

SHORT PAPERS ON CHURCH HISTORY

CHAPTER 38

THE COUNCIL OF BOLOGNA

When we last parted with the Emperor and the pope, they were spending the winter months together at Bologna. Charles arrived in great state on the 5th of November, 1529. When the news of his approach reached Rome, Clement hastened, in full ecclesiastical pomp, to meet his majesty. The Emperor was escorted by five-and-twenty cardinals who received him on the frontiers — besides crowds of nobles, Spanish and Italian, with their brilliant equipages. The pope, overcome by the presence of his dutiful son, saluted him three times; and the Emperor, affecting the reverence due to his “holy father,” fell on his knees, kissing his feet, then his hands and his face.

Such was the meeting of the two chiefs of Romish Christendom, whose main object was to consult as to the most effectual means of rooting out the heresies which had sprung up in Germany. The lips of the priest, true to his character urged the immediate adoption of the most violent measures, but the soldier, though backed by a powerful army, recommended some further delay, and suggested that there should be an opportunity given for free deliberation in council on the present aspect of affairs in the church. Clement, who dreaded above all things the public discussion of such questions, employed every argument to dissuade the Emperor from his purpose. He assured him that his forbearance would only make the heretics more presumptuous that the state of things in Germany was desperate and called for force and chastisement. But the policy of the soldier led him to milder measures. He may have cared as little in heart for the Reformation as Clement, but he became daily more convinced that menaces would not subdue the spirit of the Protestants, and he was not prepared for actual warfare. He endeavoured to persuade the pope to call a general council, but the angry pontiff thought of nothing but crushing by military power the stubborn enemies of the catholic faith.

To those who have become familiar with the **principles of the papacy**, the character of these consultations will be no surprise, however humiliating to contemplate. Impartial history has been careful to record the sad contrast. “On the one side was the prince and the soldier, the natural advocate of arbitrary and coercive proceedings; on the other the peaceful ecclesiastic, the representative of the religion of the God of mercy; and yet, whatever piety or virtue may be found in the above dialogue, whatever justice or pretence to justice, whatever principle of sound morality, whatever generosity of political sentiment, whatever regard for the rights or for the happiness of man, whatever respect for the trite and manifest precepts of Christ — whatever, in short, ought to have proceeded from the minister of concord and charity, was

uttered by the secular despot; while the direct recommendation of violence and bloodshed issued from the lips of the spiritual priest.”²⁵⁷

The crafty pope was well aware that the reformers were then weak and divided, and therefore pressed Charles to carry into execution without delay the sentence of Leo, together with the decree of the Diet of Worms. But Charles was not the man to give up his own will, even to his holy father. He now instructed his chancellor, Gattinara, to explain his views and intentions to the conference; who spoke to the following effect: —

The Emperor had regarded with deep affliction the dissensions which had arisen in his day, and of which the violence appeared to be increasing rather than abating; and that, among all the duties which providence had imposed upon him, none was nearer his heart than that of restoring the tranquillity of the church, that there was no expedient more salutary to the church, or more worthy of the sovereign pontiff and of a christian prince, than to convoke a general and free council for the scriptural determination of all controversies, that this council should be assembled immediately, and composed of the most eminent doctors of all nations, that perfect freedom of debate should be allowed; and that the articles there recommended, after receiving the sanction of the pope, should become the established doctrine of the christian world, and be supported, if necessary, by the interference of the civil powers.

Clement viewed the proposed convocation with great aversion. The proceedings of the councils of Pisa and Constance, which had deposed the popes Benedict XIII, Gregory XII, and John XXIII, excited his fears. He had many personal motives for dreading an assembly of Christendom. “Large congregations,” he replied, “serve only to introduce popular opinions. It is not with the decrees of councils, but with the edge of the sword that we should decide controversies.” He promised, however, to reflect on what had been said.

THE DIET OF AUGSBURG

The Emperor at length came to the conclusion that it would be unjust to follow the Council of the Vatican, and a violation of the imperial laws of Germany, to condemn worthy citizens unheard, and to make war against them. He, accordingly, in the month of January, 1530, sent his mandatory letters into Germany, summoning a diet of the empire to be held at **Augsburg** in the following April.

In the meantime, during his stay at Bologna, Charles expressed his desire to be crowned by the Pope as many of his ancestors had been. “He appointed the 22nd of February for receiving the iron crown as King of Lombardy, and resolved to assume the golden crown as Emperor of the Romans, on the 24th of the same month — his birthday and the anniversary of the battle of Pavia.

²⁵⁷ Waddington, vol. 3, p. 39.

“We notice this fact because Charles was a different man after he sealed by a false oath his coronation vows. The pontiff having anointed him with oil, and given him the sceptre, presented him with a naked sword, saying, “Make use of this sword in defence of the church against the enemies of the faith.” Next, taking the golden orb, studded with jewels, he said, “Govern the world with piety and firmness.” Then came the golden crown enriched with diamonds. Charles bent down, and Clement put the diadem on his head, saying, “Charles, Emperor invincible, receive this crown which we place on your head, as a sign to all the earth of the authority that is conferred upon you.”

The Emperor then kissed the white cross embroidered on the pope’s red slipper, and exclaimed, “I swear ever to employ all my strength to defend the pontifical dignity, and the Church of Rome.” But Charles at this time, was neither inclined, nor able if he had been inclined, to carry matters with that high hand against the reformers, which the pope so earnestly desired. For thirteen years the Lord had so overruled the councils of kings and pontiffs, and all agents and events, that the Reformation had been sheltered from outward violence, and so nourished it by His grace, that it gradually acquired that root and establishment which no human power could subvert. Most distinctly do we see the gracious hand of a good providence at this moment in protecting the reformers from the cruelty of the pope and the power of the Emperor.

The rivalry long existing between Charles V and Francis I, the intrigues of the popes with these princes, and the threatening advances of the Turks, have been frequently used of God for the peace and prosperity of the Reformation. The work was His and He watched over it.

THE CONFESSION OF AUGSBURG

When the Emperor’s reasons for the convocation of the diet were known, the elector instructed the divines of Wittemberg to prepare a formula of confession. Up to this time no standard of the faith of the reformers had been published; and as the Emperor was surrounded by all the prejudices and misrepresentations of the papacy, the only hope of removing these prejudices, and of obtaining justice, was by a public and straightforward proclamation of the real principles of the Reformation, and the real objects of the reformers. Luther, with the assistance of Jonas, Pomeranus, and Melancthon, re-examined the seventeen articles which had been drawn up and signed by the Lutheran party at Schwabach in 1529, and thinking them sufficient, presented them to the Elector at Torgau, whence they are called *the articles of Torgau*. From these articles as a basis, Melancthon, by order and authority of the princes, prepared a more orderly and elaborate statement of their doctrines and observances, and also assigned reasons for their opposition to the Roman pontiffs. This document has ever since been well known as “**The Confession of Augsburg.**”

But as religious concord was the Emperor's professed object in convening the assembly, it was necessary to have the confession drawn up in terms as little offensive to the papists as faithfulness to God and His truth would permit. The pious Elector had recommended the theologians to distinguish between such articles as must, at any cost, be maintained, and such as might, if it were necessary, be modified or conceded. While this celebrated confession was to speak the truth as believed by all Protestants, it was, at the same time, the lowest statement they could consent to make for the sake of peace, rather than the highest they were prepared to give on the authority of the word of God.

As the time drew near for the assembling of the diet, considerable anxiety was manifested by some of the princes as to the real intentions of the Emperor, and the safety of the Elector. He stood first among the princes in Germany, and first as to his faith in God, his love for the Reformation, his opposition to popery, and his avowed protection of Luther against papal and imperial vengeance. But John pursued the wiser and bolder course, and was the first prince who arrived in Augsburg.

The assembling of the diet was postponed till the 1st of May, and the Elector appeared on the 2nd, accompanied by a military train or suite of one hundred and sixty horsemen, and several of his most eminent divines. Luther was left at Coburg. The Elector feared that Luther's presence at the diet would exasperate the papists and drive Charles to extreme measures. He had been excommunicated by the pope, condemned by the Emperor, and viewed as the author of all those dissensions which were now so difficult to compose. But at the same time John was determined to keep Luther within reach, that he might be able to consult him.

It was about this time that Luther published his **catechisms, Greater and Lesser**, which are of authority in the Lutheran churches, even until this day; and in his castle at Coburg he was made acquainted with all that was going on, and gave his opinions and directions by his numerous letters. He also published just before the opening of the diet, "A remonstrance to the Spirituals assembled at the Diet of Augsburg." The object of this composition was to vindicate the position of the reformers, deny the false charges brought against them, and point out the abuses of the papacy as the ground of their persistent opposition.

On the 12th of May, Philip of Hesse arrived with an escort of one hundred and ninety horsemen, and just about the same time the Emperor reached Innsbruck, in the Tyrol, accompanied by his papal court of princes, cardinals, legates, and nobles of Germany, Spain, and Italy. We learn from Dr. Robertson, the able biographer of Charles, that he was deeply thoughtful when on his journey towards Augsburg. "He had many opportunities of observing the disposition of the Germans with regard to the points in dispute, and found their minds everywhere so much irritated and inflamed, as convinced him that nothing tending to severity or rigour ought to be

attempted until all other measures proved ineffectual.” It appears that he remained some considerable time at Innsbruck, for the purpose of studying the situation of Germany, and how he might best ensure the success of his schemes.

Meantime, large parties were finding their way to Augsburg from all quarters. “Princes, bishops, deputies, gentlemen, cavaliers, soldiers in rich uniforms, entered by every gate, and thronged the streets, the public inns, churches, and palaces. All that was most magnificent in Germany was about to be collected there. The critical circumstances in which the empire and Christendom were placed, the presence of Charles V and his kindly manners, the love of novelty, of grand shows, and of lively emotions, tore the Germans from their homes.”²⁵⁸

It is interesting to notice here, that at this moment, when the leading reformers were assembled at Augsburg, and the enemy close at hand, and while the storm was thus actually impending, the noble and generous Landgrave made one final effort to reconcile the two grand divisions of the reformers. But though Luther was absent, his spirit was there, and burnt with equal ardour among his disciples. They assured the Landgrave that they could never acknowledge as brothers those-who persisted obstinately in error; and that by an alliance with Zwinglians, they should expose themselves to all the hatred that attached to the latter, and thus endanger the success of the Reformation. The Landgrave could not understand how a single error, admitting it to be one, or an obscure question, should be a sufficient reason for exclusion from communion. But his reasoning with the Lutherans was all in vain. No fear of danger, no hope of success could induce them to have any fellowship with the Zwinglians.²⁵⁹

As the Emperor did not arrive till June 15th, and the city of Augsburg was crowded with inquirers, the Protestant princes resolved to place their preachers in the pulpits of some of the principal churches. This step was taken in expectation of the Emperor’s opposition; but the Elector and the Landgrave thought the opportunity for confessing Christ was too favourable to be neglected. John instructed one of his theologians to preach daily with open doors in the church of the Dominicans, and of St. Catherine. Philip of Hesse appointed his chaplain Snepff to preach the gospel in the cathedral. Every day, through the mercy of God, salvation by grace without works of law, was preached in these places to immense and attentive crowds. The greater part of the population were already Lutherans.

This was a bold step, it was a grand means of converting those whom the Emperor had drawn together. The Catholics were astonished. They had expected to see the Protestants looking like criminals, and afraid to lift up their heads when the saviour of Catholicism was at the gates of the city. But

²⁵⁸ D’Aubigné, vol. 4, p. 161.

²⁵⁹ Waddington, vol. 3, p. 48.

what was to be done? The bishop of Augsburg ordered his preachers to ascend the pulpits and address the people. But the Romish priests were not good preachers — they never were. They understood better how to say mass than to preach the gospel. The Romanists were angry; they hastened to acquaint Charles of what was going on. He immediately sent orders from Innsbruck, that the offensive sermons should cease. The Elector replied, that it was impossible for him to impose silence on the word of God, or refuse himself the consolation of hearing it, nothing is proclaimed in the sermons but the glorious truth of God and never was it so necessary to us. We cannot therefore do without it.

The Protestants very naturally thought that such a reply would hasten the arrival of the Emperor. Melancthon was still at work on the confession. Timid and alarmed, he weighed every expression, softening it down, changing it with such minute anxiety, that his bodily strength was nearly exhausted. Luther thought all this superfluous, and enjoined Philip, under pain of anathema, to take measures for the preservation of “his little body,” and not “to commit suicide for the love of God.”

While the friends of the Reformation were preparing for the struggle at Augsburg, Luther was not idle at Coburg. Numerous letters and pamphlets issued from his stronghold, his second Wartburg. The castle stood on the summit of a hill, and his apartments were in the upper story, so that he sometimes dated his letters from the *region of birds*. Impatient at seeing the diet put off from day to day, he wrote to his friends that he had resolved to convoke one at **Coburg**. “We are already in full assembly,” he says, in his own playful style, “you might here see kings, dukes, and other grandees, deliberating on the affairs of their kingdom, and with indefatigable voice, publishing their dogmas and decrees in the air. They dwell not in those caverns which you designate with the name of palaces. The heavens are their canopy; the leafy trees form a floor of a thousand colors, and their walls are the ends of the earth. They have a horror of all the unmeaning luxury of silk and gold; they ask neither coursers nor armour, and have all the same clothing. I have neither seen nor heard their Emperor, but if I can understand them, they have determined this year to make a pitiless war upon the most excellent fruits of the earth... But enough of jesting — jesting, which is, however, necessary to dispel the gloomy thoughts that prey upon me.” For many months he maintained a struggle, full of darkness and mental agony, such as he passed through at the Wartburg.

THE ARRIVAL OF CHARLES AT AUGSBURG

Gattinara, the Emperor’s chancellor, died at Innsbruck. This was considered a great loss to the reformers. He was a man of good sense and moderation, and decidedly opposed to the sanguinary views of the papal party. He possessed great influence over the mind of the Emperor, and was the only man who dared to resist the pope. The timid Melancthon exclaimed on

hearing of his death, “With him all the human hopes of the Protestants vanish.”

Two days after Gattinara’s death, Charles quitted Innsbruck. He arrived at Munich on the 10th of June, and at Augsburg on the 15th. He made his public entry into the city with extraordinary pomp. Never, according to the historians, had anything so magnificent been seen in the empire.²⁶⁰ We only notice that which shows the firmness of the Protestants. The Elector, the princes, and their councillors left the city at three in the afternoon to meet Charles on his way. When he had come within fifty paces of the German princes, they all alighted. Perceiving the Emperor preparing to do the same, some of them advanced and begged him to remain on horseback; but Charles dismounted without hesitating, and approaching the princes with an amicable smile, shook hands with them cordially. The Roman legate remained proudly seated on his mule; but seeing the graciousness of Charles, he raised his hands and blessed the great personages thus assembled on the road. Immediately, the Emperor, the king, the princes, the Spaniards, Italians, and all who submitted to the pope, fell on their knees; but the Protestants, like Mordecai, bowed not. They remained standing in the midst of this prostrate crowd. How galling it must have been to the papal party! But Charles did not appear to notice it, though he must have understood well what it meant. After the usual formalities, the great procession moved on — two thousand imperial guards leading the way.

The Emperor was now thirty years of age: of distinguished bearing and pleasing features; pale and delicate-looking with a weak voice, but winning manners, having the air of a courtier more than of a warrior. He marched straight to the cathedral as a humble worshipper, amidst the gorgeous parade of ecclesiastical wealth and display, and the military pride and warlike show of many nations and many crowned heads. When he reached the altar, he fell on his knees, and raised his hands to heaven, as if all he cared for were there and himself a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth. A gold embroidered cushion was offered him, but he refused it, and knelt on the bare stones of the church. All the assembly knelt with him; the Elector and the Landgrave alone remained standing. They required to be present officially, but they acted according to their faith in God and His word.

THE CHIEFS OF THE AUGSBURG DIET

Before the business of the diet commences, it may be well to place in order the **principal leaders** on both sides. On that of the papists there were the Emperor, his brother Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria and King of Hungary and Bohemia, the pope’s legate Campeggio, two nuncios Pimpinella and Vergerio, Joachim Elector of Brandenburg, George Duke of Saxony, and William of Bavaria. These were all vehement Roman Catholics, and took an

²⁶⁰ See a full account in d’Aubigné, vol. 4.

active part in the diet. Their principal divines were Faber, Eck, Cochlaeus, and de Wimpina.

On the side of the Protestants were John, Elector of Saxony, and his son, John Frederick; Philip Landgrave of Hesse, George Margrave of Brandenburg, Anspach, Ernest, and Francis, Dukes of Lunenburg, Wolfgang Prince of Anhalt, Albert Count Mansfeld, and Count Philip of Hanover, besides the deputies of several imperial cities. Their chief divines were Melancthon, Justus, Jonas, Spalatin, Snepff, and Agricola. There were also several of the Swiss divines, and Bucer, Hedio, and Capito from Strasburg.²⁶¹

The firmness and principle of the Protestants were now to be thoroughly tested. The Emperor, on his arrival at Augsburg, repeated his order for the removal of the preachers. "We cannot," said the Landgrave, "deprive ourselves of the food of the word of God, and deny His gospel; and we entreat your majesty to withdraw your order, for our ministers preach only the pure word of God." Charles being much displeased and getting angry, said, in a positive tone, that he could not desist from his demand. "Your conscience," replied the Landgrave, "has no right to command ours." The Margrave, who had been silent until then, having received a sharp answer from Ferdinand, placed his hand on his neck, and said with deep emotion, "Rather would I instantly kneel down, and in the Emperor's presence, submit my neck to the executioner, than prove unfaithful to God, and receive or sanction antichristian error." Charles was moved and surprised, but replied with mildness and address, "that there was no intention to take any man's life." The Emperor then proposed that the preachers on both sides should be silenced, and that the selection of others during the diet should be left to him. The matter in debate was then deferred till another opportunity, but d'Aubigné and others speak as if the Protestant divines continued to preach, though, in all probability, with less provoking publicity.

Ferdinand, who had frequently tried his strength with the princes at former diets, set another snare for their feet, or rather for their necks. The day following that of the Emperor's entrance into Augsburg was the festival of the Holy Sacrament — **Corpus Christi**. The king was well aware that the Protestants had discontinued, as idolatrous, the ceremonies observed by the church on this occasion, and that their refusal to attend would irritate and inflame the mind of the Emperor. The snare was thus skilfully laid: of victory there can be no doubt, thought the legate. Besides, late in the evening, the Emperor sent for the Protestant princes, and signified to them his pleasure that they should attend him in the procession of the ensuing day. The princes begged to be excused. "Christ," they said, "did not institute this sacrament to be worshipped." Charles persevered in his demand, but gave them till the following morning to prepare their reply.

²⁶¹ *History of the Church*, by John Scott, M.A., vol. 1, p. 6.

At the hour appointed the princes appeared before the Emperor. He repeated his demands, and they repeated their refusal. He even used entreaties, but to the same effect. Charles, who had not expected such resistance, was greatly agitated, and the legate endeavoured to exasperate him. The Margrave of Brandenburg again took speech in hand. "You know," he said, "how at the risk of our lives my ancestors and myself have supported the house of Austria, but in the present cause, which pertains to God, I am compelled to resist all impositions of this kind, whatever may be the consequence; since it is written, *We ought to obey God rather than man*. For the confession, therefore, of the doctrine, which I know to be the word of Christ, and eternal truth, I decline no danger — not even that of life itself, which, I hear, is threatened by some." The wisdom of God again appears, in making the wrath of man to praise Him. The Emperor, his brother, the legate, and others must hear the truth. The sacrament of the supper, the princes answered, was for spiritual blessing to Christians; "not to be paraded in pompous pageantry about the streets, as an object of adoration to the vulgar. They maintained that the festival had no authority in the word of God, and that they deplored any indecent degradation of so holy an institution."

It was already beyond the time appointed for the procession, and the Emperor and his party left the room, but the princes returned full of hope and joy to their palaces, and the festival was celebrated without them.

The defeat of the Emperor and the triumph of the Protestants were as gall and wormwood to the heart of the papal legate. But he had yet another net to spread and determined if possible, that they should be caught. The opening of the diet was fixed for the 20th of June, and the occasion was to be solemnised by the celebration of mass.

The Elector of Saxony was Grand Marshal of the empire and in virtue of his office, he was bound to carry the sword before the Emperor on such occasions. "Order him, therefore," said Campeggio to Charles, "to perform his duty at the mass of the Holy Ghost, which is to open the sittings." This, the legate thought, would not only be attending, but assisting at popish ceremonies. The Elector was requested to attend. His first impulse was to refuse, but on the representation of his theologians, that in this case, he was called to the discharge of a civil office, not to the performance of a religious duty, he consented to attend. But he was careful to inform the Emperor that in so doing he was making no religious concession.

By an overruling providence, he was once more to be a witness for the truth of God, and against the superstitions of popery, and that in its very citadel. The Grand Marshal of the empire, bearing the sword, standing near the altar, remained upright, together with his friend the Margrave, while all the rest of the congregation fell down on their knees at the elevation of the host. Two men dared to stand in that vast assembly at the moment of adoration, and that in the presence of a hostile power, both papal and imperial.

“These mere skirmishes,” says one, “though followed by no personal consequences, are very deserving of the notice of the historian, not only as indicating the resolution with which the reformers approached the conflict, but as unquestionably productive of some effect on the mind of Charles. He was unacquainted with their principles and their character. It was a new thing for him to be resisted, and resisted by princes, and in his presence, on the ground of religious conscience.” Whatever Charles may have thought or felt of this third resistance to his orders, he left the church immediately mass was over, entered his carriage, and repaired to the town-hall, where the sittings of the diet were to take place.

THE OPENING OF THE DIET OF AUGSBURG

The great religious controversy, which commenced with an obscure humble monk on Saxony, now gathered around the avowed defender of the faith forty-two sovereign princes, besides many ambassadors, counts, nobles, bishops, deputies from the cities, etc., etc., forming a most illustrious assembly.

The diet was opened with a long speech, in the Emperor’s name, read by the **Count Palatine**. It turned principally upon two subjects — war with the Turks, and the religious dissensions. Under their Sultan Solyman the Turks had taken Belgrade, conquered Rhodes, besieged Vienna, and threatened all Europe. Hence the necessity of adopting vigorous measures to arrest their progress. But the unhappy religious differences in Germany formed the important point in the Emperor’s speech. It was observed that the language in his address was more hostile to the Protestants than his letters of convocation led them to expect. But Charles had been crowned since he wrote those letters; he had sworn to defend the pontiff and the Church of Rome, and his many private interviews with Clement at Bologna, would not improve his spirit towards the reformers. His tone was greatly changed. He referred to the old and oft-repeated story of the Diet of Worms. “He deplored the non-execution of that edict, and the inefficacy of all subsequent exertions for the same purpose during his absence in Spain. He was now returned to his German dominions, to institute a personal investigation, and to attend to the complaints and arguments of all parties, when they should be duly delivered to him in writing.”

It was now proposed that the immediate attention of the diet should be directed to the subject of religion. The Emperor, therefore, gave notice to the Elector and his friends, that at the next session, to be held on the twenty-fourth, they should deliver to him a summary of their faith, of the ecclesiastical abuses of which they complained, and of the reformation which they demanded.

This arrangement gave the princes an interval of two days. They met at the Elector’s on the twenty-third, to reconsider the Confession, or, as it was then

called, **The Apology**; and also to commit their whole way unto the Lord. It was a time of much anxiety and prayer. The following day the diet met; but it was evidently planned by the papists that no opportunity should be given for the reading of the Apology. It was three o'clock in the afternoon before business commenced. Then much time was spent by Campeggio in presenting his credentials, and delivering his master's message. The Ambassadors of Austria and the adjoining provinces were also introduced, who occupied some time in representing the calamities which they had suffered from the Turks, and in urging the adoption of measures for the protection of these provinces. The length of these preliminary matters gave the Emperor a plausible pretext for objecting to hear the Apology read; he said it was too late. The legate, no doubt, thought he had gained his point; the Catholics, from the pope downwards, dreaded the public reading of the Protestants' Confession. The princes, however, were firm, and equally determined that it should be read aloud in a full diet, that it might have all possible publicity.

A violent struggle now took place between the two parties or rather, we should say between the powers of light and of darkness. The father of lies used every means to quench the light, to stifle this manifestation of the truth, if he could not accomplish the death of the witnesses. But a handful of faithful men, by the grace of God, nobly withstood the powers of darkness in the persons of the great Emperor, the cardinals, prelates, and catholic princes, and triumphed over them. "Deliver your Confession to the appointed officers," said Charles, "and rest assured that it shall be duly considered and answered." "Our honour is at stake," said the princes; "our souls are endangered; we are publicly accused, and we ought publicly to answer." On the continued resistance of Charles to hear the Confession, the princes became bolder and firmer. They assured the Emperor that they had no other motive in attending the diet than this, and that they must retain their papers in their own hands until they had permission to read them publicly.

Charles was surprised at the respectful but unyielding constancy of the Protestants, and saw that some concession was necessary. "Tomorrow," said the Emperor, "I will hear your summary — not in this hall, but in the chapel of the Palatine Palace." The princes agreed to this, and returned to their hotels, full of thankfulness to the Lord, while the legate and his friends now saw, to their sorrow, that the public reading of the Confession was inevitable.

The chapel where the Emperor agreed to hear the Apology was much smaller than the town-hall, and would contain only about two hundred persons. This was the enemy's device to exclude numbers from hearing it; but it was not very successful. All those whom it was most important to undeceive and enlighten on the principles of the Reformation were accommodated in the chapel, and the adjacent chambers were crowded with anxious listeners.

On the 25th of June, 1530 — a day of great interest in the history of the Reformation, of Christianity, and of mankind the Protestant chiefs stood

before the Emperor. Christopher Beyer, the Elector's chancellor, held in his hand a German copy, and Pontanus, his late chancellor, held a Latin copy of the Confession. The Emperor wished the Latin copy to be read, but the Elector most respectfully reminded the Emperor that, as they were in Germany, they should be allowed to speak in German. The Emperor consented. The Elector and his companions proposed to stand during the reading, but the Emperor desired them to take their seats. The chancellor, Beyer, then read the Confession. It is said that he read slowly, clearly, distinctly, and with a voice so loud and sonorous, that he was heard in all the adjoining places. Two hours were occupied in reading all the papers, but the most profound attention prevailed during the whole time.

The two copies of this celebrated Confession, being duly signed by the princes and the deputies of the imperial cities, were handed to the Emperor's secretary by Pontanus, who said, in an audible voice, "With the grace of God, who will defend His own cause, this Confession will triumph over the gates of hell." Charles took the Latin copy for himself, and assured the Elector and his allies that he would carefully deliberate on its contents.

The effect produced by the public reading of this document was such as might have been expected. The less prejudiced portion of the listeners were astonished to find the doctrines of the Protestants so moderate, and "many eminently wise and prudent persons," says Seckendorf, "pronounced a favourable judgment of what they had heard, and declared they would not have missed hearing it for a great sum." **Father Paul** also observes, "that the archbishop of Salzburg, after hearing the Confession, told everyone that the reformation of the mass was needed, the liberty of meats proper, and the demand to be disburdened of so many commandments of men just: but that a poor monk should reform all was not to be tolerated — he would not have reform by means of a poor monk." Such is the pride and prejudice of the human heart. The archbishop might have remembered that God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; that no flesh should glory in His presence. But who is completely above the attractions of personal influence? It matters little to some what may be said, unless spoken by the teacher who is in favour for the time. This is a serious evil in the professing church, and has been the origin of many factions and schisms, besides, it takes multitudes off the ground of faith in the word of God and leads them to trust in the word of man. The great work of God's Spirit was acknowledged by the archbishop to be needed and good, but he rejected it because it was accomplished by means of a poor monk.

But many consciences were touched and many hearts were exercised by means of the Confession. The Lord caused the truth to be felt. For the moment it seemed to have triumphed. "All that the Lutherans have said is true," exclaimed the bishop of Augsburg, "we cannot deny it." The **Duke of Bavaria**, the great upholder of the papacy in Germany, after hearing the

Confession, said to Eck; “Well, doctor, you had given me a very different idea of this doctrine and of this affair: but, after all, can you refute by sound reasons the Confession made by the Elector and his friends?” “No,” replied the popish advocate, “by the writings of the apostles we cannot; but by the writings of the Fathers and the canons of councils we can.” “I understand,” replied the duke in a reproachful tone, “according to you, the Lutherans have their doctrine out of scripture, and we have our doctrine without scripture.”

The joy of Luther was boundless when he heard of the Lord’s goodness to his friends. “I thrill with joy,” he wrote, “that my life is cast in an epoch in which Christ is publicly exalted by such illustrious confessors and in so glorious an assembly. Our adversaries thought they had succeeded to admiration when the preachers were silenced by an imperial prohibition; but they do not perceive that more is done by our public Confession than perhaps ten preachers could have accomplished. Truly Christ is not silent in the diet. The word of God is not bound. No: if it is prohibited in the pulpits, it shall be heard in the palaces of kings.”

The day following the reading of the Confession, Charles convoked the states faithful to Rome. “What reply should be made to the Confession?” said he to the senate around him. Three different opinions were proposed by his advisers. 1. The men of the papacy — the pure churchmen — in accordance with the customs and views of the age, and with the violent counsels of the Romish church, had nothing to propose but **immediate vengeance**. “Let us not discuss our adversaries’ reasons,” said they, “but let us be content with executing the Edict of Worms against the Lutherans, and with constraining them by force of arms to give up their errors and return to the communion of the church of Rome.” 2. Another party — called the men of the empire — proposed that the Confession should be submitted to the **consideration of moderate and impartial men**, and that the final decision should be given by the Emperor. 3. The men of tradition, so called, advised, that the Confession should first receive a **public refutation**, and that the Protestants should be compelled to conform to the established doctrines and ceremonies, until a council should decide otherwise. The last proposal was adopted with the Emperor’s consent. Faber, Eck, and Cochlaeus, the old champions of Rome and the bitter enemies of the Reformation, were appointed to draw up a confutation of the Protestant Confession, and to have it ready for the diet within the period of six weeks. Meanwhile the secret emissaries of Rome were actively employed in Germany to practice her usual arts of bribery and corruption; which she frequently found to succeed after the defeat of her public exertions.

Since the Confession of Augsburg is the most celebrated document in the history of the Reformation, and has been adopted as a public standard of faith by the general body of Protestants, it may be well just to give the subjects of which it treats. The entire Confession is composed in **twenty-eight articles**, or chapters. In the first twenty-one is comprehended the profession of their

faith. The other seven recount the errors and offensive abuses of the church of Rome, on account of which they had withdrawn from her communion.

THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

The Trinity — Original sin — The Person and work of Christ Justification — The Holy Spirit and the word of God — Works their necessity and acceptance — The Church — Unworthy members — Baptism — The Lord's supper — Repentance Confession — Sacraments — Ministering in the church Ceremonies — Civil institutions — Judgment and the future state — Free will — The causes of sin — Faith and good works Prayer and the invocation of saints.

THE ARTICLES CONCERNING ABUSES

The Mass — The Communion in both kinds — Auricular Confession — The distinction of Meats and Traditions — The Marriage of Priests — Monastic vows — The Ecclesiastical Power.

In chapter 10 the Lutherans plainly assert that the real body and blood of Christ are truly present in the Eucharist, under the elements of the bread and wine, and distributed and received. In consequence of this plain assertion of the dogma of Consubstantiation, the Reformed, or Zwinglian party refused to subscribe the Augsburg Confession. Hence the imperial cities of Strasburg, Constance, Lindau, and Memmingen, offered a separate confession, called the Confession of the Four Cities — *Confessio Tetrapolitana*. It agreed substantially with the Augsburg Confession, except in regard to the corporeal presence; but the Emperor would not allow it to be read in public.²⁶²

THE PERPLEXITIES OF THE PROTESTANTS

As six weeks must elapse before we can hear the refutation of the Confession, we may turn our attention to the proceedings of the contending parties during that period.

It was indeed a time of trial and suspense to the Protestants. They were perplexed and harassed on every side and in every way. Rome's system of promises and threatenings was immediately put in practice. Favours were offered and threatenings were applied to different individuals in a way most likely to gain their deceitful ends. Even the great Emperor condescended to a policy of meanness and cruelty towards the Elector of Saxony, and the Margrave of Brandenburg, with the view of separating them from the interests of reform. And the Landgrave of Hesse he endeavoured to seduce by the tempting offer of a crown. "What would you say if I elevated you to the

²⁶² Scott's *Continuation of Milner*, vol. 1, p. 30; Dean Waddington, vol. 3, p. 57; d'Aubigné, vol. 4; *Faiths of the World*, vol. 1, p. 258. For a Summary of the Whole Confession, see Mosheim, vol. 3, p. 139.

regal dignity?" said Charles to Philip; "but," he added, "if you show yourself rebellious to my orders, then I shall behave as becomes a Roman Emperor."

On the **Emperor's conduct** at this moment, his biographer, Dr. Robertson, makes the following just observations. "From the divines, among whom his endeavours had been so unsuccessful, Charles turned to the princes. Nor did he find them, how desirous soever of accommodation, or willing to oblige the Emperor, more disposed to renounce their opinions. At that time, zeal for religion took possession of the minds of men, to a degree which can scarcely be conceived by those who live in an age when the passions excited by the first manifestation of the truth, and the first recovery of liberty, have in a great measure ceased to operate. This zeal was then of such strength as to overcome attachment to their political interests, which is commonly the predominant motive among princes. The Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, and other chiefs of the Protestants — though solicited separately by the Emperor, and allured by the promise or prospect of those advantages which it was known they were more solicitous to attain — refused, with a fortitude highly worthy of imitation, to abandon what they deemed the cause of God for the sake of any earthly acquisition."²⁶³

THE SORROWS AND FEARS OF MELANCTHON

The Emperor having failed to draw away the leading princes from the Evangelical Confession, the legate and his deputies used every exertion to gain over some of the leading divines, especially Philip Melancthon. He had manifested great uneasiness at the secret conferences between the Emperor and the princes, and proposed to reduce the demands of the Confession, with the view of accomplishing a reconciliation. Flattered by the attentions of the legate, alarmed by the threats of war and the general appearance of affairs, he lost his balance for a moment and was driven to the very borders of recantation. Even d'Aubigné observes that "he thought it his duty to purchase peace at any cost, and resolved in consequence to descend in his propositions as low as possible." But we must bear in mind that the position of Melancthon was one of extreme difficulty. The responsibility of drawing up the Confession rested almost entirely with himself. It was no easy task to show sufficient causes for the secession of the reformers, and yet to avoid all unnecessary grounds of offence to the papists. He was thus exposed to the insults of his enemies, and to the reproaches of his friends. He had to deal with the princes on the one side, the theologians on the other, and the crafty emissaries of Rome.

The mild and tender spirit of Melancthon was in every way unfitted to contend against all these anxieties. He had neither the inflexible nature nor the religious enthusiasm, of his master Luther. Historians vie with each other in their praise of his great talents, his extensive learning, and his characteristic

²⁶³ Robertson's *Charles the Fifth*, vol. 2, p. 383.

modesty. “Melancthon,” says Dr. Robertson, “seldom suffered the rancour of controversy to envenom his style, even in writings purely polemical.” But that which chiefly troubled his soul during those wearisome six weeks was an intense desire to make further concessions to conciliate the Roman Catholics, without the compromise of truth or the violation of conscience. The following letter to the legate shows Melancthon in his lowest state of despondency. Here he ventures to affirm that the Protestants were prepared to refuse no conditions on which peace and concord might be secured to them.

THE LETTERS OF MELANCTHON AND LUTHER

“There is no doctrine,” writes **Melancthon to Campeggio**, “in which we differ from the Roman Catholic Church; we venerate the universal authority of the Roman pontiff, and we are ready to obey him, provided he does not reject us, and that of his clemency, which he is accustomed to show towards all nations, he will kindly pardon or approve certain little things that it is no longer possible for us to change... Now then, will you reject those who appear as suppliants before you? Will you pursue them with fire and sword?... Alas! nothing draws upon us in Germany so much hatred, as the unshaken firmness with which we maintain the doctrines of the Roman church. But with the aid of God, we will remain faithful, even unto death, to Christ and to the Roman church, although you should reject us.” Thus did Melancthon the head of the evangelical theologians, lower himself in the presence of Rome and of all mankind. But there was one who was watching over the interests of the Reformation, and overruling His servant’s failure for the accomplishment of His own purposes and the glory of His holy name.

Melancthon had come down so low, as to entreat the Elector to demand only the two kinds in the Eucharist and the marriage of priests. Had these two things been granted, the Reformation, humanly speaking, would have been arrested, and a reconciliation with Rome accomplished. But the legate would grant nothing. The papists now accused the reformers of having dissembled their heresy in the Apology. Melancthon, filled with shame at the advances he had made to the legate, by whom he was deceived, found a place, we doubt not, of repentance and restoration.

Luther was still at Coburg, but he was constantly hearing of all that was going on, and constantly writing to his friends, especially to the Elector and Melancthon. His letters about this time breathe a very different spirit from those of Melancthon. But as Waddington justly observes, “The wild and lofty solitudes of Coburg were far more favourable to those exclusive spiritual impressions than the crowded halls and courts of Augsburg: and that perpetual contact with the weaknesses and disquietudes of friends, that unwearied wariness necessary against an ever-plotting enemy, would have shaken a firmer resolution than Melancthon’s, and had Luther himself been as long

exposed to those trials, they would have disturbed his equanimity, though they might not have broken his courage.”²⁶⁴

The following extracts from the **letters of Luther** during this crisis will give the reader some idea of his christian principles and the soundness of his judgment.

“It is your philosophy, my Philip, which vexes you so, not your theology... Self is your greatest foe, and it is you who supply Satan with arms against you... I, for my part, am not very much disturbed respecting our common cause. God has power to raise up the dead, He has power then to support His cause while falling, to restore it when fallen, to advance it while standing upright. If we are not worthy to be His instruments, let the work be done by others; but if we are not to find comfort and courage in His promises, who are there now on earth to whom they more properly pertain?”

Two days afterwards he wrote, “What displeases me in your letter is this, that you describe yourselves as having followed my authority in this affair. I do not choose to be, or to be said to be, your mover in this cause. If it be not also and equally your cause, I do not at least choose that it should be called mine and be imposed upon you. If the cause is mine alone, I alone will act in it... Assuredly I am faithful to you, and present with you in my groans and prayers, and I would I were also present in body... But it is in vain I write thus; because you, following the rules of your philosophy, persist in directing these things by reason, that is, in being rationally mad, and so you wear yourself to death, without perceiving that this cause is placed altogether beyond your reach and counsel.”

Again on the 13th of July he writes to his son in the faith, “I think that you must be this time have had enough and more than enough of experience not to see, that Belial can by no devices be reconciled to Christ, and that there is not any hope of concord from a council, so far as doctrine is concerned... Assuredly, I, for my part, will neither yield, nor suffer to be restored, so much as a hair’s breadth. I will rather endure every extremity. Concede so much the less, as your adversaries require so much the more. God will not aid us until we are abandoned by all. If it were not tempting God, you would long ago have seen me at your side.”

On the 21st he thus wrote to Justus Jonas: “I am delighted that Philip is beginning to find out by experience the character of Campeggio and the Italians. That philosophy of his believes nothing except from experience. I, for my part, would not trust the least, either to the Emperor’s confessor, or to any other Italian. For my friend Cajetan was so fond of me, that he was ready to shed blood for me — to wit, my own blood. An Italian, when he is good, is of all men the best; but such is a prodigy as rare as a black swan... I could

²⁶⁴ *Church History*, vol. 3, p. 72.

wish to be the victim of this council, as Huss was the victim of that of Constance, which was the latest papal triumph.”

From these extracts the reader will plainly see that Luther was not a party to the humiliating letter of Melancthon. It is also plain from all history that Luther's letters were used of God for strengthening and confirming his friends at Augsburg during that very critical interval. Though all the resources of papal diplomacy had been brought into action, the papists could not boast of a single apostate. The Elector had been especially tampered with by the Emperor, believing that, if he fell, the Confession would fall with him. But the Lord enabled his servant to triumph. “I must either renounce God or the world,” said John. “Well! my choice is not doubtful. I fling myself into His arms, and let Him do with me what shall seem good to Him... I desire to confess my Saviour.” Noble resolution! Invincible warrior of light against the powers of darkness! No weapon of carnal temper could prevail against those which are spiritual and wielded by faith. Here the Elector and his friends were victorious. Would to God they had ever maintained this moral elevation! But alas! for the day when they stepped down to the world's arena of strife and conflict; then all was defeat and degradation. We shall see the mighty contrast between the two classes of weapons by-and-by.

SHORT PAPERS ON CHURCH HISTORY

CHAPTER 39

THE POPISH REFUTATION

On the 13th of July, or rather less than three weeks after the reading of the Protestant Confession, the popish divines presented their **reply to the Emperor**. It consisted of two hundred and eighty pages; but the style was so abusive and violent, that Charles would not allow it to be read in the diet. He was much displeased, and ordered another to be drawn up, shorter and more moderate. The document having been so altered as to suit the mind of the Emperor, he caused it to be read in full diet on the 3rd of August. The first copy was in accordance with the counsel of the pope, the second with the policy of Charles.

