, until I can deliver them to their relations. For my monks become so fat by the riches of the word of God, that I could lately not borrow on my own credit, ten guilders for a poor citizen. My own yearly salary is only five hundred and forty guilders.\* Besides this sum, I do not from the city receive a single halfpenny, nor do my brethren. Nor do I ask for any thing from the city, that I may emulate the fame of St. Paul, by not robbing other churches, and serving my Corinthians without reward." At another time, he recommended to the same man a poor exiled nobleman, who had suffered severe persecution:--"He deserves," he writes, "that we should support and aid him in his distress. You are sufficiently acquainted with my circumstances, to know that it is out of my power to provide for him, as I depend on the bounty of others myself for a living. It is difficult for me alone to maintain him, and still more hard to desert him. However, if you should not succeed

\*About two hundred and thirty-six dollars in federal money.

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in obtaining any succour for him, then Christ will help his own from some other source." In all his labours he looked for no compensation. The booksellers offered him for the books which he should annually write, the sum of four hundred dollars, out of the avails proceeding from the sale of his books. However, he refused to accept of it in these words: "I will not sell my talents. I am not in need of money, thank God! I would otherwise demand money for my lectures. But inasmuch as God anticipated and provided for my wants, and the elector has furnished a small

additional supply, I never sold a single copy of my books, nor have I lectured for money. And this character, if God is willing, I am resolved to take with me into my grave." Concerning his translation of the Bible, he says: "This I can declare with a good conscience, that I have therein employed the utmost faithfulness and diligence, and that in the prosecution of that work, I have never harboured a single improper or selfish thought. For I have not taken nor sought the least compensation for the work, nor have I in any wise derived any gain from it. Nor was fame my object therein, this the Lord my God knows! But I have done it out of love to the dear Christians, and to the honour of him who is seated on high, who every hour does me so much good, that if I had translated a thousand times as much as I have, I would even then not have deserved to live an hour, nor to have a sound eye. All that I am, and all I have, is the fruit of his goodness and compassion. Therefore will I, with a joyful heart, do all I can, to cause this translation to redound to his honour. If I did not in this difficult task endure the utmost pains and labour, for the sake of the man who died for me, the world would not be able to give me a sufficient pecuniary reward for writing a book, or for translating any thing from the Bible. I do not wish the world to reward my labour. She is too abject and poor to do it. While I have been here in Saxony, I have never asked my prince for a single penny."

What is said above, supersedes the necessity of my saying any thing respecting Luther's industry. His application was uncommonly great. He did not suffer any time to pass away which he did not devote to something good. From early in the morning till evening he was busily employed. Hence he reluctantly accepted of the many invitations of his well-wishers and friends, because they deprived him of so much time, which he could have applied to some greater object, and in a more useful manner. "I waste a great deal of time," he writes, "by going to entertainments. I do not know what devil has given rise to this custom. I cannot well refuse to go to them, but at the same time it is a great disadvantage to me." It is a matter of astonishment, how under his feeble health, he could do so much, and still constantly keep up that resolution, which with others, is usually lost in sickness. He always had to contend with many bodily complaints, some of which may have originated from his sedentary life, although he sometimes took exercise. When he had leisure, his recreations after labour consisted in the culture of his garden, and in amusing himself with turning. That was the case, may be seen from the following letter to a friend. "I am glad that you promised me garden seeds for the ensuing spring. Send me as many as you can spare, because they are of considerable importance