The Count-Palatine, after admitting, in a general way, that many abuses had crept into the church, and that the Emperor by no means defended them, delivered the following message: "That the Emperor found the articles of this Refutation orthodox, catholic, and conformable to the Gospels that he therefore required the Protestants to abandon their Confession, now refuted, and to adhere to all the articles that had just been set forth; that, if they refused, the Emperor would remember his office, and would know how to show himself the advocate and defender of the Roman Church."

These words could not be misunderstood by the Protestants. They breathed force and violence. This was the boasted clemency of the Emperor. Each party now stood on its own proper ground. The Protestants had taken their stand on the word of God; the Catholics on the word of man — the fathers, the popes, and the councils. These were, and are, and ever must be, the essential features of divine and human ground, of true religion and false. Once allow a lower, or another, standard than the truth of God, and where may the professor soon find himself? He may never reach Rome, but he is on the way to it. Those who maintain the pure truth of God as the only ground of faith and practice — of walk, worship, and testimony — may often have to lament their shortcomings. So much imperfection, mingled with the Christian's purest services; but the important question with every Christian should be, Can I allow, admit, or accept a lower standard than the mind of God as revealed in His word? "It is written," was the unfailing refuge of the Lord Himself in the day of His temptation; by which word He completely overcame the tempter. Christ is the Christian's one grand lesson, as the apostle says, "But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus." And the same apostle makes the rule of the Christian's life still more simple in that all comprehensive saying, "*For to me to live is Christ.*" As if he had said, For me to live is to

have Christ always before me as my object, my motive, my power; so that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in my life while here. Thus would the eye be single, the heart undivided, and the whole path full of light. Eph. 4:20, 21; Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 4:10.

But we must return to our history.

The Refutation wholly rejected the doctrine of justification by faith, without the merit of good works. And with respect to the marriage of priests, the Catholics wondered that the Protestants could demand such a thing, seeing it had never been the practice for priests to marry since the days of the apostles. With regard to the mass, it was affirmed to be a sacrifice for the living and the dead; “that Daniel had prophesied long ago, that when Antichrist should come, the daily offering should cease; but as yet this had not come to pass in the Holy Catholic Church. Nevertheless, in those places where mass was despised, altars destroyed, and images burned, there that prophecy was fulfilled.” Such were the enlightened arguments of the popish doctors. The moment they refer to scripture, they prove that they are blinded by the god of this world.

Such was the character of the Refutation which Charles invited the Protestant princes to accede to, out of deference to his own authority, as protector of the integrity of the Roman Church, and the religious unity of the empire.

A COPY OF THE REFUTATION REFUSED

John, the good **Electors of Saxony**, nobly answered for himself and his friends, “That they would do anything for peace which they could do with a safe conscience; and, if convicted of any error by scriptural authority, they would readily renounce it. But he desired a copy of the Refutation, that they might consider it at leisure, and show on what points it was not satisfactory to them; which would be in conformity with the fair and candid discussion to which they had been invited by the edict of convocation.” This reasonable request, however, was refused. The Refutation was not published, and no copies of it were to be given to the Protestants. But they persisted in demanding a copy; and Charles agreed to give them one on the following conditions, namely, “that the Protestants should not reply; that they should speedily agree with the Emperor and submit to his decision that no transcript of it should be made, and that it should not be communicated to any other persons, as the Emperor would have no further debate.” On such conditions they declined to receive it, and appealed to God and to His truth.

The firmness of the princes greatly irritated the Emperor. They thus refused all that he had proposed to them, even what he considered a favour, and he had utterly failed, with all the craft of Rome, either to gain or disunite them. “Agitation,” says d’Aubigné, “anger, and affright were manifested on every bench of that august assembly. This reply of the evangelicals was war — was rebellion. Duke George of Saxony, the Princes of Bavaria, all the violent

adherents of Rome, trembled with indignation. There was a sudden, an impetuous, movement, and an explosion of murmurs and hatred.”²⁶⁵

PRIVATE NEGOTIATIONS

So violent was the tumult produced in the diet by the Protestants rejecting the Emperor’s proposals, that the Electors of Mayence and Brandenburg interposed, and requested the Emperor to accept their offices for the private and amicable arrangement of the differences. This being agreed to, **mediators were appointed.** They were six in number — all violent enemies of the Reformation — the Elector of Brandenburg, the Archbishop of Saltzburg, the Bishops of Strasburg, Wurtzburg, and Bamberg, and Duke George of Saxony. The affair was now placed on new ground, but no nearer a peaceful settlement. Had Charles been left to his own convictions, there would have been little difficulty in coming to peaceful terms with the reformers. He wanted both money and men from Germany, and could not see the policy of desolating the country, and exterminating his subjects because they refused obedience to the pope. Besides it is thought by some historians, that the nearer he contemplated the principles of the Reformers, the more did they strike a chord in his own spirit. And it is certain that his own sister, Mary, who was married to Christiern, King of Denmark, was a pious princess, and probably a Lutheran. Like Margaret with her brother Francis I, she often pleaded with her brother Charles on behalf of the Protestants.

But the Emperor was in a difficulty, he must play the politician. He was under the most solemn oath to defend the Roman Church and the pontifical dignity; he had therefore to assume a position that would be gratifying to the pope and his party. But as he was slow in his movements, messages were sent from Rome of the most violent character, and Campeggio redoubled his zeal. “Let the Emperor,” said the legate, “conclude a treaty with the Catholic princes of Germany; and if these rebels equally insensible to threats and promises, obstinately persist in their diabolical course, then let his majesty employ fire and sword, let him take possession of all the property of the heretics and utterly eradicate these poisonous pests. Then let him appoint holy inquisitors, who shall go on the track of the remnant of reform, and proceed against them as in Spain against the Moors.” Besides all this, the University of Wittemberg was to be excommunicated; the heretical books burned, and those who had studied there were to be declared unworthy the favour of pope or Emperor. “But first of all,” said the crafty legate to Charles, “a sweeping confiscation is necessary. Even if your majesty confines yourself to the leaders of the party, you may extract from them a large sum of money, which is at all events indispensable to carry on the war with the Turks.”²⁶⁶

Such were the counsels of Rome, and by such the mediators were animated. In the first conference which was held, they addressed the Protestants after the

²⁶⁵ D’Aubigné, vol. 4, p. 277. John Scott, vol. 1, p. 53.

²⁶⁶ Ranke’s *History of the Popes*, vol. 1, p. 76.

style of their party — repeating to them the mildness of the Emperor, his desire to establish unity, and correct some abuses which had crept into the Christian church, in conjunction with the pope. “But,” said the Elector of Brandenburg, “how contrary to the gospel are the sentiments you have adopted! Abandon then your errors, do not any longer remain separate from the church, and sign the Refutation without delay. If you refuse, then, through your fault, how many souls will be lost, how much bloodshed, what countries laid waste, what trouble in all the empire!” And, turning to the Elector of Saxony, he said in plain terms, “that if he did not renounce and anathematize the new-fangled doctrine which he had embraced, the Emperor would by force of arms deprive him of his dignities, his possessions, and his life; that certain ruin would fall upon his subjects, and even upon their wives and children.” The prince, now old and infirm, was, for the moment, much affected by such outrageous language, but speedily recovered his wonted resolution. The princes remained firm and unanimous, though surrounded by the imperial guards, and the city almost in a state of siege.

Immediately after the first meeting, the Landgrave of Hesse left Augsburg. His sudden departure caused a good deal of uneasiness to the Emperor, the princes, and the whole diet. His intentions were unknown; but he left a note with his Chancellor for the Elector, in which he assured him of his unalterable constancy in the cause of the gospel, and his determination rather to shed the last drop of his blood than abandon it. He also exhorted his allies to permit themselves in no manner to be turned aside from the word of God. His ministers remained in the diet, instructed to give their vigorous support to the Protestant cause.²⁶⁷

Philip, who was a man of a quick and discerning mind probably saw that the dispute was now placed on more dangerous and more hopeless ground than ever, and, becoming weary of the insolence of the papists, longed for home. And as the result proved, his judgment was right. The whole of the month of August was spent in long conferences, but without effect. The differences did not admit of arrangement; toleration could not be thought of by the Church of Rome, nor could the unreserved submission which the Catholics demanded be thought of by the Protestants. At the end of the month, the controversy was referred back to the Emperor, in the same state in which the Electors had taken it out of his hands.

THE TERMINATION OF THE DIET

What divines and princes had failed to accomplish, the great Charles, no doubt, thought would soon be done by his personal influence. But he was bitterly disappointed. He probably never understood the real nature of the dispute, at least he could not understand the power of conscience enlightened by the word of God. It was a new word and a new power to the soldier. His

²⁶⁷ Waddington, vol. 3, p. 84.

only idea of arrangement was by concessions from both parties, or the entire submission of one. But he soon had to prove that **conscience** was beyond the reach of his personal influence and the power of his sword.

Finding private means, with all the ingenuity of papal diplomacy, utterly ineffectual, he sent for the chiefs of the Protestant party, on the 7th of September, to meet him in his audience chamber. Only his brother, and a select number of his confidential advisers, were present. The princes and deputies having been introduced, he expressed to them, by the mouth of the Count-Palatine, his surprise and disappointment at their conduct: — “That they, who were few in number should have introduced novelties, contrary to the ancient and most sacred custom of the universal church; should have framed to themselves a singular kind of religion, differing from what was professed by the Catholics, by himself, his brother, and all the princes and states of the empire; nay, utterly disagreeing with all the kings of the earth, and of their own ancestors. Being desirous, however, of peace, he would use his interest with the pope and the other princes to procure a general council, as soon as the place could be agreed upon, but still, on this condition, that they should, in the meantime, follow the same religion which he and the rest of the princes professed.” In reply the Protestants most respectfully declined his terms. They “denied that they had stirred up new sects contrary to the holy scriptures; thanked him for the proposal of a council, but that nothing could compel them to re-establish in their churches the abuses which they had condemned in their Confession, nor, even were they so disposed, could they force them upon subjects now too enlightened to receive them.”

Charles was embarrassed. He did not desire war, and yet how could he avoid it with honour? “He could not understand how a few princes, inconsiderable in power, should reject the conciliatory and condescending proposals he had made to them. It was their duty to abide by the decision of the majority, and not arrogantly to prefer their own opinion to that of the church, and their own wisdom to that of the pope and all the other princes of Christendom.” He begged the Protestants to renew the conference, and hoped that the work of concord might be completed in other eight days. But they declined to renew the conference, as only occasioning useless delay; and on the 9th of September all direct communication between them and Charles terminated.

THE FINAL DECREE

The Emperor now ordered a committee to be chosen for framing a decree, and required the Elector of Saxony to stay four days longer, that he might hear the draft of it. The commissioners appointed for drawing up this decree, were the Electors of Mayence and Brandenburg, the Archbishop of Saltzburg, the Bishops of Strasburg and Spire, George, Duke of Saxony, William, Duke of Bavaria, and Henry, Duke of Brunswick — comprising all the most violent enemies of the Reformation.

On the 22nd of September the decree was read to the Protestants. It affirmed that the Confession of the Elector and his associates had been publicly heard, and confuted; that in the subsequent conferences those princes had retracted part of their new doctrines, but still retained the rest; that space was now allowed them, till the 15th of the ensuing April, to return to the doctrine of the church, at least till the decision of a council; and that they were to make known their final resolution before that day. Meanwhile they were commanded to live peaceably, to permit no changes in religion, to publish no new religious works, to prevent none of their subjects from returning to the ancient faith, and to join with the other princes of the empire to suppress the Anabaptists and Sacramentarians; assuring them that within six months the Emperor would send out his summons for a council, to commence the next year.

The tone of this resolution is extremely moderate, compared with the violent language which we have frequently heard from the papal party; but, whatever may have been their object, the Protestants replied with their usual firmness: — “That they could never admit that the Confession had been refuted; on the contrary, they were more than ever convinced that it was conformable to the word of God, which they would more fully have demonstrated, had a copy of the Refutation been allowed them.” Here Pontanus presented to the diet an **“Apology for the Confession,”** which had been composed in reply to the Refutation, so far at least as the substance of it could be recollected by those who heard it. After referring to their oft-repeated willingness to abandon every opinion not founded on scripture, and their most profound assurances of loyalty to the Emperor and the empire, they concluded by requesting a copy of the proposed decree, that they might make up their minds respecting it, before it passed.

On the morning of the 23rd of September, the Elector had his audience of leave; the Emperor then gave his hand to the princes, and allowed them to depart.

The diet continued its sittings for at least a month after the departure of the Protestant princes, chiefly engaged in providing supplies for the Turkish war. The **“Recess,”** or final decree, of the diet was published on the 19th of November. After comparing several abstracts of this important document, we think Waddington’s the clearest and simplest for modern readers; it is as follows: —

“ Those who denied the corporeal presence were proscribed; the restoration of the ancient sacraments, rites, and ceremonies, in the places where they had been abolished, was commanded; so was the degradation of all married priests; nor were any other to be substituted for them, or instituted anywhere, without the approbation of the bishop. The images, which had been removed, were to be restored, the freedom of the will was to be asserted, and the opposite doctrine prohibited as insulting to God; so was the doctrine of

justification by faith alone; obedience to the civil authorities was diligently inculcated; the preachers were commanded to exhort the people to the invocation of the saints, the observance of feasts and fasts, and attendance at mass the monks were to obey the rules of their order; the clergy to lead a reputable and decorous life. All who should attempt any change in doctrine or worship were made liable to personal inflictions. The destroyed monasteries were to be rebuilt, and their revenues restored to the monks. The decree was to be executed by military force, wherever it might not find voluntary obedience, and the States of the empire were to unite their forces with those of the Emperor for that purpose. The ‘imperial chamber’ was to pursue the rebels, and the neighbouring States to execute its sentences. The pope was to be solicited to convoke a council, within six months, to be assembled within a year from the date of convocation.”

Two days after the public reading of the Recess, Charles V quitted Augsburg. According to the opinion of d’Aubigné, he was greatly distressed in his mind, and knew not how to escape from the labyrinth in which he was caught. As the head of the State, he had interfered for the protection of the church, and the suppression of her enemies. But the opposite had been the result. “If he did not execute his threatenings, his dignity was compromised, and his authority rendered contemptible... The ruler of two worlds had seen all his power baffled by a few Christians; and he who had entered the imperial city in triumph, now left it gloomy, silent, and dispirited. The mightiest power of the earth was broken against the power of God.”²⁶⁸

REFLECTIONS ON THE DIET OF AUGSBURG

No study is dry and barren, and no time is misspent, that leads us to a deeper knowledge of God, and to a more intimate acquaintance with His ways. To see His hand guiding and overruling the most complicated affairs of men for the accomplishment of His own gracious purposes, is truly refreshing and edifying to the soul. “Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.” “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Ps. 107:43; Rom. 8:28) Historians may expatiate with wonder and admiration on the results of such a contest — at the triumph of the few over the many, of the weak over the strong; but while we would seek to speak impartially of each combatant, we would have our eye especially on Him who is “Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

The reader must have observed that the pontifical ministers, guided by the subtle and experienced Campeggio, and countenanced by the Emperor, completely failed to gain any important advantage over the comparatively rude provincial princes. Like the waves breaking against the rock, their craft,

²⁶⁸ D’Aubigné, vol. 4, pp. 132-340; Waddington, vol. 3, pp. 43-113; Scott’s *Continuation*, vol. 1, pp. 1-90; du Pin, vol. 3, p. 206.

duplicity, and evil counsel fell powerlessly on the Elector and his allies. By faith and constancy in the word of God, they stood firm amidst the angry passions and threatenings of their enemies. The pope, the Emperor, the legates, the princes, with all their experience in diplomacy, were utterly astonished to perceive how little they could accomplish. “Day after day,” says a close observer, “their designs were penetrated, and their artifices eluded, by men of no pretensions to political skill, by Germans, natives of obscure provinces, subjects of petty princes, unpractised in the arts of courts, uninstructed even in the rudiments of intrigue. It was in vain that they taxed their ingenuity for some fresh expedient to succeed those that had failed — it was defeated by the same considerate and suspicious sagacity.”

In reflecting on the proceedings of the Diet of Augsburg, we are forcibly reminded of the Diet of Worms, and of the great changes which had taken place during those nine years.

1. At that time Luther stood alone as the representative of the Reformation. Not a single prince had then declared for the new doctrines. At Augsburg all is changed. In place of a solitary monk, we see a numerous and well-organized body of princes, nobles, and theologians, and all of them men of weight and respectability. But Rome was not more humbled and perplexed by the latter than by the former. She could no more silence the single monk than the host of princes. Such was the manifest power of God in connection with His own word. Then she sent forth an edict similar to the Recess of Augsburg, but which she never was able to execute. What could be more convincing, as to the strength of the Reformation, and the weakness of her enemies!

2. The effects or results, of the Augsburg diet were evidently **favourable to the Protestants.** The one grand object of the papal party at this time was to crush and root out, by the sword of Charles, the very seeds of the Reformation from the soil of Germany, but in place of accomplishing its Satanic design, Protestantism was immensely strengthened, and delivered from gross misrepresentation. The calm, sober, respectful, and dignified behaviour of the princes led many of the papists to think more favourably of them, and ultimately to unite with them. “Among the most important converts were Hermann, Archbishop of Cologne, Frederic Count Palatine, first minister of the Emperor, and afterwards Elector; Eric, Duke of Brunswick; the Dukes of Mecklenburg and Pomerania; Joachim, Prince Elector of Brandenburg, who soon after succeeded his father; and George Ernest, son of Prince William of Hennenberg. Some free cities, hitherto papal or neutral, declared in favour of the Reformation; and even the Emperor and his brother carried away with them a less bigoted aversion for the faith and name of Protestant, than they had imbibed from the lessons of their ecclesiastical counsellors.”

3. A considerable **amount of truth** was kept before the mind of that august assembly for nearly six months. This was an immense point gained. Many

dignitaries both in church and state heard the pure truth of God for the first time. Besides the great Confession of the Lutheran churches, two others were presented to the diet. One was sent by Zwingli, the other was called the Tetrapolitan, deriving its name from having been signed by the deputies of the four imperial cities, Strasburg, Constance, Memmingen, and Lindau. Bucer has the credit of drawing up the Tetrapolitan, as Melancthon has of the Lutheran Confession. Thus God had ordained that the truth should be established by three noble confessions. They were substantially the same as to the great fundamental truths of the word of God; they only differed on the doctrine of the real presence, or, concerning the manner in which Christ's body and blood are present in the Eucharist.

4. It would be easy to point out many **blessed truths** in the word of God which were not referred to in these confessions of faith, but our present object is to speak thankfully of what the Lord enabled these noble men to do, and with so much grace. The truth of God as to the church, the body of Christ, and her heavenly relations; the operations of the Holy Spirit; the difference between the righteousness of God and the righteousness of the law, the believer's oneness with an exalted Christ; the hope of the Lord's coming *for* His saints, and afterwards *with* His saints to reign in millennial glory, were comparatively, if not altogether, unknown to the Reformers. Nevertheless, they were faithful to what they knew and held it firmly in the face of every danger. It was by faith that the victory was won.

The history of the Reformation, morally viewed, is now accomplished. There will still be conferences and discussions; leagues, failures, and desolating wars; to say nothing of endless persecutions and martyrdoms; but the emancipating truth of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, without the merit of good works has taken so deep a hold of the European mind, that neither the sword of the empire, the conspiracies of popery, nor the powers of hell, shall ever be able to extinguish it.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN THE AFFAIRS OF CHARLES

There is nothing more interesting, in connection with the history of the Reformation, than the overruling hand of a divine providence in the midst of its enemies. The persons, the writings, and the testimony of God's chosen witnesses are guarded and protected by means the least thought of and the most remote. He only could convert the disputes of monarchs and the armies of the Turks into instruments for the furtherance of the gospel of peace. And this He did from the very commencement.

Immediately after the promulgation of the Edict of Worms against the Reformers, **war commenced** between the Emperor and Francis, king of France. "How desirous soever the Emperor might be to put a stop to Luther's progress," says Dr. Robertson, "he was often obliged, during the Diet at Worms, to turn his thoughts to matters still more interesting, and which

demanded more immediate attention.” The great object of his ambition at this time was to oppose the power of Francis. According to civil history both Charles and Francis laid claim to the duchy of Milan, which had been lost by Louis XII after he had obtained it by conquest. “For a time Francis was successful; but, about the year 1525, Charles again brought it under his own power. Charles, on his part, laid claim to Artois as part of the Netherlands; while he had to defend Navarre, which his grandfather Ferdinand had taken from France. In addition to which, Francis asserted his right to the two Sicilies.” Here we have an explanation of the Emperor’s backwardness to commence hostilities against the Germans. But these quarrels and contests between the leading powers of Europe so occupied their attention for many years, that the Reformation was allowed to spread far and wide, and the oft-repeated threatenings of the papal powers were from time to time diverted and deferred.

Again, the severity of the Edict of Augsburg very naturally excited the most serious apprehensions of all the members of the Protestant body — of all Germany. There was only one expectation throughout the whole country, that of an immediate civil war — the destruction of the Protestants. Such was the outward aspect of affairs; but God had ordained otherwise. The heart, as well as the position of Charles, was unfavourable to persecution at that time. His familiar intercourse with the Protestants for nearly six months had taught him that they were not the dangerous fanatics or the domestic enemies he had understood them to be. He must have been greatly impressed with the fairness and justness of their cause, though he could not understand the civil and religious liberties which they claimed; yet he saw no reason why he should chastise them as rebels for the pleasure of the pope. Clement and all his Italian adherents were greatly disappointed that the Emperor had not assumed his proper character as defender of the church, and had not waged war against the incorrigible heretics. But in the providence of God this was impossible, even if Charles had been as blood-thirsty as Clement.

Despatches from the East greatly perplexed the Emperor, and relieved the Protestants. Solyman had again invaded Hungary at the head of three hundred thousand men, and for the avowed purpose of dethroning Ferdinand and placing another on his throne. Such intelligence drew the thoughts of the Emperor entirely away from Germany. But here we must leave him for a moment, and notice the position of the Protestants.

THE LEAGUE OF SMALCALD

Immediately after the dissolution of the Diet of Augsburg, and the issuing of its menacing decree, the Elector of Saxony and his associates proceeded to adopt such measures as appeared most likely to avert its effects, and to prepare without delay for the worst extremities. The dread of those calamities falling on the Reformers, oppressed the feeble mind of Melancthon, even to the borders of despair; but Luther was neither disconcerted nor dismayed. By

his letters, written from his seclusion at Coburg, he comforted and encouraged his friends. Convinced that the work was the work of God, he exhorted the princes to stand firm on the ground of eternal truth, to trust in the protection of God, and to concede nothing of the pure gospel to the enemy.

As early as the month of November, 1530, the Landgrave of Hesse, more impetuous than the rest, and less averse to the doctrines of the Swiss reformers respecting the Lord's supper, entered into an alliance for six years with the cantons of Zurich, Berne, and Basle, and the city of Strasburg. On the 22nd of the following month, the Landgrave and the other Protestant leaders met at **Smalcald**, in Upper Saxony, and laid the foundation of the famous league known in history as the "**Articles of Smalcald.**" The Landgrave, who had never desisted from his favorite object of union, took great pains to have the Swiss included in the Confederacy, but Luther and those who followed him absolutely refused to admit them.

The Protestant states of the empire, in virtue of this league, were now formed into one body for their mutual defence. But Luther, and some others who had written and spoken strongly against any confederacy, even for the defence of their cause, had great scruples as to the alliance. The jurists were consulted as well as the divines respecting its legality. The former affirmed "That there were certain cases in which the laws permitted resistance to the imperial authority; for, by virtue of the compact between the Emperor and the states, the Emperor engaged not to infringe upon the laws of the empire, and the rights and liberties of the Germanic Church. This compact the Emperor had violated; and therefore the states had a right to combine together against him." Luther replied, that he had not been aware of this, but, being now persuaded that it was so, he had no objections to make; for the gospel did in no respect invalidate civil institutions. Yet he could not approve of any offensive war. Here we may notice in passing that this is the first and fatal downward step of the Protestants. Through fear of the enemy they are taken off the ground of faith. Even Luther falls. In place of conscience and the word of God, they combine to repel force by force.

An affair, not connected with religion, happened about this time, which furnished the Protestants with a *political* ground of resistance to the Emperor. Charles, whose ambitious views enlarged in proportion to the increase of his power, expressed his desire that his brother Ferdinand should be elected **King of the Romans**. Accordingly the Emperor summoned the electoral college to meet at Cologne for this purpose. The Elector of Saxony refused to be present; but instructed his eldest son to appear there, and to "protest against the election as informal, illegal, contrary to the articles of the Golden Bull, and subversive of the liberties of the empire." But the protest was disregarded. The other electors whom Charles had been at great pains to gain, chose Ferdinand King of the Romans, who, in a few days after, was crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle.

THE SECOND MEETING AT SMALCALD

On the 29th of March, 1531, the Protestants opened their second assembly at Smalcald. The league, though at first **limited** to Protestant electors, princes, and states, was now extended so as to include those, who, whatever might be their religious sentiments, were opposed to the Emperor, and protested against the election of Ferdinand. They also took measures to bring the kings of France, England, and Denmark, as well as other princes and states, into the Confederacy. The Dukes of Bavaria, and others who had not been present at the first meeting, now joined the league. Regulations were made for the levying of supplies and soldiers to be ready in case of need.

CHARLES SEEKS TO CONCILIATE THE PROTESTANTS

The warlike aspect of the confederates, and the position of Charles in his Turkish war, led him to court the friendship of the Protestants rather than to provoke hostilities with them. He greatly needed their assistance, and sent his order for men and money. But they refused to furnish their contingent unless peace were secured to them. They reasonably replied, that it would not be wise in them to place their means of self-defence at the disposal of their persecutors, accordingly they required, that the hostile proceedings of the Imperial Chamber — the executive council of the empire — should be stopped. Charles was now in a great difficulty. To make this concession would amount to a virtual repeal of the decree of Augsburg.

After various consultations, the Elector of Mayence and the Prince Palatine interposed as mediators between the parties. They met at Schweinfurt, the following articles being proposed by the mediators: “That the Confession of Augsburg, without further innovation, or any connection with Zwinglians or Anabaptists, should be the doctrine of the Protestants until the decision of a council, that these should make no attempts to diffuse their tenets in the Catholic states, or to disturb the jurisdiction or ceremonies of the church; that they should furnish supplies for the Turkish war; that they should submit to the imperial decrees and tender their allegiance to the Emperor and to the King of the Romans.” The Protestants objected, but chiefly on account of the elevation of Ferdinand. They refused to acknowledge the validity of his title, and on this ground they were supported by some of the Catholic princes and by the Kings of France and England.

THE PEACE OF RATISBON

The Protestants, now conscious of their own strength, replied to the mediators, “That the Emperor should proclaim forthwith a general religious peace; that the two parties should be prohibited from offering any sort of insult or molestation to each other; that the Imperial Chamber should be instructed to suspend the execution of the sentences pronounced on religious matters. If these should be accorded, they promised on their side not in any way to innovate into their confession, not to interfere with the ecclesiastical

jurisdiction in places where it was still established; to render the most zealous obedience to the Emperor; and to furnish all possible supplies for the Turkish war." After some discussion, when no agreement seemed possible, the Conference was adjourned to the 3rd of June, 1532, at Nuremberg.

Meanwhile the Turks were advancing nearer to Austria, and the heart of the empire was in danger. Such was the state of things when the Conference resumed its negotiations at the time appointed. But the discussions and difficulties were speedily disposed of: "The arguments of the diplomatists were silenced by the march of Solyman; and the conditions proposed by the Protestants were accepted. The Emperor was awaiting the result at Ratisbon, and it is recorded that, when the treaty was at length brought to him, without so much as examining the document, he affixed his signature." August 2, 1532.

THE OPINIONS OF HISTORIANS

It may be interesting to notice here, how uniformly historians attribute this great triumph of the Reformers to the direct intervention of God. "It is indeed true," says Waddington, "that it was not by the physical power of the Protestants, still less by the moral authority of their doctrine, but solely by that stronger **providential dispensation**, which converted the very arms of the infidel into an instrument for the revival of the gospel. Still it was an advantage of most essential importance. The edicts of Worms and Augsburg were now virtually suspended; and the interval of their suspension was indefinite." Scultetus calls upon us to admire "the providence of God, which made the Turkish Sultan the great instrument of annulling, or at least suspending the execution of the decrees of Augsburg against the Reformation." Melancthon says, "By the tacit commandment of God, the Emperor was called away from his designs against the Germans by the Turkish war. The dogs lick the sores of Lazarus. The Turk mitigates the edict of Augsburg. No race of men were ever in greater peril than we were: no party was ever subjected to animosities more bitter than ourselves. There was no aid but from God."

And the testimony of the civil historian, Dr. Robertson, is even more weighty than that of the ecclesiastical historians. He says, "In this treaty it was stipulated, that universal peace be established in Germany, until the meeting of a general council, the convocation of which within six months the Emperor shall endeavour to procure: that no person shall be molested on account of religion; that a stop shall be put to all processes begun by the Imperial Chamber against Protestants, and the sentences already passed to their detriment shall be declared void. On their part, the Protestants engaged to assist the Emperor with all their forces in resisting the invasion of the Turks. Thus by their firmness in adhering to their principles, by the unanimity with which they urged all their claims, and by their dexterity in availing themselves of the Emperor's situation, the Protestants obtained terms which

amounted almost to a toleration of their religion: *all the concessions were made by Charles — none by them*; even the favorite point of their approving his brother's election was not mentioned; and the Protestants of Germany, who had hitherto been viewed only as a religious sect, came henceforth to be considered as a political body of no small consequence."²⁶⁹

How far their attainment of political importance was conducive to the interests of Christianity, is another question, and for our own opinion on that subject we must refer the reader to our exposition of the epistle to Sardis at the beginning of the volume. The politician and the theologian should never be united in the same person. The Christian's citizenship is in heaven, the principle of his position here is strangership — that of a pilgrim and a stranger. (1 Peter 2:11; Phil. 3:20)

The princes nobly redeemed their pledge to Charles. They brought forces into the field which exceeded the numbers expected. The Imperial army, by the fresh levies, was increased to ninety thousand well disciplined foot, and thirty thousand horse, besides a prodigious swarm of irregulars. The Emperor took the command in person; and mankind waited in suspense the issue of a decisive battle between the **two greatest monarchs** in the world. More than half a million men, of nearly all nations, looked each other in the face for a time, and closely watched each other's movements: but what were the results? The great Sultan, Solyman the Magnificent, with three hundred thousand men, seemed to have been deprived of energy, of decision, or to have been intimidated by this display of power, and quickly withdrew his formidable army without coming to a battle. It is remarkable, that in such a martial age, this was the first time that Charles, who had already carried on such extensive wars, and gained so many victories, appeared at the head of his troops. "In this first essay of his arms," says his able biographer, "to have opposed such a leader as Solyman was no small honour, to have compelled him to retreat, merited very considerable praise."

But who, we think, can fail to see a **higher hand** in this bloodless victory than the young Emperor's? When the Turk had terrified Charles into submission by his appearance, his work was done. The God who rules over all sent him home. The empire must still be saved for the sake of the Reformation. Solyman had made great preparations for this campaign, but, unaccountable to all, save to faith, it ended without any memorable event. Charles returned to Spain, to superintend his vast military preparations. The Reformers returned to their peaceful and christian occupations, the church had rest from persecution, and the period of her tranquillity was prolonged for well nigh fifteen years.

²⁶⁹ Waddington, vol. 3, p. 160. John Scott, vol. 1, p. 112. Robertson's Reign of Charles V, vol. 5, p. 391.

The Reformation having now gained, through the Lord's watchful care, a great triumph and a solid footing in Germany, we may turn for a little and examine the rise and progress of the reform movement in Switzerland.

SHORT PAPERS ON CHURCH HISTORY

CHAPTER 40

THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND

In studying the history of the Reformation in Germany, and that of Switzerland, the heart is greatly refreshed in observing the perfect unity of the Spirit's operations in both countries. Nationally, politically, and socially, they were widely different. The great monarchical system of Germany, and the thirteen small republics of Switzerland were contrasts. In the former, the Reformation had to struggle with the imperial power, in the latter with the democratic. But, as if by concert, the great work of God's Spirit commenced in both places about the same time, and with precisely the same character of truth. This was clearly of God, and demonstrates the divine origin of the Reformation. "I began to preach the gospel," says Zwingle, "in the year of grace, 1516, that is to say, at a time when Luther's name had never been heard in this country. It is not from Luther that I learnt the doctrine of Christ, but from the word of God. If Luther preaches Christ, he does what I am doing; and that is all."

D'Aubigné is the only historian — so far as we know — who takes particular notice of this interesting fact in its divine aspect. And as he has now gone to his rest and his reward, it gives us unfeigned pleasure to bear testimony to the piety of the historian who could thus walk with God in the midst of his abundant labours. The ways of God in government as well as in grace are truly edifying if we study them in communion with Himself. But the most spiritual subjects will prove barren if He fills not our thoughts. Thus d'Aubigné writes, "Zwingle had no communication with Luther. There was, no doubt, a connecting link between these two men; but we must not look for it on earth; it was above. He who from heaven gave the truth to Luther, gave it to Zwingle also. Their bond of union was God."²⁷⁰

But although the Reformation in both places — and in other states of Europe — derived a striking unity from the One Spirit, the national features of each are not difficult to discern! In Germany the person of Luther, as of lofty stature, towers above all his fellow-reformers. He is seen, he is heard, he is prominent, everywhere and on all occasions. Nothing can be done, nothing can be settled without him. He is the acknowledged head of a party. But in Switzerland there was no such leader. It pleased God to reveal His truth, and to exercise many minds in different cantons at the same time. A number of noble names, resembling a republican senate, stood forth as champions of the faith; Justus, Wittenbach, Zwingle, Leo Juda, Capito, Haller, Farel,

²⁷⁰ D'Aubigné, vol. 2, p. 382.

Æcolampadius, Oswald Myconius, and Calvin. But though none of them assumed the command, one name rises above all the others Ulric Zwingle.

As the great branch of the professing church, commonly called “**The Reformed Churches,**” originated in the Swiss Reformation, it demands a careful and distinct notice, though comparatively brief. The church histories best known in the families of this country are Mosheim’s and Milner’s; but in neither is there any history of the Reformation in Switzerland. Mosheim, a Lutheran divine, almost ignores it: Milner merely remarks on some of the leading men in passing. But before we attempt to trace the history of the Reformation, it may be well to renew our acquaintance with the religious condition of Switzerland previously to that great moral revolution.

CHRISTIANITY INTRODUCED INTO SWITZERLAND

Christianity was first introduced into that country of mountains and lakes, in the seventh century, by **St. Gall**, a native of Ireland, and a follower of the great abbot Columbanus.²⁷¹ After the death of Gallus or St. Gall, his disciples and other missionaries from Ireland continued to labour for the conversion of the Swiss, for the founding of monasteries, and for the propagation of the gospel. A Helvetian church was formed, strictly Romanist in its character, and yielding submission to papal power. About the middle of the eleventh century two hermits found their way from St. Gall to a distant valley on the lake of Zurich. By degrees the valley was peopled around their cells, and on an elevation of two thousand feet above the level of the lake, a church was built, and afterwards the village of Wildhaus. The bailiff or magistrate of this parish, about the end of the fifteenth century, was a man named Zwingle, the father of our Reformer. Thus we can trace the light of truth from Ireland to the continent, indeed throughout Europe and throughout Christendom.

The position of Switzerland, in the bosom of its own mountains, in the very heart of Europe, has been compared to a military school, through which the surrounding nations learnt to perfect themselves in the art of war. The reputation of the Swiss soldiers for courage and endurance, led to the ruinous habit of enlisting extensively in the service of foreign countries. Though strongly attached to their native mountains and their native liberty, the charms of foreign gold induced many to quit their Alpine pastures for the service of strangers.

This practice became a **great national evil**. Husbandry was neglected, families were bereaved of father and son, thousands who left never returned, and those who did were demoralized, so that the ancient simplicity of the people was gradually disappearing. But sad to relate — though recorded by all chroniclers that we know — the great foster-father of this national calamity was the Roman Pontiff. In his contentions with other nations he frequently found it necessary to solicit that help from the cantons, which his

²⁷¹ See Chapter 14: “The Characteristics of a Monk Superior”.

own subjects, either from a want of courage or fidelity, refused to give him. The apostolic treasury supplied the sinews of war, and the poor but brave Swiss often determined the fortunes of the pope on the battle-field of northern Italy. The priests, stationed in various parts of Switzerland, were instructed to prepare the people for this form of obedience to the holy father. “The deluded mountaineers were taught, that it was a holy thing to gird their loins for battle, and a glorious martyrdom to fall in the service of the church.” But such was the growing venality of the Swiss, that the highest bidders for their services were sure to obtain them: this led the pope to great liberality in the distribution of indulgences and benefices; which naturally resulted in the moral corruption and degradation of both priests and people. From this time, the intense reverence which the Swiss church had so long entertained for the See of Rome, rapidly diminished.

“At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the church of Rome had attained such a height of grandeur and power, that it seemed impossible that it should be disturbed. Especially in Switzerland any change of religion appeared hopeless, on account both of the *strict alliance which existed with the pope*, and of the extreme ignorance and corruption which prevailed. But it is in such circumstances that God is pleased to work, that all the glory may be given to Him. His righteousness could not permit Him longer to tolerate the *frightful excess* of disorder which reigned in the churches of Europe... But God must have His true worshippers, who shall *worship Him in spirit and in truth*.”²⁷²

Such was the state of things in general as the new day began to dawn in the valleys of the Alps. Ulric Zwingle has been styled the apostle of the Swiss Reformation. He was no doubt the chief instrument in commencing and carrying on this great work, though some had been in the field before him. He was possessed of a strong and clear judgment, an ardent lover of the truth, earnest in its propagation, and animated with a noble zeal for the glory of God and the good of His church. In many things he was mistaken, as the best of the Lord’s servants may be, but he is well-fitted to rank with such men as Luther and Calvin, or the most illustrious names in ecclesiastical history.

THE BIRTH AND EDUCATION OF ZWINGLE

The family of the Zwingles was ancient, respectable, and at this time in great esteem in the county of **Tockenbourg** — a small district of lofty mountains and narrow valleys, covered with wood and pasturage. Ulric was the third son; he had five brothers and a sister. He was born on New Year’s day, 1484, in an obscure village on the lake of Zurich, which, from its mountainous situation, was called Wildhaus, or the Wildhouse.

²⁷² Abraham Ruchat, of Lausanne, as quoted by Scott, vol. 2, p. 328; Gardner’s *Faiths of the World*, vol. 2, p. 19.

The father and sons were chiefly engaged with their flocks and herds — the chief riches of the district. And beyond the narrow sphere of Tockenbourg, Ulric might never have stepped, had not the promising dispositions of his childhood determined his father to consecrate him to the church. Before he was ten years of age he was placed under the care of his uncle, the dean of Wesen. His uncle gave such an account of his abilities to his father, that with his sanction and assistance he studied successfully at Basle, Berne, Vienna, and then again at Basle. From the remarkable progress which he made in his studies and the promising dispositions he displayed, he was a great favourite with all his masters. While at Berne, the Dominicans had remarked the beautiful voice of the young mountaineer, and hearing of his precocious understanding, prevailed upon him to come and reside in their convent. When the father heard of this step, he strongly expressed his disapproval and ordered his son forthwith to leave Berne and proceed to Vienna. The unsuspecting youth thus escaped from those monastic walls within which Luther suffered so much, and from the moral effects of which he suffered all his life.

During Zwingle's second visit to **Basle**, he studied theology under the justly celebrated Thomas Wittenbach. From this able theologian, who did not conceal from his pupils the errors of the church of Rome, Zwingle seems to have learnt, what Luther about the same time learnt from Staupitz, the great doctrine of justification by faith. "The hour is not far distant," said Wittenbach, "in which the scholastic theology will be set aside, and the old doctrines of the church revived." He assured those earnest young men who flocked around him "that the death of Christ was the only ransom for their souls." The warm heart of Zwingle drank in the truth, and like his master and some of his fellow-students eagerly rushed into the new field of conflict.²⁷³

Here too, he formed some of his warmest friendships which continued through life and which death itself could not destroy. Leo Juda, the son of an Alsatian priest, and Capito, were now the intimate friends of Ulric. Like the mountaineers in general, and like his compeer, Luther Zwingle was a musician, and could play on several instruments: the lute, harp, violin, flute, dulcimer, and hunting horn, were familiar to him, and were often applied to in hours of heaviness, or as a relaxation from severer studies.

ZWINGLE, PASTOR OF GLARIS

After having gone through his course of theology, and taken the degree of Master of Arts, he was chosen — the same year, A.D. 1506 — by the community of **Glaris** to be their pastor. There he remained for ten years, faithfully discharging his professional duties while diligently studying the Holy Scriptures. During this time he seems to have acquired in knowledge and experience the needed preparation for his future services to the Lord and to

²⁷³ D'Aubigné, vol. 2, p. 399; Waddington, vol. 2, p. 268; *The Faiths of the World*, vol. 2, p. 20.

His church. “A most interesting manuscript,” says one of his biographers, “still exists in the library of Zurich — a copy of all St. Paul’s epistles in the original Greek, with numerous annotations from the principal fathers, which Zwingle wrote with his own hand, and then committed entire to memory.” At the end of the MS. is written, “copied by Ulric Zwingle, 1514.” He also studied the Latin classics, and collected from the writings of the fathers — especially from Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Chrysostom — the doctrines and practices of the early church. “I study the doctors,” he said, “not as authorities, but with the same end as when we ask a friend: How do you understand this passage?” The writings of Wycliffe and Huss he also knew, but like all students of his age, he devoured the writings of Erasmus as they successively appeared.

From this time, the ecclesiastical abuses which Rome had introduced became obvious to his mind; and, while expounding the scriptures from the pulpit, he faithfully and fearlessly exposed the innovations and corruptions of the Romish system. This was the **dawn of the Reformation in Switzerland**. Zwingle was maintaining the absolute authority of the truth of God and denouncing the falsehoods of Rome.

While thus engaged, he was obliged to leave his more sacred duties, and accompany the confederate army on an Italian expedition. Threatened by Francis I who vowed to avenge in Italy the honour of the French name, the pope, in great consternation, entreated the cantons to come to his aid. It was then the custom in Switzerland for the *Landamman*, or chief magistrate of the canton, and the pastor of the parish to take the field with the troops on such campaigns. In the years 1513 and 1515, Zwingle was compelled to follow the banner of his parish to the plains of Italy. On the former of these occasions, the French were defeated by the confederates at Novara; and monks and priests proclaimed from their pulpits that the Swiss were the people of God, who avenged the bride of the Lord on her enemies. But, on the latter occasion he witnessed a signal defeat of his countrymen on the fatal field of Marignan. There, says history, the flower of the Helvetian youth perished. And Zwingle, who had been unable to prevent the great disaster, and overcome by his national feelings and patriotism, seized a sword and threw himself into the midst of danger. This was natural, and in those times it was considered noble, but it was not christian. He forgot for the moment that as a minister of Christ he should fight only with the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal,” says the apostle, “but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor. 10:4, 5)

Zwingle now felt more keenly than ever the necessity of reform in both church and state. He had seen the consequences of the practice long prevalent among his people, of letting out their soldiers to fight the battles of other

nations, and to settle quarrels which did not belong to them. The sight of so many of his brave countrymen being slaughtered beyond the Alps in defence of a faithless and ambitious pope, filled him with indignation. He raised his voice against the practice; and, through his means, it was given up by several of the cantons. He also saw when in Italy, as Luther had seen, the pride and luxury of the prelates, the avarice and ignorance of the priests, and the licentiousness and dissipation of the monks. His future course was decided. He ascended the pulpit with a holier determination to preach the word of God more clearly, more fully, comparing scripture with scripture; and soon a fresh spirit of inquiry began to breathe on the mountains and in the valleys of Switzerland.

The question of *priority* between Zwingle and his Saxon ally, as to their aggressions on the papacy, has been raised by some historians. Both seem to have received the truth about the same time, especially the knowledge of salvation by grace through faith alone; but as a Reformer, Luther evidently was first in the field. When Zwingle was preaching the gospel in a comparatively quiet way, Luther was publicly raising the standard of truth against the dominion of error, and causing his voice to be heard in all parts of Christendom.

ZWINGLE AT EINSIDLEN

In the autumn of 1516, Zwingle received an invitation from the governors of the Benedictine monastery of **Einsidlen**, in the canton of Schwyz, to be pastor and preacher in the church of the Virgo Eremitana — “Our Lady of the Hermitage.” The hand of the Lord in bringing his servant to Einsidlen is very manifest. It was the grand resort of superstition for all Switzerland, for nearly all Christendom. “It may be called,” says Ruchat, “the Ephesian Diana, or the Loretto of Switzerland.” Legends of the most marvellous kind crowd its early history. Here the great Reformer was to have a nearer view of the idolatrous worship of Rome. The great object of attraction was an image of the virgin, carefully preserved in the monastery, and which had, it was said, the power of working miracles. Crowds of pilgrims flocked to Einsidlen from every part of Christendom, to pay their devotions and present their offerings.

Over the gate of this abbey the blasphemous inscription was engraver on a tablet, and supported by the figure of an angel, “Here a plenary remission of sins may be obtained.” This delusion brought pilgrims from all quarters to merit this grace by their pilgrimage, at the festival of the virgin. “The church, the abbey, and all the valley were filled with her devout worshippers. But it was particularly at the great feast of ‘the consecration of the angels’ that the crowd thronged the Hermitage. Many thousand individuals of both sexes climbed in long files the slopes of the mountain leading to the oratory, singing hymns or counting their beads. Such was then, and is even to the present day, the scenes at ‘our Lady of the Hermitage.’ It is computed that not less than a hundred thousand poor deluded votaries visit this place yearly. Such is

popery, even in the present hour, where it is dominant; and that in a free country, surrounded by an enlightened population, and within sight of Protestant establishments.”²⁷⁴

After what we have said of the extraordinary sanctity of this monastery, the reader may be surprised to find that the abbot, Conrad of Rechburg, was the most celebrated huntsman and breeder of horses in the whole country. He was greatly averse to superstition, therefore he preferred his stud and the field to the Hermitage. When urged by the visitors of the convent on one occasion to celebrate the sacrifice of the mass, he replied, “If Jesus Christ is really present in the host, I am unworthy to look upon Him, much less to offer Him in sacrifice to the Father; and, if He is not there present, woe unto me if I present bread to the people as the object of their worship instead of God... I can only cry with David, *‘Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness,’*... *‘and enter not into judgment with Thy servant.’* I desire to know nothing more.”

The manager of the temporalities of the abbey, Baron Geroldseck, was a man of another order. He is represented as mild in character, sincere in piety, and a zealous patron of learning. His favorite habit was to invite learned men to his convent, and, influenced by the fame of Zwingle’s learning and piety, he had invited him to accept the office of minister of the abbey church. In this seclusion the young Reformer enjoyed rest, leisure, the advantages of a library, and congenial friends. The eloquence of the new preacher and the character of the governor, drew a number of learned men to Einsidlen. He soon acquired the confidence of the admirers of Reuchlin and Erasmus, and contracted some of his most intimate and tender friendships. On this page of his history we find the names of Francis Zingk, Michael Sander, John Cæxlin, Capito and Hedio — men, whose names are famous in the history of the Reformation. But although he greatly enjoyed reading the scriptures, the fathers, Reuchlin and Erasmus, with these intelligent men, his real work was *Reformation*, and in as far as he then understood it, he honestly pursued it.

ZWINGLE AND REFORM AT EINSIDLEN

He began with the governor. “Study the scriptures,” said Zwingle to Geroldseck: “a time may soon come when Christians will not set great store either by St. Jerome or any other doctor, but solely by the word of God.” He acted on the prophetic words of the Reformer himself, and also permitted the nuns in the convent to read the Bible in the vulgar tongue. And so great was his esteem and affection for Zwingle that he followed him to **Zurich**, and died with him on the field of Cappel, October 11, 1531. The hunting abbot, too, appears to have profited by the ministrations of the new preacher. He banished almost all superstitious observances from his abbey and died in 1526, confessing that he had confidence in nothing but the mercy of God. Zwingle’s

²⁷⁴ Scott, vol. 2, p. 344. d’Aubigné, vol. 2, p. 426.

faithful and energetic preaching drew crowds to the abbey church, and made a great impression on their minds. He endeavoured to lead them away from the worship of images to faith in Christ, from human inventions and traditions to the pure doctrine of the gospel. "Seek the pardon of your sins," he cried, "not from the blessed Virgin, but in the merits and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ."

What Luther learnt from his visit to Rome, Zwingle learnt from his residence at Einsidlen. His whole soul was stirred within him when he saw thousands of pilgrims from the most distant parts of Europe, coming there to merit the forgiveness of their sins by presenting their offerings to the patroness of the Hermitage. He did not hesitate between his conscience and his interests, or the interests of the monastery, but boldly raised his voice against the delusion. He struck at the very root of the evil, by proclaiming a free salvation through faith in Christ, without the merit of pilgrimages, indulgences, vows and penances. He appealed to the multitudes on two grand fundamental truths more especially — *that God is the source of salvation, and that He is the same everywhere*. "Do not imagine," said he from the pulpit, "that God is in this temple more than in any other part of creation. He is as ready to hear prayers at your own homes as at Einsidlen. Can long pilgrimages, offerings, images, the invocation of the Virgin, or of the saints, secure for you the grace of God? What avails the multitude of words with which we embody our prayers? What efficacy has a glossy cowl, a smooth shorn head, a long and flowing robe, or gold embroidered slippers?... God looks on the heart, but, alas! our hearts are far from Him."

At the same time he preached the doctrine of reconciliation through faith in the precious sacrifice of Christ once offered on Calvary. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. 5: 20-21)

THE EFFECT OF ZWINGLE'S PREACHING

Admiring friends might have given a somewhat embellished representation of **Zwingle's discourses**, but the effects produced, according to the record of the times, plainly prove his great power over the multitudes of pilgrims. "Language so unexpected produced impressions difficult to describe. Admiration and indignation were painted alternately on every face while Zwingle was preaching; and, when at length the orator had concluded his discourse, a confused murmur betrayed the deep emotions he had excited. Their expression was restrained at first by the holiness of the place; but, as soon as they could be freely vented, some, guided by prejudice or personal interest, declared themselves against this new doctrine; others felt a fresh light breaking in upon them, and applauded what they heard with transport... Many," it is said, "were brought to Jesus, who was earnestly preached to them

as the only Saviour of the lost; and many carried back with them the tapers and offerings which they had brought to present to the Virgin. The grand motto of the preacher to the pilgrims — ‘*Christ alone saves, and He saves everywhere,*’ was remembered by many, and carried to their homes. Often did whole bands, amazed at these reports, turn back without completing their pilgrimage, and Mary’s worshippers diminished in number daily.’²⁷⁵

But although Zwingli thus uncompromisingly attacked the superstitions of the crowd that surrounded him, his orthodoxy was still unsuspected by the papal party. They saw the power which such a man would have in a republican state, and their plan was to gain him; they had gained Erasmus by pensions and honours, why not Zwingli? Besides, the court of Rome was always politic enough to allow considerable latitude to eminent men, provided they recognized the supremacy of the pontiff. Just about this time — 1518 — Zwingli was flattered by the avowed estimation in which he was held by Pope Leo X, who sent him a diploma, constituting him a chaplain of the Holy See; and for two years after this he received his pension from Rome. Both Luther and Zwingli were long in learning that the Church of Rome could not be reformed, that it was corrupt, root and branch, and that the voice of God to His people always is, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” When the Christian finds himself in a wrong position ecclesiastically, the first thing he has to do is to leave it, trusting the Lord for further light and future guidance. (Rev. 18:4; Isa. 1:16, 17; Rom. 12:9)

ZWINGLI REMOVES TO ZURICH

After remaining nearly three years in Einsidlen, Zwingli received an invitation from the provost and canons of the cathedral church of **Zurich** to become their pastor and preacher. During his residence at Einsidlen he had become known to many persons of great consideration, and the number of his friends had greatly increased. But he had no friend more devoted than Oswald Myconius, master of the public school at Zurich, and in high esteem there for his piety, learning, and intelligence. In answer to this call, and the earnest entreaties of Myconius, Zwingli went to Zurich to talk over the matter, and weigh it well in the presence of the Lord. Some of the canons, fearing the effects of the innovating spirit of so bold a preacher, objected to his appointment. But his personal appearance, as well as his reputation, was in his favour. He was a man of the most graceful form and manners, his countenance agreeable beyond expression, mild and gentle in his general bearing pleasing in conversation, and celebrated throughout the whole country for his eloquence, seriousness, and discretion. He was elected by a large majority and removed to Zurich.

²⁷⁵ Scott, vol. 2, p. 348. d’Aubigné, vol. 2, p. 428.

On the first day of January, 1519, being his thirty-fifth birthday, Zwingli entered upon his new office. The divine Master had been educating His servant during his residence at the Hermitage for this central sphere of labour. He who had chosen the new university of Wittenberg for the Saxon Reformer, selected for the Swiss the cathedral church of Zurich. The Lord was overruling all things for the good of His church and the progress of the Reformation. The city of Zurich was regarded as the head of the Confederation. Here the Reformer would be in communication with the most intelligent and energetic people in Switzerland, and still more with all the cantons that collected around this ancient and powerful state. The new and earnest style of Zwingli's preaching attracted great crowds to the church, and produced a strong impression on their minds. Soon after his arrival he was reminded by the administrator of the temporalities that he must make every exertion to collect the revenues of the chapter, and to exhort the faithful, both from the pulpit and the confessional, to pay all tithes and dues, and to show by their offerings their affection for the church. But Zwingli was happily delivered from the spirit of the rapacious priests, and bent all his energies in another direction.

ZWINGLI AND THE GOSPEL

Before accepting the office, he had stipulated that he should not be confined in his preaching to the lessons publicly read, or to certain passages appropriated to the festivals and different Sundays in the year; but that he should be allowed to explain **every part of the Bible**. He saw that the habit of preaching from a few detached portions year after year necessarily limits the people's knowledge of the word of God. He commenced with the Gospel of St. Matthew. "The life of Christ," said he to the Chapter, "has been too long hidden from the people. I shall preach upon the whole of the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter after chapter, according to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, without human commentaries, drawing solely from the fountain of scripture, sounding its depths, comparing one passage with another, and seeking for understanding by constant and earnest prayer. It is to God's glory, to the praise of His only Son, to the real salvation of souls, and to their edification in the true faith, that I shall consecrate my ministry." Thus did Zwingli nobly abandon the exclusive use of the mere scraps of the Gospels which had been the textbook of the papal preachers since the time of Charlemagne.

Language so novel, so bold, but obviously so consistent for a minister of the New Testament, made a deep impression on the college of canons. "This way of preaching," exclaimed some, "is an innovation; one innovation will lead to another; and where shall we stop?" "It is not a new manner," replied Zwingli, "it is the old custom. Call to mind the homilies of Chrysostom on St. Matthew, and of Augustine on St. John." Unlike Luther, he did not shock men's minds by his rough and stormy replies; he was mild and courteous in his intercourse with the heads of the church. But in the pulpit — his own province — he

proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation with unmeasured heart and voice, and thundered against the abuses of the times. He everywhere enforced the necessity of an undivided and unreserved adherence to the written word of God as the only standard of faith and duty. And so great was the impression which he had made on the Zurichers, that in little more than a year after his settlement there, the Supreme Council published an edict, enjoining all preachers and persons having the care of souls, to teach nothing which they could not prove from the scriptures, and to pass over in silence the mere “doctrines and ordinances of men.”

Like a John the Baptist, he called most earnestly upon all classes to repent. He attacked the prevailing errors and vices among his people — idleness, intemperance, luxury, the oppression of the poor, and foreign services. “He spared no one in the pulpit,” says Myconius, “neither pope, prelates, Emperor, kings, dukes, princes, lords, nor even the confederates themselves. Never had they heard a man speak with such authority. All the strength and all the delight of his heart was in God; and accordingly he exhorted all the city of Zurich to trust solely in Him.” His labours were attended with the most encouraging success. At the close of his first year he could reckon upon as many as two thousand persons who had embraced his opinions, and professed to be converted to the gospel which he preached. There we leave them. God will judge the heart. But what a moment for Zurich, for the souls of men! The Lord who is Head over all things to His church, was sustaining and protecting His servant, and His Spirit was at work in the hearts and consciences of the people.

Such was God’s chief instrument in the work of Reformation in Switzerland. His rejection of the errors of the papal system and his experience of the power of truth, was produced and sustained solely by the instrumentality of the New Testament, which he diligently perused with earnest prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit. From day-break until ten o’clock he used to read, write, and translate. After dinner he listened to those who required his advice, he then would walk out and visit his flock. He resumed his studies in the afternoon; took a short walk after supper, and then wrote his letters, which often occupied him till midnight. He always worked standing, and never permitted himself to be disturbed except for some important matter.”²⁷⁶

ZWINGLE AND THE SALE OF INDULGENCES

In the month of August, 1518, the bull of Pope Leo X for the **sale of indulgences** throughout Christendom, was published in Switzerland. One Bernardin Samson, a Franciscan monk of Milan, to whom the pope gave his commission crossed the Italian Alps with his long procession of attendants. He executed the disgraceful traffic entrusted to him by “his holiness,” with the same blasphemous pretensions, and the same clamorous effrontery as the

²⁷⁶ See d’Aubigné, vol. 2, p. 450. Scott, vol. 2, p. 355. *Universal History*, vol. 7, p. 73.

notorious Tetzels of Germany. Zwingle was at that time pastor of the Hermitage, and fearlessly testified against the imposture and against the personal conduct of Samson. Through the opposition thus offered by our Reformer, Samson had little success within the Canton of Schwyz. He thence proceeded to Zug, Lucerne, and Unterwalden, where he had many purchasers. But being chiefly poor people, they could not give more than a few pence for an indulgence. This did not suit Samson's money chest, and he prepared to proceed. "After crossing," says the Genevese historian — whose pardonable love for his native land leads him to embrace every opportunity to speak of its grandeur — "after crossing fertile mountains and rich valleys, skirting the everlasting snows of the Oberland, and displaying their Romish merchandise in these most beautiful portions of Switzerland they arrived in the neighbourhood of Berne."

Here Samson was received with some reluctance, but eventually he succeeded in gaining admission. He entered the town with a splendid retinue, under banners displaying jointly the arms of the pope and of the cantons. He set up his stall in St. Vincent's church, and began to bawl out his indulgences, varying in price from a few pence to the sum of five hundred ducats. "Here," said he to the rich, "are indulgences on parchment for a crown." "There," said he to the poor, "are absolutions on common paper for two batz" — three halfpence. Such were the shameless impositions which the emissaries of the Romish church were permitted, and even commissioned by the pope himself, to practise upon the pitiable ignorance of its credulous devotees.

From Baden, where his traffic was turned into ridicule by the wits, he entered the diocese of the bishop of Constance. Acting solely on the authority of the pontifical bulls, he omitted to present his credentials to the bishop or to ask his sanction. The bishop was offended at this disrespectful conduct, and immediately directed Zwingle as the chief pastor of Zurich, and the other pastors of his diocese to exclude the stranger from their churches. The bishop was not sorry to have so good a reason for rejecting the intruder. He was regarded as invading the rights of bishop, parish priest, and confessor; for they were left short of their dues by this exciting trade.

In obedience to this mandate, **Henry Bullinger**, rural dean of Bremgarten, and father of the illustrious Reformer of the same name, refused to receive the pope's agent. After a severe altercation which ended in the excommunication of the dean, Samson proceeded to Zurich. Meanwhile Zwingle had been engaged for about two months — seeing the enemy gradually approaching — in arousing the indignation of the people against the pope's pardons. He knew in his own soul, and on the authority of scripture, the sweetness of God's forgiveness, through faith in the precious sacrifice of Christ. Like Luther he often trembled because of his sinfulness, but he found in the grace of the Lord Jesus a deliverance from all his fears. "When Satan would frighten me," he said, "by crying out, You have not done this or that which God commands' forthwith the gentle voice of the gospel consoles me by

saying, That thou canst not do — and certainly thou canst do nothing — Christ has done perfectly. Yes, when my heart is troubled because of my helplessness and the weakness of my flesh, my spirit is revived at the sound of the glad tidings, Christ is thy sanctification! Christ is thy righteousness! Christ is thy salvation! Thou art nothing, thou canst do nothing! Christ is the Alpha and Omega; Christ is the first and the last, Christ is all things; He can do all things. All created things will forsake and deceive thee, but Christ, the holy and righteous One, will receive and justify thee... Yes!" exclaimed the enlightened, the happy, the humble, but firm Reformer, "Yes! it is Christ who is our righteousness, and the righteousness of all those who shall ever appear justified before the throne of God."

In the knowledge, enjoyment, and proclamation of such soul-emancipating truths, the Zurichers in general were prepared to shut their gates against the impostor. When he reached the suburbs, a deputation was appointed to meet him outside the walls, who informed him that he would be allowed to retire unmolested, on condition of his revoking the excommunication of Bullinger. The legate, seeing the strong feeling that was against him, speedily obeyed and retired. Slowly he moved off with a wagon drawn by three horses, and laden with the money that his falsehoods had drained from the poor, he turned towards Italy and repassed the mountains. The diet immediately addressed a strong remonstrance to the pope, in which they denounced the disgraceful conduct of his legate, and recommended his holiness to recall him. Leo replied in about two months — April, 1519 — with mildness and address. His experience of the Saxon revolution no doubt led him to hope that by timely concessions he might prevent a second in the Swiss cantons.

"The Helvetic Diet," says d'Aubigné, "showed more resolution than the German. That was because neither bishops nor cardinals had a seat in it. And hence the pope, deprived of these supporters, acted more mildly towards Switzerland than towards Germany. But the affair of the indulgences, which played so important a part in the German, was merely an episode in the Swiss Reformation."

THE RISING STORM

The zeal of Zwingle, in assailing and expelling the vendors of indulgences from the diocese of the bishop of Constance, was much applauded by that prelate. And John Faber, his vicar, then the warm friend of Zwingle, wrote to him in terms of kindness and esteem, exhorting him "resolutely to prosecute what he had auspiciously begun, and promising him the bishop's support." Encouraged by such commendations, and in the hope that the bishop was disposed to further the work which lay so near his heart, he invited him both by public and private solicitations, to give his support to the evangelical truth, and to permit the free preaching of the gospel throughout his diocese. "I failed not," says Zwingle "with all reverence and humility, publicly and privately, by written addresses to urge him to countenance the light of the

gospel, which he now saw bursting forth so that no human power could avail to stifle or suppress it.” But the Reformer soon found that a change had taken place in the mind of the bishop and his vicar since the indulgence seller had left the country. “They,” he adds, “who had lately excited me by their reiterated exhortations, now deigned me no answer beyond these public and official documents, yet the vicar in the first instance, expressly assured me, both by word of mouth and by letter, that his bishop could no longer endure the insolence and unjust arrogance of the Roman Pontiff.”

John Faber — whom we have seen at Augsburg, in association with Eck and Cochlaeus — after this break with Zwingle, became one of the most persevering enemies of the Reformation. The Reformer, from the commencement of his ministry at Zurich, had laboured unweariedly to instruct the people in the meaning, object, and character of the gospel and at the same time to impress upon them the importance of being guided in all their religious duties by the scriptures of truth only. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) Nothing can be a “good work” for the performance of which, scripture gives us no information. Such views and such teaching Zwingle had soon to prove could not long be approved by the dignitaries of the papa; hierarchy. But by the blessing of God, from this time henceforward, he was to place all his hopes and expectations on a surer foundation. Antonio Pucci, the pope’s legate, endeavoured to seduce him but in vain. “He conferred with me four times,” says Zwingle, “and made me many splendid promises, but I told him that from that time forward I should devote myself, by the divine grace, to the preaching of the word, as the effectual means of shaking the power of the papacy.”

Thus prepared to proceed inflexibly on his course, **he resigned** in the year 1520 a pension which he received from Rome for the purchase of books, and as chaplain of the holy see. “Formerly,” he says, “I thought myself permitted to enjoy the liberality of the pope, so long as I could maintain with a pure and pious conscience his religion and his doctrines, but after the knowledge of the Son had grown up in me, I renounced for ever both the pontiff and his presents.”

The effects of Zwingle’s preaching upon the minds of the people, and the influence of his presence in Zurich, were first displayed about this time. Many of the ceremonies of the Roman church were disregarded and fell into disuse. The fast of Lent, which had hitherto been kept with the utmost strictness, was neglected by the townspeople. The civil authorities became alarmed, and on the complaint of several priests some were thrown into prison. The people maintained that in their liberty as Christians they had given up such distinctions of meats. The bishop of Constance, hearing of the unsettled state of things, instantly issued an edict against the innovations and the innovators,

exhorting the people by his agents to remain steadfast to the church, at least till after the decision of the council — the usual salvo. The monks, who had been ordered by an edict of the senate, to preach the word of God only, were confounded. Most of them had never read it. This decree became the signal for the most violent opposition from every order of monks and priests. Plots began to be formed against the head pastor of Zurich; his life was threatened. Sometimes it was considered necessary to place a patrol in the street to protect the Reformer and his friends.

Zwingle now saw the storm gathering in all quarters and well he knew against whom its fury would be directed. But this only aroused his zeal, and led him to write pamphlets in vindication of the truth and his friends, and to send them broadcast over the land. The principles of the Reformation now made such progress throughout Switzerland, that Erasmus, in a letter which he wrote in 1522 to the president of the court of Mechlin declared, that “the spirit of Reform had so much increased in the Helvetic confederacy that there were two hundred thousand who abhorred the See of Rome, and are to a great extent adherents of Luther.”

Seeing that the work of Reformation is thus hopefully commencing in other parts of the Helvetic republic, we may here pause for a little, and briefly notice some of these positions, and some of the principal men with whom we shall become better acquainted as we proceed.

SHORT PAPERS ON CHURCH HISTORY

CHAPTER 41

THE LEADERS OF THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND

Having rapidly traced the course of proceedings in the successive scenes of Zwingle's labours in the three cantons, Glaris, Schweiz, and Zurich, we will now pass on to other scenes and make ourselves acquainted with some of those devoted men whom God raised up and fitted for the same blessed work of His sovereign grace and power in Switzerland.

John Hausschein, which in Greek is *Æcolampadius*, was born in the year 1482 at Winsberg, in Franconia, about a year before Zwingle and Luther. He was descended from a respectable family which had come from Basle. His father at first destined him to business or the legal profession, but his pious mother desired to consecrate him to God and His church; and to this end she watched over him like Monica over Augustine. He was of a mild and peaceful disposition, of excellent character, and from early life he was distinguished above his contemporaries for his progress in learning. He was sent to Heidelberg and hence to Bologna where he studied jurisprudence; but as this study was contrary to his own inclination and the desire of his mother, his father was willing that he should devote himself to theology.

In accordance with the wish of his parents he commenced his ministry in his native place; but from an over-sensitive mind, he was persuaded that he was not qualified for such a charge, and in a short time left for Basle. He was appointed to the principal church there, and two years afterwards he was promoted by the University to the dignity of doctor in theology. He was a sincere Christian, an earnest and an eloquent preacher of Christ. He was greatly loved and admired by his hearers, not only for his public ministrations, but for his humility, meekness, and piety. Meanwhile he made such unusual proficiency in the three languages of religion as to attract the attention of Erasmus. Basle was then the great city of learning and of the printing press. "Erasmus was at this time engaged in preparing his first edition of the New Testament, and obtained the assistance of *Æcolampadius* in comparing the quotations from the Old Testament, which are found in the New, with the Hebrew original." *Æcolampadius* soon became enthusiastically attached to Erasmus, and might have suffered seriously in his soul from his ideas of a half-way Reformation; but the Lord in His good providence called him away for a time to the quiet retreat of his native place. Erasmus seems to have been equally fond of the youthful preacher. He thus acknowledges the important service he rendered him: "In this part I have received no little aid from the subsidiary labours of a man eminent not for his piety only, but for his knowledge of the three languages, which constitutes a true theologian. I

mean John Œcolampadius; for I had not myself made sufficient progress in Hebrew to authorize me to pronounce on those passages.”

From Basle he removed to **Augsburg**, having received an invitation from the canons of the cathedral church to become preacher there. Here he had the opportunity of preaching Christ to large numbers of the people, but again his timidity of mind pursued him and induced him to resign. Though a Christian, he had not found perfect rest for his soul in the finished work of Christ. Peace with God is the only remedy for such uneasy, restless souls. It gives stability and consistency to the mind even in the ordinary affairs of this life. We can look at things more calmly, weigh them up in the presence of God, and estimate them in the light which makes manifest the nature and reality of everything. “I have set the Lord always before me,” says the psalmist, and what are the consequences? “He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved, my heart is glad, my glory rejoiceth.” These are the unfailing consequences of having the Lord always before us as our one object: at our right hand, the place of strength; hence follow stability of mind, gladness of heart, always rejoicing. But like thousands more, and in all ages, Œcolampadius had not left the corrupt system in which he found himself. In place of ceasing to do evil, and then learning to do well (as exhorted in the Old Testament), or abhorring that which is evil, then cleaving to that which is good (as in the New Testament), he remained in Rome and vainly desired a purification of Romanism. Disappointed and despairing, as every sincere heart must be that tries to patch the old garment in place of accepting the new one, he threw himself into a monastery, proposing to spend his future days in retirement and study.

There he remained for nearly two years, and there he became acquainted, like Luther, with that monastic life which is the highest expression of the papal system. After leaving the cloister of Saint Bridget, he found a refuge in the castle of the celebrated Francis Sickingen, then the resort of so many learned men; after his death he returned to Basle, where he engaged in good earnest in the work of the Reformation, and where he spent the remainder of his days.

Leo Juda is represented by historians as a man of small stature, but of a heroic mind: as full of love for the poor, and of zeal against false doctrine; indeed, it was said of Leo Juda that whatever constitutes a good man was not only found but abounded in him. He was born in the year 1482, and was descended from a family of some rank in Alsace. After studying for a time at Schlestadt, he removed in 1505 to Basle, and there became the fellow-student of Zwingli under the excellent Wittenbach. His first pastoral charge, like Œcolampadius, was in his own province, but like him also he very soon left it and returned to Basle. Having preached for some time in the church of St. Theodore, he succeeded Zwingli at Einsidlen in 1518, and from thence he removed to Zurich in 1523, to occupy the station of pastor of Saint Peter’s; and to become a true yoke-fellow to Zwingli in the work of the Reformation. Besides being an earnest preacher of the gospel, he was a diligent student of

the writings of Reuchlin, Erasmus, and Luther. He translated into the German language a paraphrase of the New Testament by Erasmus; which was considered at the time of great importance, as scarcely any exposition of the scriptures in the vernacular tongue was then in circulation. He also employed his knowledge of the Hebrew in the production of valuable translations of the sacred writings into the German and Latin languages.

Conrad Kirsner, or Pellican, was also a native of Alsace and born in the year 1478. He was celebrated for his acquaintance with Hebrew and other oriental literature, which he consecrated to the illustration of divine truth. Much against the wishes of his friends he entered upon the monastic life at the age of sixteen. At the age of twenty-four, his learning and piety recommended him to the office of professor of theology at Basle; and two years afterwards he received the degree of doctor in divinity by a bull from the pope. He was taken ill at Milan on his way to Italy — where he was to be crowned with higher honours — but he returned to Basle, and was employed by the bishop to draw up a summary of the chief points of christian doctrine, directly from the sacred scriptures. His fame, influence, and honours rapidly advanced, but with them a great and salutary change of mind. He had now begun to distrust the reigning doctrines and figments of popery- indulgences, confessions, purgatory, and the pope's supremacy. The writings of Luther began at this time to be spread abroad; the ninety-five theses which that Reformer had published were put into his hand, with which he agreed in the main, but hoped that Luther would explain himself more fully. After this Pellican gradually prepared to renounce his monastic cowl, and his prospects of advancement; he laboured to disseminate the pure truth of God for some time at Basle, and in the year 1526 removed to Zurich, where he continued till his death in 1556.

Wolfgang Fabricus Koefflin, or Capito, was the son of an Alsatian senator. His mother was of noble family. He was born at Haguenau in the year 1478. Thus the province of Alsace has the honour of being the birthplace of three most distinguished men and zealous Reformers. Capito's own inclination was the church, but as his father had a strong dislike to the character of the clergy and the theology of the times, he applied himself to medicine; indeed he successively studied physics, divinity, and canon-law, and gained the degree of doctor in each; but after his father's death he confined himself to his original choice of the clerical profession.

His career may be briefly stated. He was professor of philosophy for a short time at Friburg, then preacher at Spires for three years; when on a visit to Heidelberg, he formed an acquaintance with Œcolampadius which was interrupted only by the death of the latter. In 1513 he found his way to Basle. On the invitation of the senate, he accepted the office of minister of the cathedral church of their city. Erasmus speaks of him as “a profound theologian, a man eminently skilled in the three languages, and of the utmost piety and sanctity.” When settled at Basle, he persuaded his friend Œcolampadius to join him there. This was the dawn of the Reformation in that

place. These two devoted men laboured abundantly in the gospel and in the ministry of the word. Much good seed was sown, which produced a rich harvest in the salvation of souls to the glory of God the Father.

For five years, ending with 1520, Capito had been happily engaged in expounding the scriptures, especially the Gospel of Matthew, to large congregations; and he thus announced, in that year, his progressive success: "Here matters are constantly improving. The theologians and monks are with us. A very large audience attends my lectures on Matthew. There are some indeed who threaten dreadful things against Luther, but the doctrine is too deeply rooted to be torn up by violence. Some accuse me of favouring Lutheranism; but I carefully conceal from them my inclination." This smooth state of things did not long continue. He was charged with the heresy of Luther; a conspiracy of priests and monks was formed against him; and, being at that time solicited by Albert, Archbishop of Mentz, to become his chancellor, he accepted the invitation and left the place. The people hearing of this were greatly excited, their indignation was roused against the priests and the monks, and a violent commotion broke out in the city.

The fame of Capito as a man of learning and piety was now so great, that Leo X, unsolicited, conferred on him a provostship. The Emperor, Charles V, raised him to the rank of a noble; and Albert, the first prince of the German Empire, gave him the appointment of ecclesiastical counsellor and chancellor. But these high positions and honours did not suit the spirit of his mind, the real desire of his heart; though at that time he little understood the great work for which the Lord was preparing him. Gradually, his eyes were opening to the discovery of the truth; the mass became offensive to his conscience, and he refused to celebrate it any more. After being about three years at the court of the cardinal archbishop, he resigned, and joined Bucer at Strasburg as a humble preacher of the gospel, where he continued till his death in 1541. This was the work in which his soul delighted. He began to urge the necessity of a reformation, and of vigorously prosecuting the work in dependence upon the living God. He and Pellican, as early as 1512, were of one mind as to the Lord's supper being a memorial or remembrance of Christ. This was long before the doctrine was taught publicly by the Swiss Reformers.

Caspar Hedio was a native of the Marquisate of Baden in Swabia. He was educated and graduated at Basle. He laboured long and successfully in the gospel, first at Mayence, and then at Strasburg. When Capito left Basle, Hedio was chosen as his successor. The papal party objected. "The truth stings," says the indefatigable preacher, "it is not safe now to wound tender ears by preaching it; but it matters not! Nothing shall make me swerve from the straight path." The monks redoubled their efforts. "He is Capito's disciple," they cried, and the general disturbance increased. "I shall be almost alone" wrote Hedio to Zwingli about this time, "left in my weakness to struggle with these pestilent monsters. Learning and Christianity are now between the hammer and the anvil. Luther has just been condemned by the Universities of

Louvain and Cologne. If ever the church was in imminent danger, it is now.” He seems to have retired some time after this to Strasburg, where his labours were less interrupted. He was a man of a mild and moderate temper.

Berthold Haller, the Reformer of Berne, was born at Aldingen in Wurtemberg, about the year 1492. He studied at Pforzheim, where Simmler was his teacher, and Melancthon his fellow student. The Bernese, who had been hostile to the new opinions, and incensed at Zurich for the countenance it had given to what they called *Lutheranism*, began to relax in their prejudices under the gentle but evangelical preaching of Berthold Haller. In the year 1520, he was appointed to a canonry and preachership in the cathedral. He was joined in his labours by *Sebastian Meyer*, a Franciscan, who had been a papist, but was now: a zealous preacher of the gospel of the grace of God. Haller was possessed of considerable learning and eloquence, and his powers as a preacher gained him great influence with the citizens. By the united efforts of these two Reformers, the state of religious feeling in a short time was such as to call for the interference of the government.

Naturally timid and diffident, he applied to Zwingle for counsel in his troubles, and confided to him all his trials, and Zwingle was well fitted to inspire him with courage. “My soul is overwhelmed,” said he one day to Zwingle, “I cannot support such unjust treatment. I am determined to resign my pulpit and retire to Basle, to employ myself wholly, in Wittenbach’s society, in the study of sacred learning.” “Alas!” replied Zwingle, “And I too feel discouragement creep over me when I see myself unjustly assailed; but Christ awakens my conscience by the powerful stimulus of His threatenings and promises. He alarms me by saying, ‘*Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me before men, of him shall I be ashamed before My Father,*’ and He restores me to tranquillity by adding, ‘*Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him also will I confess before My Father.*’ Oh! My dear Berthold, take courage! Our names are written in imperishable characters in the annals of the citizens on high. I am ready to die for Christ... Oh! that your fierce bear-cubs would hear the doctrine of Jesus Christ, then would they grow tame. But you must undertake this work with great gentleness, lest they should turn round furiously, and rend you in pieces.” Berthold’s courage greatly revived. The flame that burned so brightly in Zwingle’s bosom rekindled that of Haller’s. He preached with increasing zeal and power, and by the blessing of God, the pure gospel was restored to the republic of Berne whence it had so long been exiled.

Oswald Myconius — to be distinguished from Frederick Myconius, the disciple of Luther — was a native of Lucerne, and born in 1488. He studied at Basle, where he became known to many learned men who then formed the circle of Erasmus, but more especially to Zwingle. He presided over the public school, first at Basle, then at Zurich, and afterwards in his native town of Lucerne. From the strong military spirit which prevailed in this canton, the preacher of the gospel of peace, who ventured to condemn the practice of

foreign service, or who sought to restrain their warlike habits, was instantly met by the most determined and violent opposition. “He is a Lutheran,” was the cry, “and Luther must be burned, and the schoolmaster with him.” He was summoned to appear before the council, and forbidden to read Luther’s works to his pupils, or ever to mention him before them, or even to think of them. “But what need has anyone to introduce Luther,” he answered, “who has the Gospels and the writings of the New Testament to draw from?” His naturally gentle spirit was wounded and depressed: “Everyone is against me,” he exclaimed, “assailed by so many tempests, whither shall I turn, or how shall I escape them? If Christ were not with me, I should long ago have fallen beneath their blows.” In the year 1523, he was expelled from Lucerne, and after several changes he became the successor of Œcolampadius at Basle, both in his professorship and his pulpit; and continued in that situation till his death in 1552. He laboured much to disseminate the truth, and his services to the cause of reform were great and valuable.

Joachim Von Walt, or Vadian, was a distinguished layman, a native of St. Gall, where he was eight times raised to the consulate. He was intimately acquainted with almost every kind of learning; but at an early period his mind became affected by the great question of Reform, and, by the grace of God, he steadily, zealously, and with great wisdom and prudence promoted the cause of the Reformation. He more than once presided at the great public disputations by which the good work was so materially advanced in Switzerland.

Thomas and Andrew Blaurer were of a noble family at Constance, and both laboured early in the cause of the Reformation. The latter, in particular, is distinguished as the Reformer of his native city. This city, so famous in the history of papal persecution and christian stedfastness, was also favoured with the devoted labours of Sebastian Hoffmeister and John Wauner. They nobly maintained the doctrines of the Reformation in that celebrated city, though they suffered for so doing.²⁷⁷

REFLECTIONS ON THE DAWNING OF THE SWISS REFORMATION

Who could fail to see and adore the good providence and sovereign grace of God in this noble array of witnesses for Christ and His gospel! So many different men, in so many different places — as if by concert — all studying the same truths, from the same motives, with the same desires, and persuaded of the same results, and yet, for a time, without the knowledge of each other, and independently of the same character of movement in Germany. We have avoided bringing down the history of these pioneers to a later period than about 1520 — a year before the Diet of Worms — when the name and writings of Luther were beginning to find their way into other lands.

²⁷⁷ The dates and facts of the foregoing sketches have been taken chiefly from Scott’s *History* where the reader will find many details which we have omitted. Vol. 2, pp. 366-384.

The attentive reader must have noticed that most of the leaders we have named were men of high character, of great learning and ability, with the most flattering prospects as to preferments and honours; all of which they willingly sacrificed that they might devote themselves entirely to the Lord Jesus Christ and the service of His gospel. And God — who never forgets to honour them that honour His Son — accepted the willing sacrifice, and consecrated their learning, talents, and character, to the accomplishment of His own great work. He made their moral weight to be felt by their most prejudiced enemies. Here it may be truly said, “The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it.” (Ps. 68:11) And it has been remarked, that these eminent men were like *brethren dwelling together in unity*; that they were all firm and faithful friends, even unto death; and not a discordant note was heard among them.

The heart of faith leaps with joy to see so manifestly the hand and power of God working for the glory of His Son, and the emancipation of His church from the thralldom of popery. There is nothing more wonderful in this world than the triumphs of truth when the Spirit of God is working. What have we before us now? As at the beginning, a few men, by the force of truth alone, engage to change the religious views, feelings, and ways of their contemporaries. The veneration of mankind for antiquity, for the religion of their ancestors, and a thousand different interests arise to arrest its progress; the kings of the earth and their armies, the pontiff and his emissaries, combine to oppose the new doctrines and to silence the witnesses by death: but this work is of no avail, unless it be to purify the motives and deepen the zeal of the Reformers. To the natural eye the obstacles must appear invincible; yet the cause of truth prevails, every obstacle is surmounted, and without any visible means, save the preaching of the word and prayer.