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to me. If I shall be able to return you a kindness, I will cheerfully do it. For while Satan rages, I will in the mean time laugh at him, and view the gardens, that I may enjoy the blessings of the Creator, and that which serves for his glory. I and my Famulus,\* Wolfgang, have engaged in the art of turning. But as we cannot here among us obtain the necessary instruments, I herewith send you a golden guilder, and subjoin a request, that you would purchase for it some augurs and turner's tools, which a turner may easily point out to you. We have indeed, already some tools, yet I would prefer some of the best ones made at Nuerenberg. My reason for learning this trade is, that if it should so happen that the world would not support us for the sake of the word of God, we might be able to earn our bread by the labour of our hands." One of his principal delights was music. It was his opinion that music, above all other things, had the power of producing pious reflections in the heart, and of elevating it to God. "I commend and esteem the Dukes of Bavaria," he writes, "although they harbour but little good will towards me, and especially because they highly value and love music. For there is no doubt that the seed of

eminent virtues is often to be found in minds which are touched by music. But those who are insusceptible to the charms of music, I think resemble logs and stones. And I have no hesitation in saying, nor am I ashamed to assert, that next to theology, no art or science is comparable to music, because next to theology, she only is capable of effecting what otherwise theology alone produces, namely, tranquillity and cheerfulness of mind. He had but little taste for other amusements. The chase and other noisy recreations were disagreeable to him. When he was at the castle of Wartburg, he wrote as follows: "I lately was along on the chase for two days, and was a spectator of this irksome pleasure of the great folks who were present. Two hares and some partridges were caught. Certainly a most important business for idle people. However, amidst the nets and hounds my mind was still occupied by good thoughts. But I must confess, that as much satisfaction and pleasure as this apparent diversion may yield to others, it awakened in my mind much dissatisfaction and pity; and many reflections concerning those things which such an occasion presents. I had with great pains preserved the life of a young hare, and very carefully wrapped it into my riding cloak. But when I had gone only a short distance from it, the hounds tracked it, bit through the cloak into its right leg, and at length killed it. I am weary of this chase." Such expressions, more than any thing else, serve as a proof of his good and noble heart, which would enjoy no pleasure procured at the expense of another, even if it was a brute animal.

There are persons, who in their public behaviour appear reasonable and amiable men, but pay very little attention to the private duties they owe at home, to their own families. To this class Luther did not belong. He was a kind husband, and an affectionate and reasonable father. When he saw his wife or children suffer, tears of pity often

\*Famulus is a Latin word, and signifies a student who lives with the professor, and in his lecture rooms at the university, keeps the subscription lists of students, and regulates other inferior matters.

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flowed down his cheeks. The frugality, faithfulness and tender assiduities of his wife, were of infinitely great value to a man pressed by so many cares and labours. By her sympathizing tenderness towards him, under his bodily infirmities, by her assiduous and punctual discharge of all her domestic duties, by her patient endurance of whatever symptoms of ill humor his sorrowful hours betrayed, she proved herself to be a wife, such as she ought to be. Hence he was never so fond of tarrying, as when he was in the circle of his wife and children. It was only when he was very desirous of finishing a work, that he denied himself the gratification of his most pleasing desire of his heart. It often happened that for several days and nights he locked himself up in his study, and took no other nourishment than bread and water, that he might the more uninterruptedly pursue his labours. This often happened, and his good wife, as willingly as she would have objected to such intense application, did not dare to oppose the zeal excited by such a sense of duty. But on a certain occasion he locked himself up three days and three nights, and did not suffer himself to be disturbed by the repeated calls of his wife at the door. She was quite beside herself through fear, and by the assistance of several persons, at length broke open the locked door, and found her husband sitting at his writing desk, and deeply wrapped up in reflection concerning the learned exposition of some scriptural passages. She blamed him for having occasioned her so much anxiety and fear, when he being roused from his meditations, and being displeased by reason of the interruption the train of his thoughts had suffered, cried out to her: "Do you not know that I must work while it is day, for the night cometh wherein no one can

work."