In proceeding with our history we shall see the truth of this. Whole nations, obedient to the voice of the Reformers, abandon the worship of their fathers, destroy their idols, and overthrow in one day the usages of many generations. That which at first appeared to be a dispute, only interesting to theologians, produced a great moral revolution, the influence of which extended over the civilized world.²⁷⁸

PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION — ZURICH

A.D. 1522

It was in the course of the year 1520 — as we have already seen — that the civil authorities of Zurich first interfered with the work of the Reformation. The effect produced upon the middle and lower classes by the preaching of Zwingle then began to display itself. In addition to the subject of Lent, which then came before the senate, through the edict of the bishop of Constance,

²⁷⁸ Preface, *Life of Zwingle*, by J.G. Hess. Translated by Lucy Aikin.

Zwingle called the attention of the Zurichers to the gross licentiousness which prevailed in Switzerland through the celibacy of the clergy; and in a private letter to the bishop he entreated him not to promulgate any edict injurious to the gospel, nor any longer to tolerate fornication, nor to enforce the celibacy of the priesthood. "In some of the cantons the priests were *required* to keep concubines, and everywhere that practice was permitted for money." Instead, however, of listening to the needed and respectful remonstrance of the Reformer, the bishop began to persecute several of the clergy who were known to have embraced the new opinions. They were branded as **Lutheran heretics**, and denounced as holding opinions hostile to the See of Rome. Until this time the Swiss Reformers had not met with any public or systematic opposition: but now, the church implored the state to interfere and arrest their progress everywhere.

But under the good providence of God, the opposition which now arose in so many quarters was overruled for the deepening and the extension of the work. The controversies and the public disputations were eminently used in Switzerland for the furtherance of the Reformation. The wind of persecution but scattered the good seed of the kingdom, and caused it to take root all over the land. "The priests stood up," says the Swiss historian, "as in the days of the apostles, against the new doctrines. Without these attacks, it would probably have remained hidden and obscure in a few faithful souls. But God was watching the hour to manifest it to the world. Opposition opened new roads for it, launched it on a new career, and fixed the eyes of the nations upon it. The tree that was destined to shelter the people of Switzerland had been deeply planted in her valleys, but storms were necessary to strengthen its roots and extend its branches. The partisans of the papacy, seeing the fire already smouldering in Zurich, rushed forward to extinguish it, but they only made the conflagration fiercer and more extensive."²⁷⁹

THE MONKS CONSPIRE AGAINST ZWINGLE

In the year 1522, the new doctrines had made such progress at Zurich, as not only to cause the bishop but the senate considerable anxiety. The divisions and confusion that had prevailed for some time in the city were evidently on the increase. And the monks, encouraged by their superiors raised the accustomed cry of heresy, sedition, and infidelity. There were three orders of monks in the city — **Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians**. These formed a conspiracy against Zwingle, and charged him before the magistrates with "incessantly attacking their orders, and exposing them in his discourses to the contempt and ridicule of the people." They petitioned the senate to silence the preacher, and to repeal the edict of 1520, or at least to allow them to draw their sermons from Aquinas and Scotus. The authorities not only refused the petition but renewed the order — "that nothing should be introduced into the pulpit which could not be clearly proved from the written word of God." The

²⁷⁹ D'Aubigné, vol. 2, p. 502.

exasperated monks were no longer careful to conceal their intentions, but vowed, that if Zwingli did not restrain his hostilities, they would be driven to adopt more violent measures.

The bishop, about the same time, made his second and great appeal to the senate. He laid before that body many and heavy charges against Zwingli. A long exhortation was addressed to the clergy and magistrates of his diocese, and also to the provost and chapter of the city. These exhortations were accompanied by copies of the pope's bull, with the edict of Worms against Luther, and all were entrusted to three ecclesiastical deputies.

When Zwingli stood up and replied to the various accusations of the bishop, his adversaries were completely silenced. But he was so distressed, so grieved in spirit, by the presence of his accusers, who were once his intimate friends, and also by the general state of matters, that he respectfully requested that a public conference should be held, at which he might have an opportunity of defending himself and his doctrines. Meanwhile he employed his pen with all diligence that he might make more widely known the truths which he held and taught, and the errors and abuses against which he testified.

THE PUBLICATIONS OF ZWINGLI

In July, 1522, he addressed to the members of the Helvetic Confederation at large, a **“Pious and Friendly Exhortation,”** entreating them “not to obstruct the preaching of the gospel, or discountenance the marriage of the clergy.” “Fear nothing,” he said to the heads of the cantons, “from granting us this liberty; there are certain signs by which everyone may know the truly evangelical preachers. He who, neglecting his own private interest, spares neither pains nor labour to cause the will of God to be known and revered, to bring back sinners to repentance, and give consolation to the afflicted, is undoubtedly in unison with Christ. But when you see teachers daily offering new saints to the veneration of the people, whose favour must be gained by offerings, and when the same teachers continually hold forth the extent of sacerdotal power, and the authority of the pope, you may believe that they think much more of their own profit, than of the care of the souls entrusted to them.”

“If such men counsel you to put a stop to the preaching of the gospel by public decrees, shut your ears against their insinuations, and be certain that it is their aim to prevent any attacks from being made upon their benefices and honours; say that if this work cometh of men, it will perish of itself, but that if it cometh of God, in vain would all the powers of the earth league together against it.”²⁸⁰

After explaining the nature of the gospel, and showing that all salutary doctrine is to be drawn from the scriptures alone, he touches on the

²⁸⁰ Hess, pp. 130-138.

immorality that prevailed among the ecclesiastics as one great prejudice to the cause of Christianity, he pleads most earnestly against the prohibition of marriage to the clergy — proving that it is a modern device, for the purpose of aggrandising the church, by breaking the ties which should attach the ministers of religion to the people, by rendering them strangers to the domestic affections, and thus concentrating all their zeal upon the interests of the particular body, or order, to which they belong, and the upholding of the papal system.

He addressed a similar remonstrance about the same time to the bishop of Constance; “in which,” says Hess, “he conjured the bishop to put himself at the head of those who were labouring to accomplish a Reform in the church, and to permit *to be demolished with precaution and prudence, what had been built up with temerity.*” These two petitions were signed by Zwingle and other ten of the most zealous advocates of the Reformation in Switzerland.

The exhortation, or mandate, of the bishop to the chapter of Zurich, drew forth from Zwingle another work which he called his “**Archeteles**,” a word which signifies “the beginning and the end;” it was a summary of the main points at issue between the Reformers and their adversaries. “This work,” says Gerder, “exhibits a true picture of the Zwinglian Reformation — very different from what it has been represented by many writers.” It obtained more celebrity than his previous pamphlets, and was highly esteemed, not only in Switzerland, but in foreign countries, as proving the author to be “mighty in the scriptures,” and one who united an intrepid courage with true christian moderation.²⁸¹

While these things were taking place in connection with Zurich, the bishop, now distrusting his own power to repress the growing dissensions, appealed to the national assembly held at Baden, and claimed the interference of the entire Helvetic body for the execution of his decrees. But the seeds of the Reformation were springing up there as strongly as at Zurich, at least among the pastors, for they had come to the unanimous resolution of preaching no doctrine which they could not prove from scripture. “This appeal of the bishop,” says Waddington, “ended in the persecution of a single and humble delinquent.” One Urban Wyss, pastor of Visisbach in the County of Baden, boldly preached against the invocation of saints; he was seized and delivered over to the prelate; and a long imprisonment, which he endured at Constance, has distinguished him as the **first of the Swiss Reformers** who suffered for the truth’s sake.

ZWINGLE AND HIS BROTHERS

As we mentioned in connection with the early days of our Reformer, that he had five brothers, it may be interesting to notice, that they were all alive at

²⁸¹ Scott’s quotations from Gerdes, or Gerdesius, professor of divinity at Groningen, and from A. Ruchat, vol. 2, p. 406.

this period of his history, and, hearing such reports concerning Ulric's apostasy, they manifested great uneasiness about their brother, and wished to see and confer with him on the subject. Although their anxiety seems to have been more for the respectability of their family than for the salvation of his soul it gave him an opportunity of writing most fully and freely on the great subject of the gospel, and of expressing the deep christian feelings of his heart.

After expressing his most sincere affection for his brothers, and the deep interest he always feels in their welfare, he assures them that he will never cease to discharge faithfully and diligently the duties of a christian pastor, unmoved by the fear of the world or the powerful tyrants that rule in it. "With respect to myself," he says, "I am not at all solicitous; for I have long since committed myself and all that concerns me to the hands of God... Be assured there is no kind of evil which can befall me, that I have not fully taken into my account, and that I am not prepared to meet. I know indeed that my strength is perfect weakness. I know also the power of those with whom I have undertaken to contend. But as St. Paul says concerning himself, *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me...* But you 'What a disgrace would it be, and with what infamy would it brand our whole family, should you be brought to the stake as a heretic, or otherwise suffer an ignominious death? And what profit could result from it?' My dearest brothers, hear my answer, Christ the Saviour and Lord of all, whose soldier I am, hath said, 'Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven.' (Luke 6:22, 23) Hence learn, that the more my name is branded with infamy in this world for the Lord's sake, the more will it be had in honour in the sight of God Himself... Christ the Son of God condescended to shed His blood for our salvation: *he*, therefore, is a cowardly soldier of His, and unworthy the name, who would not willingly sacrifice his life for the glory of his commander, but rather, like one who, basely casting away his shield, contemplates disgraceful flight...

"You are my own brothers, and as such I acknowledge you; but if you will not be my brothers in Christ, I must grieve over you with the deepest pain and sorrow, for the word of the Lord requires us to forsake even father and mother if they would draw away our hearts from Him. Rely on the word of God with an unhesitating and assured mind. Carry all your sorrows and complaints to Christ, pour out your prayers before Him, seek from Him alone grace, peace, and the remission of your sins. Finally, be joined to Christ by such an intimate tie and bond of union, that He may be one with you, and you one with Him. God grant, that being received under His guardian care, you may be led by His Spirit, and under His teaching! Amen. I will never cease to be your faithful brother if only you will be the brethren of Christ. — At Zurich, in great haste, in the year of Christ, 1522."

These deep breathings of the innermost soul of Zwingli must command the grateful praise of every renewed heart to the God of all grace. What devotion to Christ, to His gospel, to His church, to his own relatives, to his country, to mankind! How evidently, how wonderfully, taught of God! His knowledge of the way of salvation, and his deeper entrance into the grand rest-giving truth of the believer's *identification with Christ*, fill our hearts with admiring delight. True, he did not understand deliverance *through death* from sin, Satan, and the world, as taught in Romans 6 and similar portions, nor could he have known the teaching of scripture on the subject of the church as the body of Christ, according to that word — “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” (1 Cor. 12:13) But he understood that there was communion in grace and blessing *through faith* in Christ's precious sacrifice. Had he been more under “the power of His resurrection” he would have been less of what his biographers call “the christian patriot, the christian hero.” Not that he would have loved his neighbour, his kindred, or mankind less, but he would have manifested his love more in accordance with the spirit of one who is not only dead, but risen in Christ, and joined unto the Lord by one Spirit — the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Like Luther he held that justification by faith alone is the keystone of Christianity; though, evidently, he was less under the power of prejudice, and had a much broader view of divine truth than the Saxon Reformer, and a more elevated style of expressing it.

THE DISPUTATIONS AT ZURICH

In compliance with the request of Zwingli, already noticed, the senate of Zurich proclaimed a conference for the discussion, or the composing, of religious differences, to be held on January 29th, 1523. This was the first of those public disputations which, under the overruling providence of God, so rapidly advanced the progress of the Reformation. An invitation was given to all persons who had anything to allege against the chief pastor to come forward publicly and state their charges.

One noble stipulation, however, was announced by the senate — “that all appeals must be made to the scriptures, as the sole rule of judgment, and not to mere custom or the traditions of men.” The clergy of the canton were invited, and the bishop was especially entreated to appear in person, or, if that were impossible, to send competent representatives.

That all parties might be well informed as to the subjects proposed for discussion, and that none might plead that they were taken by surprise, Zwingli published some time before, **sixty-seven propositions**, embodying the chief doctrines he had preached, and which he was prepared to maintain. These he had extensively distributed in good time.

THE THESES OF ZWINGLE

As the theses of Zwingli may be considered the creed of the Swiss Reformers, it will be satisfactory to the reader, briefly to state the most important of these propositions.

“That the gospel is the only rule of faith, and the assertion erroneous that it is nothing without the approbation of the Church of Rome; that Christ is the only head of the church; that all traditions are to be rejected; that the attempt of the clergy to justify their pomp, their riches, honours, and dignities, is the cause of the divisions in the church, that penances are the dictates of tradition alone, and do not avail to salvation; that the mass is not a sacrifice, but simply the *commemoration* of the sacrifice of Christ; that meats are indifferent; that God has not forbidden marriage to any class of Christians, and consequently it is wrong to interdict it to priests, whose celibacy has become the cause of great licentiousness of manners. To give absolution for money is to be guilty of simony; that God alone has power to forgive sins the word of God says nothing of purgatory. The assertion that grace is necessarily derived from receiving the sacraments is a doctrine of modern invention, that no person ought to be molested for his opinions, as it is for the magistrate to stop the progress of those which tend to disturb the public peace.”²⁸²

THE MEETING AT ZURICH

At an early hour on the morning of the 29th, great numbers, say the chroniclers, thronged the hall of conference. All the clergy of the city and canton, with many others from distant parts, were present, and a numerous company of citizens scholars, men of rank, and other persons of various descriptions. The consul of the Republic, Mark Reust, a man of high character, opened the deliberations. He referred to the sixty-seven propositions of Zwingli, and called upon any who dissented from them to state their objections without fear. The grand-master of the episcopal court, and the vicar-general Faber, with several theologians were present as the bishop's representatives. All supposed that Faber would have attempted a confutation of Zwingli's theses, and a defence of the established system; but Faber knew his opponent too well, and refused to discuss any one of the articles. Zwingli pressed him to the disputation, but in vain. “I was not sent here to dispute,” said Faber, “but to listen, besides, this is not the place for so great an argument; that it was more decorous to await the decision of a general council, which was the only legitimate tribunal in doctrinal matters and which would shortly be convoked; meanwhile, that he was commanded to offer his mediation for the removal of the differences which distracted the city.”

Zwingli, who was urgent to have his doctrines subjected to the severest examination was deeply pained by the evasive courtier-like style of Faber.

²⁸² Hess, p. 148.

“What!” he exclaimed, standing in front of a table on which a Bible lay; “is not this vast and learned meeting as good as any council? We have only to defend the word of God.” After making this appeal — which produced a solemn silence in the assembly — he addressed the meeting at some length. “He complained of the calumnious charges with which his doctrines were continually assailed; he challenged his slanderers to come forward on that public occasion, appointed for that express purpose, and discuss with him the articles in question.” But the Reformer found, that those who were most prompt to accuse and defame him in secret preserved an obstinate silence in public. But he had an upright conscience, and he wished to give an account of his doctrine, publicly, before the senate of his country, before his diocesan, and before the whole church of God, and to hear whatever could be alleged against him — thankful to be corrected if he were in error, but prepared to maintain what he believed to be the truth of God.

Faber still refused to dispute with Zwingle before the great council, but promised to publish a written refutation of his errors.

As no other opponent appeared, the president then said, “If there be any one here who has anything to say against Zwingle or his doctrines, let him come forward.” This was repeated three times, but as no one presented himself, the senate declared that the evangelical propositions had gained an undisputed triumph, and immediately published an edict to the following effect. “That since Master Ulric Zwingle had publicly and repeatedly challenged the adversaries of his doctrines to confute them by scriptural arguments, and since, notwithstanding, no one had undertaken to do so, he should continue to announce and preach the word of God, just as heretofore. Likewise that all other ministers of religion, whether resident in the city or country, should abstain from teaching any tenet which they could not prove from scripture; that they should refrain, too, from making charges of heresy and other scandalous allegations, on pain of severe punishment.”

On hearing the decree, Zwingle could not refrain from publicly expressing his heartfelt joy. “We give thanks to thee, O Lord, who willest that Thy most holy word should reign alike in heaven and on earth.” Faber, on hearing this could not restrain his indignation. “The theses of Master Ulric,” said he, “are contrary to the honour of the church and the doctrine of Christ, and I will prove it.” “Do so,” said Zwingle, “but I will have no other judge than the gospel.”

Leo Juda, Hoffmann, Meyer, and others, endeavoured, as well as Zwingle, to draw the papal party into a discussion, but beyond the slightest skirmishing respecting the invocation of the saints, nothing passed between them.

THE EFFECTS OF THE DECREE

The promulgation of this decree, according to Hess, gave a powerful impulse to the progress of the Reformation in Switzerland. And the effect of

Zwingle's address in the hall was most favourable to himself and his doctrines. "His simplicity, firmness, and gentleness inspired his audience with great veneration, his eloquence and knowledge carried away those who were hesitating between the two parties and the silence of his adversaries, being regarded as a tacit proof of their weakness, served his cause almost as much as his own arguments. From this time the friends of Reform multiplied rapidly in all classes of society." Considering that the times were still papal, the decree was most just and reasonable. It ordained no pains, no penalties on religious grounds; Zwingle, and all the pastors, were merely to be protected in going on to preach the word of God as heretofore; and by that word the preachers were to stand or fall. A breach of the peace, or what directly tended to it, was to be punished by the authorities.

Faber, soon after the conference, writing to a friend at Mayence, expressed in the following terms his apprehensions of Zwingle: "I have no news for you, except that a second Luther has arisen at Zurich, who is the more dangerous, as he has an austerer people to deal with. Contend with him, whether I will or not, I must; I do it with the greatest reluctance, but I am compelled. You will presently learn this, when I publish my book to prove the mass to be a sacrifice."²⁸³ But in proportion to the triumph of the Reformers and the confirmation of their principles, was the vexation and disappointment of their opponents. The most skilful advocates of the papacy had been silent before the great council of their country— **The Two Hundred**. They were evidently afraid to enter into debate with Zwingle. But unscrupulous Rome had other weapons. It is stated by the most reliable historians, that the pope's legate, Ennius, and the bishop of Constance employed emissaries to take the life of Zwingle, if the opportunity could be found without too great a risk. "Snares surround you on every side," wrote a secret friend to Zwingle, "a deadly poison has been prepared to take away your life. I am your friend; you shall know me hereafter." "Leave Zwingle's house forthwith; a catastrophe is at hand," said another to a chaplain who lived with him. But the man of God was calm and peaceful, trusting in Him. "I fear my enemies," said he, "as a lofty rock fears the roaring waves, with the help of God." But though both the poison and the poignard failed to accomplish the foul deed, Rome had not exhausted her means; now she tries flattery.

Soon after the decree was issued, Hadrian, who then filled the papal chair appeared to take no interest in the controversy at Zurich though he was thundering his anathemas in Saxony. He despatched a most flattering letter to Zwingle, called him "his beloved son," and assured him of "his special favour." "And what has the pope commissioned you to offer him?" said Myconius to the bearer of the papal brief. "Everything except the chair of St. Peter." Mitre, crosier, or cardinal's hat were at his will; but Rome was greatly mistaken with the Reformer of Zurich in this respect. All her proposals were unavailing. Even d'Aubigné admits, "that in Zwingle the

²⁸³ Waddington, vol. 2, p. 284.

Romish church had a still more uncompromising enemy than Luther.” He had never been a monk; his conscience was less perplexed, his judgment less enthralled by popish dogmas, and altogether he cared less for the ceremonies of former ages than the Saxon Reformer. It was enough for his Swiss ally if any custom, however innocent in itself, were not warranted by scripture, he fell violently upon it. His jealous care for the dignity, sufficiency, and authority of scripture was remarkable. “The word of God,” he used to say, “should stand alone.” “Yet these convictions,” it has been said, “were attained through fewer struggles, and burnt with less violence, than in the heart of Luther.” This we can only see to be true in the case of one doctrine — justification by faith alone. All will readily admit, that although the Swiss Reformer believed this truth as sincerely as the Saxon, it never was to the former what it was to the latter. As a divine truth, it was the source of Luther’s convictions, strength, comfort, vitality, and energy. The two men had been led of God by different paths, and were differently furnished for their great work.

THE ZEAL OF ZWINGLE AND LEO JUDA

Notwithstanding the immense power and popularity which Zwingle gained by the result of the conference in January, he was in no haste to promote alterations. His great object was to instruct the people, remove their prejudices, and bring them to oneness of mind before recommending any great changes. He therefore devoted himself to the preaching of the word with greater zeal and boldness than ever, and he was ably assisted by his friend, **Leo Juda**, who had lately been elected a minister of Zurich. It is not certain that Faber’s promised book on the mass ever appeared, but Zwingle produced one in the same year, “On the canon of the Mass,” arguing with great force against that cornerstone of the papal system. About the same time a priest, named Louis Hetzer, published a treatise entitled, *The Judgment of God against images*, which produced a great sensation, and engrossed the thoughts of the people.

The citizens of Zurich were now become warm friends of the Reformation, and in their zeal some of the more ardent spirits expressed a determination to purge the city of idols. Outside the city gates stood a crucifix elaborately carved and richly ornamented. The superstition and idolatry to which this image gave rise, moved the people to give vent to their indignation. Some of the lower classes, having at their head an artisan named Nicholas Hottinger — “a worthy man,” says Bullinger, “and well read in the holy scriptures” — assembled and ignominiously threw down this favorite idol. This daring and unlawful act spread dismay on every side. “They are guilty of sacrilege! they deserve to be put to death!” exclaimed the friends of Rome. The authorities were obliged to interfere, and caused the leaders of this outbreak to be apprehended; but when sentence was to be pronounced upon them, the council was divided. What some regarded as a crime worthy of death, others considered to be a good work, but done in a wrong way from inconsiderate

zeal. During the debates upon this sentence, Zwingli maintained in public that the law of Moses expressly forbade images to be the objects of religious worship, and concluded that those who had pulled down the crucifix could not be accused of sacrilege; but he pronounced them deserving of punishment for open resistance to the authorities.

The language of Zwingli increased the embarrassment of the magistrates; the whole city was much divided; and the council again determined to submit the question to a discussion, in the meantime retaining the prisoners in custody.

Thus we see that, in the good providence of God, even such acts of insubordination by the rude undisciplined children of the Reformation, were the means of bringing to light not only the dark shades of popery, but the truth of God on subjects of vital importance, and of securing fresh triumphs and greater liberty to the Reformers.

THE SECOND DISPUTATION AT ZURICH

The 26th of October, 1523, was the day fixed for the second disputation; and the subjects to be discussed were — “whether the **worship of images** was authorized by the gospel, and whether the mass ought to be preserved or abolished.” The assembly was much more numerous than the preceding; above nine hundred persons were present, from every part of Switzerland, including the grand council of Two Hundred, and about three hundred and fifty ecclesiastics. Invitations had been sent to the bishops of Constance, Coire, and Basle, to the university of the latter city, and to the twelve cantons, requesting them to send deputies to Zurich. But the bishops declined the invitation: the humiliation of their deputies in January was fresh in their mind, and they were not disposed to risk a second defeat. Only the towns of Schaffhausen and St. Gall sent delegates, and these, Vadian of St. Gall, and Hoffmann of Schaffhausen were chosen presidents. The edict of convocation having been read, and the object of the meeting stated, Zwingli and Leo Juda were requested to answer all who defended the worship of images and the mass as a sacrifice.

With a devotion and piety, ever prominent in the spirit of Zwingli, he proposed that the deliberations should be opened with prayer. He reminded the friends of the promise of Christ, that “where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. 18:20) After prayer, and a few words from the president, enjoining upon all who spoke to draw their argument only from scripture, Zwingli was desired to commence the proceedings.

Before speaking on the first proposition — the worship of images — he begged to offer a few remarks on the scriptural usage of the word church; since on that depended the right and authority of their present deliberations. He rejected the exorbitant claims of the church of Rome which asserted that nothing was valid in the whole christian world, but what was done with her

sanction. According to his view, the term “**the church,**” designated, first, the universal body of the faithful; secondly, any portion of that body meeting in the same province or city; such as the church of Ephesus, of Corinth, the churches of Galatia, or the church of Zurich. He denied that the term could be restricted to a convention, consisting of the pope, cardinals, bishops, and other ecclesiastics exclusively. His object was to overthrow the objections urged by the Roman Catholics against the authority of such assemblies as the present; and to show that every assembly, united together by faith in Christ, and by the gospel, as the only rule of faith and practice, possessed the perfect right to discuss and settle their affairs. Zwingle was thus withdrawing the church of Zurich from the jurisdiction of the bishop of Constance, and separating it from the Latin hierarchy.

Here Zwingle paused; and an invitation was given to all who had anything to object to his positions, to come forward and express their sentiments without fear. The Reformers sought publicity, and feared not fair discussion. One **Conrad Hoffmann**, a canon of Zurich, attempted a reply, but as he spoke only of the authority of the pope’s bull, the Emperor’s edict, the canons, and the impropriety of all such discussions, without any reference to scripture, he was given to understand that he was not observing the rule of the assembly. The prior of the Augustinians, a famous preacher, and much attached to the ancient orthodoxy, confessed that he could not refute the propositions of Zwingle, unless he were allowed to have recourse to the canon law. Zwingle immediately referred to a passage in the canon law, which showed that the scriptures alone were to be relied upon. The monk thus silenced, resumed his seat, muttering to himself, “The pope has decided: I abide by his decisions, and leave others to argue.”

Leo Juda, to whom was entrusted the subject of the **images**, addressed the assembly at some length, proving from the scriptures, “that images are forbidden by the word of God; and that Christians ought not to make them, set them up, or pay them any homage.” On the second day of the Conference, Zwingle introduced the subject of the mass, showing from the words of the institution, and from other portions of the New Testament, that **the mass** is not a sacrifice, that no one man can offer to God a sacrifice for another; and that the mode of celebrating the Eucharist in the church of Rome is quite different from the institution of the Saviour. The few feeble attempts that were made to sustain the established practice and doctrine, were immediately confuted by the two champions of the Reformation, to the entire satisfaction of the Council.

THE WORD OF GOD PREVAILS

A deep and salutary impression was produced on the assembly. “Until this hour,” exclaimed Schmidt, the commander of Kussnacht, “ye have all gone after idols. The dwellers in the plains have run to the mountains, and those of the mountains have gone to the plains; the French to Germany, and the

Germans to France. Now ye know whither ye ought to go. God has combined all things in Christ. Ye noble citizens of Zurich, go to the true source; and may Christ at length re-enter your territory, and there resume His ancient empire.” The aged warrior, Reust, turning to the Council, gravely said, though in military language, “Now, then... let us grasp the sword of God’s word, and may the Lord prosper His work.” With such expressions of sympathy Zwingle was completely overcome. “God is with us,” he said, with deep feeling, “He will defend His own cause. Let us go forward in the name of the Lord.” Here his emotion was too great for utterance; he burst into tears, and many mingled their tears with his.

Thus the colloquy ended; it lasted three days; it was decisive in favour of the Reformation. The victory was undisputed. The presidents rose; Vadian of St. Gall, speaking on behalf of those who had presided with him, observed, “that no definite sentence was to be pronounced as the decision of the meeting. They had heard the testimony of God’s word in support of the two propositions, and likewise what could be urged against them; each person must judge for himself what was the conclusion to be formed, and must follow the dictates of his own conscience.” Reust joined in the exhortation, and “entreated all present to take the word of God for their only guide, and to follow it, fearing nothing.” The meeting then closed.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CHARACTER OF THE CONFERENCE

All who know something of the value of the word of God, must reflect with supreme satisfaction on the rule by which these disputations were governed. We can never be too thankful for such an appreciation of the holy scriptures. In this respect Zwingle did a great and a noble work. He **restored the Bible** to its true place, and the people to their true privileges. Perfect freedom of discussion was allowed to both parties, with this stipulation — “that all arguments were to be derived directly from scripture, the sole standard of judgment; that all merely verbal disputes, and vain contentious subtleties, were to be instantly repressed.” And this, let us bear in mind, this noble assertion of the authority and sufficiency of scripture was publicly made at a time when nearly all classes were only beginning to hear of the errors of popery, and of the character, if not of the existence, of the Bible. Many of the priests even had never seen one, and scarcely any of them had read it.

It required more than the commanding presence of Zwingle — more than his brilliant talents, his high cultivation, his natural eloquence, to maintain such a position. Nothing less than faith in the living God, and in the divine presence, could have sustained him at such a moment. Mere cleverness and superstition could then give, as they can give now, a thousand reasons why the dogmas of the papacy should be held supreme; but faith did then — as it must now — assail the whole system of popery as the imposture of Satan, and in direct opposition to the truth of God. In the face of nine hundred members of the Roman Catholic church, lay and clerical, Zwingle, Leo Juda, and others

maintained, that the pure word of God, which should be in the hands of the people, was the only standard of faith and morals, and that all the time-honoured customs and traditions of Romanism, though sanctioned by the credulity of ages, and backed by the display of worldly power, were the mere inventions of priestcraft, and ruinous to the souls of men.

This was bold work, and at such a time; but when Christ has His right place in the heart, His strength is made perfect in our weakness. The word of God, we know, is the sword of the Spirit, by which all questions should be settled, and to which alone all Christians should appeal. One line of scripture far outweighs ten thousand reasons. But how far, we may ask, is this rule observed by Christians in the present day? Where shall we find such inflexible adherence to the plain truth of God? We know not where to look for it. But we hear on all sides of questions being raised as to the plenary inspiration of the scriptures; and that, as it is capable of various interpretations by the learned, it cannot be appealed to as decisive. Hence the invention of creeds and confessions as the bulwarks of the church in place of the word and power of God. Such alas! alas! is the growing infidelity of our own day, which will tend to the increase of Romanism, and to the final apostasy of Christendom. Meanwhile let all who love the Lord hold fast His word as unchanged and unchangeable. Thou, Lord, hath “magnified Thy word above all Thy name.” And it still holds true, that, “them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.” The Lord give us grace to honour His name by faithfully keeping His word, and, like the Master, be able to say as to all our religious observances, “Thus saith the Lord”... “It is written,” “it is written.” (Rev. 3:8; Ps. 138:2; 1 Sam. 2:30; Matt. 4)

SHORT PAPERS ON CHURCH HISTORY

CHAPTER 42

THE RESULTS OF THE DISPUTATIONS

The authorities, though convinced that neither the mass nor the use of images could be justified by the word of God, did not think it expedient to abolish by law either the one or the other at that moment. Zwingli prudently recommended great caution and moderation. "God knows," he said to the council, "that I am inclined to build up, and not to throw down. I am aware there are timid souls who ought to be conciliated. The people generally are not yet sufficiently enlightened to receive with unanimity such extensive alterations." The magistrates, following his advice, allowed every minister to say mass or decline it, as he thought proper; reserving to themselves the right of ordaining at a future time what they should judge proper.

During this delay, the friends of the Reformation petitioned the council to release the persons imprisoned for throwing down the crucifix. All were set at liberty with the exception of **Hottinger**, who, because of the leading part he had taken in the commotion, was banished for two years from the canton of Zurich. This slight sentence, contrary to the intentions of those who passed it, was soon followed by a violent and cruel death.

THE FIRST MARTYR OF THE SWISS REFORMATION

In proportion as the cause of the Reformation advanced, the rage of its adversaries increased. At a diet held at Lucerne, in the month of January, 1524, all the cantons were represented with the exception of Zurich and Schaffhausen. The clergy present endeavoured to excite the council against the new doctrines and those who had promulgated them. Alarmed at what might be the consequences of the changes which were taking place at Zurich, they were determined to be silent spectators no longer. Through the influence of the partisans of Rome in the council, an edict was passed, "forbidding the people to preach, or to repeat any new or Lutheran doctrine in private or public, or to talk or dispute about such things in taverns or at feasts, that whatever laws the bishop of Constance enacted respecting religion should be observed; that everyone, whether man or woman, old or young, who saw or heard anything done, preached or spoken, contrary to this edict, should give immediate information of the same to the proper authorities." Thus was the snare laid, through the subtlety of Satan, for the feet of the Reformers; and, the council being national, it was spread over all Switzerland. Hottinger was the first to be caught in its toils.

When banished from Zurich, he repaired to the country of Baden, where he lived by the labour of his hands. He neither sought nor avoided occasions of speaking about his religion. When asked what the new doctrines were which the Zurich pastors preached, he frankly conversed on the subject. He was now narrowly watched, and reported to have said, "That Christ was sacrificed once for all Christians; and that by this one sacrifice, as St. Paul says, He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; therefore the mass is no sacrifice; and that the invocation of saints and the adoration of images are contrary to the word of God." This was more than enough to condemn the unsuspecting man. He was denounced for his impiety to the grand bailiff, and very soon arrested. When questioned as to his religious belief, he did not conceal his convictions, and professed himself ready to justify what he had stated. He was convicted before the tribunal of having contravened an ordinance of the sovereign power, which forbade all discussions on the subject of religion. He was then removed to Lucerne, when he was condemned by the deputies of seven cantons to be **beheaded**.

When informed of his sentence, he calmly answered, "The will of the Lord be done! May He be pleased to pardon all who have contributed to my death..." "That will do," said one of his judges, "we do not sit here to listen to sermons; you can have your talk some other time." "He must have his head off this once," said another of his judges, "but if he should ever get it on again, we will then be of his religion." "To Jesus also it was said," he replied, "*Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.*" A monk presented a crucifix to his lips, but he put it from him, saying, "It is by faith that we must embrace Christ crucified in our hearts." He was greatly strengthened by the presence of the Lord when on his way to the place of execution. Many followed him in tears. "Weep not for me," he said, "I am on my way to eternal happiness." He preached the gospel to the people as one so near his end would, entreating them to look to the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone pardon and salvation could be found. His last words on the scaffold were, "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit, O my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." In a few moments he was absent from the body and present with the Lord.

The tranquillity, courage, and wisdom which Hottinger showed before his judges, and on his way to the scaffold, give him a high place among those who died for the cause of the Reformation. Calmly and firmly in his last moments he prayed for the mercy of God in favour of his judges, and that their eyes might be opened to the truth. Then turning to the people, he said, "If I have offended anyone among you, let him forgive me as I have forgiven my enemies. Pray to God to support my faith to the last moment. When I shall have undergone my sentence, your prayers will be useless to me."²⁸⁴

²⁸⁴ Hess, p. 168.

THE BLOOD OF HOTTINGER INFLAMES THE ZEAL OF THE PAPISTS

The council of Zurich had protested against the irregularity of its allies in the condemnation of a fellow citizen; but in place of listening to remonstrance, their persecuting zeal was evidently inflamed by the execution of Hottinger; for scarcely was the blood of that innocent man cold when the diet determined on more vigorous efforts to crush the Reformation itself. They immediately resolved that a deputation should be sent to Zurich, the seat of the mischief, calling upon the council and the citizens to renounce their new opinions.

In accordance with this resolution an embassy was sent to Zurich on the 21st of March, 1524, in which all the cantons represented at Lucerne united, with the single exception of Schaffhausen. The deputies, in the most specious style of address, lamented that the unity of the ancient christian faith should be broken, and that universal sorrow should be occasioned by the unhappy changes which had lately been introduced: the delightful repose of church and state, transmitted from all antiquity, had been thus violently interrupted. **“Confederates of Zurich,”** said the delegates, “join your efforts to ours; let us stifle this new faith; it had been well if this growing evil had been stopped in the beginning, and if, after the example of our ancestors, we had vindicated the honour of God, the blessed Virgin, and all the saints, at the expense of our lives and fortunes: the fruits of the doctrine of Luther are everywhere apparent in the menacing aspect of the people, who show themselves ripe for rebellion.” Thus the deputation appealed to the Zurichers, and entreated them to dismiss Zwingli and Leo Juda, the instruments of communicating this contagion to the Swiss. That there were abuses in the ecclesiastical system, they readily admitted. “They were all oppressed by the pope, and his train of cardinals, bishops, and agents, who, by their usurpations, simony, and indulgences, exhausted the wealth of the country. They were willing to co-operate in any scheme for the correction of these evils and such as these; but the states in assembly could no longer endure the innovations which were sheltered and nourished by the Senate of Zurich.”

Thus spoke the adversaries of the Reformation: and what reply can the council give to such fair speeches from so large a portion of the Helvetic body? The answer was immediate, firm, and noble. The death of Hottinger had not discouraged them, but rather raised their indignation against the states which had perpetrated it.

THE ANSWER OF ZURICH TO LUCERNE

“We can make no concessions,” said the Zurichers, “in what concerns the word of God. For five years past we have been listening to the sacred instructions of our ministers: at first their doctrine did seem new to us, as we had heard nothing of the like before. But when we understood and clearly perceived that this was its end and scope — to make manifest Jesus Christ as

the author and finisher of our salvation; who died on the cross as the Saviour of mankind, and shed His precious blood to cleanse our sins away, who is now in heaven as the only Advocate and Mediator between God and man; — when we heard so salutary a message we could not refrain from embracing it with great eagerness.” They then proceeded to reply at some length to the representations of the delegates, to expose the abuses of the Church of Rome, and to assert that all blessing to their souls and all harmony in the states must spring from obedience to the word of God. They reasserted that the single weapon for overthrowing the power, usurpations, and rapacity of the papists is the preaching of the pure word of God.

How interesting to the Christian reader of the present day to find that statesmen, warriors, and political bodies, so openly and with such wondrous faith, referred to the word of God in those times. It was their only standard of appeal and their sole rule in practice. It is too much taken for granted now that all are secretly governed by it, therefore there is no reference to it in our public assemblies. “There is nothing,” said the senate in conclusion, “that we desire more ardently, than the universal prevalence of peace, nor will we in any respect violate our laws and treaties of alliance. But in this affair, which involves our eternal safety, we cannot act otherwise than we do, unless we should be first convicted of error. We therefore again exhort you, as we have already done, if you think our doctrine opposed to scripture, to point it out, and prove it against us; but we must entreat you not to delay the attempt beyond the close of the month of May; till that time we shall expect an answer from you and from the bishops, and from the university of Basle.”

THE DOWNFALL OF THE IMAGES

The appointed interval had elapsed, and as no reply was received from the Roman Catholic cantons, the council of Zurich determined to **proceed in the work of Reformation**. The decree for the demolition of images was passed in January, but the authorities were in no haste to have it executed. There is nothing more to be admired at this moment of our history, than the patient and considerate way in which this delicate matter was conducted by the magistrates. They delayed in the expectation that the work would be accomplished by the general consent, and not by the open violence, of the people.

At the request of the three pastors, Zwingle, Leo Juda, and Engelhardt, the council published an order to the effect that honour being due to God only, the images should be removed from all the churches of the canton, and their ornaments sold for the benefit of the poor; that the council prohibit all private persons from destroying any image, without public authority, except such as are their own property, that every separate church may destroy its images after a prescribed method; that those persons whose families had erected images in the churches must have them removed within a limited time, or they will be destroyed by public authority. By these prudent and moderate

measures, of which Zwingli was the councillor, civil dissension was entirely avoided, and the work proceeded as if by the unanimous determination of the citizens.

The appointed officers, consisting of twelve councillors, the three pastors, the city architect, masons, carpenters, and other necessary assistants, went into the various churches and, having closed the doors, took down the crosses, defaced the frescoes, whitewashed the walls, burned the pictures, and broke in pieces or otherwise destroyed every idol, to prevent their ever becoming again the objects of idolatrous worship. The country churches, following the example of the capital, displayed even greater zeal in destroying their ancient decorations and the objects of their recent adoration. Zwingli speaks with a little playfulness of a famous **stone statue of the Virgin** among the nuns in Altenbach, held in great reverence, and of much miraculous celebrity. The monks affirmed that it could never be removed from its place, or at least it could never be kept from its venerated station. It had been repeatedly taken away, firmly fixed and fastened elsewhere, and even locked up, but it always reappeared the following morning on its former basis. But alas! it failed to vindicate the prediction of the monks; it quietly submitted to be roughly removed, and returned no more to its ancient position. Thus the idol lost credit with the people.

“I rejoice, then,” exclaims Zwingli, “and bid all others to rejoice with me, that this most iniquitous imposture was at length removed from the eyes of men, for, when this was once accomplished, all the other figments of popery were overthrown more easily. To God, through whose power and grace all this has been accomplished, be praise and glory for ever. Amen.”

THE SWISS AND GERMAN REFORMATION

Here, in the presence of such a mighty work of God’s Spirit, it may be well to pause for a moment and contemplate the difference between the two great leaders of the Reformation, the character of their principles and action, and the consequent results. The difference has often arrested us, and sometimes we have referred to it, and as d’Aubigné, the warm-hearted champion of Luther, has noticed the difference we refer to, we may draw attention to it the more freely.

That which completely ruled Zwingli’s mind, and all his teaching and actions as a Reformer, was his supreme regard for the holy scriptures. All religious observances that could not be found in, or proved by, the word of God, he boldly maintained should be abolished. His Hebrew Bible and his Greek New Testament lay on the table before him in the halls of discussion, and he would own no standard but these. Luther’s principle of dealing with the old religion was of a widely different character. He desired to maintain in the church all that was not *directly* or *expressly contrary* to the scriptures. This is by no means a safe or a sound principle. It might be difficult to prove that certain

things are *expressly* forbidden in the word of God, though it might be still more difficult to prove that they had any place in scripture. Truth is definite and positive, this dogma is loose and uncertain.

Even d'Aubigné admits that Luther rose up against those who had violently broken the images in the churches of Wittenberg, while the idols fell in the temples of Zurich by Zwingli's own direction. The **German Reformer** wished to remain united to the Church of Rome, and would have been content to purify it of all that was opposed to the word of God. The **Zurich Reformer** passed over the middle ages entirely, and reckoned nothing of absolute authority that had been written or invented since the days of the apostles. Restoration to the primitive simplicity of the church was his idea of a Reformation. There was therefore greater completeness in the mind of Zwingli as a Reformer.

Primitive Christianity had been transformed in its early days by the self-righteousness of Judaism and the paganism of the Greeks into the confusion of Roman Catholicism. The Jewish element prevailed in that part of her doctrine which relates to man — to salvation by works of human merit, or to trading in the salvation of the souls of men, as by indulgences. The pagan element prevailed especially in that which relates to God — to the innumerable false gods of popery; to the long reign of images, symbols, and ceremonies; to the dethroning of the infinitely blessed and all gracious God. "The German Reformer proclaimed the great doctrine of justification by faith, and with it inflicted a death-blow on the *self-righteousness* of Rome. The Reformer of Switzerland unquestionably did the same; the inability of man to save himself forms the basis of the work of all the Reformers. But Zwingli did something more: he established the sovereign, universal, and exclusive supremacy of God, and thus inflicted a deadly blow on the *pagan worship* of Rome."²⁸⁵

THE MARRIAGE OF ZWINGLI

Of the many innovations which were now introduced, none gave a greater scandal to the papal party than the **marriage of the clergy**. It was setting at defiance all ecclesiastical discipline, and by those who were naturally expected to be its guardians. To live, as if married, was overlooked, if not sanctioned, by the ecclesiastical authorities; but to marry was a mortal sin. Such was the morality of popery. But the Spirit of God was now working, and the eyes of many were being opened to the truth. One of the pastors in the city of Strasburg, who had been living like many others at that time, was led to see his sin and married immediately. The bishop, because it had been done publicly, could not overlook the offence, and caused a great stir to be made both in the church and in the senate. The time, however, was past for the bishop to have all his own way: numbers approved of the new doctrine, following the example of the pastor; and the magistrates refused to interfere.

²⁸⁵ D'Aubigné, vol. 3, pp. 356-359.

In the month of April, 1524, Zwingle availed himself of the privilege which he had so often claimed for all the priesthood. His nuptials with **Anna Reinhart**, widow of John Meyer, lord of Weiningen, in the county of Baden, were publicly proclaimed, thereby setting a good example to his brethren. Only two of several children survived him, Ulric who became a canon and archdeacon of Zurich, and Regula who was married to Rudolph Gaulter, a divine of eminence. The following year Luther was married to **Catherine of Bora**. These events gave occasion to great calumnies; but as Zwingle had not been a monk, or his bride a nun, the scandal was not so enormous as in the case of Luther and Catherine.

THE PROGRESS OF REFORM

The Lord greatly blessed the labours of the Reformers in Zurich at this time, and stayed the cruel hand of their enemies. The word of the Lord had found its right place in their hearts, and, through them, in the hearts of the people. And God never fails to bless the people or the nation that honours His word. It is ever the certain pathway to the richest blessings. He still says, "Them that honour Me I will honour." (1 Sam. 2:30)

The downfall of the images was immediately followed by the voluntary dissolution of the two most important religious institutions in Zurich. The first was that of an ancient and wealthy **abbey**, of royal foundation, known by the name of Frauen-Munster, and used for the reception of ladies of quality. It was distinguished not only by very high antiquity but also by various immunities and privileges, and the possession of splendid revenues. This extraordinary society of females exercised the sovereign right of coining all the money circulated, and of nominating the persons who should preside in the tribunals of justice. The lady-abbess, of her own accord, surrendered all the rights and possession of the institution into the hands of the government, on the understanding that the funds should be applied to pious and charitable purposes, with a due respect to vested rights. The abbess, Catherine Cimmern, retired on an honourable pension and soon after married. In consequence of this change, the city of Zurich, in the year 1526, for the first time coined money and established courts of justice in its own name.

The chapter of canons also, of which Zwingle was a member, after arranging with the government respecting their rights and revenues, followed the example of the opulent nuns. The few remaining monks of the three orders were collected into one monastery; the young to be taught some useful trade, the aged to end their days in peace.

The news of these triumphs of the word of God rapidly spread over the mountains and valleys of Switzerland. The Roman Catholic cantons were exasperated. Facts were distorted, falsehoods were circulated; diets were assembled unknown to the senate of Zurich, and the deputies of the cantons

bound themselves never to permit the establishment of the new opinions in Switzerland.

Meanwhile the pontiffs were not indifferent spectators. Clement VII addressed a brief to the Helvetic republic generally, which he saluted with the most profuse expressions of respect and benevolence. He also addressed himself in the most flattering terms to all — lay and clerical — who had exerted themselves in support of the catholic faith. Their zeal was “more glorious than all the victories and military achievements of their brave country;” and he further exhorted them to persevere in their laudable course, until they had extirpated the “Lutheran doctrines” from the soil of Switzerland.

Animated by this artful address, and roused by the proceedings at Zurich, the ten cantons, which had not avowed the reformed faith, assembled at Zug, in the month of July, and sent a deputation to Zurich, Schaffhausen and Appenzel. The delegates were commissioned to acquaint these states with the firm resolve of the diet **to crush the new doctrines;** and to prosecute its adherents to the forfeiture of their goods, of their honours, and even of their lives. Zurich could not hear such threatenings without deep emotion; but she was ready with her usual reply: “In matters of faith the word of God alone must be obeyed.” On receiving this answer, the Catholic cantons trembled with rage. Lucerne, Uri, Schweiz, Zug, Unterwalden, and Friburg, declared to the citizens of Zurich, that they would never again sit with them in diet unless they renounced their novel dogmas. The federal unity was thus broken by the partisans of Rome; and, in spite of their oaths and alliances, they determined to arrest the progress of truth by the sword of persecution.

THE WEAPONS OF ROME’S WARFARE

Matters now began to assume a more alarming aspect. An event soon occurred which increased the misunderstanding of the confederates, and gave Rome the opportunity of showing with what weapons she was prepared to fight for the ancient faith.

The village of **Stamheim**, situated on the frontiers of Thurgau was dependent upon Zurich, except for its criminal jurisdiction, which was vested in the bailiff of Thurgau. This village possessed a chapel dedicated to St. Anne, and enriched by the gifts of a multitude of pilgrims. But, notwithstanding these great advantages to the inhabitants, they were inclined to abandon their idolatrous practices and gains, and embrace the principles of Reform. Stamheim was at that time governed by a vice-bailiff, named John Writh, a worthy man, and an earnest Reformer. He had two sons young priests, John and Adrian, who had been stationed there by the council of Zurich for the instruction of the people. Full of piety and courage, and zealous preachers of the gospel, the citizens were taught to regard the honours which were offered to the patroness of their village as dishonouring to God and contrary to His holy word, and having received the edict of the council of

Zurich on the subject of images, they burned the votive pictures that attested the miracles of St. Anne, and removed the images which had been placed in the public situations of Stamheim.

For the moment the popular feeling was in favour of Reform, but there were many still who clung to their idols with a tenacity peculiar to idolatry, and murmured deeply for the blood of their destroyers. Such carried their complaints to the grand-bailiff of Thurgau, named Joseph Amberg. This unhappy man was at one time inclined to the opinions of Zwingle; but when a candidate for the office of grand-bailiff, in order to obtain the suffrages of his fellow citizens, all zealous Catholics, he promised to use his utmost power to suppress *the new sect* in Thurgau. He would gladly have seized and imprisoned the offenders, but Stamheim was beyond his jurisdiction. His violent hatred, however, of the bailiff Writh and his sons he took no pains to conceal, nor of his purpose to be avenged because of the dishonour done to the images.

THE ILLEGAL ARREST OF CÆXLIN

The evil genius of Rome came to the assistance of Amberg. He saw that the minds of men were in that state of excitement which indicates a readiness for tumult and violence. This was his snare and a fatal one it proved. **Cæxlin**, a great friend of Zwingle's, and the principal apostle of the Reformation in Thurgau, was arrested in the hope of stopping its progress. At midnight, on the 7th of July, 1524, the learned and pious minister of Burg was seized by the bailiff's soldiers and carried off, in defiance of his cries and in contempt of the privileges of his position. The inhabitants, hearing the disturbance, rushed into the streets, and the village soon became the scene of a frightful uproar, but their pastor was not rescued, the soldiers were off, and the night was dark. According to the custom of those times, the tocsin was rung — the alarmbell; and the inhabitants of the adjacent villages were soon on the move and inquiring of one another what was the matter.

When John Writh and his sons heard that their friend and brother had been violently carried off, they hastened to join the pursuers. But they were too late; the soldiers, hearing the alarm, redoubled their speed, and soon placed the river Thus between themselves and the pursuing party. Application was made to Amberg for the release of Cæxlin on bail, but their terms were refused. Unhappily, a number of unprincipled, turbulent spirits, who always make their appearance in such tumults, became unruly. They applied for some refreshment at the convent of Ittingen, but not content with what they received, they began to pillage and drank to excess. Writh and his sons did their utmost to restrain them, but without success. It was believed by the populace that the inmates had encouraged the tyranny of Amberg, and that they should be revenged on the monks of Ittingen. While revelling in the store-rooms and cellars, a fire broke out, and the monastery was burned to the ground.

THE WRITHS FALSELY ACCUSED

This was enough for the evil purposes of the adversary. The grand-bailiff, in giving an account to his government of the fatal event, blamed the inhabitants of Stein and Stamheim, and above all, the bailiff Writh and his sons, whom he accused of causing the tocsin to be sounded; of being the authors of the excesses committed at Ittingen; of having profaned the host, and burned the monastery.

In a few days the deputies of the cantons assembled at Zug. So great was their indignation, that they would have marched instantly with flying banners on Stein and Stamheim, and put the inhabitants to the sword. "If any one is guilty," said the deputies of Zurich with more reason, "he must be punished, but according to the laws of justice, and not by violence." They also represented to the deputies of the cantons, that the grand-bailiff had provoked the commotion by violating the privileges of the town of Stein in the illegal arrest of the pastor Cæxlin. In the meantime the Council of Zurich sent one of its members, with an escort of soldiers to Stamheim — whose subjects they were — to seize the persons accused. Several consulted their safety by flight; but Writh and his sons, who had returned before the monastery was burned, and were living quietly at Stamheim, refused to fly, depending upon their own innocence and the justice of their government. When the soldiers made their appearance, the worthy bailiff said to them, "My lords of Zurich might have spared themselves all this trouble. If they had sent a child, I should have obeyed their summons." The three Wriths, with their friend, Burchard Ruteman, bailiff of Nussbaum — a man of the same spirit — were taken prisoners, and carried to Zurich.

After a three weeks' imprisonment, they were brought up for examination. They acknowledged that they had gone out at the sound of the tocsin, and that they had followed the crowd to Ittingen; but they proved that, instead of exciting the peasants to disorder, they had endeavoured to dissuade them from it, and that they had returned home immediately they knew that the grand-bailiff refused to set Cæxlin at liberty. Nothing could be proved against them; they had only acted according to the republican principles of their country, in turning out at the sound of the alarm-bell. They were pronounced, after a full examination, to be entirely innocent.

THE ASSEMBLY OF BADEN

These proceedings were communicated to the cantons then assembled at Baden, but they were not satisfied. Jezebel's thirst for blood had been whetted by having her prey so near her grasp, and she determined on lengthening her arm, and making it secure. Contrary to the established customs of the Confederation, she demanded the prisoners to be given up, in order to be judged at Baden. The Zurichers refused on the ground that to them belonged the right to judge their own subjects, and that the diet had no right over the

persons accused. On hearing this, the deputies trembled with rage. "We will do ourselves justice," they exclaimed, "if the accused are not delivered up to us immediately, we will march our troops to Zurich and carry them off by force of arms." Knowing the state of feeling against Zurich because of Zwingle and the Reformation, and dreading the calamities of a civil war, the resolution of the Senate was shaken.

Unhappy moment for the honour of Zurich! "To yield to threats," said Zwingle, "to renounce your just rights when the life of a subject is at stake, is a criminal weakness, from which none but the most fatal consequences can be expected. If the persons accused were guilty, I should be far from wishing to save them from the sword of justice, but since they have been judged innocent, why deliver them up to a tribunal, determined beforehand to make the whole weight of its hatred against the Reformation fall upon their heads?" The whole town was in agitation; opinions were divided. At last it was supposed that a middle course had been found. The prisoners were to be delivered to the diet, on condition that they would only be examined with regard to the affair of Ittingen, and not as to their faith. The diet agreed to this, and on Friday, August 18th, the three Wriths and their friend, accompanied by four councillors of state, and several armed men, quitted Zurich.

"A deep concern," says the historian, "was felt by all the city at the prospect of the fate which awaited the two youths and their aged companions. Sobbing alone was heard as they passed along. What a mournful procession! exclaimed one. God will punish us for delivering them up, cried another. Let us pray Him to impart His grace to these poor prisoners, and to strengthen them in their faith." The churches were all filled. Zwingle and others lifted up their voices; and who, we may ask, did not bathe with their tears those first-fruits to God of the Reformation in Switzerland?

THE WRITHS AND RUTEMAN FALSELY CONDEMNED

When the prisoners reached **Baden**, they were thrown into a dungeon. The *form* of an examination began the following day; the bailiff Writh was first brought in. The Catholics, acting upon their old motto, "that it is wrong to keep faith with heretics," immediately questioned the bailiff concerning the removal of the images at Stamheim, and other points affecting his religion. The deputies of Zurich protested, reminding the diet that this was a gross violation of the conditions on which the prisoners were allowed to appear. But expostulations were of no avail now. The Zurichers and their appeals were treated with derision. The prisoners were put to the torture, in the hope of extorting from them some confessions which might give a colour of justice to the sentence which was already determined to be pronounced upon them.

The most cruel tortures were inflicted on the father, without regard to his character or his age; but he persisted in declaring his innocence of the pillage

and burning of Ittingen. From morning till noon they practised their cruelties on the old man. His pitiful cries to God to sustain and comfort him, only called forth the impiety of his tormentors. "Where is your Christ now?" said one of the deputies, "bid Him come to your relief." His intrepid son, John, was treated with still greater barbarity. But nothing could move his constancy in Christ. He seems to have triumphed in his sufferings, and gloried in his cross. Adrian was threatened with having his veins opened one after another, unless he made a confession of his guilt. But he could only confess to having preached the gospel of Christ, and been married. When wearied with their work of torture, they sent back the faithful confessors of Christ to a loathsome dungeon; their bodies well-nigh racked to pieces, themselves strong in the consciousness of their innocence, and sustained by the presence and power of their Lord and Master, Christ Jesus.

The **bailiff's wife, Hannah Writh**, and the mother of the two young priests, hastened to Baden, carrying an infant child in her arms, to implore the mercy of the judges. With floods of tears she pleaded for mercy to her husband and her sons; she pleaded her large family, her husband's past services to the state and his country; but all in vain. Her entreaties, such as only a wife and a mother could pour forth instead of softening the judges, irritated them more and more, and betrayed that Satanic hatred to the truth which was the real cause of all their cruelties. One of the judges, the deputy for Zug, was led in the providence of God to give the most wonderful testimony to the character of Writh, and the treachery of his judges. "You know the bailiff Writh," said a friend of the distressed wife to him. "I do," he replied, "I have been twice bailiff of Thurgau, I never knew a more innocent, upright, and hospitable man than John Writh. His house was open to all who stood in need of his assistance, in fact, his house was a convent, an inn, and a hospital; and I cannot imagine what demon can have drawn him into this tumult. If he had plundered, robbed, or even murdered, I would willingly have made every exertion to obtain his pardon; but seeing he has burned the image of the blessed St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin, he must die; there can be no mercy shown him." The court broke up, the deputies returned to their cantons, the prisoners to their cells, and did not meet again till that day month.

THE MARTYRDOM OF THE WRITHS AND RUTEMAN

At length those dreary four weeks passed away, and the deputies assembled to deliberate on the sentence. In solemn mockery of all justice, and with closed doors, the **sentence of death** was passed on the bailiff Writh; on his son John — who was the strongest in the faith, and who had led away others and on the bailiff Ruteman. Adrian — it may have been to color over the cruelty and injustice of this sentence — was given back to his mother's tears with a show of mercy.

The officers proceeded to the tower to bring the prisoners into court. On hearing the sentence, Adrian burst into tears. His father calmly embraced the brief interval, to exact from him a promise, that he would never, in any way, attempt to avenge their death. "My brother," said John to Adrian, "the cross of Christ must always follow His word. Do not then weep, my brother; resume your courage, preach the gospel of Christ, be constant in the cause of Christ. I can render thanks to my Lord this day, that He has honoured me by calling me to suffer and die for His truth. Blessed be His holy name for ever! His holy will be done!"

They were next conducted to the scaffold. The sufferings of these faithful men from their long detention in unwholesome dungeons, and from the tortures that were inflicted on them, made death a welcome messenger of peace. But that noble son — to be remembered with admiration and gratitude for ever — whose heart was filled with the tenderest anxiety for his father, sought in every way to comfort and sustain him. Floods of tears fell from all spectators, as he embraced his father, and bade him **farewell on the scaffold**. "My dearly beloved father, henceforward you shall be no longer my father, nor I your son. We are brethren in Christ Jesus, for the love of whom we are about to die. But we are going to Him who is our Father, and the Father of all the faithful; and in His presence we shall enjoy eternal life. Let us fear nothing!" "Amen," replied the father, "may God be glorified, my dearly beloved son and brother in Christ." The bailiff Ruteman prayed in silence.

All three knelt down together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and in another moment their heads fell on the scaffold, and their happy souls had found their home and rest in the blooming paradise of God.

The crowd gave loud utterance to their lamentations. The two bailiffs left twenty-two children, and forty-five grandchildren. Hannah had brought up a large family in the fear of the Lord, and was greatly respected for her virtues throughout the whole district. But she had not yet drained the cup of her bitter anguish. She was condemned to pay *twelve crowns to the executioner* who had beheaded her husband and her son. Let the reader note the refined barbarity, the ignoble littleness, the cowardly persecution, the wanton cruelty, that delights in lacerating an already sorely wounded woman's heart. "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." (Gen. 49:6)

Adrian Writh was released, with orders to make a public confession of his crime at Einsidlen; but he escaped to Zurich, where he found an asylum, became pastor of Altorf, and was the father of the celebrated Rudolph or Ralph, Hospinian, author of the Sacramentarian history. Cæxlin was released,

after having been put to the torture at Lucerne. He likewise found a refuge in the canton of Zurich, and became a pastor there.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁶ For more lengthy details, see *Life of Zwingli*, by Hess, 178-194. D'Aubigné, vol. 2, chap. 5. Scott, vol. 2, pp. 494-501.

SHORT PAPERS ON CHURCH HISTORY

CHAPTER 43

THE GENERAL PROGRESS OF REFORM

The Reformation in Switzerland had now been baptized in blood — the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. The adversary of the gospel had done his work — his cruel work; but it made all men thoughtful. The violence of the blow was felt by all classes throughout Switzerland. The power of Rome was weakened, the triumphs of the Reformation were accelerated. Even the heads of the Catholic cantons, notwithstanding their hatred against the Reformers, could not conceal from themselves, that the general corruption of manners, and the glaring immoralities of the clergy, rendered some reform absolutely indispensable. And seeing the indifference of the ecclesiastical authorities to all such matters, they resolved to provide for the wants of the church, and for the tranquillity of their common country. But the plan of the deputies was opposed by the whole clerical influence, and they had neither energy nor authority to press it. The future general council, so often demanded, so long promised, was again spoken of as the only hope of pacifying Christendom.

While these things were agitating the heads of the Catholic cantons, those favorable to the Reformation were drawing closer together. Zurich, Berne, Glaris, Schaffhausen, and Appenzell, formed an alliance for the more effectual spread of the truth, and for the protection of their rights and liberties. Such were the favorable results of the martyrdom of the Wriths. “Every time,” says d’Aubigné, “that Rome erects a scaffold, and that heads roll upon it, the Reformation will exalt the holy word of God, and throw down some abuses. When Hottinger was executed, Zurich suppressed images, and now that the heads of the Wriths have fallen, Zurich will reply by the abolition of the mass.”

Ever since the decision of the **two conferences**, the council of Zurich had been resolved to abolish the superstitious rites of the mass; but it was thought desirable to delay until the public mind should appear to be prepared for the change. The mass was therefore allowed to remain untouched after the removal of the images, but no priest was compelled to say it, nor any layman to hear it. It became generally neglected, and day by day it fell more and more into disrepute, so that the proper time for its total abolition seemed to have arrived.

THE ABOLITION OF THE MASS

On the 11th of April, 1525, the pastors, Zwingle, Leo Juda, and Engelhardt, accompanied by Megander, chaplain of the hospital, and Myconius, preacher

in the abbey church, presented themselves before the council, and recommended the immediate abolition of the sacrifice of the altar. One advocate alone presented himself to defend the established opinion. **Engelhardt**, formerly a doctor of pontifical law, explained the difference between the service in the Latin church, and the Eucharist according to the institution of Christ and the apostolic practice. All felt the solemnity and importance of the resolution which the council was called upon to take, and thought it well to adjourn the debate till the following day. And then, after some further conference between the divines and the senators, a decree was published to the following effect: “Henceforward, by the will of God, celebrate the Eucharist according to the institution of Christ, and the apostolic practice. Be it permitted to those infirm, and yet rude in faith, to continue the ancient practice for this time only. Let the mass be universally abolished, laid aside, and antiquated, so as not to be repeated even tomorrow.” The altars were accordingly removed from the churches, and replaced by communion tables; the great body of the people communicated according to the new form; those who attended mass were even less numerous than the Reformers expected. Thus fell that mystery of iniquity, which had deeply impressed for centuries the feelings and the credulity of mankind. Mass had been celebrated in the Latin Church from an early period; but prostration at the elevation of the host, and other ceremonies, were of a later date.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

Zwingle, first of all, preached from the words, “It is the Lord’s passover.” After the conclusion of the sermon a table was covered with a white cloth, unleavened bread, and cups filled with wine, to recall the remembrance of the last supper of our Lord with His disciples. The minister then approached the table. The words of institution from the epistle to the Corinthians, and other portions were read aloud by the deacons. The crowd was so great, and the services so prolonged, that several ministers and deacons assisted. After prayer, and exhorting the people to self-examination, the minister lifted the bread, and, with a loud voice, repeated the institution of the Lord’s supper. He then delivered the bread, and afterwards the cup, to the deacons, to present them to the people, and for the people to distribute them to each other. While the elements were passing round, one of the ministers read from the Gospel of St. John those ever fresh and ever blessed discourses, held by the Lord with His disciples, immediately following the feast of the passover, in chapter 13. After the supper the congregation all knelt down, and offered up their grateful adorations and thanksgivings; then hymns, full of the expression of love and praise to their Saviour and Lord, terminated this solemn and affecting scene — the first celebration of the Lord’s supper by the Reformers in Switzerland. It occupied three days — Thursday in Passion Week, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

For the establishment of the good work in Zurich, and for the spread of the truth elsewhere, Zwingle, Leo Juda, and other learned men, published about

this time, several useful works on the holy scriptures, such as the Pentateuch, and other historical books of the Old Testament, besides an able commentary on “True and False Religion.”

We may now leave Zurich for a time. Having given a somewhat minute account of the work of God’s Spirit there, we must be brief with the other places, as many fields still lie before us. Besides, there is a great similarity in the work in the different places.

THE REFORMATION IN BERNE

Berne was one of the most influential states in the confederation; it numbered many powerful friends of the gospel, and many formidable adversaries. For the first few years after the appearance of Luther and Zwingli, a strong opposition was manifested to the new opinions. Nowhere was the struggle likely to be more severe. But under the evangelical preaching of **Haller and Meyer** the more violent prejudices began to soften down.

By the blessing of God on the labours of these devoted, earnest, and consistent men, the cause of truth prospered, and from an act of the government in 1523, we may conclude that the balance inclined to the side of the Reformation. It was decreed, “That as conflicting doctrines were delivered to the people and the preachers thundered against each other, they should all of them thenceforward preach the same gospel, namely, the doctrine revealed by God, and illustrated by the prophetic and apostolic writings; that they should propound nothing contrary to Holy Writ, whether on Luther’s, or on any other authority, and avoid every discourse of a seditious tendency.”

By this decision of the senate, the preaching of the gospel in all its fulness and simplicity was encouraged, and the word of God was established as the only standard of appeal in discussion, the only test of truth. Thus was the foundation surely laid of a true Reformation, and under the sanction of the government. But these advantages, intentional or unintentional, were sufficient to alarm the papists, and to drive them to their favorite weapons of intrigue, treachery, and violence. The two faithful witnesses in Berne, Haller and Meyer, must be silenced by fair means or foul. They were falsely accused, together with the famous Wittenbach, of having spoken to some nuns with the view of inducing them to leave their convent life, and were sentenced to banishment from Berne. But when the plot was discovered, the opposition on the part of the people was so great, that the matter was carried before the Great Council, which reversed the decision of the Smaller Council, and discharged the ministers, with an exhortation to confine themselves to their pulpits, and not to meddle with cloisters. This was all that these devoted men wanted — their pulpits. Thus the Reformation gained a fresh victory, and her enemies were covered with disgrace.

THE NUNS OF KONIGSFELDT

A few months after this occurrence, the principles of the Reformation were greatly strengthened by the conversion of the **nuns of Konigsfeldt**. This was a wonderful triumph of the gospel. The monastery stood near the castle of Hapsburg, and was surrounded with all the magnificence of the Middle Ages. From the family of Hapsburg the imperial house of Austria sprang in the seventh century, and gave, in after years, many Emperors to Germany. Here the daughters of the nobles in Switzerland and Swabia used to take the veil. Beatrice of Laudenberg, sister to the bishop of Constance was one of the inmates. But the truth of God, which the bishop was seeking with all his power to suppress, was the means of the conversion of many of the nuns in this imperial monastery. The writings of Luther and Zwingle, and the holy scriptures, had found their way into this institution, and the saving change was accomplished. Nor need we wonder: God was working by His Holy Spirit, and the strongest prejudices and the greatest difficulties were overcome. The following letter, written by Margaret Watteville, a youthful nun and sister to the provost of Berne, will furnish a better idea of the fruits of the Reformation, and of the christian spirit that existed in those pious women, than any explanation we could give. She writes to Zwingle:

“May grace and peace in the Lord Jesus be given and multiplied towards you always by God our heavenly Father. Most learned, reverend, and dear sir, I entreat you to take in good part the letter I now address to you. The love which is in Christ constrains me to do so, especially since I have learnt that the doctrine of salvation is spreading day by day through your preaching of the word of God. For this reason I give praise to the everlasting God for enlightening us anew, and sending us by His Holy Spirit so many heralds of His blessed word; and at the same time I offer up my ardent prayers that He will clothe with His strength both you and all those who proclaim His glad tidings, and that, arming you against all the enemies of the truth, He will cause His divine word to grow in all men. Very learned sir, I venture to send your reverence this trifling mark of my affection: do not despise it; it is an offering of christian charity. If this electuary does you any good, and you should desire more, pray let me know; for it would be a great pleasure to me to do anything that was agreeable to you; and it is not I only who think thus, but all those who love the gospel in our convent at Konigsfeldt. They salute your reverence in Jesus Christ, and we all commend you without ceasing to His almighty protection. — *Saturday before Loetare.*”

These pious ladies, believing that they could better serve the Lord outside than inside the walls of a convent, petitioned the government for permission to leave it. The council, in alarm at this strange proceeding, endeavoured to induce them to remain, promising that the discipline of the convent would be relaxed, and their allowance increased. “It is not the liberty of the flesh that we require,” said they to the council, “it is the liberty of the Spirit.” As they persisted in their petition, the government found it necessary at length to

yield. And the decree which restored them to liberty contained a general provision for the liberation of all who, with the consent of their parents, might desire it. The convent gates were now thrown open, which greatly weakened the credit and power of Rome, and manifested the triumphs of the Reformation, for many of those ladies were in a short time honourably married.

THE CONFERENCE AT BADEN

But although the principles of the Reformation were gaining ground rapidly, the Roman Catholic party was still very powerful and very active. A more decisive battle must be fought before victory can be declared.

Ever since the first conference held at Zurich, the bishop of Constance, or rather **John Faber**, his grand vicar, had been constantly deliberating by what means he could most effectually arrest the progress of the Reformation. Experience had proved that bishops' charges were little regarded; that writing books was hopeless, as the Reformers surpassed their adversaries in learning and talents; indeed, success seemed utterly hopeless unless the destruction of Zwingle could be accomplished. His popularity and influence were increasing day by day.

A political event which happened about this time yet further impressed upon the Romanists the necessity of some instant and vigorous measure. The battle of Pavia, fought between the French and the imperialists, threw a dark shadow over Switzerland, but shed a bright gleam on the wisdom, patriotism, and Christianity of Zwingle. More than ten thousand Swiss mercenaries had fought on that field so fatal to France. Between five and six thousand swelled the number of the slain, and five thousand were made prisoners. When these were released and sent home, their maimed and emaciated forms were like so many spectacles of horror wandering over the land, and were everywhere met by the wailings of the widows and the orphans of the slain. The people now remembered how often Zwingle had thundered against these foreign enlistments from the pulpit; and spoke of him as the truest patriot and their best friend.

The Romanists now saw that the general feeling was in favour of Zwingle, and that some means must be taken to check his growing influence. But how is this to be done? Who can solve the problem? We must go wisely to work. Jezebel, long in practice, came to their aid; and thus, we may say, she counselled. The first thing to be done is to induce Zwingle to leave Zurich. Of course he will come to the conference. Once out of the territory of that state, he would be in your power. You could seize him and burn him, and the death of the champion would be the death of the whole movement. The plan was approved, victory was certain. "The torrent once stemmed, the waters of heresy will retreat to the abyss whence they issued, and the 'everlasting hills' of the old faith, which the deluge threatened to overtop, will once more lift up

their heads stable and majestic as ever.” Faber communicated his plan to Dr. Eck, vice-chancellor of Ingolstadt who had acquired great reputation with his party by combating the opinions of Luther at Leipsic; and it was agreed that he should take charge of the plot.

This notorious and unscrupulous advocate of the papacy addressed a letter to the cantons, filled with invectives against Zwingle, and offering to convince him publicly of his errors, if they would furnish him with a favourable opportunity. “I am full of confidence,” he said, “that I shall, with little trouble, maintain our old true christian faith and customs, against Zwingle, who has no doubt milked more cows than he has read books.” A diet was at length fixed to be held at Baden — a Romish city, in May, 1526.

Zwingle and the other divines of Zurich were invited to attend, but the senate refused compliance. To send Zwingle to Baden, said the council, would be to send him not to dispute, but to die. There the blood of the Wriths was shed, and there the popish cantons were all-powerful: they had burned his books at Friburg and his effigy at Lucerne, and they were only thirsting to burn himself. Indeed the papal party took no pains to conceal their intentions towards Zwingle, whom they denounced in their public manifesto as a rebel, a heretic, and a perverter of scripture. With these threatenings before them, the council of Zurich decreed that Zwingle should not go to Baden. They also protested against the resolutions that might be taken by the diet, but offered Eck full security, if he would come and confer with the Reformer at Zurich. This offer was rejected, and the conference took place without the presence of Zwingle.

THE OPENING OF THE DIET

Faber, Eck, and Murner, accompanied by prelates, magistrates, and doctors, robed in garments of silk and damask, and adorned with chains, rings, and crosses, repaired to the church. Ecolampadius and Haller, two quiet timid men, were the only Reformers who appeared in the discussion. The same dogmas which had been replied to over and over again, were brought forward by Eck. The following are his **seven propositions**, as given by the learned and candid Roman Catholic historian, du Pin. They will also place before the reader the figments of popery for which the papists were fighting, and for which they were ready to shed the blood, not only of their best citizens, but of the saints of God. 1. That the real body and blood of Christ are present in the sacrament of the altar. 2. That they are truly offered in the sacrifice of the mass for the living and the dead. 3. That we ought to call on the blessed Virgin and the saints, as our intercessors. 4. That the images of Jesus Christ, and His saints, ought not to be taken down. 5. That there is a purgatory after this life. 6. That infants are born in original sin. 7. That baptism takes away that sin.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁷ Du Pin, folio ed. vol. 3, p. 201; Hess, pp. 240-250.

Eck alone spoke in defence of the popish doctrines; but the absence of Zwingli greatly disconcerted him, and nullified the chief object of the diet. "I thank God," wrote Ecolampadius to Zwingli, "that you are not here. The turn that matters take makes me clearly perceive that, had you been here, we should neither of us have escaped the stake. How impatiently they listen to me! but God will not forsake His glory, and that is all we seek." The assembly, being entirely governed by Eck, pronounced an excommunication against Zwingli and all his adherents, and particularly required of the senate of Basle to deprive Ecolampadius of his office, and to banish him. It also strictly prohibited the sale of the books of Luther and Zwingli, and forbade all innovations — all change in worship or doctrine, under severe penalties.

The papal party affected to make much of their victory at Baden, but victory was only in appearance. Ecolampadius was received with open arms at Basle, and Haller was retained in the exercise of his functions, notwithstanding the excommunications launched against him. The cantons of Zurich, Berne, Basle, and Schaffhausen, demanded permission to inspect the acts of the assembly, but they were not allowed to see them: on which account they refused all further concern with the official decision of the diet.

A dispute, which immediately followed on the return of Haller and the deputies from Baden, fairly tested the strength of both parties. For six months preceding the conference, the Reformer had suspended the celebration of mass in Berne. The smaller senate, influenced by the decrees of Baden, insisted on his restoring it. He firmly but respectfully refused, and appealed to the larger senate. They no doubt felt the difficulty of their position. Will they annul the generous edict of 1523, and confirm the persecuting mandate of 1526? The populace came to their help. The people, by whom Haller was much loved, assembled in multitudes, and expressed their determination not to be deprived of their christian pastor. The senate, yielding to the popular commotion, decreed: That he should resign his dignity, but continue in his ministerial functions, and that the celebration of mass should not be required of him. The day was evidently past for communities to be governed by papal edicts or alarmed by church censures. The strength of public feeling, embittered by religious strife, was far beyond their reach. The breach which separated the papal and the Protestant parties was widening day by day, and the spirit and position of each becoming more and more hostile.

The Catholic cantons, or those most firmly attached to the faith of their fathers, Lucerne, Uri, Schwitz, Unterwalden, and Zug, which are frequently spoken of as *the five*, perceiving the instability of Berne in the case of Haller, offered to the authorities to send deputies to assist in the maintenance of the old religion. This message, fortunately, offended the pride of Berne — a military state. The government replied: "That the embassy proposed was quite unnecessary, since the people of Berne were sufficient for the management of their own affairs, and the care of their religion was of all others most especially their own." They now revoked any engagement they had come

under at Baden by their deputies, they confirmed the edict of 1523; and decreed that a public disputation should be held in their city during the winter following, for the final decision of the disputed questions.

THE GREAT CONFERENCE AT BERNE

The bishops of Constance, Basle, Zion, and Lausanne together with all their most eminent theologians, were summoned to appear at this great conference, on pain of forfeiting such of their possessions as lay in the Bernese territory. They commanded all their own divines to be present, and stated that the holy scriptures would be the only standard of appeal. At the same time they published **ten articles**, to be maintained by the advocates of the Reformed churches, and to be the subject of the conference.

1. That the church of which Jesus Christ is the only Head sprang from the word of God, and subsists by the same word 2. That the church ought to observe no other laws, and is not subject to the traditions of men. 3. That the death of Christ on the cross is a sufficient expiation for the sins of the whole world, and they that seek salvation in any other way deny Jesus Christ. 4. That it cannot be proved by any testimony of scripture, that the body and blood of Jesus Christ is corporeally received in the sacrament. 5. That the sacrifice of the mass is opposed to scripture, and derogates from the sacrifice of Christ. 6. That Christ is the only intercessor and advocate for His people with God the Father. 7. That the existence of a purgatory cannot be proved from scripture; therefore, the prayers, ceremonies, and annual services for the dead are useless. 8. That the worship of images, statues, and pictures is contrary to the word of God. 9. That marriage is not forbidden to any order of men. 10. That all lewd persons ought to be put out of the communion of the church, as the scriptures teach us; for nothing is more unbecoming the order of priesthood than a lewd and unchaste celibacy.²⁸⁸

Haller, the real author of the ten articles, naturally turned to Zwingli for help in their defence. "If you do not stretch out your hands to me," he wrote, "I fear all is over." The contest seemed unequal. On the one side the Roman hierarchy, with the sanction of ages, the prejudices of mankind, and backed by the authority of the civil power; and on the other side, Berthold Haller, a modest, timid preacher of the gospel. But the sword of the Spirit was invincible. Nevertheless the servant of the Lord had to prove, through deep exercise of soul, his own weakness and where his great strength lay. Zwingli, as well as Ecolampadius, promised his assistance. The decisive moment was at hand. The success of the Reformation throughout the whole of Switzerland was involved in the approaching assembly.

²⁸⁸ Waddington, vol. 2, pp. 327-336. Scott, vol. 3, pp. 1-25. d'Aubigné, vol. 4, pp. 361-385. Hess, pp. 250-258.

THE OPPOSITION OF ROME

The Catholic party, apprehending the results of the conference, made great efforts to prevent it. They assembled at Lucerne, and strongly opposed the meeting, referring the Bernese to the disputation of Baden as having sufficiently decided the questions at issue. The Catholics of Germany also addressed a strong remonstrance to the government of Berne, dissuasive of the conference. "They implored them not to be seduced unto those novelties by the influence of a few foreigners, but to adhere to the religion of their fathers and forefathers, under the shadow of which they had achieved so many glorious victories, and extended so widely the boundaries of their dominions." To this plausible appeal the senate of Berne nobly replied: "That the religion of Christ that the salvation of souls, that the peace of the republic, were at stake; and that from a resolution thus grounded no reasons could possibly move them. "Other means of persuasion and intimidation were then attempted. The Friburgers even endeavoured to excite the people of Berne to rise against their rulers. Passports were refused to the evangelical ministers; and all persons were forbidden to pass through the territories of the Catholic cantons to the meeting. Nor did the Emperor suffer his numerous engagements to prevent his writing to the government of Berne urging them to change their mind and refer the whole question to a general council.

The reader must draw his own conclusions as to the motives of the Catholics in uniting all their energies to prevent the proposed assembly. They dreaded the light of plain scripture. Roman Catholicism can only exist in gross darkness as to the truth of God. But their remonstrances and menaces were all in vain. The senate was firm; and the evangelical principles had made such manifest progress among all classes of the inhabitants, that any attempt to arrest the cause of Reform would have immediately ended in a popular commotion and bloodshed.

THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

On the 7th of January, 1528, the great conference was opened. None of the prelates, and very few of the higher powers who had been invited were present; yet a great number of ecclesiastics and learned men assembled from all parts of Switzerland and the surrounding countries. As many as a hundred evangelical teachers from Glaris, Schaffhausen, St. Gall, Constance, Ulm, Lindau, Isenach, Augsburg, Strasburg, and other places proceeded first to Zurich, in order to go in a body with Zwingle. But so suspicious were the Zurichers of papal treachery, and so anxious about the safety of their own Reformer, that the magistrates sent forward his party under a strong military escort.

More than three hundred and fifty ministers of the gospel were present at the disputation. Many of those worthy men deserve a place in our history for the Lord's sake; but we can only give the names of a few. Haller was supported

by Zwingle, Œcolampadius, Capito, and Bucer, the flower of the Swiss and Strasburg Reformation, there were also Pellican, Bullinger, Blaurer, Hoffmeister, Megunder, Zingk, Schmidt, the burgomaster Reust, and Vadian, consul of St. Gall. On the side of the papacy the cause was left, says Waddington, “to the feeble protection of men without talents or learning, or any sort of reputation or authority, not comparable to Eck and Faber — Alexius Grad, Tregarius, Buchstab, Egidius — names which appear on no other occasion on the page of history. But the positions of Haller were defended with much solid erudition and great and practised talents.” If we accept a few feeble attempts by the papal party to disturb the unanimity of the Reformers, there was no feature of any remarkable interest in the whole assembly at least to readers in our day.