Amidst all his labours he however devoted a part of his time to the instruction of his children; and endeavoured from their youth up, to impress their minds with good thoughts. For he used to say, "the father must speak out of his children." But though he exceedingly loved his children, yet he was not guilty of any criminal indulgence towards them. When at a certain time his son John had committed a fault, he did not permit him for three days to come into his presence, and would no more hear of him; however much his mother and others interceded for him. Luther said, "I would rather than have a perverse son, have none at all." It was only when the son actually forsook his fault and humbly solicited forgiveness that he pardoned him. And yet this was his favorite son, whom he used to call "his Johnny." When he was advised to lay up a little property for his children, he replied: "That I will not do, else they will not rely on God, and their own hands, but on their gold." The elector in order to make a provision for his wife and children, offered him a share of the mine which is situate on Schneeberg. The possessor of such a mine, receives a part of the profits of the mine. But he refused to accept of this offer in these words: "It would much rather be my duty to say the Lord's prayer, and add hereto a petition, that the ore might not fail, and the profits of the mines be well applied, than that I should accept of any share." He went so far in his contempt and indifference of earthly goods that, when at a certain time a poor man complained to him of his poverty; and Luther himself had no money, he took from his wife the present given

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her by her baptismal sponsors, according to a custom then prevailing, and brought it to the poor man. When he was called to an account for this act, he replied: "God is rich, he will provide something else in the room of it." And from the same disposition he refused many presents which were brought for himself and his wife, and directed them to be given to persons who stood in greater need of them than himself. He likewise on a certain occasion wrote as follows to the elector, who had sent him many presents, "I humbly entreat your highness, not to believe those who represent me to be in needy circumstances. Alas! I have more and especially have received more from your highness than my conscience will justify. Nor is it becoming in me, that I, who am a preacher of the gospel, should be in affluent circumstances, nor do I desire it. Hence, I in such a manner felt the kind and gracious benevolence, manifested towards me by your highness, that it immediately gave me a fearful concern of mind. For I would not in this life wish to be found in the number of those, to whom Christ says: 'Who unto you rich, for ye have your reward.'" And besides, to speak after a temporal manner, I would not wish to be burdensome to our highness; because I know your highness so often makes donations, that there can be nothing left to spare for that purpose. Too much empties the purse. I therefore wish that your highness would wait till I complain myself, that I may not through the generous proffers of your highness made to me, become afraid to beg for others, who are much more deserving objects of such beneficence. For even without this your highness does too much for me. Christ will graciously repay it."

Whoever is pleased with modesty and humility in great men, must be pleased with them in Luther. However great his merit really was, yet he ascribed the accomplishment of his great work to him only, whose mighty arm guides and directs the whole, and referred every one who praised him, to the praise of God. In several instances he acknowledged that there were men much more learned than himself, and that he often needed advice and instruction. External honour was of very little value in his estimation. Some teachers at Wittenberg had, for instance, given orders

that all the students should rise as soon as the professor should enter the lecture-room. Luther disapproved of this regulation, and said: "I cannot bear such affected ceremonies." Towards common people he was no less condescending and meek. A coachman had at a certain time carried some persons to Wittenberg, and had a strong desire to see the true and right pope, as he expressed himself, and as the common people called Luther. He therefore went to the house of Luther, knocked at the door, and begged leave to enter. Luther permitted him to come in, and when the coachman took his post at the door, in a shy and respectful way, Luther took him by the hand, which he shook in a friendly manner, pressed him to be seated, invited him to the table, drank his health, and handed to the stranger his own glass, which was in those times considered as the greatest mark of friendship. The poor man was quite transported by the honour which had been done to him; and every where boasted that he had sat at the table with Dr. Martin Luther. The most inconsiderable persons has free access to him, when they stood in need of advice, consolation, instruction

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and assistance. But it is a position, the truth of which is confirmed by experience; that the greater and more worthy a man is, the less does he despise the poor and humble.

Good people are capable of becoming good and excellent friends. Luther's heart was disposed to friendship and affection, wherever he believed he had observed love towards God and uprightness of conduct. He and Melancthon are a pattern of friendship and love. They prayed for each other, lived and laboured for each other. It is moving to read how much anxiety they felt, and under what great concern of mind they were for each other, when any thing happened to either of them. If one of them was sick, the other relinquished all other business to assist him, and called together all the rest of his friends, in order to pray for his recovery with their united hearts. And we have the more reason to wonder at this, when we consider how easily the one might have become jealous and envious of the other's fame, as they both laboured in one and the same cause. But this did not prevent their hearts from cherishing a mutual love for each other. They were, and remained friends.