THE REGULATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

Four presidents were appointed, and that everything might be recorded with unimpeachable fidelity, four secretaries were chosen — two by each of the two parties — and sworn to give a faithful account of the proceedings. The meeting took place in the church of the Franciscans, and lasted from the 7th till the 28th of January. Two sessions were held daily, and each session was opened with prayer. Perfect freedom of debate was allowed to both parties, with this one condition, “That no proof should be admitted but from scripture, nor any explanation of the proofs which was not also supported by scripture — no judge being allowed but scripture explained by itself, that is, by the comparison of more obscure parts with those which are more clear.” The ten theses composed by Haller were successively discussed. Zwingle, Œcolampadius, Capito, Bucer, and Haller defended them alternately with so much success, that a great majority of the clergy of Berne, together with the canons the prior and sub-prior of the Dominicans, signed the ten articles, declaring that they judged them in perfect accordance with the sacred scriptures. The presidents of the assembly then exhorted the magistrates to adopt such measures for the interest of religion as they should deem wise and practicable.

THE RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE

The authorities proceeded immediately to act upon the advice of the presidents. The altars were removed from the churches, and the images were destroyed, yet without disorder or bloodshed. They published a decree, with the concurrence of the citizens, proclaiming the ten articles as the creed of all. They further, by this decree, deprived the four bishops of all spiritual jurisdiction within their territories, ordering the removal of all such rural deans as opposed the Reformation, and the abolition of the mass and images at Berne for ever. Thus was the downfall of the papacy throughout that extensive canton completely accomplished, and the idols which had reigned for twelve hundred years were overthrown and destroyed in one day!

When **Constantine** made the profession of Christianity a pathway to worldly preferment, his heathen soldiers and senators eagerly rushed into the church. But alas! they brought their idolatries with them. It was then that statues, images, paintings, pomps, festivals, vestments, and the demigods of paganism were introduced into the professing church; and all this, that she might enjoy the favour of princes. From the fourth till the sixteenth century, idolatry was supreme, and the word of God was degraded and rejected by the dominant church. But now we see a greater than Constantine — son of a herdsman in the valley of the Tockenurg — the humble pastor of Zurich; standing before us, through grace, as the noblest champion of the word of God, and the most uncompromising enemy of the Judaism and the paganism of Rome, that the sixteenth century has furnished us with. Luther was a great Reformer as to doctrine, but feeble as to idolatry; Zwingle was valiant in both. Here, all praise be to the God of all grace, and the power of His Holy Spirit, Zwingle restores the long banished Bible to its right place, and purifies the church of its inveterate abuses.

Before leaving Berne, he went to the cathedral, where twenty-five altars and a great many images had been thrown down, and finding his way through these “eloquent ruins,” he ascended the pulpit in the midst of an immense crowd. In great emotion he said, “Victory has declared for the truth, but perseverance alone can complete the triumph. Christ persevered even until death. Stand fast, my brethren, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Fear not! That God who has enlightened you, will enlighten your confederates also, and Switzerland, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, shall flourish in righteousness and peace.”

The work was severely complete. “The citizens were commanded, without exception, to withdraw their obedience from the episcopal authorities; deacons, pastors, and all other ministers of the church, were absolved from their oaths of allegiance to the bishop; altars, images, and masses were abolished throughout the territory, together with the long list of pontifical observances and ceremonies, such as anniversaries of the saints, dedications of churches, the use of sacred vestments, fast-days and feast-days.” The capital adopted the new form of worship, and in the space of a few months all the municipalities of the canton followed the example.

THE MERCY OF THE GOSPEL

How seldom it has been our lot to witness a great victory celebrated by acts of mercy! Alas! this is a new thing in Christendom. It has never been so in the reign of Jezebel. Her disobedient children have either been drowned in blood or consumed in fire. But the principles of the papacy are essentially opposed to the mercy of the gospel. Fire and sword are the arguments of the one, love and mercy of the other.

At Berne, we find that the great triumph of the truth was celebrated by public rejoicings and deeds of mercy. The magistrates opened the prison doors; two men condemned to death were pardoned; others who had been banished from the republic were recalled — her exiles returned to their homes. Thus charity followed in the footsteps of faith and victory. “A great cry resounded far and wide,” writes Bullinger, “in one day **Rome had fallen** throughout the country, without treachery, violence, or seduction, by the strength of truth alone.” The monks resigned their monasteries into the hands of the magistrates: the funds were appropriated for benevolent and educational purposes, and the religious houses were converted into schools and hospitals. And now we find the princely monastery of Konigsfeldt was also devoted to the same useful purposes. “If a king or Emperor,” said the citizens, “in alliance with us, were to enter our city, would we not remit offences, and show favour to the poor? And now the King of kings, the Prince of peace, the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, has visited us, and brings with Him the pardon of our sins, who only deserve eternal banishment from His presence. And can we better celebrate the advent of Him to our city than by forgiving those who have trespassed against us?”

In the same strain followed a moral and political regeneration, which was not among the least honourable or merciful accompaniments of the Reformation. All mercenary service to foreign powers was prohibited, and foreign pensions abolished.

At Easter the Lord’s supper was celebrated for the first time according to the institution of the blessed Lord, and the practice of the apostles. As to Zurich, it was a time of great solemnity and deep interest. The citizens and their wives, in quiet sober dress, gathered round the table of the Lord, which recalled the ancient Swiss simplicity. The heads of the state, and the people mingled together, and each one felt that the Lord was present with them. “How can the adversaries of the word refuse to embrace the truth at last,” said Hoffmeister, “seeing that God Himself renders it so striking a testimony?”

Thus was the Reformation established at Berne, and thus it has continued until the present day. If the disputation at Baden gave a temporary ascendancy to the papal party, it was more than counteracted at Berne. “The citizens of Constance, Schaffhausen, St. Gall, Glaris, Tockenbourg, and other places, in which the struggle was till that time undecided, now boldly declared their adhesion to the Reformation, and gave the customary proofs of their evangelical zeal by abolishing images, altars, and the mass.”²⁸⁹

²⁸⁹ For lengthy details of the great crisis, see Scott, vol. 3. He quotes from Bucer’s account of the meeting, and from Munster’s. He also quotes from Gerdes, Ruchat, and others. du Pin, in apologizing for the absence of the four bishops, says, “that disputes about matters of faith ought not to be determined by scripture alone, because everyone would explain it according to his own humour... that the law of God had provided another way to decide all doubts in religion, which is, to apply themselves to the pope, and acquiesce in his determination.” Such is the blindness of Rome’s most reasonable, learned, and devout members.

THE REFORMATION OF BASLE

According to all history, the triumphs of the gospel in Berne produced a most sensible effect on several cantons; but more especially on those where the Reformed doctrines had previously found an entrance. Indeed, some venture to say that **all Switzerland was moved** by the decided part which that powerful canton had taken in the Reform movement. “It gave new life,” says Wylie, “to the Protestant cause in every part of the country. On the west, it opened the door for the entrance of the Protestant faith into French-speaking Switzerland. On the east, in German Helvetia, the movement, quickened by the impulse communicated from Berne, was consummated in those towns and villages, where for some time it had been in progress. From the Grisons, on the Italian frontier, to the borders of the Black Forest, where Basle is washed by the waters of the Rhine, the influence was felt, and the movement quickened. The great mountains in the centre of the land where the glaciers have their seat, and the great rivers their birthplace, were alone unmoved: yet not altogether unmoved, for the victory of Berne sent a thrill of surprise and horror through the Oberland.”²⁹⁰

But the Reformation of the learned city of Basle was the most important consequence of the decisive step of the warlike Berne. In importance, it was next to Zurich and Berne in the Swiss Confederacy. We have already spoken of Basle in connection with the early days of Zwingli and Leo Juda, when they sat at the feet of the famous Wittenbach — the first to sow the good seed of the gospel in Helvetia. Capito and Hedio successively watered that precious seed by their prayers, and the public expositions of the gospel of the grace of God. And these were followed in 1522 by a yet greater evangelist, Œcolampadius. And here too, the writings of Luther were printed by the famous Froben, and scattered over Switzerland and other lands.

THE PEOPLE IN ADVANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT

For about six years, the gospel had been faithfully preached by the meek and pious Œcolampadius; but with all his scholarly accomplishments, he was wanting in decision and courage. It has been said by some, that what Melancthon was to the dogmatic Luther, Œcolampadius was to the prompt and courageous Zwingli. But the middle classes had been so taught by their pastor, that they were more in favour of a change of religion than the ruling powers. “There was,” says d’Aubigné, “**a triple aristocracy** — the superior clergy, the nobles, and the university — which checked the expansion of christian convictions.” And these authorities, failing to discern the exact moment for concession to popular opinion, were compelled to yield to the demands of the citizens, and to act according to their dictation; that which ought to have been characterized as a peaceful Reformation, was

²⁹⁰ *History of Protestantism*, vol. 2, p. 70.

accomplished (through the temporising of the magistrates) by a violent revolution.

A few years previous to this fresh excitement in 1528, the senate issued an edict, "That there should be a uniformity in the religious worship, and that on some future day a public disputation should be held on the subject of the mass, and the question of its continuance decided by vote." By this decree, the council flattered themselves that they had laid the foundation of public peace; but, like all half measures in troublous times, it entirely failed of its object. Both the Roman Catholics and the Reformers continued to assail each other in public and private; but from the boldness and bitterness of the popish preachers, and their increasing violence, the citizens began to fear that they had their secret supporters among the leading men in the senate. This suspicion aroused the Protestants. They began to assemble in large numbers. But first of all they sent deputies to remind the senate of the obligation of their decree.

This was perfectly legal, and consistent with republican principles. But the friends of popery, who resided for the most part in Little Basle, which lay on the other bank of the Rhine, assembled in arms, and brandishing their swords and lances, endeavoured to obstruct the passage of the petitioners to the town hall. Meltinger, the burgomaster, and an intrepid leader of the papists, had great influence in the senate, and haughtily refused the petition. Meyer, who was also burgomaster, and an equally zealous friend of the Reformation, had with him the majority of the people. A collision became inevitable. "The fatal hour approaches," said Œcolampadius, "terrible for the enemies of God." Much debate ensued with no good results. The council affected to be neutral; trial was made of soft words, both parties were advised to retire to their homes; but it was too late: the tumult was gradually rising into a tempest. The deputies not only stood firm, but proceeded to demand "that those senators who encouraged the papal preachings, in contempt of the decree, and to the promotion of disorder and discord, should be deprived of their dignity." This, the senate altogether refused; and from this moment the agitation increased. Basle soon wore the appearance of a military camp, which an accidental blow might have changed into that of a battlefield.

BASLE IN A STATE OF SIEGE

On the night of the 25th of December, the partisans of the bishop, alarmed at the appearance of affairs, met under arms, and raised the cry that an Austrian army was coming to their aid. This was the first formal departure from the legal course. The Protestants hearing this terrible cry, hastily arose from their beds, seized their arms, and repaired to the Gardeners' Hall, the rendezvous of their party. The news of what was going on in Basle brought many deputies from both Reformed and Catholic cantons, to express their sympathy and offer their mediation. But the Reformed citizens were anxiously awaiting the decision of the magistrates. Both parties remained under arms for several

days and nights. All the gates of the city, except two, were closed; and strong guards were posted in every quarter. The senate continued its sittings; one edict after another was issued, but so temporising, that they increased rather than appeased the violence of the crisis. The Protestants, considering what was due to the glory of Christ, to public justice, and to the welfare of their posterity, repeated their remonstrances to the council, and demanded an immediate answer.

On the 8th of February, 1529, the senate replied, "That those senators whose removal was required should refrain from voting on religious questions, but should retain their seats and voices upon all others." The citizens began to fear from the delays required, and the half-measures proposed, that some evil design was thereby concealed, and that their liberties were in danger as well as their religion. This so incensed the citizens, that they took military possession of the gates and towers of the city, and demanded the removal of the suspected members without delay. However contrary such proceedings were, and ever must be, to the gospel of peace, we must bear in mind what the principles of a popular government are, what the education of those men had been, and that they were only emerging from the darkness of popery. But a merciful providence so overruled this great commotion that no blood was shed, though a great victory was gained.

For fifteen days the patience of the townspeople had been sorely tried by the halting policy of the council. Basle was on the eve of a civil war, and, what is worse, "**a war of hearths.**" The senate was suspected of treachery. "The mass, the mass — or to arms! to arms!" was the Catholic cry, accompanied with a storm of insults, invectives, and sanguinary menaces. The Protestants replied, "No mass, no mass — not even a single one more: we will die sooner!" The senate was embarrassed. Œcolampadius retired to his pulpit, and preached meekness and patience with such unction that the people were melted to tears. Prayer was offered up to God that He would direct them to those measures that would be for His glory and the deliverance of His people from the superstitions of Rome. Sincerely believing that they were contending for their civil and religious liberties, they resolved not to yield. Twelve hundred men, all well armed, appeared before the senate house. "We must have your reply tonight," said they. It was nine of the evening. "Tomorrow," said the council, "we will give you an answer," and begged the citizens to retire in peace to their homes. "No eyes shall be closed tonight in Basle," was the substance of their reply. The Protestants resolved not to separate, and once more, and for the last time, they demanded the answer of the council that very night. The lords of Basle began to think they had trifled long enough; some concession must be made.

When near midnight they sent a messenger to say, "That all members of senate who were relatives of priests would be excluded from that body, and as to the rest of their demands, all things touching religion and policy would be regulated according to their wishes." This reply was so far satisfactory, but

the citizens viewed it as little better than a further compromise, that their enemies might gain time; so they agreed not to separate nor to relax their vigilance.

THE IDOLS DESTROYED

While both parties were thus deliberating as to the future, an apparent accident speedily brought the whole matter to an issue. Those who had been appointed to patrol the streets, and to inspect all the posts in the city, entered the cathedral church of St. Peter. One of the men, urged by curiosity, opened a side door with his halberd, where a number of idols had been stowed away. One of them falling on the stone pavement was broken to pieces. The curiosity of the spectators was further moved by the sight of the fragments, and they began turning out the images one after another that were concealed in this closet. The floor was soon covered with heads, trunks, and broken limbs; the priests, who were not far off, raised a great outcry, and attempted resistance, but this only hastened the work of destruction. The rumour of a disturbance in the church flew rapidly through the city. Hundreds of armed burghers were immediately on the spot. The hour of religious fury had arrived. “Why should we spare the idols that light up the flames of discord?” cried the Protestants; and the cathedral was swept as by a hurricane. The altars were demolished, the pictures were torn down, the idols were overturned, and the fragments piled up, and set on fire in the public squares.

The priests, trembling with fear, hastened to conceal themselves from public view. The senate came together in amazement, and attempted to interpose their authority, and appease the tumult; but it was too late. They had failed in the first requisite in the art of popular government — the wisdom to discern the right time to meet the popular demand. The citizens were long patient, but their determination gradually increased, and the senate was blinded by the influence of a small faction within it; and now they must listen to the haughty reply of the people. “We are doing in one hour that on which you have been deliberating for these three years, whether it should be done or not.” While the iconoclasts respected all kinds of private property, no symbol of idolatry was spared. Under the blows of these zealous burghers, all the idols in all the churches fell, and were cast into the flames, so that they lighted up the darkness of the night, and warmed the chilly and excited crowds.

The people carried the day, the senate submitted. Twelve members — opposed to the Reformation — were dismissed to an honourable obscurity, and the demands of the citizens were granted. “They decreed, 1, That the citizens should vote in the election of the members of the two councils; 2, That from this day the idols and mass should be abolished in the city and the canton, and the churches provided with good ministers to preach the word of God; 3, That in all matters appertaining to religion and the commonwealth,

two hundred and sixty of the members of the guilds should be admitted to deliberate with the senate.’²⁹¹

Such were the triumphs of these two eventful days. They had secured the establishment of the Reformed religion; and gained, what were in their estimation, great civil advantages, and all without shedding one drop of blood. The two objects, civil and religious, were generally combined in the **Swiss Reformation**. “The commencement of the Reformation in Basle,” says Ruchat, “was not a little tumultuous, but its issue was happy, and all the troubles that arose about religion were terminated without injury to a single citizen in his life or goods.” All the trades met on the 12th of February, and took the oath, guild by guild, of fidelity to the new order of things. The following Sunday the Reformed worship was introduced in all the churches of Basle, with the singing of the Psalms in German: and in the course of the week a general amnesty was proclaimed, covering all offences.

THE RESULTS OF THE REVOLUTION

Everything was now changed in Basle. The leaders of the papal party, priests, scholars, and monks, prepared to leave it. Not however, from any fear of bodily harm, but from their dislike to the Protestant faith. Many of them were courteously entreated to remain; **Erasmus** especially — the most eminent person who withdrew from Basle at this time. In writing to his friend Pirkheimer, a little before his departure he says: “Æcolampadius made me the offer of his sincere friendship; which I accepted on condition that he would allow me to differ from him on certain points. He would have persuaded me not to leave Basle. I told him that it was with reluctance I quitted a city, which, on so many accounts, was highly agreeable to me; but that I could not longer support the odium to which a continuance there would expose me, as I should be thought to approve the public proceedings of the place.” Soon after this friendly interview he took his departure and removed to Friburg. His salaries, his credit with the great, with the pope and the papal party, were in danger if he remained any longer in that polluted residence. But so prone was this great man of letters to sarcasm and jesting, that he could not restrain his wit against the superstition of his own party. “So many were the insults heaped upon the images and crucifixes,” he says, “as to make it strange, that those holy saints, who had been wont to display such prodigies of power on very slight offences, should have refrained, in this important emergency, from the display of their miraculous energies.”

New professors, to supply the place of Erasmus and others, were invited to fill the vacant chairs in the university, and in particular, Myconius, Phrygio, Munster, and Grynaeus. At the same time an ecclesiastical order, or

²⁹¹ Wylie’s *History of Protestantism*, vol. 2, p. 75.

confession of faith, was published, which is considered one of the most precious documents of this epoch.²⁹²

THE SACRAMENTAL DISPUTE

About the period at which we have now arrived, one of the most grievous sources of discouragement to the Reformers, both in Germany and Switzerland, was the dispute which arose about the sacrament of the supper, commonly called **the sacramentarian controversy**. Luther, it will be remembered,²⁹³ whom God used to raze to the ground almost every part of the Romish system, retained to the end of his days a superstitious reverence for a certain materialism in the supper which he called *consubstantiation*; that is, “he believed in the presence of the flesh and blood of Christ with, in, or under, the bread and wine.” He did not believe like the Romanist, that the Lord’s supper was a sacrifice, or that the body of Christ in the elements should be worshipped; but he maintained that the body was there, and received, not merely by faith, but corporeally by the communicant. Zwingle, on the other hand, was extremely simple in his views of the sacred supper. He maintained that its grand design was a *memorial* or *commemoration*. “This do in remembrance of Me.” At the same time he affirmed that it can only be properly commemorated *in faith*. We show the Lord’s death — His death for us, the blood shed by which our sins are washed away. We thus rest in faith upon His death as the sure ground of our eternal life, and joyfully feed on the rich spoils of accomplished redemption.

“His precious blood was shed,
His body bruised for sin;
Remembering this, we break the bread,
And, thankful, drink the wine.”

But as we have already described the conference of Marburg, we return and take up the thread of our history.

²⁹² Scott, vol. 3, p. 40; Waddington, vol. 2, p. 321; d’Aubigné, vol. 4, p. 416.

²⁹³ See Chapter 37: “The Conference at Marburg” and “A Proposal for Toleration and Unity”.

SHORT PAPERS ON CHURCH HISTORY

CHAPTER 44

THE EXTENSION OF REFORM IN SWITZERLAND

The Reformation was now established in the three principal cantons, Zurich, Berne, and Basle. The example of these powerful states, greatly influenced a considerable part of **German Switzerland**. In many places the citizens, who had been inclined to the Reformation but were undecided, now boldly declared their faith in the new doctrines. Schaffhausen, St. Gall, Glarus, Bienne, Thurgau, Bremgarten, Tockenbourg, Wesen, and other parts of less consideration, were entirely or partially reformed. The effect of the discussions, followed by the zeal of those great centres, was also felt in *French Switzerland*, “lying at the foot of the Jura, or scattered amid the pine-forests of its elevated valleys, and which up to this time had shown the most absolute devotion to the Roman pontiff.”

THE MINGLING OF SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS

But here we must pause for a moment and draw attention to the great and **common mistake of Protestantism** from the beginning — that of looking to the secular arm for protection in place of simply witnessing for the truth, and trusting in the living God. No sooner had the Reformers broken with Rome, than they, as if terrified by her remaining power, stretched out their hands to the civil governments and sought the shelter of their armies.

Luther, it is true, objected to the force of arms in the furtherance of the truth, and looked for the triumphs of the gospel through the faithfulness of its friends; yet, as we have seen, he agreed to the princes assuming the entire control over ecclesiastical and spiritual affairs from an early period of the Reformation. But Zwingli went much farther in this dangerous course. When troubles arose, and dangers beset the vessel of the Reformation, through the treachery of the Catholic cantons, he thought it his duty, like a true republican or a christian patriot, to examine federal questions, to counsel the senate, and to sanction an appeal to arms. But the end of these unscriptural proceedings, as we shall soon painfully see, was the inglorious death of the illustrious Reformer, and an almost fatal blow to the evangelical cause in Switzerland.

From the time that the Reformed states assumed, or rather usurped the functions of the church, and the ministers of the gospel interfered with politics, the clouds began to lower and the storm to gather. Desirous no doubt to strengthen the good work within their cantons, and of extending it without, the magistrates of Zurich and Berne published several edicts prohibiting their subjects from attending mass and from speaking unfavourably of the recent

changes, and ordered a better attendance on evangelical services: and also, for the purification of morals, they issued a general proclamation against festivities, drunkenness, and blasphemy. But while the civil authorities were thus enforcing their religion by edicts, Zwingle descended from his sacred vocation to that of a political diplomatist. From this time the almighty arm of a divine providence, which had sheltered the great Reformer and the Swiss Reformation, seemed to be withdrawn, and the council of Zurich, though for a time boastful, was smitten with indecision, weakness, and folly.

THE FIRST FALSE STEP — “A CONFEDERACY”

Influenced, or rather misled, as we believe, by his republican education, Zwingle thought it but right for the Reformers and the Reformation to form a **league of self-defence**. Having long foreseen that the Reform movement would eventually divide his beloved country into two camps he thought himself perfectly justified in promoting an alliance with the evangelical states. In the year 1527 he proposed what was called a *Christian Co-Burghery*, in which all the professors of the gospel might be united in a new Reformed confederation. Constance was the first to intimate her approval of the new league; Berne, St. Gall, Mulhausen Basle, Schaffhausen, and Strasburg followed. “But this Christian Co-Burghery,” says d’Aubigné, “which might become the germ of a new confederation, immediately raised up numerous adversaries against Zwingle, even among the partisans of the Reformation.” The pastor of Zurich was now on dangerous ground, which the end too speedily proved. As a citizen he had been taught to consider the regeneration of his country as a part of his religion, and the church in which he was cradled had for centuries wielded two swords. Even in the present day we are surprised to find how much Continental Christians are governed by what is national.

Luther, who was an imperialist, was entirely opposed to the policy of carnal resistance. “Christians,” he said, “ought not to resist the Emperor, and if he requires them to die they are to yield up their lives.”

THE FIVE CANTONS FORM A LEAGUE WITH AUSTRIA

The Roman Catholics, on hearing of this new alliance of the Protestants, were filled with alarm and indignation. The five, or forest cantons, Lucerne, Zug, Schweitz, Uri, and Unterwalden, remained firm in their fidelity to Rome. The herdsmen of those mountains, long wedded to their habits, their traditions, and their religion, heard with grief and dismay of the terrible wickedness of the heretics in the plains below. As priests and monks arrived in the Oberland from those scenes of daring impiety, and told their wondrous stories to the excited mountaineers, they were inflamed to madness. This cannot be borne with! this pestilent heresy must be exterminated by fire and sword, was their first thought; and they burned with desire to light the faggots.

Almost entirely ignorant of the meaning of the word **Reform**, we can easily imagine their feelings when messenger after messenger came running to tell them that the altars at which their fathers had worshipped were being cast to the ground, that the images were ignominiously burnt in the public squares, that mass was abolished, and that the holy priests and monks were driven into exile. Their fanatical zeal being thus raised to the highest pitch, and fanned by the artful monks, they were ready for anything desperate; and they were only restrained from proceeding immediately to open violence by the superiority, both in numbers and power, of the Protestant cantons. The bishop of Constance also appealed to them by letter, entreating them to act with firmness, or all Switzerland would embrace the Reform.

What is to be done? was now the important question. We can sit still no longer! To form an alliance with a foreign power without the consent of all the other cantons would be a violation of the fundamental principles of the Helvetic Confederation, and of the league of brotherhood. Nevertheless, allies we must have, and the claims of the church are higher far than fidelity to the nation. And knowing that Ferdinand, brother of Charles V, and Archduke of Austria, was distinguished for his hatred of the Protestants, they entered into an alliance with this prince for the extirpation of Reform, and the maintenance of Romanism.

This was unconstitutional, unnatural, and cruel. Austria was the ancient oppressor and the natural enemy of the Swiss nation — the last quarter from which a Swiss canton might have been expected to seek help. “Had they forgotten,” exclaims a modern writer, “the grievous yoke that Austria made them bear in other days? Had they forgotten the blood it cost their fathers to break that yoke? Were they now to throw away what they had fought for in the gory fields of Morgarten and Sempach? They were prepared to do this. Religious antipathy overcame national hatred. Terror of Protestantism suspended their dread of their traditional foe.”²⁹⁴ The alliance was so contrary to all national feeling and prejudice, that the Austrians had some difficulty in believing it to be in good faith. “Take hostages,” said the mountaineers, “write the articles of treaty with your own hands; command, and we will obey!” The league was concluded, and sworn to on both sides, the 23rd of April 1529, at Waldshut. It decreed, “that all attempts at forming new sects in the five cantons should be punished with death And in case of emergency, Austria shall send into Switzerland six thousand foot soldiers, and four hundred horse, with all requisite artillery. And if necessary, the Reformed cantons shall be blockaded, and all provisions intercepted.”

The report of these negotiations excited great distrust and alarm even among the enemies of the Reformation. By leaguering themselves thus with a foreign power, it was said they were compromising the independence of Switzerland and, instead of an ally, they would find a master. But these feelings, as the

²⁹⁴ Wylie's *History of Protestantism*, vol. 2, p. 76.

first blush of their patriotism, were soon extinguished by their hatred of the Zwinglians. The men of Unterwalden and Uri, in their fanatical zeal, suspended the arms of Austria with their own, and decorated their hats with peacocks' feathers — the badge of Austria. This gave rise to the following lines which expressed the national feeling:

“Wail, Helvetians, wail,
For the peacock's plume of pride
To the Forest-canton's savage bull
In friendship is allied.”

The eight cantons not included in this alliance, with the exception of Friburg, united in sending deputies to their mountain confederates, with a view to reconciliation. But they were everywhere disrespectfully treated. Feeling that they had the imperial army to fall back upon, the papists offered every kind of insult to the doctrines and persons of the Reformers. “No sermon, no sermon!” they cried, “would to God that your new faith was buried for ever!” The deputies, retiring in astonishment, were still further shocked in passing the door of the secretary of state, where they saw the arms of Zurich, Berne, Basle, and Strasburg, hanging from a lofty gibbet.

THE ROMISH CANTONS PERSECUTE THE REFORMED

Thus **war seemed inevitable**. All things were tending to an open and immediate rupture. The men of the mountains became violent. In order to defend the religion of their fathers, and to exclude the new doctrines from their subjects, they began to fine, imprison, torture, and put to death the professors of the Reformed faith. One of these cases, however, was so atrocious, that it roused the feelings of mankind, and speedily brought matters to a crisis.

James Keyser, a pastor of the canton of Zurich, and a father of a family, was making his way on Saturday, 22nd May, to Oberkirk, in the parish of Gaster, where he was to preach on the Sunday. When quietly and confidently walking along a woody part of the road, which he had often gone before, he was suddenly seized by six men, posted there to surprise him, and carry him off to Schweitz. He was brought before the magistrates, tried, and condemned to be burnt alive, on no other pretence than that he was an evangelical minister. The remonstrance of Zurich, to whose territory he belonged, was treated with derision, and the barbarous sentence was carried into execution. When first the pious man heard his sentence, he burst into tears; but before the hour of his martyrdom arrived, the grace of God had so revived his courage, and filled him with joy, that he walked cheerfully to the stake, fully confessed his faith, and thanked the Lord Jesus in the midst of the flames, even to his latest breath, that He had counted him worthy to die for the gospel. “Go,” said one of the Schweitz magistrates, with a sarcastic smile, to the

Zurich deputies, “Go, and tell them at Zurich how he thanks us!” This was a defiant challenge to the men of Zurich, and so they understood it.

WAR DECLARED

The Zurichers, exasperated at this outrageous conduct, and regarding it as an affront to themselves, declared war against the five cantons. While it is the duty of the magistrates to defend the oppressed against the oppressor, it is the duty of the minister of Christ, to abide by his sacred calling, and only bring into the field the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. But here alas! impartial history has recorded the sad departure of the great Reformer from the gracious precepts of his Master, of which he ought to have been a living witness. The burning pile of his brother minister kindled the strongest passions of his soul as a citizen and a patriot. He raised a cry against the bigotry and intolerance of the Forest-cantons which resounded through all the Confederation.

He called for the most energetic measures on the part of the authorities. In the council, in the pulpit, he exhorted them to take up arms, to be firm and fear not. Identifying himself with the army, of which he was chaplain, he exclaimed, “We thirst for no man’s blood, but we will clip the wings of the Oligarchy; if we shun it, the truth of the gospel and the lives of ministers will never be secure among us. We must trust in God alone; but when we have a just cause, we must also know how to defend it, and, like Joshua and Gideon, shed blood in behalf of our country and our God.”

Had Zwingle been a magistrate in the council, or a general in the army, his appeals would have been consistent and inspiring; but he had forgotten that he was a minister of the Prince of peace, and that the weapons of his warfare were not to be carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through the power of God. At the same time we must remember that it was against political abuses, and not against a difference of faith that he called for force. “As for the mass, rites, idols, and superstitions,” he said, “let no one be forced to abandon them. It is for the word of God alone to scatter with its powerful breath all this idle dust. Let us propose to the five cantons to allow the free preaching of the word of the Lord to renounce their wicked alliances, and to punish the abettors of foreign service.”²⁹⁵

MILITARY PREPARATIONS

Meanwhile the popish cantons were not idle. They knew what they had done, and what they had to expect. The war of religion was begun. The sound of the warhorn re-echoed in the mountains and the valleys: men were arming in every direction; messengers were sent off in haste to Austria; but Ferdinand, having been attacked by the Turks, could not furnish them with the troops he had promised. Nevertheless, firmly united among themselves, the men of the

²⁹⁵ D’Aubigné, vol. 4, p. 477.

five cantons marched under the great **banner of Lucerne**, on the 8th of June, to join battle with the Reformers. Zurich saw there was not a moment to be lost. Four thousand men, on the 9th of June, well armed, issued from the gates of Zurich to meet the foe. The walls and towers were crowded with spectators to witness the departure, among whom was Anna, the wife of Zwingle. At nine in the evening they arrived at Cappel, a village on the frontiers of Zurich and Zug. At day-break, on the morning of the 10th, the Zurich warriors sent a herald with a formal declaration of war, and of the rupture of the alliance. Immediately the small town of Zug was filled with cries and alarm. The sudden march of the Zurichers had taken them by surprise; great consternation prevailed: men hasting to put on their armour, and women and children in tears.

But just as the first division of the Zurich army, consisting of two thousand men, was preparing to cross the frontier, a horseman was observed spurring his steed up the hill at full gallop. It was Œlbi, Landamman of Glaris. "Halt!" he cried, with great emotion; "I am come from our confederates. The five cantons are prepared, but I have prevailed upon them to halt if you will do the same. For this reason I entreat my lords and the people of Zurich, for the love of God and the safety of the Confederation, to suspend their march at the present moment. In a few hours I shall be back again. I hope, with God's grace, to obtain an honourable peace, and to prevent our cottages from being filled with widows and orphans."²⁹⁶

Œlbi was thought to be an honourable man, and friendly to the gospel; therefore the Zurich captains suspended their march. Many believed his embassy to be peace, but Zwingle suspected treachery. Troubled and uneasy in his camp, he beheld in Œlbi's intervention the subtlety of Satan. Unable to obtain assistance from Austria at that moment, they feigned a desire for peace in order to gain time. With something like a prophetic vision, Zwingle went up to Œlbi, whom he knew well, and earnestly whispered in his ear, "Godson Amman, you will have to answer to God for this mediation. Our adversaries are in our power; this is why they give us sweet words. By-and-by they will fall upon us unawares, and there will be none to deliver us." No prophecy was ever more literally fulfilled, as we shall soon see. "My dear godfather," replied Œlbi, "let us act for the best, and trust in God that all will be well." So saying, he rode off to Zug, leaving Zwingle in deep thought, anticipating a dark and terrible future. "Today they beg and entreat," said he, "and in a month, when we have laid down our arms, they will crush us."

THE TREATY OF CAPPEL

The deputies of Zurich and of the Romanists, with the exertions of the neutral cantons, were sixteen days in drawing up and agreeing to the articles of peace. During this time the soldiers of both armies behaved in the most orderly and

²⁹⁶ D'Aubigné, vol 4, p. 480. Wylie, vol. 2, p. 82.

friendly manner. They seemed to remember only that they were all Swiss. In the **camp of Zurich**, Zwingli, or some other minister, preached every day. “No oath or dispute was heard; prayers were offered up before and after meals; and each man obeyed his superiors. There were no dice, no cards, no games calculated to excite quarrels; but psalms, hymns national songs, and bodily exercise, were the military recreations of the Zurichers. At length a treaty was concluded on June 26th, 1529, which, as Zwingli thought, was only a suspension of the storm. The warriors now struck their tents and returned to their homes.”

The terms of this treaty, though not all that the Protestants desired, were nevertheless favourable to Reform, yet not unfavourable to the Catholics. It was agreed that the Forest-cantons should abandon their alliance with Austria that liberty of conscience should be guaranteed to all subjects; and that the smaller parishes should decide by a majority of votes which religion they would profess. The people of Zurich — not Zwingli — were elated with the success which had crowned their warlike demonstration. The Bernese, who had contributed nothing towards this bloodless victory, were becoming jealous of the growing influence of Zurich, and, unhappily, a spirit of disunion sprang up between those powerful states, which led to the great catastrophe of 1531.

ZWINGLI'S CHRISTIAN CONFEDERATION

Just at this time, when the mind of Zwingli was too much occupied with politics, he fell into the snare of the enemy. Satan knew his weak point as a Christian, and tempted him with grand ideas of the unity of all Switzerland, and of the Reformed Christendom, by a unity of faith. His motives, no doubt, were of the purest and loftiest character. Meditating day and night how he might advance the Reformation, and overthrow that terrible power which had held the nations of Europe so long in bondage, the idea of a holy confederation consisting of all the Protestant states and nations of Europe filled his active mind. All Christendom was under his eye. No man of his day had such a comprehensive grasp of its condition — political, military, and religious. But not seeing the difference between the principle of law in the Old Testament, and of grace in the New, he honestly thought that it was the duty of the Protestant states to put forth their military power in defence of the gospel. “Why should not,” he said, “all the Protestant powers unite in a holy confederation for the purpose of frustrating the plans which the pope and the Emperor are now concocting for the violent suppression of the Reformation?”²⁹⁷

This colossal **scheme of the Reformer** led him into many negotiations to which we need not refer. While they would have done honour to a statesman, they were a reproach to a christian minister. But whatever were his projects,

²⁹⁷ Wylie, vol. 2, p. 86.

or whatever his mistakes, his object was one, and a noble one — the spread and establishment of the pure gospel all over his native land. This to Zwingle was dearer far than life; and the Master knows how to give His servant credit for a good motive, even though He cannot approve of his work. Besides, it is positively affirmed that Zwingle never abated for a moment his pastoral labours; that he was present on all occasions when his duty called him.

THE FIVE CANTONS VIOLATE THE TREATY

The popish cantons, enraged at the progress of the Reformation, and its near approach to their own gates, were eager to find some pretext for ridding themselves of the treaty of Cappel. This was not difficult to find. They had never really kept it. What was called in the treaty “liberty of conscience,” or what was beginning to be called by the Protestants “the rights of conscience,” the Catholics never acknowledged. They knew no distinction between religious and civil obedience. With this fundamental position of the Protestants, the Catholics never could for a moment agree. It necessarily became a principal matter of contention, and the source of innumerable local jealousies and controversies, which daily increased the irritation, and determined the mountaineers openly to violate the treaty.

The cup of **Catholic indignation** was at length full. Blood! blood! was the cry. Nothing but the blood of living Christians could atone for the destruction of the dumb idols; nothing but the burning piles of God’s saints could answer for the ashes of their altars and images. Oh Rome! Rome! when wilt thou be satisfied with the blood of God’s redeemed? Thy thirst is unquenchable. The oceans which thou hast shed have only inflamed it. On every possible occasion during thy usurped dominion we see thee thirsting for blood. But what will it be when thy reign is ended, and no more blood to shed? That awful word “remember” will throw thee back over the past and fill thee with visions of blood, visions of the dungeons of the Inquisition, and of the flames of thy innocent but helpless victims. Then all will be changed. Unmingled, unending blessedness, shall be their happy portion; but what of that place where the flames shall never be quenched, where the worm shall never die, where the visions of the past shall ceaselessly flit before thy sleepless restless soul, and where one drop of cold water shall never be procured to cool thy burning tongue? There we must leave thee to the fruitfulness of thy memory, the accusations of thy conscience, and the upbraidings of those whom thou didst deceive by thy sorceries, and drag down by thy delusions to those regions of endless woe.

THE FLAMES OF PERSECUTION REKINDLED

Switzerland was now divided into two camps, and the gulf which separated them was daily widening. The Forest cantons, backed by the Emperor of his brother Ferdinand, recommenced the persecution of the Protestants with more fury than ever. They indulged in the most atrocious barbarities. The

preachers and the professors of the Reformed faith wherever they could find them, they imprisoned, confiscated their goods, cut out their tongues, beheaded, and burned them alive. Those who escaped their intolerance implored the protection of Zurich. Under these circumstances, Zwingli thought it his duty to raise his voice and arouse the confederate cantons. He visited many places in person, addressed large assemblies, appealed to everything that could stimulate the zeal of the people for the defence of the gospel and the liberty of the subject. "These are Swiss," said he, "whom a faction is attempting to deprive of a portion of their liberty transmitted to them from their ancestors. If it would be unjust to attempt to force our adversaries to abolish the Romish religion from among them, it is no less so to imprison, to banish, and to deprive citizens of their property, because their consciences impel them to embrace opinions which are obnoxious to their oppressors."

On the 5th of September, 1530, the principal ministers of Zurich, Berne, Basle, and Strasburg — Œcolampadius, Capito, Megander, Leo Juda, and Myconius, assembled at Zurich, and addressed to their popish confederates an earnest and christian remonstrance, but it was utterly disregarded. In a general diet held the following April at Baden, the disputes were renewed with more than their former violence. In vain did the mediating cantons entreat the two parties to banish every cause of discord. The papal party, having made ample preparations, were now determined to make open war. The Zurichers were importunate in their complaints, and even called for a direct appeal to arms. Zwingli thought this the speediest way to bring the mountaineers to reasonable terms. The men of Berne were more temperate; while they admitted that the five cantons had broken the treaty of Cappel, and shamefully violated their own promises, they urged that a milder expedient should be tried.

THE BLOCKADE

"Let us **close our markets** against the five cantons," said the Bernese, "let us refuse them corn, wine, salt, steel, and iron; we shall thus impart authority to the friends of peace among them, and innocent blood shall be spared." This resolution was adopted, duly published, and rigorously carried out. Situated, as these cantons were, on the mountainous part of Switzerland, the measure was one of extreme severity. From the nature of their country, the greater part of the people had little native produce besides their flocks. They were dependent for their daily supplies upon the harvests and markets of the plain. But now those markets were closed, and roads leading to the towns were blockaded. The consequences of this pitiless decree were most disastrous. Bread, wine, and salt, suddenly failed from the chalets of the poor. Famine, with its invariable attendant, disease, spread dismay and death among the inhabitants. The cry of distress which arose from the mountains moved many hearts, and many voices were raised against the interdict, both within the

confederate cities, and outside the limits of Switzerland; but it roused those who suffered from it to the highest pitch of indignation and resentment.

ZWINGLE'S POLICY

As the part which Zwingle took in the political affairs of Zurich at this time, has been much criticized by historians, and, we think, severely so by d'Aubigné, we quote the opinion of Dean Waddington, who will not be suspected of any leaning towards republicanism.

“It must here be mentioned, that Zwingle expressed his decided opposition to these measures. Doubtless he too maintained that just principle, so constantly asserted by Luther, that the cause of reason and truth, when contending with proscriptive oppression, has no enemy so dangerous as the sword. He even ascended the pulpit and preached against the publication of the interdict. He argued, that the insulting slanders of the papists ought to be endured with christian forbearance; that an example of that great evangelical virtue was especially required from those who professed the gospel. But his fellow-citizens closed their ears for once against his admonitions, and hastened whither their inauspicious passion led them.”²⁹⁸

As a **matter of policy**, Zwingle maintained that, if the Catholic cantons were to be punished as evil-doers, the means apparently the most violent, were nevertheless the surest to bring them to a more submissive and reasonable temper, and the most humane in the end. But to reduce a whole population to famine would fill the land with the wail of suffering, and the cry of indignation. He also clearly saw that delay would be ruinous to Zurich. “By this measure,” he said, “we give the five cantons time to arm themselves, and to fall upon us first. Let us take care that the Emperor does not attack us on one side, while our ancient confederates attack us on the other; a just war is not in opposition to the word of God; but this is contrary to it — taking the bread from the mouths of the innocent as well as the guilty: straitening by hunger the sick, the aged, children, and all who are deeply afflicted by the injustice of our adversaries. We should beware of exciting by this means the anger of the poor, and transforming into enemies many who at the present time are our friends and our brothers!”²⁹⁹ But notwithstanding these truthful and powerful appeals of the Reformer, the cantons, Berne in particular, were immovable.

The indignant mountaineers, on seeing themselves surrounded by a formidable power, alone with barrenness and famine between their lakes and their mountains, determined on violent measures. “They block up our roads,” said they, “but we will make a way with our swords.” They first had recourse to the observances of their religion. Prayers were directed to be offered up, pilgrimages to be made, paternosters repeated, and hymns to be sung. War

²⁹⁸ *History of the Reformation*, vol. 3, p. 236.

²⁹⁹ D'Aubigné, vol. 4, p. 536.

would immediately have broken out, had not the Catholic leaders found their advantage in delay. They knew that the Protestants were not agreed among themselves, and by delaying the attack, they hoped to widen their divisions.

THE MEDIATORS RENEW THEIR EXERTIONS

Several attempts were made at **reconciliation**, but without effect. Zurich and Berne demanded that the preaching of the word of God should be permitted, not only in the common parishes, but also in the five cantons. This was asking too much under the circumstances; and as they persisted in their demands, they only exasperated the proud and inflexible Catholics. "No," they replied, "we will not listen to any proposition before the raising of the blockade." Deputies from all the cantons met on five different occasions between June 14th and August 23rd. The neutral cantons continued their exertions, with the assistance of ambassadors from foreign powers, until all the expedients that prudence and humanity could suggest were exhausted, yet they were unable to advance the parties a single step towards reconciliation.

The situation of the Reformer was becoming every day more painful and perplexing. It is impossible to contemplate his position at this moment, without sharing the agonies of his broken heart. But alas! he was off the direct line of the word of God, and without His divine guidance. In the troubled state of affairs, as the senate could not move without him, he allowed his natural feelings as a citizen, to displace those of the Christian and the Reformer. But however well intentioned these services may have been, they were inconsistent with his high and holy calling. The unnatural union of church and state, which had corrupted Christianity from the age of Constantine, was spreading confusion everywhere, and hastening the ruin of the Reformation. The tendency of Zwingle's policy, without doubt, was to weld them together; still the word of the Lord remains the same: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." And if this divine precept, this ever-abiding christian principle, be neglected, we may have to reap the bitter fruits of disappointment and disaster. So it was with this great and noble man. He mixed the Reformation with the strife of politics, and it was now far beyond his power to avert the fearful consequences.

THE POSITION OF ZURICH AND THE REFORMATION

Zwingle was anxious, disquieted, and filled with the most painful forebodings as to the future. He saw the storm gathering on all sides. Those who had been his friends turned against him; his enemies, taking courage from the ebbing tide of affairs, beset and tormented him; for there were many at Zurich whose hearts still clung to the hereditary despotism, though they had professed some zeal for the principles of Reform. The partisans of the monks, the friends of foreign service, pensioners, and the malcontents of every class, united in pointing out Zwingle as the author of all the sufferings of the people. Seeing

his actions were misrepresented, and the measures he had counselled were rejected, he felt he had only to withdraw from public life.

The magistrates were dismayed. Both **Zurich and the Reformation are in danger** if Zwingli cease to pilot the ship; they were now in the same vessel, and on the stormy waters of religious contention. Immediately the council sent to him a deputation of honour, and entreated him not to forsake them at so critical a moment. Three days and three nights he spent in prayer, earnestly seeking divine guidance. All the tenderness of friendship, and all the ardour of patriotism were employed in vain by the deputies; but when they represented to him the blow that the Reformation would sustain if he left Zurich, he yielded and consented to retain his post.

By thus consenting to remain at the head of affairs, he had thought to recover all his former influence and restore harmony and courage to Zurich; but he was bitterly disappointed. A strange infatuation seemed to possess both rulers and people. They daily became more and more indisposed towards the war which they at first so importunately demanded, and identified themselves with the passive policy of Berne. But as the Conference still professing pacific objects was held at Bremgarten, Zwingli, attended by two ecclesiastics, secretly repaired thither. He endeavoured to persuade his friends to raise the blockade; representing to them the many evils which it had occasioned, and the fatal catastrophe in which it was likely to terminate. But his pleadings, though with tears and anguish of heart, were all in vain. On this occasion he took a mournful and last farewell of his young friend Bullinger, the pastor of the place, and commended to his charge the tottering church of God.

WAR DECLARED AGAINST ZURICH

During the course of the negotiations the Forest-cantons remained intractable and warlike. Indeed the final proposals of the mediators would probably have been received by the Protestants, but they were decidedly rejected by the Catholics. Matters were now so much involved that war became inevitable. The preparations of the five cantons being completed, they took the field on the 6th of October 1531. They were the **first in arms**. The defence of the church and the holy see were their real objects for waging war, though the interdiction of commerce was the ostensible grievance. The chiefs were closely united together, and the people, burning with indignation against those who had taken away their food, and were seeking to take away their religion, powerfully supported them. Their common faith and sufferings, united them as by one spirit for one object, which could not fail to impart resolution and courage in action. But no alarm had yet been given: Zurich was asleep. All the passes were seized, all communication between Zurich and the five cantons had been rendered impossible. "The terrible avalanche," says our Swiss historian, "was about to slip from the icy summits of the mountain, and to roll over the valleys, even to the gates of Zurich, overthrowing everything in its passage, without the least forewarning of its fall."

In the hope of dividing the Reformed, the Catholics declared war, not against the body of the Reformers, but against Zurich only. The eye of Jezebel was set upon the blood of Zwingli. Whoever may be saved, he must be slain. So long as he lives, there can be no peace for holy mother church in Switzerland. Let the battle be against the arch-heretic. Thus inspired by the papal demon of war, the mountain warriors assembled in their chapels, heard mass, and then, to the number of eight thousand, began their march toward the Protestant frontier. A papal army, twelve thousand strong, marched into the free parishes. The soldiers having entered the deserted churches, and seeing the images and the altars broken down, their anger was kindled to madness. They spread like a torrent over the whole country, inflicting all the horrors of war wherever they came. The country people, terrified, and running from chalet to chalet, calling aloud for help, failed to arouse the bewitched Zurichers; yet in four days was the ruin of Zurich accomplished.

THE INFATUATION OF THE COUNCIL OF ZURICH

On the evening of the 9th, the council was called together by the assurance that war was begun. Only a small number assembled; and instead of sounding the tocsin, or calling the people to arms, they despatched two councillors to Cappel and Bremgarten to ascertain what was going on. "The five cantons," said they, "are making a little noise to frighten us, and to make us raise the blockade." But at daybreak, on the morning of the 10th, they were aroused from their slumbers by the positive intelligence, that the enemy had crossed the frontier and seized upon Hytzkilch. Still, the council was but partially aroused. The day was spent in making speeches and lengthened tedious debates. A vanguard of six hundred men with artillery was sent on to Cappel to oppose the invaders; the main body was to follow. At seven in the evening the tocsin was sounded in all the country districts.

It was a fearful night, as if nature herself shuddered at the blood that was about to be shed. "The sun went down behind the Albis," says Wylie; "the city, the lake, and the canton were wrapped in darkness; with the darkness came trembling and terror. The bells were rung to summon to arms. They had hardly begun to toll when a tempest burst forth, and swept in terrific fury over Zurich and the surrounding country. The howling of the wind, the lashing of the waves of the lake, the pealing of the steeple-bells, the mustering of the landsturm, and the earthquake, which about nine o'clock shook the city and canton, formed a scene of horror such as had seldom been witnessed. Few eyes were that night closed in sleep. In the dwellings of Zurich there were tears, and loud wailings, and hasty and bitter partings of those who felt that they embraced probably for the last time."³⁰⁰

³⁰⁰ *History of Protestantism*, vol. 2, p. 93; see also d'Aubigné, vol. 4, p. 568.

THE EVIL FOREBODINGS OF THE PEOPLE

This dreadful night was to be followed by a still **more dreadful day**. The morning came, the tempest was past, but a bright dawn could not dispel the gloom that had settled in the hearts of the Zurichers. The sound of trumpets, and the beating of drums, were calling the inhabitants to arms; but hours passed away before a few hundred soldiers could be mustered. “The irresolution of the council,” says Hess, “filled the citizens with uneasiness, and lessened their submission; for the vacillation of a government destroys all confidence, and orders given with hesitation are ill obeyed.” Instead of an army of four thousand men, which the council had decreed should march to Cappel, only seven hundred were under arms at ten o’clock, and these were disorderly and agitated, without uniform and inefficiently armed. Zwingle, at the command of the council, and in conformity with the customs of his country, accompanied the army as chaplain. With a broken and a bleeding heart he embraced his beloved wife and his beloved children for the last time on earth. “I know,” he said, “what all this means — it is all about me — all this comes to pass, in order that I may die.” He did not deceive himself as to the issue of the expedition, but he thought it his duty to obey the orders of his superiors, without urging any objections. Calm himself in the midst of friends who trembled for his life, he endeavoured to comfort them. “Our cause is good,” said he, “but ill defended. It will cost my life, and that of a number of excellent men who would wish to restore Christianity to its primitive simplicity, and our country to its manners. No matter! God will not abandon His servants; He will come to their assistance when you think all lost. My confidence rests upon God alone, and not upon men; I submit myself to His sovereign will.”

THE BATTLE OF CAPPEL

At noon, under the drooping banner of Zurich, only seven hundred passed through the gates. The affectionate Anna was seen on the ramparts following her husband with her eyes so long as he was visible. But she had also in that ill-omened army, a son, a brother, a great number of near relations, and many intimate friends, of whose return she had no hope. She shared the forebodings of her husband, and like him, believed that it was for the holy cause of God and His truth that they thus exposed themselves to danger and to death — it was martyrdom.

Zwingle was observed to fall behind his troops. Those who were near him could hear that he was engaged in prayer. He thus rode mournfully alone, praying for the welfare of the church of God, until he reached Mount Albis.

Cappel is only three leagues from Zurich, but the road crosses Mount Albis. On its summit they halted; and some proposed that they should wait for reinforcements; but the roaring of distant cannon announced that the battle had begun. This sound awoke the native feelings of Zwingle. “Hear ye not the

roar of the cannon beneath us?” he exclaimed, “they are **fighting at Cappel**; let us hasten forward to the aid of our brethren.” The words of Zwingle prevailed with the leaders, filled them with enthusiasm, and they pushed forward.

Early on the morning of that day, the soldiers of the five cantons attended divine service, heard mass; the host was offered up for the sins of the people, and the army, eight thousand strong, began their march at nine o'clock. The division posted at Cappel was attacked by this army at one o'clock, but being ignorant of their force contended themselves with keeping up a constant fire of artillery. In two hours the Zurichers bearing the “great banner,” reached their comrades and joined in battle.

The Catholics, not knowing the extent of this reinforcement, would not hazard a general engagement. The artillery of the Zurichers being advantageously posted and well served, greatly disconcerted the Catholics, who were spread out on a morass beneath them. It was four o'clock; the sun was sinking rapidly. Loud murmurs were heard in the ranks of the Catholics because of the tardiness of the chiefs. During this altercation, an experienced and brave warrior of the canton of Uri, at the head of three hundred volunteers, silently entered a wood on the left flank of the Zurich army, which they had neglected to occupy, and perceiving the weakness of the Protestant army, he immediately resolved to attack them. The mountaineers coming to the knowledge of this oversight, climbed the hill, and under cover of the beech-trees, opened a deadly fire on the men of Zurich. They were within a short distance of them, and ordered to pick out the men they desired to bring down. Having discharged their fire, they rushed out of the wood, sword in hand, and furiously charged the bewildered Zurichers, crying, “Heretics! image-breakers! we have you at last!”

THE DEATH OF ZWINGLE

The weakness manifested and the errors committed by the Zurich leaders, can only be accounted for on the principle of **judicial blindness**. They had gone far away from the narrow path of the word of God, and He was no longer with them. The church had become the state, and the state the church and the present army was composed of congregations and their ministers rather than of Swiss soldiers. This was failure which God must judge; and the Catholics were the rod in His hand to chastise the children of His love. But what a moral! What a lesson for Christians in all ages!

Finding themselves ensnared and surrounded, the men of Zurich fought desperately; but, being only as one to eight they were overpowered. And to increase the confusion, some of the enemies' spies joined the rear-guard and raised the cry of *treachery*, which ended in a general flight; but all those who fought in the first ranks, being thus deserted, were cut down. The carnage was great; the Alps were echoing and re-echoing the wild roar of battle, when the

curtain of night fell, closed the scene of blood, and more than five hundred of the flower of Zurich slept the sleep of death: “the wisest of its councillors, the most christian of its citizens, and the ablest of its pastors, were left on that fatal field.”

But it is with shame and sorrow that we have to record the melancholy fact, that among the slain there were **twenty-five christian ministers**, who had marched at the head of their flocks. In this respect, we doubt not, the battle of Cappel stands alone in the history of battles. Surely this was expression enough of God’s sore displeasure against the unholy mixture of the church and the world, of the theologians and the politicians, which obtained to such an extent in the Swiss Reformation.

But there was one death which affected Zurich and the Reformation in Switzerland more than all the others — the **death of Ulric Zwingle**. Scarcely had the action begun, when, stooping to console a dying man, he received a wound on the head and fell to the earth. He attempted to rise, but he was thrice overthrown in the press, and received several wounds. He had not drawn his sword, but he had raised his voice, which was heard above all the uproar, to inspire the troops with courage, and to prevent confusion. Exhausted, he lay with clasped hands in the attitude of prayer, and was heard to say, “Alas, what a calamity is this! Well, they can indeed kill the body, but they cannot touch the soul.” These were his last words.

THE CAMP FOLLOWERS

When the field of Cappel was in the possession of the Catholics, the camp-followers, with lighted torches, began to prowl over the battle-field. In fuming over the bodies — for the purpose of stripping or robbing them — when they found any who were still sensible, they said, “Call upon the saints and confess to our priests.” If the Zuricher refused, he was instantly despatched as a vile heretic with oaths and curses. Among those heaps of slain was one, whose eyes and hands were raised to heaven; — “Do you wish for a priest to confess yourself?” said one of those slayers of the slain, holding the glimmering light of his torch against his expiring features. He shook his head. “If you cannot speak,” said they, “invoke the mother of God, and the other saints for their intercession.” He again shook his head, keeping his eyes fixed on heaven. “This man too is an obstinate heretic,” cried they. But a soldier, moved with curiosity, turned the head in the direction of a fire that had been lighted on the spot and exclaimed, “I think it is Zwingle!” whereupon, a Captain Tockinger, of Unterwalden, who came up at that moment, hearing the name, drew his sword, struck Zwingle on the throat, uttering many curses, and thus extinguished what remained of that remarkable life. And thus too was that scripture fulfilled: “All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” (Matt. 26:52)

The night was cold; a thick hoar-frost wrapped, as in a winding-sheet, the bodies of the dead and the dying. At length the day appeared, the body of Zwingle was recognized, and then the full hatred of his enemies — especially the foreign service men — broke out against him. After offering many indignities to the lifeless body, they held the mockery of a council, and summoned it before them. It was condemned, on the double charge of treason and heresy, to be **burnt to ashes**. The public executioner of Lucerne carried out the sentence, and the fanatical pensioners flung the ashes to the four winds of heaven.

The condition of Zurich, when a few wounded men found their way home to tell what had happened, was beyond description terrible. But we dwell not on the agitation, confusion, sorrow. We only refer to it for the purpose of introducing one chief mourner — **Anna Zwingle**. She had heard from her own house the repeated discharges of artillery. She feared the worst. What hours of anguish! But at length she knows all: her husband, son, son-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, and almost all her dear friends, lie cold on the heights of Cappel. But though a woman, a wife, and a mother, she was a true Christian, and committed herself and her young children to God's tender care, and sought to rejoice in the midst of her tears, that so many whom she loved had received the crown of martyrdom.

REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE OF ZWINGLE

As we have discussed pretty freely, in passing, the character and principles of the **great Swiss Reformer**, we have little to add by way of reflection. But we cannot bid farewell to this sad scene, without offering our tribute of grateful respect to one whom God raised up and so wonderfully used and of expressing our deep sorrow that so great a light should have deviated from the narrow path, and led so many after him.

In tracing his steps from the herdsman's cottage in the Valley of the Tockenurg, we have seen much to admire and imitate, for which also posterity must be ever thankful. He pursued with constancy and fearlessness the convictions of his own mind, as to the teaching of the word of God, so far as he understood its spiritual meaning and application. We can never forget nor undervalue the noble stand he frequently made for the absolute authority of the word of God, and that at a time, when its existence was scarcely known, and had never been read, even by the priests and monks. In those halls of public disputation, when he placed his Hebrew Bible and his Greek New Testament on the table before him, and appealed to these books as the only standard of faith and practice, God was glorified, His power was manifested, and the Catholics were utterly confounded, and driven back into the darkness of their superstitions.

Zwingle, as the representative man of his time, stood triumphant. The light of the Reformation progressed rapidly, and seemed as if it would soon shed its

radiance over every mountain and valley in Switzerland. All but the Forest-cantons had received the truth, either wholly or partially, and had he gone on in simple dependence upon the living God and the word of His grace, even the Oberland might soon have submitted to the new faith. But from the time that Zwingle counselled Zurich to punish the persecutors with the sword, he assumed the character of the politician. And though he was still the sincere Christian and the earnest Reformer, he thought it was his duty to study the cabinets of kings, the councils of the people, and the movements of armies. This was the rock on which the vessel of the Reformation struck, and struck with all sails set, and Zwingle at the helm. We have seen the wreck; and surely it ought to be as a beacon-light to all Christians in all ages. But instead of that there are many of the Reformed ministers so-called, even in the present day, who commend the zeal of Zwingle as a patriot and a politician; and argue that he suffered from the rashness of others.

True, he strongly objected to the blockade which led to the war; but he advocated a direct appeal to arms, which is as far from the spirit of Christ as a commercial interdict. And the two things for which the Reformer urged the government of Zurich to take up arms were the *slanders* and the *persecutions* of the papists. But what does the blessed Lord say? “Blessed are ye, when men shall *revile* you, and *persecute* you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” And again, “Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not.” And knowing the state of irritation which slander and persecution would naturally produce, the gracious Lord condescends to approach the oppressed in terms of the greatest endearment. “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.” Surely both the blockade and the appeal to arms meet their utter condemnation in these divine precepts of our Lord and Master. (Matt. 5:11, 12; Rom. 12:14, 19, 20)

The Christian is *saved* by grace, he *stands* by grace, and he ought to be the *witness* of grace, and that, under all circumstances. The last of these the great Reformer never understood. He never saw the truth of the Christian’s separation from the world by the death and resurrection of Christ, or the heavenly relations of the church as the Bride, the Lamb’s wife. Still, the word of God is plain enough, and we can find no shelter for our ignorance. At the same time, more allowance must be made for Zwingle than for many ministers of the gospel in our own day, who take a leading part in the political affairs of the world. Emerging from the darkness of popery which has no argument but the sword, and nurtured in the midst of Swiss liberty, and in the histories of the ancient republics, he honestly believed from his earliest days that tyrants should be opposed, and that Christians should unite with the government in resisting them. From not seeing, after his conversion, the

heavenly calling and character of the Christian, he acted on these principles as the leader of the Reformed party.

D'Aubigné, we are glad to find, so far agrees with the views we have expressed; thus he writes — “Zwingle observing how all the powers were rising against the Reformation, had conceived the plan of a **co-burghery** or christian state, which should unite all the friends of the word of God in one holy and powerful league. This political phase of his character is in the eyes of some persons his highest claim to glory; we do not hesitate to acknowledge it as his greatest fault. The Reformer, deserting the paths of the apostles, allowed himself to be led astray by the perverse example of popery. The primitive church never opposed their persecutors but by the dispositions of the gospel of peace. Faith was the only sword by which it vanquished the mighty ones of the earth.” But Zwingle himself appears to have had some conflict in his mind on this subject, as he says, “No doubt, it is not by human strength, it is by the strength of God alone that the word of the Lord should be upheld. But God often makes use of men as instruments to succour men. Let us therefore unite, and from the sources of the Rhine to Strasburg let us form but one people and one alliance.”

As to his great intellectual powers, his literary and his theological works, we will allow a competent witness to bear his testimony. Dean Waddington, speaking of Zwingle, says, when we regard the many ingenious and elaborate compositions, polemical, exegetical, hermeneutical, which he produced in little more than twelve years — years, too, distracted by a thousand other cares and occupations — and which will remain an everlasting memorial of an extensive erudition, a sound judgment, a temper, upon the whole candid and charitable, a calm, considerate, earnest faith; it is a matter of serious sorrow, even now, that he was cut off thus unseasonably...

“Together with several just and profound views of scriptural interpretation, his works contain many noble sentiments, flowing from an enlarged and elevated spirit. Gifted with much penetration, incited by an honest zeal, regulated by consummate prudence, firm and forbearing, he did not stain these great qualities by a single fault. He showed great sagacity in accomplishing his purposes; he was never guided, either in his acts or in his writings, by any factious spirit; and he was never suspected of any unworthy motive.”³⁰¹

Zwingle was not forty-eight years old when he died. He was in the full vigour of life and the maturity of his understanding. With gifts so rich and varied, what might he not have done for the Reformation in Switzerland, and even in Europe, had he restricted himself to the ministry of the word of God. But if we fail to do the Lord's work in His way, it may be taken from us and given to another. “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this

³⁰¹ *History of the Reformation*, vol. 3, p. 242.

life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man strive also for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.” (2 Tim. 2:4, 5)

TREATIES OF PEACE

The news of the disgraceful treatment of the remains of Zwingli, aroused the indignation and anger of Zurich. She rallied her forces, and the Bernese gathered from all quarters for the support of their ally. The combined army was very formidable; they assumed the offensive, and **invaded the canton of Zug**; but the Lord was not with them. They again exhibited every form of incapacity. With no combined plan of operation, they commenced in rashness and disunion, and insubordination prevailed, while the Catholics were orderly, united, and resolute. The victory was easy and complete.

These successes, which far surpassed the expectation of the five cantons, inspired them with religious confidence as to the holiness of their cause; and the Reformers, from their reverses, became dispirited and disposed to treat for peace. Negotiations were renewed; two treaties were drawn up and signed by the Zurichers and the Bernese, on the 16th and 23rd of November, which annulled the treaty of 1529, and gave decided advantages to the enemies of the Reformation. These treaties are of great historical importance, as they affixed a permanent boundary to the Reformation of German-Switzerland; and no important change has been wrought among the cantons from that day even until now.

It is said that Zwingli, on his departure for Cappel, in the mournful conviction that he would never return, designated as his successor, the younger **Bullinger of Bremgarten**, who, after a short interval, was appointed chief pastor and professor of divinity, and filled the double charge for forty years, with undisputed distinction, and rendered extensive service to the church of Christ. The same calamitous autumn witnessed the extinction of another of the brightest lights of the Reformation. The meek and gentle, the learned and devoted **Æcolampadius**, on hearing of the death of his friend, and the indignities which were cast upon his memory died shortly after of a broken heart, at the age of forty-nine. When he perceived that his own departure was at hand, he assembled his friends and colleagues around him, and exhorted them in the most pathetic and affectionate manner to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, that God might be glorified, and the blessed cause of Christ become more resplendent through the light of their purity. Thus fell asleep the pacific **Æcolampadius**. His death was like his life, full of light and peace. He was succeeded at Basle by the learned and pious Oswald Myconius.³⁰²

³⁰² D'Aubigné, vol. 4, pp. 465-621. John Scott, vol. 3, pp. 104-120, with quotations from Ruchat. *Life of Zwingli*, by J.G. Hess. Waddington, vol. 3, pp. 236-252. Wylie, vol. 2, pp. 77-95.

The history of the Reformation in *French Switzerland* which was somewhat later, and in which the names of William Farel and John Calvin bear a prominent part, we must pass over for the present, and return to Germany, that we may examine the last years and the closing scenes of the life of the great German Reformer.

SHORT PAPERS ON CHURCH HISTORY

CHAPTER 45

THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY

We have already traced the history of the Reformation in Germany from the year 1517, when Luther nailed his theses to the church door in Wittemberg, down to the year 1532, when the Emperor signed the **treaty of peace at Ratisbon**. The history of these fifteen years is certainly the most important in the annals of mankind, if we except the early part of the first christian century. We pass through a succession of events, characterized by the grace and energy of the Holy Spirit, combined with the hand of God in government, and emerge from the darkness and superstition of Rome, into the light and liberty of the truth of God. We know of no page in history, which so commands, not only our interest, but our adoration.

And how, it may be asked, was this mighty revolution so speedily accomplished? Not by philosophy, not by the schoolmen, not by the Humanists, but simply by the truth of God acting on the conscience of man, through the power of the Holy Spirit. On what ground did Luther stand and triumph at the Diet of Worms? The word of God, sustained by His grace. On what principle did the princes prevail at Augsburg? Precisely the same. And by what means did Zwingli put to flight the enemies of the truth at Zurich? By appealing to the word of God, and to that alone; but when he shifted his position, giving up divine ground for human, he became weak as other men. So long as conscience ruled in that noble mind, and raised that powerful voice, the mightiest of Rome's champions were confounded, and fled ashamed from his dignified presence. But alas! when he connected the civil sword with the sword of the Spirit, the truth of God was dishonoured, he had left the place of strength, and became the weakest of the weak. He had a bad conscience, his breastplate was gone; and that always robs a man of courage, peace, and happiness. It is only by means of *conscience* that truth establishes its dominion over the minds and ways of mankind.

This fact, historically viewed, is wonderful, and demands our devout consideration. Luther was as free from fanaticism as he was far from hypocrisy; he was perfectly simple; but his conscience was honestly bound by the word of God, and his affections were kindled by it, and thus, holding by that word, all Europe was shaken by a power which faith only can understand. "To him that worketh *not*, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The two exquisite properties of faith are, to exclude human power, and to bring in divine. As the apostle says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Rom. 4:5; Phil. 4:13)

We will now glance for a moment at the effects of this power in the short period of fifteen years.

A BRIEF SURVEY

The great truth which the early **Reformers preached** — salvation by faith without works of human merit — spread with a rapidity resembling the light of heaven. In a short time it had travelled over the greater part of Europe. In the year 1530 Luther, writing to the Elector, speaks of his dominions as if they were a millennial scene. “It gives me great pleasure,” says the Reformer, “when I see that boys and girls can now understand, and speak better concerning God and Christ, than formerly could have been done by the colleges, monasteries, and schools of the papacy, or than they can do even yet. There is thus planted in your highness’s dominions a very pleasant paradise, to which there is nothing similar in the whole world.” The ground had been cleared of monasteries and convents, and covered with churches and schools.

Hesse, as well as Saxony, we have seen evangelized, and planted with churches and schools, and all regulated by the government. In Franconia, Silesia, East Friesland, Prussia, Brunswick, Luneburg, and Anhalt, the light of the gospel was spreading. Many of the free cities had opened their gates to the preachers of the new doctrines and were now rejoicing in the truth, and boldly witnessing for it. The rapid conquests of the Reformation in Switzerland, which we have examined with some care, fall within the limits of our period. Along the chain of the Jura, by the shores of Lemman to the gates of Geneva, the light of the gospel had travelled. In Denmark and Sweden the gospel had gained a firm footing, and Bohemia, Moravia, and Hungary had been revived. Even in the court of Francis I and in the Sorbonne, renowned for its orthodoxy, there were true believers in the doctrine of justification by faith alone; but the state ever was and is Roman Catholic; and dearly she has had to pay in her terrible revolutions for her rejection of the truth, and the persecution of its witnesses. In England, the followers of Wycliffe were revived, and the persecuted Lollards again lifted up their heads, and testified for the truth with fresh courage. The king, the parliament, and the people threw off the yoke of Rome in 1533, and Henry was declared *supreme head of the British church*. The authority of the Roman pontiff was then abolished in England. But the details of this important event will form a distinct theme for our “Short Papers,” the Lord willing.

As early as 1528, Luther’s tracts and **Tyndal’s New Testament** had done their blessed work in Scotland. The noble, gentle, and accomplished Patrick Hamilton was burned at the stake in the centre of the large area before the gate of St. Salvator’s college, Aberdeen, on a charge of “holding and maintaining divers heresies of Martin Luther.”³⁰³

³⁰³ Cunningham, vol. 1, p. 220. Wylie, vol. 1, p. 620.

A GREAT INCREASE

After the pacification of **Ratisbon** many, who had concealed their opinions, now came boldly forward and declared for the great truths of the Reformation. Princes, nobles, various regions and towns of Germany, year after year, professed without fear to have given up the old faith, and to have embraced the new doctrines.

An event, in its origin purely political, which occurred at this period, was so overruled, as to increase greatly the strength of the Reformers. In the year 1519, Ulrich Duke of Wurtemberg, gave offence to the league of Swabia and was expelled from his dominions, which were afterwards placed under the sceptre of Ferdinand. The exiled prince, after a long captivity of seventeen years, was restored, through the assistance of his kinsman, Philip of Hesse, to the dukedom of his ancestors. It appears that he attended the conferences at Marburg in 1529, and had received impressions favourable to the Reformation. "Hence," says Scultetus, "his first object on the recovery of his dominions, was to throw them open to the glory of Christ, and to introduce the preaching of the pure word of God, and the administration of the sacraments, according to His institution." He also engaged the assistance of several theologians to organize churches, establish schools, and arrange other details on the principles of Protestantism. This must have been like life from the dead to those extensive dominions which had been under the sway of the bigoted catholic Ferdinand.

The Reformation of the Duchy of Wurtemberg, was followed by that of Brunswick, Calenberg, Hanover, Pomerania, Mecklenburg, and the cities of Augsburg, Bremen, and Hamburg. But there was one accession to the Protestant cause about this time which demands a special notice as illustrating the overruling providence of God in those eventful times.

On the 24th of April, 1539, George, Duke of Saxony, died. He was head of the Albertine branch of the Saxony family and possessed, as Marquis of Mesnea and Thuringia, extensive territories comprising Dresden, Leipsic, and other cities now the most considerable in the electorate. From the dawn of the Reformation he had been the most resolute and determined enemy of what he styled *Lutheranism*. It is probable that his opposition at first was from a sincere belief in the doctrines of Romanism; but it became embittered by personal antipathy to Luther, and by the electoral princes, the other branch of the family, being his unfailing friends. By his death without issue, the succession fell to his brother Henry, whose attachment to the doctrines of the Reformation surpassed, if possible, that of his brother George to the papacy. Like Ulrich, he invited some Protestant divines, and among them Luther himself, to meet him at Leipsic. In the course of a few weeks the whole system of ancient rites was over-turned, and the full exercise of the Reformed religion established, and that with the universal applause of his subjects.

This was an event of great advantage to the Reformation. It removed an inveterate enemy from the very centre of the Reformed states, and converted that which had been a point of weakness into a position of strength. These providential, yet mysterious, accessions greatly strengthened the Smalcald league, extending the boundaries, and increasing the numbers of the Protestants. The territories of the princes, and cities attached to their cause now extended, in one great and almost unbroken line, from the shores of the Baltic to the banks of the Rhine.³⁰⁴

THE GREAT ACTORS PASSING OFF THE SCENE

Many of the names with which we have become familiar, and who have sustained a conspicuous part in the **earlier history of the Reformation**, are now passing off the stage of time. “Having discharged the offices assigned to them,” says Dean Waddington, “they had proceeded on their fatal journey; and the grave which closed over their ashes might have concealed the memories of most of them in a like oblivion, had they not been cast upon one of those periods of revolutionary convulsion which break in like tempests, upon the ordinary progression of human events, and leave behind them such lasting traces of their operations on the destinies of mankind, as to give an interest to the petty performances of the humblest agents, even with a remote and intelligent posterity.” But happy they, happy all, who act in the great drama of life with a good conscience towards God and man — repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ — who care for the glory of the one and the well-being of the other.

Conscience has much more to do with man’s future well-being than is generally thought. A bad conscience forbids him accrediting the grace of God in Christ towards the guilty. Man knows the difference between good and evil, and, knowing that he has chosen the evil and refused the good, he believes God is against him. In this state of mind he endeavours to keep out of the way of all that which would bring him face to face with God. Therefore as unbelief is cherished, the mind becomes darker and the heart grows harder. The effects of *self-complacency*, through the power and subtlety of the enemy are also most ruinous. Man is so blinded by the god of this world, and so occupied with *self*, that he sees no moral beauty in Jesus, no need of Him as a Saviour, and no need of the salvation which is pressed upon his acceptance. And thus it is that so many pass off the scene, outwardly respectable, but inwardly heedless of the danger against which they are so solemnly and so frequently warned.

We judge not the dead; but offer the result of our reflections for the benefit of the living. May he not, as many do, slumber on under the influence of an evil conscience, self-complacency, and the blinding power of Satan, until he has played out his part; and then wake up, *too late*, to the importance of the

³⁰⁴ Robertson’s *History of Charles V*, p. 244.

truth he has rejected, and the Saviour he has slighted. But, alas! the day of mercy is past, the door of mercy is closed; and, seeing his loss to be irreparable, he sinks under the weight of hopeless despair.

John, Elector of Saxony, surnamed the Constant, died August 16th, 1532. During seven critical years, this illustrious prince, guided with great wisdom and firmness the vessel of the Reformation. At Augsburg, it will be remembered, he displayed a constancy superior to the wavering of some of his theologians; yet so tempered by moderation as to preserve him from immediate collision with the Emperor. At one time he was cruelly menaced by Charles, at another, his honesty was tempted by secret but flattering overtures; but, nobly free from personal motives, he remained true to his convictions, and generously devoted to the great public question of the sixteenth century, the Reformation. There can be no question as to the genuineness of his piety. He was affectionately attached to Luther, and on doubtful questions usually deferred to his opinion. He took such delight in the holy scriptures, that he would frequently have them read to him by youths of noble families, as much as six hours in the day. Happily the Reformation lost nothing by his death. His son, John Frederick, the new Elector, was in the flower of his youth, warmly attached to the cause, and not less to the person of Luther, than his father. He was characterized by piety and firmness in the trying circumstances through which he was afterwards called to pass.³⁰⁵

As few of the **antagonists of Luther** survived him, notwithstanding the high price that was set upon his life, we will notice some of the leading ones.

Pope **Clement VII** died September 27th, 1534. He died, even according to Italian history, “Detested by his court, suspected by the princes, with an offensive and hateful reputation; for he was esteemed avaricious, faithless, and by nature indisposed to do good to mankind.” In addition to the evil qualities here specified, others mention an obduracy and inclemency, which grew with the decay of his frame, and the morbid weakness of declining life. The virtues commonly ascribed to him are gravity, parsimony, self-control, circumspection, or, dissimulation; for indeed, the last was so essential a quality, at the court of Rome, that he who excelled in that, in which all aspired to excel, deserved the sort of praise attached to such pre-eminence.”³⁰⁶

Clement is familiarly known to our readers as professing his willingness to call a council, yet persevering to the end of his life in the artifices which he knew would delay, if not finally prevent, its convocation. His dark and suspicious mind dreaded the thought of a general council. He was afraid of the light; he knew that the circumstances of his own history, and his elevation to the chair, were not free from reproach. How different the character and the end of the chief prince of Germany to the chief pastor of Rome! May we seek

³⁰⁵ Scott, vol. 1, p. 129; Waddington, vol. 3, p. 164.

³⁰⁶ Guicciardini and Fra Paolo, quoted by Waddington, vol. 3, p. 183.

to imitate all that was of God in the former and avoid all that was of Satan in the latter.

Cardinal Cajetan, one of Luther's earliest antagonists, died the same year as Clement. He was censured by many of the dignitaries of the church for his unsuccessful contest with Luther at Augsburg, but not disgraced by the Vatican. It is thought by some that he fumed his attention more to the study of the scriptures after his defeat; but he lived and died in the service of the papacy.

Lorenzo Campeggio, the legate selected for the critical occasion of the famous Diet of Augsburg, died in 1539. He ably represented his papal majesty and the principles of the Vatican. Secretly and unceasingly he urged Charles to violent measures against the Protestants. Fire and sword sweeping confiscations, the Inquisition, burning heretical books, were the legate's arguments behind the scene. Still he was far from exceeding his orders.

Aleander, the great papal champion at the Diet of Worms died in 1542. For his great zeal in the pontifical cause, he received high ecclesiastical honours; but his life was chiefly spent in the management of public business, the affairs of state, and the councils of princes.

Erasmus, of high literary fame, and in some respects the forerunner of Luther, died in 1536 at the age of sixty-nine. His name must ever be associated with Luther and the Reformation, though latterly, Luther considered him one of its greatest enemies, and the enemy of all true religion. He lacked the essential principles of a Reformer. He was insincere, unstable, without courage, and trembled at the results of his own work. He was a reformer, until the Reformation became a great reality. He fled from Basle when the Reformation was established on the destruction of the images, and returned to it when tranquillity was restored. Yet, notwithstanding his inconsistencies, he commanded great respect from his literary reputation, his manners and accomplishments; and his death was deplored as a great national affliction. He died, professedly, in the bosom of holy mother church, and declaiming against the new evangelical practices.

John of Eck, professor of Ingolstadt, closed his noisy career in 1543, at the age of fifty-seven. He was the indefatigable champion of the dignity and absolute supremacy of Rome papal. He was arrogant, vain-glorious, and eminently gifted with the qualities which form an accomplished disputant. "His unwearied zeal hurried him into every field where the Reformers were encamped. Everywhere he was foremost in the strife; everywhere he contended with force and energy, and on more than one occasion with success... Thus was he confronted in a long series of combats, during a space of twenty years, with all the chieftains of the Reformation." Thus he lived and thus he died, maintaining even with his latest breath the loftiest pretensions of Rome.

THE LATTER END OF LUTHER

The public testimony of Luther and his associates, may be said to have closed when they delivered the confession of Augsburg. The contest then, if not before, changed its character. It was no longer between excommunicated heretics bearing witness to the truth of God against the falsehoods of Rome; but between the princes of Germany, united in league and arrayed in arms, and the imperial confederacy. But, although retiring from the notice of the public chronicler, they still laboured unweariedly in the duties of their special vocations, and had the gratification of seeing the result of their labours, in the peaceful progress of the word of God. Of Luther, however, one of his biographers remarks, “That though he continued to discharge, with his accustomed zeal, his official duties as a preacher and a professor, and published commentaries on various parts of scripture, and showed no inclination to relinquish his former habit of sending forth a popular treatise whenever circumstances in the state of religion appeared to call for it; yet, amid those various occupations, it was remarked that his enterprising spirit appeared to undergo abatement, and that in his latter years he was found to hazard no new doctrine.”³⁰⁷

During these years the great Reformer, who has claimed so large a portion of our attention, was chastened by long and **painful sickness**, and was fast descending to his resting-place, where the rude contests of life, its animosities and injuries, are all forgotten. Writing to a friend a few days before he set out on his last journey, he says, “I am old, decrepit, sluggish, weary, spiritless, and deprived of half my sight; yet, at a time when I had hoped to have a reasonable share of rest, I continue to be overwhelmed with business, writing, speaking, acting, and doing, as if I had never yet acted, written, spoken, or done anything.”

In the January of 1546, the **Counts of Mansfeld**, having some difference about boundaries and inheritance, invited Luther to Eisleben — his native place — to decide it by his arbitration. Though not caring to meddle in such matters he consented.

He left Wittemberg on the 23rd of January, accompanied by his three sons, and his faithful friend, Justus Jonas. Though feeble and suffering, he engaged in the business on which he had come for about three weeks, and matters were arranged to the satisfaction of the lords of Mansfeld. He was received by these noblemen with great honour; they met him with an escort of one hundred horsemen, amidst the ringing of the bells in all the churches. He occasionally preached in the church and partook of the communion. Every night, as he took leave of his friends, he would say, “Pray to God that the cause of His church may prosper, for the Council of Trent is vehemently enraged against it.”