The Papists accused Luther of intemperance in eating and drinking. Even if the circumstance that his enemies had asserted this, did not render the accusation doubtful, yet we need only to consider how little he valued money and other property; how often he refused to accept of them, to convince ourselves that this accusation was a malicious slander. For these are things which are of service in pampering the stomach. As we have already observed, it was likewise with reluctance that he went to entertainments. And men of veracity among his contemporaries repeatedly testified that he was very moderate in eating and drinking; insomuch that they often expressed their astonishment at it, as he was neither small in stature, nor weak in his person. Sometimes when he was deeply engaged in business, he would take no food for several days. But such is the way of the world. Such persons are out of the reach of a direct injury, mankind will often endeavour to hurt by false invective.

I believe that my readers are now sufficiently acquainted with Luther's good and great heart; and that it will therefore be unnecessary for me to say any thing more. I entertain a confident hope, that by those qualities, he has rendered himself still more worthy of our esteem. For if he had stained his great work with impure actions; and if his great genius had not been united to a good heart, he would indeed always have claimed our admiration, but would have been unworthy of our love. He would always continue to be considered to have been an enterprising genius, but not a good and great man.

### SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF ZUINGLE.

Ulric Zuingle, or Zuinglius, was born January 1, 1484, at Wildhausen, in the county of Tockenburgh, in Switzerland. His education, which was liberal, was completed at the University of Vienna. In his eighteenth year, he became classical teacher at Basil. Four years afterwards he took the degree of M.A., and being chosen pastor of Glarus, was ordained by the Bishop of Constance. Having been trained by a teacher who accustomed him to think for himself, without being trammelled by the system of the schools, he pursued his inquiries to a discovery of the corruptions of Rome. The New Testament was his principal counsellor. He made that the directory of his faith, and he also attended to many of those authors who had been censured by the papacy. But, though he had thus become dissatisfied with existing errors, he did not immediately separate from the pope, but, for ten years, pursued a course of practical instruction at Glarus, contending himself with exposing, from time to time, some of the superstitions of the church. From Glarus he removed to the abbey of Einsidlin. While there, he preached against vows, pilgrimages, and offerings; he caused the relics to be buried; the inscription over the abbey gate--"Here plenary remission of sins is obtained," to be effaced; and he introduced among the nuns, the habit of reading the New Testament. He also taught the necessity of purity of heart and life. He became more and more eminent, and excited more and more jealousy in such as were opposed to reformation, but his ecclesiastical superiors allowed him, as yet, to remain unmolested. In 1519, he was invited to the cathedral at Zurich. On being installed there, he announced his intention of preaching from the gospel of Matthew, with no other comment than the Scriptures would afford him. This novel plan of expounding fully the word of God, drew together large auditories, and excited great admiration. The iniquitous traffic of indulgences, which roused the spirit of Luther in Saxony, was carried into Switzerland. The agent whose business it was to dispose of these lures to perdition, met with great success, until he came to Zurich; there, he was so effectually opposed by Zuingle, that he was obliged to quit the city, and retire into Italy.

Zuingle was a man of adventurous genius, and of great intrepidity. He was remarkable for his penetration, and, above all, was learned in

the word of God; so that he was well qualified to be cause of truth. So sensible were the Papists of his weight of character, that he was much courted by the cardinals, and Pope Adrian sent him, by his nuncio, a bribe written with his own hand. Moreover, the force of Italian gold was tried upon him, but he was not open to a bribe.

Being an enemy to offensive war, Zuingle, in 1522, obtained the passage of a law, in the assembly of the Canton of Zurich, abolishing all alliances and subsidies for the term of twenty-five years.

He declared the superiority of the rules of the gospel over those of ecclesiastical discipline, and when some persons were denounced to the magistrate, for infringing the fast of Lent, without a dispensation, he defended them. The word of God he considered the authority from which there was no appeal, and the decisions of the church as binding only so far as they were founded in that word. At length, he openly avowed the principles of the Reformation, and when, in consequence,

he was called to give an account of his doctrine, the great council of Zurich decided, "That Zuingli, having been neither convicted of heresy, nor refuted, should continue to preach the gospel as he had already done; that the pastors of Zurich, and its territory, should rest their discourses on the words of Scripture alone." But, though he was thus supported by the magistracy, he appeared more anxious to lay a solid foundation for a salutary change, by instructing the people, than to hazard too much by hastily abolishing ceremonies and modes of worship. In 1524, the pictures and statues were removed, and, step by step, the simplicity of the gospel was introduced, until, in 1525, the mass was abolished.

In 1525, the Anabaptists attacked Zuingli, They began by insinuating into the minds of the people that the Reformation was not sufficiently spiritual. They then addressed Zuingli himself, charging him with conducting the business of religion in a slow and frigid manner. They insisted on the necessity of adult baptism in all cases, and declared rebaptization the criterion of a union with Christ. The senate caused conferences to be held on the subject, but they were in vain. The Anabaptists at length became furious. They boasted of having all things in common, and threatened destruction to all who would not follow their example. They also pretended to prophecy--crying, "Who to Zurich! Who to Zurich! Repent or perish!"--allowing the same space for repentance that was allowed to Nineveh. Other conferences were appointed, but these fanatics were not open to argument. Finally, the senate made their offence capital, and, a year or two after, one of them suffered.

Zuingli differed from Luther on some points, which created a very unhappy controversy between them and their respective parties, that continued for several years to the great injury of the Reformation. At length, in 1529, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, anxious to close the dispute, invited Luther and Zuingli to a conference at Marburg. Thither they repaired, Luther accompanied by Melancthon, and Zuingli by Oecolampadius. The argument continued four days, after which they all signed fourteen articles containing the essential doctrines of Christianity, and expressed a hope that their difference, with respect to minor points, would not interrupt their harmony.

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The canton of Berne followed that of Zurich in adopting the Reformation. In an assembly, at which Zuingli was present, the subject was discussed, and, so triumphant were the reformers, that, in conclusion, the grand council of the canton resolved to adopt their principles. Upon this, five of the cantons, who were attached to popery, entered into a solemn engagement to prevent the doctrines of Luther and Zuingli from being preached among them. But the hostilities between the Roman and reformed cantons were terminated by the treaty of Cappel, in 1529. This treaty, however, was broken, and a battle took place at which Zuingli was present. The Zurichers, who had gone to the relief of their countrymen at Cappel, were defeated, and Zuingli was mortally wounded. His wound deprived him of his senses, but, recovering himself, "he crossed his arms on his breast and lifted his languid eyes to Heaven." In this condition he was found by some Catholic soldiers, who, without knowing him, offered to bring him a confessor; but, as he made a sign of refusal, the soldiers exhorted him to recommend his soul to the Holy virgin. On a second refusal, one of them furiously exclaimed, "Die then, obstinate heretic!" and pierced him through with a sword. His body was found on the next day, and the celebrity of his name drew together a great crowd of spectators. One of these, who had been his colleague at Zurich, after intently gazing on his face, thus expressed his feelings: "Whatever may have been thy faith, I am sure thou wert always sincere, and that thou lovedst thy country. May God take thy soul in mercy!"

Among the savage herd some voices exclaimed, "Let us burn his accursed remains!" The proposal was applauded; a military tribunal ordered the execution, and the ashes of Zuingle were scattered to the wind. Thus, at the age of forty-seven, he terminated a glorious career by an event deeply lamented by all the friends of the Reformation, and occasioning triumph to the partisans of the Romish church.