³⁰⁷ *History of the Church by the Rev. John Fry, p. 324.*

On the evening of the 17th of February he dined with his friends, including his three sons — John, Martin, and Paul — and Justus Jonas. He was persuaded to abstain from business that evening, and to keep quiet in his study. He walked about the room, looked out at the window, looked upwards, and prayed earnestly. Deep thoughts were passing through his mind, but did not depress his spirits. There he had spent the morning and there, he now felt, he was to spend the evening of his life. “I was born and baptized here at **Eisleben**, Jonas,” he would say: “what if I should remain or die here!”

THE DEATH OF LUTHER

Early in the evening he began to complain of an oppression in the chest; but he was relieved by means of friction and warm applications. Feeling better, he left his room and joined the party at supper. “During this last meal he was sometimes playful, even jocular, sometimes profoundly serious — such as he had ever been in the unreserved society of his friends.” After supper, the oppression returned, yet he would not have medical aid called in, but asked for a warm linen cloth for his chest. He fell asleep about nine on a couch, and awoke about ten. Seeing so many friends around him, he desired that they should retire to rest. He was then led to his chamber; when he was placed in his bed, he exclaimed, “I go to rest with God... Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” And, stretching out his hand to bid all good-night, he added, “Pray for the cause of God.” Having slept about three hours, he awoke, feeling very ill. “Oh God!” he said, “how ill I am! what an oppression I feel in my chest! I shall certainly die at Eisleben!” “My reverend father,” replied Jonas, “God our heavenly Father will assist you by Christ, whom you have preached.” He removed into his study without requiring assistance, and again repeating, “O my God! into Thy hands I commend my spirit.”

Two physicians had been sent for, who presently arrived, and likewise Count Albert, accompanied by his countess, who brought cordials and other medicines. All Luther’s friends and his three sons were now collected around him, and he seemed somewhat relieved; and having lain down on a couch he fell into a perspiration. This gave the friends some hope: but he himself said, “It is a cold sweat, the forerunner of death: I shall yield up my spirit.” He then began to pray, nearly in these words: —

“ O eternal and merciful God, my heavenly Father, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and God of all consolation! I thank Thee that Thou hast revealed unto me Thy Son, Jesus Christ; in whom I have believed, whom I have preached, whom I have confessed, whom I love and worship as my dear Saviour and Redeemer, whom the pope and the multitude of the ungodly do persecute, revile, and blaspheme. I beseech Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, receive my soul! O heavenly Father, though I be snatched out of this life, though I must lay down this body, yet know I assuredly that I shall dwell with Thee for ever, and that none can pluck me out of Thy hands.” He then thrice repeated the words, “Into Thy hands I commend my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O

Lord God of truth.” Also those words, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” He then became silent, and his powers began to fail him. The countess gave him some restorative, and he gently whispered “Yes, or No.” And when Jonas raised his voice and said to him, “Beloved father, cost thou confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, our Saviour and Redeemer?” he clearly and audibly rejoined, “I do;” and spoke no more. With his hands clasped, a gentle respiration interrupted by sighs, continued for a short time; and then, amidst the deep lamentation of his surrounding friends, between two and three in the morning, he fell asleep in Jesus.³⁰⁸

THE FUNERAL OF LUTHER

The Counts of Mansfeld would gladly have retained and interred the body of Luther in his native place, but they submitted to the wishes of the Elector, who directed it to be conveyed to **Wittemberg**. The body was then removed into the largest church at Eisleben. Great excitement prevailed. Jonas preached a funeral sermon to an immense concourse of people after which, the body was placed under the charge of ten citizens, who were to watch it during the night. Early the following day the procession moved towards Wittemberg. The citizens crowded along the streets and beyond the gates. “There the countrymen, summoned by the ringing of bells, joined, together with their wives and families, the sad procession. It was met on the way by a deputation from the Elector, then reached Wittemberg, on the 23rd of February. When the procession arrived at the gate of the city, it was received by the senate, the rector, the professors, and the students of the university, with all the principal citizens; after which it advanced, attended by the whole population to the church of All Saints. Then came the widow of Luther with her daughters and three sons, and the little company of friends, Melancthon, Pontanus, Jonas, Pomeranus, Cruciger, and others, the true yoke-fellows of the departed, the veterans of the Reformation.

Suitable hymns were sung as the funeral proceeded through the streets of the city. The body was deposited on the right of the pulpit; whence, after some further verses had been sung, Pomeranus addressed the vast multitude. Melancthon then pronounced a funeral oration. But it has been remarked, as creditable to both orators, that their feelings were more conspicuous than their powers of oratory, and that their pious attempts to console the sorrows of others were little more than a hearty demonstration of their own.”³⁰⁹

REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE OF LUTHER

To study and estimate the different characters which pass before us in history, contrasted in everything but their common design, and to trace with the eye of

³⁰⁸ From the account given by Justus Jonas to the Elector of Saxony, by the hand of Count Albert’s secretary. See Scott’s *History*, vol. 1, pp. 464-477.

³⁰⁹ For Extracts of Melancthon’s Oration, see Waddington, vol. 3, pp. 353-356.

faith the overruling hand of God in all their works and ways, will be found both deeply interesting and highly profitable. It is the study of what God is in government, and of what man is in himself, however richly gifted or renewed by grace. Speaking of *those great*, we must always add, but, *fallible men*. There is only One who is infallible, and, thank God, we own no Head, no centre, but Him; and no name but His — the name of Jesus; and it is only from this elevated point of view that we can rightly estimate the characters and events of history.

The **life and death of Luther** are full of the deepest instruction for the thoughtful student, especially when contrasted with his great compeer, Zwingle. Their object was one; but their ways of attaining that object were as wide apart as the poles. It would be hard to say which had the greater heart for the maintenance and spread of the truth of God; perhaps Luther's was the warmer and deeper, Zwingle's the clearer and broader. The one was war, the other peace; the one looked for victory only through the energy of faith and the bold confession of the truth; the other thought that the sword of the magistrate might, in some cases, be allied with the gospel of peace; the one was destined to see his labours crowned with almost universal success; the other was doomed to witness a catastrophe which threatened to engulf his dearly loved Reformation; the one died in peace, surrounded by his friends; the other by the blows of his enemies. The principle of Luther in this respect, is one of the essential principles of Christianity. The fury of the persecutor is to be met by truth and meekness — the martyr's noblest crown — not by political edicts and men-at-arms. These two great examples are no doubt intended by God to be two great lessons to all future generations. If we follow Christ, we must be characterized by His Spirit, and walk in His footsteps. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." (1 John 2:6)

THE LORD'S CARE OF HIS SERVANT

We need no voice from heaven to assure us of the Lord's watchful care over His servant Luther. He trusted in God and his faith was not disappointed. There is no more wonderful instance of the preserving power of divine providence on the page of history. Its lessons are well fitted to strengthen our faith in Him who rules over all. An Augustinian monk of humble condition, without authority, without protection, rose up against the most degrading, firmly-seated despotism ever imposed on the credulity of mankind, and alone he triumphed. We cannot be too often reminded of this unseen, but invincible power. Faith is always in harmony with the mind and government of God. This was the grand secret of Luther's victory. He had scarcely an avowed supporter when he stood superior to kings, princes, popes and prelates, to all that was mighty in power, and venerable for antiquity.

No human eye could discover any adequate motive for the strange position he had taken. It was neither vanity, ambition, nor fanaticism. He never was

more, and he never cared to be more, than Dr. Martin Luther. It was also a time of general peace and quiet submission to papal authority. Why then trouble the still waters? There is but one answer to this question — conscience. There was a power in the enlightened conscience of the monk which the double sword of popery was powerless to overcome. Even the natural man without conscience can never be a man in any high and noble sense of the word. But faith placed the Reformer on the solid ground of the word of God, by which he was taught the difference between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, justice and oppression. Now he stood for the truth of God; and God, in wisdom and power, stood with him. He boldly maintained “that scripture was the only test of truth; that the interpretation of scripture was of private right and privilege³¹⁰; that conscience had her prerogatives, which were higher than all the powers of earth; and that despotism, whether spiritual, ecclesiastical, or intellectual, was contrary to the will of God, and to the happiness, prosperity, and dignity of mankind.” On this foundation the Reformation was built; and by the maintenance of these principles, that system of delusion, which was deemed omnipotent, was shaken to its centre by a single monk in his brown frock and cowl.

To have accomplished the destruction of such a heretic, Rome would gladly have given the half of her kingdom; but she could not touch a hair of his head, or take a day or an hour of his life from him. For well nigh thirty years he defied her utmost malice, her loudest thunders, and all her powers. Yes, the powers which, only a little time before, had made the proudest monarchs to tremble on their thrones. But now there were bolts forged at Wittemberg as well as at the Vatican, and hurled with as little ceremony at popes and kings as at the Anabaptists or the revolutionary peasants. What is to be done with the audacious monk? Will no man rid His Infallibility of this pestilent enemy of the papacy? Where are the daggers and the poisoned cups of Jezebel, which have so often come to her aid? And yet, he is always at hand, always to be seen, always in action, writing, speaking, uttering defiance to his adversaries, or inspiring his friends with courage and resolution. But he has no designs of blood; his object is life, not death. When he is most violent, it is in word only, and that he may awaken Christendom from the slumber of ages; or rage against the high ones of the earth because they have sought to arrest the progress of the truth. Every hand that was engaged on the side of papal tyranny was raised against him, yet not one of them could strike the fatal blow.

Such is the perfect security of the man who reposes under the shield of the Almighty. Diet after diet of the German Empire may be convoked, aided by the representatives of papal authority, but all in vain; Luther is beyond their reach, yet always in sight. His door stands open; the poor may come for alms; distinguished strangers from all parts of Europe may enter, converse freely,

³¹⁰ The truer ground would have been *personal responsibility to God Who has spoken to man*.

and sup with the far-famed professor; yet no man can be found to do him harm. And so he lived in the unwall'd town of Wittemberg as safely as if he had been within the gates of heaven.

THE DOMESTIC AND INNER LIFE OF LUTHER

“Hitherto,” says a competent critic, “the too common idea of the great Reformer’s character has been, that it was a mere compound of violence and ruggedness. These features have been so prominent, that the finer lines of his portrait have been completely shaded from sight. The **lion and the lamb were united in Luther**. Nothing could exceed his submissiveness and humility when a choice was left him whether to be humble or daring: but when conscience spoke no other consideration was for a moment attended to, and he certainly did shake the forest in his magnificent ire... We dwell not upon his constant contentment in poverty, and his contempt for riches, because this is the characteristic of almost all great men who are really worth more than gold can procure them; but his long unbroken friendship with Melancthon — a character so opposite to his own, and in some respects so superior, as he was the first to acknowledge himself — has always struck us as a proof that he possessed much sweetness and gentleness of disposition. Envy or jealousy never interrupted for a moment the fraternal affection that subsisted between these great men. Of those passions, indeed, Luther seems not to have been susceptible. Neither did personal ambition come near him. He gave himself no air of grandeur or importance, notwithstanding the great things he had performed. He seemed to consider himself as a common man among common men.

“But this great simplicity of manners exhibits, not only his native greatness, but that apostolic frame of mind, which all the messengers of God, from Moses downwards, have displayed. Such men are moulded at once by the hand that sends them. The accidents of this world have no power — as they have upon others — to change or modify their moral conformation. There is a oneness, a wholeness of character in these elect instruments; they are governed by one idea, and one only. Hence was begotten the simplicity and homeliness of Luther’s walk in life. Had he acted the great man, he would have proved that he was not the apostle. In his family and among his neighbours, he was pleasant, affectionate, and pious; but his piety was not put on; it flowed in a mingled stream with his everyday life and conversation.”³¹¹

LUTHER’S MARRIAGE

The marriage of Luther happening about a month after the death of his friend and patron, Frederick of Saxony, and while all Germany was bewailing the blood of her peasants, appeared to us so indiscreet, that we purposely left it out of our narrative. His usual impetuosity was strikingly manifested on this occasion.

³¹¹ *Blackwood’s Magazine* — slightly altered — December 1835.

The name of **Catherine von Bora** has long enjoyed a wide celebrity. She was of a good family, and one of nine recluses, who, after studying the scriptures, and finding that their vow was not binding, escaped from a convent in Mesnia. Within the space of two years eight of the nine were married; Catherine alone remained unmarried. During this time they had been supported by the bounty of friends, which was administered by Luther. In this way he must have known something of Catherine's character and disposition. He first proposed to unite her to one of his friends, a humble evangelical pastor; but not falling in with this arrangement, she remarked, with great simplicity, that had he proposed to espouse her himself, or to affiance her to Amsdorf, she should have felt less objection. Luther is represented to have been entirely overpowered by so flattering a declaration. He decided at once to be married, and without any notice of his intention, he caused the ceremony to be immediately performed.

On the 11th of June, 1525, Luther went to the house of his friend and colleague, Amsdorf. He desired Pomeranus, whom he styled *The Pastor*, to bless their union. The celebrated painter, Lucas Cranach, and Dr. John Apella, witnessed the marriage. Melancthon, the dearest friend of all, was absent. For Luther to take such a bold step, while so many calamities were hanging over the Reformation, overwhelmed him for the moment. But when the clamour arose against his friend, he warmly defended his friend's marriage.

No sooner was this quiet marriage known, than a shout of indignation arose, and all Europe was troubled. It afforded a fair opportunity for the enemies of Luther to spread the most false and wild calumnies; and it was regarded by his friends as a serious mortification. From this union of **a monk and a nun**, the Catholics confidently predicted — according to prophecy, they said — the birth of Antichrist; while the wits and scholars assailed the nuptials with their sarcastic hymns and epigrams.

We can have no idea in our own day, of the effect of such a step on the minds of men generally in that age. It was a rude violation of vows which had been considered for centuries inviolable. Even many of the disciples of the Reformation were scandalised by their chief marrying a nun. Early prejudices are difficult to overcome. But hasty as the step was, Luther was prepared to justify and defend it. He met the storm by a counterblast of invectives and sarcasms: but we have chiefly to do with that which seems to have become a matter of conscience. Marriage, he boldly affirmed, was the ordinance of God; celibacy, the institution of man. "I do not take a wife," he said, "that I may live long with her; but seeing the nations and the princes letting loose their fury against me, foreseeing that my end is near, and that after my death they will again trample my doctrine under foot, I am resolved, for the edification of the weak to bear a striking testimony to what I teach here below. "The war of the peasants had brought great reproach on the principles of the Reformation at that time, and Rome appeared to be recovering here and

there the ground she had lost; she even flattered herself with the hope of victory; but the marriage of the monk, who was under the anathema of the pope, and the ban of the Emperor, spread terror and surprise through her ranks, and still more fully disclosed to her the courage of the enemy she fancied she had crushed.”³¹²

THE MARRIAGE FEAST

On the 15th of June, Luther says, in a letter to Ruchel, “I have made the determination to cast off every shred of my former papistical life, and thus I have entered the state of matrimony, at the urgent solicitation of my father.” His friend was wealthy, and while inviting him to **the marriage feast** on the 27th, he tells him, with characteristic frankness and simplicity, “that any present he might choose to bring with him would be acceptable.” In a letter to Spalatin about the same time, he says, “I have silenced those who calumniated me and Catherine of Bora. If I am to give a feast in celebration of these nuptials, you must not only be present yourself, but you must send me a supply of venison. Meanwhile pray for us, and give us your benediction.” To Wenceslaus Link he wrote, “Quite suddenly, and while I was thinking of anything rather than marriage, God wonderfully brought me into wedlock with the celebrated nun, Catherine of Bora.” He invited him to the feast, but stipulated that he should bring no present, he being poor like Luther himself. The following was addressed to Amsdorf: “The report is true, that I married Catherine, and that in great haste, before the accustomed clamours of tumultuous tongues could reach me, for I hope that I shall yet live some short time, and I could not refuse this last act of obedience to the importunity of my father.” The old couple from Mansfeld — John and Margaret Luther — were to be present.

It will be seen from the above extracts, that one reason, by which Luther attempted to justify his marriage, was the urgent importunity of his father. “But when we remember the contempt,” says one of his fairest critics, “with which he had treated the parental instances, twenty years before, when he took the most important step in his early life in direct opposition to them, we may question whether the actions of his mature age were directed by that influence, and whether, with his present imperious character and habits, even the persuasion of a father would have induced him to take any step on which he was not previously determined... This defence would have been sufficient for any man except Luther; but his position was so preeminent before that of all his brother Reformers, his achievements had been so splendid, his pretensions were so lofty, and above all, his success had been so much advanced by the unquestionable disinterestedness of his character and designs, that his followers had a right to expect greater self-denial from him than from a Spalatin or a Carlstadt. They had a right to expect, in return for the almost implicit obedience which they yielded him, that he would sacrifice any private

³¹² D’Aubigné, vol. 3, p. 309.

inclination, however consistent with evangelical principles, rather than cast a certain, though it might be an unmerited, scandal upon the cause over which he presided... Thenceforward he ceased to stand apart from his brethren, and came nearer to the level of their common humanity.”³¹³

But though this imprudent affair unquestionably lowered Luther in public estimation, it does not appear to have inflicted any serious blow upon the cause of the Reformation. The work was of God, and too deeply founded to be shaken by the infirmity of His servant; and twenty peaceful years of domestic happiness may have amply remunerated the Reformer for some loss of public reputation.

THE MARRIED LIFE OF LUTHER

The union of **Luther and Catherine**, though without the raptures of a first affection, was no doubt a happy one. The Lord greatly blessed them. She seems to have been a woman of great modesty, with tender affections, and more than an ordinary share of good sense. She consoled him in his dejection by repeating passages from the Bible, saved him all anxiety about household affairs, contrived to sit near him during his leisure moments, amused him by working his portrait in embroidery, reminded him of letters he had to write; but sometimes she indulged rather more in general conversation than suited the doctor, which called forth his most playful sallies; such as “Did you say your Pater, Catherine, before you began that sermon? If you had, I think you would not have been allowed to preach.” And sometimes he addressed her as my *Lord Ketha*, and the *Doctress*. But his letters overflowed with tenderness for Catherine, and as age advanced, his affection seems to have increased. He styles her his dear and gracious wife, his dear and amiable Ketha.

They had six children, three sons and three daughters. Their daughter Magdaline died at the age of fourteen. “Such is the power of natural affection,” says the father, “that I cannot endure this without tears and groans, or rather an utter deadness of heart. At the bottom of my soul are engraver her looks, her words, her gestures, as I gazed at her in her lifetime and on her death-bed. My dutiful, my gentle daughter! Even the death of Christ — and what are all deaths compared to His? — cannot tear me from this thought as it should. She was playful, lovely, and full of love.”

The Elector provided for the mother and the five children after the father’s death.³¹⁴

³¹³ Waddington, vol. 2, p. 121.

³¹⁴ As our space forbids indulging in extracts from Luther’s letters to his children, his wife, his friends, and his many encounters with the invisible as well as with the visible world — such as the scenes in the castle of Wartburg; we would recommend our readers, who care to understand the personal character of Martin Luther, to study Michelet’s *Life of Luther*, translated by Hazlitt.

CONCLUSION

Before parting with the great Reformer, who has claimed so large a share of our attention in tracing the history of the church, we will bring under review the **estimate formed of him** by one of our most judicious writers — the historian of Charles V; and also, Dean Waddington's review of the extent of his work.

“As Luther was raised up by divine providence, to be the author of one of the greatest revolutions recorded in history, there is not any person, perhaps, whose character has been drawn with such opposite colours. In his own age one party, struck with horror and inflamed with rage, when they saw with what a daring hand he overturned everything which they held to be sacred, or valued as beneficial, imputed to him not only the defects and vices of a man, but the qualities of a demon. The other, warmed with admiration and gratitude, which they thought he merited as the restorer of right and liberty to the christian church, ascribed to him perfections above the condition of humanity, and viewed all his actions with a veneration bordering on that, which should be paid only to those who are guided by the immediate inspiration of heaven. It is his own conduct, not the undistinguished censure, or the exaggerated praise of his contemporaries, that ought to regulate the opinions of the present age concerning him. Zeal for what he regarded as truth, undaunted intrepidity to maintain his own system, abilities, both natural and acquired, to defend his principles, and unwearied industry in propagating them, are virtues which shine so conspicuously in every part of his behaviour, that even his enemies must allow him to have possessed them in an eminent degree.

“To these may be added, with equal justice, such purity and even austerity of manners, as became one who assumed the character of a Reformer; such sanctity of life as suited the doctrine which he delivered, and such perfect disinterestedness as affords no slight presumption of his sincerity. Superior to all selfish considerations, a stranger to the elegancies of life, and despising its pleasures, he left the honours and emoluments of the church to his disciples, remaining satisfied himself, in his original state of professor in the university, and pastor of the town of Wittemberg, with the moderate appointments annexed to these offices... His mind, forcible and vehement in all its operations, roused by great subjects, or agitated by violent passions, broke out, on many occasions, with an impetuosity which astonishes men of feebler spirits, or such as are placed in a more tranquil situation. By carrying some praiseworthy dispositions to excess, he bordered sometimes on what was culpable, and was often betrayed into actions which exposed him to censure. His confidence that his own opinions were wellfounded approached to arrogance, his courage, in asserting them, to rashness; his firmness, in adhering to them, to obstinacy; and his zeal in confronting his adversaries, to rage and scurrility. Accustomed himself to consider everything as subordinate to truth, he expected the same deference for it from other men; and, without

making any allowances for their timidity or prejudices, he poured forth, against such as disappointed him in this particular, a torrent of invective mingled with contempt. Regardless of any distinction of rank or character when his doctrines were attacked, he chastised all his adversaries indiscriminately, with the same rough hand; neither the royal dignity of Henry VIII, nor the eminent learning and abilities of Erasmus, screened them from the same gross abuse with which he treated Tetzal and John of Eck.

“But these indecencies, of which Luther was guilty, must not be imputed wholly to the violence of his temper. They ought to be charged in part on the manners of his age. Some parts of Luther’s behaviour, which to us appear most culpable, gave no offence to his contemporaries. The account of his death filled the Roman Catholic party with excessive as well as indecent joy, and damped the spirit of all his followers; neither party sufficiently considering that his doctrines were now so firmly rooted as to be in a condition to flourish, independently of the hand which first had planted them.”³¹⁵

“But the most remarkable fact in the history of the Reformation, and, in my opinion, one of the most so in the history of the world, still remains to be mentioned — that the limits which the Reformation won while Luther lived, were very nearly those which divide the two religions at this day. Almost all that was accomplished before his death endured: almost all that was afterwards achieved was wrested back again by Rome. The enthusiasm of a single generation attained, under his guidance, the prescribed boundaries. No exertions of his disciples, no reverence for his name and virtues, no wider diffusion of faith, and knowledge, and civilization, and commercial activity, and philosophical truth, during the course of three centuries of progressive improvement, have made any lasting additions to the work which he left. Such as when it passed from the hands of its architect, or very nearly such, are its dimensions now. The form, indeed, is somewhat altered, and the part, which he considered as exclusively sacred, has been much narrowed by the change. But to the uncompromising, unrelenting enemy of Rome, it was an immortal triumph, that he extorted from her, with his own hands, all that she was ordained, so far as we yet have seen, to lose, and that he witnessed the utmost humiliation to which, even to this hour, it has pleased Providence permanently to reduce her.”³¹⁶

³¹⁵ Robertson’s *History of Charles V*, vol. 6, p. 71-76.

³¹⁶ Waddington’s *History of the Reformation*, vol. 3, p. 362.

SHORT PAPERS ON CHURCH HISTORY

CHAPTER 46

THE OPENING OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

For several years before the death of Luther, appearances were unfavourable to the peace and religious liberty of the Protestants. This led them, not so much to prayer and confidence in God as their shield and protector, but to strengthen the league of Smalcald, and prepare for war. They were now a thoroughly political body. This was the **outward character of Protestantism** at that early period. The man who loved peace was in his grave, and his counsels were forgotten by his followers. He could not conceive a greater calamity befalling the cause of truth than that the sword should be drawn in its defence. Better far be martyrs, he thought, than warriors.

The jealous Emperor narrowly watched the increasing power of the league, and pronounced it “an empire within an empire.” But his fatal expedition to Algiers, his renewed war with Francis, and the successes of the Turks in Hungary, led him to temporize, to conceal his feelings and intentions. He held several diets of the empire for the avowed purpose of settling their religious differences, and restoring peace and harmony, but with no good results. The Protestants were deceived and thrown off their guard by fair pretences and apparent concessions. In the Diet of Spires, in 1542, the pontiff, Paul III, by his legate, renewed his promise of a council. He signified that it should be held at Trent, a city in the Tyrol, subject to the king of the Romans, and situated on the confines between Germany and Italy. Ferdinand and the whole Catholic party expressed their immediate satisfaction, and accepted the proposal. Not so the Protestants. They rejected both the place and the council proposed by the pontiff, demanding a general, or Œcumenical, Council. They protested that they would pay no regard to a council held beyond the precincts of the empire, called by the pope’s authority, and over which he assumed the right of presiding. Regardless, however, of their protestations, and fortified by the general consent of his own party, he published a bull for the convocation of the council at Trent before the 1st of November, and named three cardinals to preside as his legates.

At the appointed time, the pope’s legates, the imperial ambassadors, and a few prelates appeared. But as a fierce war was then raging between the Emperor and Francis, few ecclesiastics could travel with safety. It was manifest from these circumstances, that nothing satisfactory could be undertaken; and to avoid the ridicule and contempt of his enemies, the pope adjourned for an indefinite time the reopening of the council. Unhappily for the dignity and authority of the papal See at this very time, the Emperor and his brother

Ferdinand, king of the Romans, found it necessary, not only to connive at the conduct of the Protestants, but to court their favour by repeated acts of indulgence. Ferdinand, who depended on their assistance for the defence of Hungary against the infidels, not only permitted their protestation to be inserted in the records of the diet, but renewed in their favour all the Emperor's concessions at Ratisbon, adding to them whatever they demanded for their further security. Thus had the Reformers rest, and the evangelical principles time to deepen and spread, though not from the good will, but from the disturbed state of their adversaries' affairs.

As late as 1544, at the diet held in the same place, the politic Charles, perceiving that the time was not yet come to offend the jealous spirit of the Protestants, or to provoke the powers of the Smalcald Confederacy, contrived to soothe the Germans by new concessions, and a more ample extension of their religious privileges. Being still engaged in foreign wars, and his hands not free, he employed all his powers of dissimulation to court and flatter the Elector and the Landgrave, the heads of the Protestant party, and through them to deceive the members of the confederacy.

Meanwhile his papal majesty was becoming day by day more jealous of these negotiations and concessions. He was longing as ardently as his three predecessors had done, for the rooting out, by force of arms, of this wide-spreading **giant heresy**. It had been the constant object of the Vatican, from the beginning of the Reformation, to create a hostile breach between the Emperor and the Protestants, and a consequent appeal to arms. But, so far as we can judge, the consummation of these wicked designs was prevented for nearly thirty years, in the providence of God, and chiefly in answer to the prayers of one man. But he was now off the scene, and his brethren were trusting to their military organization and numerical strength. Besides, the determined position which they had taken with reference to the proposed council, gave the pope and the Emperor every opportunity to ensnare them; and so it turned out, as we shall soon see.

The *avowed* object of this famous council was, of course the pacification of the church, the healing of her diseases, the restoring of her unity, and the blessing of her children; but its *real* object was the condemnation of the doctrines of the Reformers, Luther, Zwingle, and Calvin, and the immediate persecution of all who should oppose its decrees. This was the secret arrangement between the pontiff and the Emperor, for they were well aware that the Protestants would never subject themselves to the council, or yield obedience to its canons.

THE TREATY BETWEEN THE POPE AND THE EMPEROR

In December, 1545, after so many years of intrigue, dissimulation, and dispute, the long-promised **council assembled at Trent**, and continued its sittings till 1563.³¹⁷

But the council which was to fix the destiny of Christendom was only a part of a great plot for the suppression of Lutheranism. The Emperor had ended his war with Francis by the peace of Crespy, he had patched up a treaty with Solyman, and secretly gained over some of the Catholic princes in Germany. He pushed on, but with great precaution, his preparations for war. The pope, however much he had disapproved of the Emperor's late policy, or dreaded his power, most readily agreed that all other matters should give place to that one which each accounted the most important. A treaty was concluded, the main object of which was,

1. "That the pope and the Emperor, for the glory of God, and the public good, but especially the welfare of Germany, have entered into league together upon certain articles and conditions; and, in the first place, that the Emperor shall provide an army, and all things necessary for war, and be in readiness by the month of June next ensuing, and by force of arms compel those who refuse the council, and maintain those errors to embrace the ancient religion, and submit to the holy See."

2. "The pope, on his part, in addition to one hundred thousand ducats which he had already given, stipulated to deposit as much more in the Bank of Vienna toward defraying the expense of the war; to maintain, at his own charge, during the space of six months, twelve thousand foot, five hundred horse, and to grant the Emperor for this year one-half of the church revenues all over Spain; to empower him to alienate as much of the Abbey-lands in that country as would amount to five hundred thousand ducats; and that both spiritual censures and military force should be employed against any prince who might seek to hinder the execution of this treaty."

3. "That the council, on its part, was to proceed at once to draw up a confession of faith, wherein should be contained all the articles which the church required its members to believe; that this ought to be the first and principal business of the council: and that anathemas were to be denounced in the name, and by the authority of the Holy Ghost, against all who should disclaim the truth of the Confession."³¹⁸

³¹⁷ For details, see Landon's *Manual of Councils*, Father Paul's *History of the Council of Trent*. Scott's *Church History*, vol. 2, pp. 256-324. Dr. Robertson's *History of Charles V*, vol. 6.

³¹⁸ See F. Paul, Teckendorf, Sleidan, Abbe Millot, quoted by Dr. Robertson, and Wylie's *History of Protestantism*, vol. 2, p. 113.

Thus was the snare most artfully laid. It was the deep device of Satan for the destruction of the Protestants, but vigorously carried out by him who assumes the title of “most holy father,” and the character of “infallibility.” The enemy saw that the Reformers had shifted from moral to political ground. They were no longer merely “protesters” for the truth of God against the errors of popery, but an armed confederacy, prepared to meet the papal and imperial armies on their own ground. This was their fatal mistake. God could not appear for them on the world’s ground; and their own folly and weakness were soon manifested. Thus it happened.

The council commenced its deliberations — though only a few Spanish and Italian bishops had arrived — with examining the first and chief point in controversy between the church of Rome and the Reformers, concerning the rule which should be held as supreme and decisive in matters of faith; and, by its *infallible authority*, determined, “That the books to which the designation of *Apocryphal* hath been given, are of equal authority with those which were received by the Jews and Primitive Christians into the sacred canon; that the traditions handed down from the apostolic age, and preserved in the church, are entitled to as much regard as the doctrines and precepts which the inspired authors have committed to writing; that the Latin translation of the scriptures, made or revised by Jerome, and known by the name of the *Vulgate* translation, should be read in churches, and appealed to in the schools as authentic and canonical.”

This was an open attack on the first principles of Protestantism, a pre-judging of every question at issue, and rendering hopeless all discussion between the two parties. Luther and his followers, from the beginning, had affirmed that the word of God was the only rule in judgment; that they owned no authority in matters of faith but the one infallible standard of holy scripture. This was the foundation and corner-stone of Protestantism, but the first decision of the council was intended to undermine the foundation, to adjudge and condemn the whole system.

THE SMALCALD WAR

The Protestants, perceiving that the real object of the council was not to examine their demands, but to condemn their faith as heresy, and to draw them into collision with the Emperor, that he might decide the question with the sword, firmly rejected its decrees. At the same time they published a **long manifesto**, containing a renewal of their protest against the meeting of the council, together with the reasons which induced them to decline its jurisdiction. But Charles was not yet prepared for hostilities, therefore he pursued his policy of dissimulation. He had no wish to increase the zeal of the council, or to quicken the operations of the league. His first object was to deceive the Protestants, that he might gain time for ripening his schemes. For this purpose he contrived to have an interview with the Landgrave of Hesse, the most active of all the confederates, and the most suspicious of the

Emperor's designs. To him he made great professions of his concern for the happiness of Germany, and of his aversion to all violent measures; he denied in express terms, having formed any treaty, or having begun any military preparations which pointed to war.

Such was the consummate duplicity of Charles, that he seems to have dispelled all Philip's doubts and apprehensions, and sent him away fully satisfied of his pacific intentions. On his return to the confederates, who were assembled at Worms, he gave them such a flattering representation of the Emperor's favourable disposition towards them, that they became dilatory and undecided in their operations, thinking that the danger was distant or only imaginary. Listening thus to the wiles of Satan the **Protestant leaders were smitten with blindness** and folly, even as the men of Zurich were in 1531. They were off the ground of faith and trusting to their own wisdom and strength, which led to their disgrace and humiliation. From this time every step they take is in the wrong and downward direction.

The conduct of the Emperor was everywhere directly opposite to his professions of peace, and seen by all excepting those who ought to have suspected him. Henry VIII of England secretly informed the princes that Charles, having long resolved to exterminate their doctrines was diligently employing the present interval of tranquillity in preparing for the execution of his designs. The merchants of Augsburg, among whom were some who favoured the Protestant cause, learning from their correspondents in Italy, that the ruin of the Reformers was intended, warned them of the approaching danger. In confirmation of these reports, they heard from the Low Countries that Charles, though with every precaution which could keep the measure concealed, had issued orders for raising troops both there and in other parts of his dominions. And seeing he was not at war either with Francis or Solyman, or any other power, for what could he intend such preparations, if not for the extinction of the Smalcald league, and the heresies which had so long abounded in Germany?

THE POPE REVEALS THE DARK SECRET

The secret was now in many hands; the officers and the allies of Charles kept no such mysterious reserve, but spoke out plainly of his intentions. The pope, overflowing with joy not doubting the issue of the enterprise, began to sing the war-song, as in the days of Innocent III, exhorting the faithful to take up arms in the holy cause and gain indulgences. "Proud," says Dr. Robertson, "of having been the author of such a formidable league against the Lutheran heresy, and happy in thinking that the glory of extirpating it was reserved for his pontificate, he published the articles of his treaty with the Emperor, in order to demonstrate the pious intention of their confederacy, as well as to display his own zeal, which prompted him to make such extraordinary efforts for maintaining the faith in its purity. Not satisfied with this, he soon after issued a bull, containing most liberal promises of indulgence to all who should

engage in this holy enterprise, together with warm exhortations to such as could not bear a part in it themselves, to increase the fervour of their prayers, and the severity of their mortifications, that they might draw down the blessing of heaven upon those who had undertaken it.”³¹⁹

The pope being deeply grieved with Charles for endeavouring to make that pass for a political contest which he ought to have gloried in as a war that had no other object than the defence of the ancient faith, exposed the treachery of his policy and declared the overthrow of Lutheranism as at hand. The Emperor, though somewhat embarrassed by this disclosure, and not a little offended at the pope’s indiscretion or malice, continued boldly to pursue his own plan, and to reassert that his intentions were only that which he had originally stated. Thus were the two heads of Christendom — the fountain of truth and the fountain of honour, so-called — proclaiming to the world that neither truth nor honour were to be found in either. And thus they stand before all posterity, down to the latest generation, a mere compound of craft, falsehood, hypocrisy, and cruelty.

But the artifices of Charles did not impose on all the Protestant confederates. Some of them clearly perceived that he had taken arms for the suppression of the Reformation, and the extinction of the German liberties. They determined, therefore, to prepare for their own defence, and resolved neither to renounce their religious liberties, nor to abandon those civil rights which had been transmitted to them by their ancestors. A deputation from the confederates waited on the Emperor, and wished to know whether these military preparations were carried on by his command, and for what end, and against what enemy? To a question put in such a form and at a time when facts were too notorious to be denied, he avowed the intentions which he could no longer conceal, but with such fascinating duplicity as to deceive the deputies. True, he admitted, that it was Germany he had in view in his preparations, but his only object was to maintain the rights and prerogatives of the imperial dignity. His purpose was, not to molest any on account of religion, but to punish certain factious members, and preserve the ancient constitution of the empire from being impaired or dissolved by their licentious conduct. Though the Emperor did not name the persons whom he had destined as the objects of his vengeance, it was well-known that he had in view John Frederick, Elector of Saxony, and Philip, Landgrave of Hesse.

Transparent as this deception was, and manifest as it might have appeared to all who considered the Emperor’s character, it nevertheless lulled to sleep the timid and the wavering. They were furnished with an excuse for inactivity, “seeing,” as they said, “the war does not concern religion, but is a quarrel merely between the Emperor and some members of the league.” And such

³¹⁹ For details of this interesting period see the *History of Charles V*, in vol. 4 of Dr. Robertson’s *Collected Writings*.

was the dexterity with which he used this division of feeling among the confederates, that he gained time and other solid advantages.

THE ARMY OF THE CONFEDERATES

The more energetic of the confederates, soon after this, met at **Ulm** to give the necessary directions for their future proceedings. It was resolved that they should repel force by force and make vigorous preparations for war. They also determined, that having neglected too long to strengthen themselves by foreign alliances, they would now apply to the Venetians, the Swiss, and the kings of France and England. So far alas! had the leaders of the Reformation, within the short period of thirty years from its commencement, departed from the principles which triumphed at Worms and Augsburg, to say nothing of the plain teaching of the word of God, as to apply for help to such men as Henry and Francis; but we shall see with what results.

Their negotiations with foreign courts were all unsuccessful; but the chiefs had no difficulty in bringing a sufficient force into the field. The feudal institutions, which subsisted in full force at that time in Germany, enabled the nobles to call out their numerous vassals, and to put them in motion on the shortest notice. "In a few weeks," says the historian of Charles, "they were enabled to **assemble an army** composed of *seventy thousand* foot and *fifteen thousand* horse, provided with a train of *a hundred and twenty cannon, eight hundred ammunition wagons, eight thousand beasts of burden, and six thousand pioneers*. This army, one of the most numerous, and undoubtedly the best appointed of any which had been levied in Europe during that century, did not require the united effort of the whole Protestant body to raise it. The Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, the Duke of Wurtemberg, the princes of Anhalt, and the imperial cities of Augsburg, Ulm, and Strasburg, were the only powers which contributed towards this great armament. The Electors of Cologne, of Brandenburg, the Count Palatine, and several others, overawed by the Emperor's threats, or deceived by his professions, remained neutral.

"The number of their troops, as well as the amazing rapidity wherewith they had assembled them, astonished the Emperor, and filled him with the most disquieting apprehensions. He was indeed in no condition to resist such a mighty force. Shut up in Ratisbon with an army scarcely *ten thousand* strong, he must have been overwhelmed by the approach of such a formidable army, which he could not fight, nor could he even hope to retreat from it in safety."

Fortunately for Charles the confederates did not avail themselves of the advantage which lay so plainly before them. Time was wasted in writing a letter to the Emperor and a manifesto to all the inhabitants of Germany. But weak and perilous though the situation of Charles was, he assumed the air of the haughty inflexible Emperor. His only reply to the letter of the Protestants was to publish the ban of the empire against the Elector of Saxony and the

Landgrave of Hesse, their leaders, and against all who should dare to assist them. By this sentence, they were declared rebels and outlaws, and deprived of every privilege which they enjoyed as members of the Germanic body; their goods were confiscated; their subjects absolved from their oath of allegiance; and it became not only lawful but meritorious to invade their territories. This tremendous sentence, according to the German jurisprudence, required the authority of a diet of the empire, but Charles overlooked that formality and assumed the power in his own person.

The confederates, now perceiving that all hopes of accommodation were at an end, solemnly declared **war against Charles**, to whom they no longer gave any other title than pretended Emperor, and renounced all allegiance to him. But, now that the moment for war had come, the league was disunited and unprepared. The supreme command of the army was committed in terms of the league to the Elector and the Landgrave, with equal power. This proved disastrous from the very commencement. The natural tempers and dispositions of the two princes were widely different. The Elector was slow, deliberate, irresolute; the Landgrave was prompt, enterprising, and wished to bring the contest to a speedy issue. But if Philip was the better soldier, John was the greater prince; and could a Landgrave command an Elector? All the inconveniences arising from a divided authority were immediately felt. Much time was wasted and dissensions multiplied. Meanwhile the Emperor had moved his camp to the territories of the Duke of Bavaria, a neutral prince, leaving a small garrison in Ratisbon. A few more days were spent in deliberating whether they should follow Charles or attack Ratisbon. By this time the imperial army amounted to *thirty-six thousand* men; and, through cowardly defections, the Protestant army was reduced to *forty-seven thousand*.

THE FIRST OPERATIONS OF THE PROTESTANTS

As no foresight had been shown by the confederates to prevent the Spanish, Italian, and other troops, from joining the imperial army, the Emperor was enabled to send such a reinforcement to the garrison at Ratisbon, that the Protestants, relinquishing all hope of reducing the town, marched towards Ingoldstadt on the Danube, near to which Charles was now encamped. "They complained loudly," says Dr. Robertson, "against the Emperor's notorious violation of the laws and constitution of the empire, in having called in foreigners to lay waste Germany, and to oppress its liberties. It came to be universally believed among them, that the pope, not satisfied with attacking them openly by force of arms, had dispersed his emissaries all over Germany, to set on fire their towns and magazines, and to poison the wells and fountains of water. These rumours were confirmed, in some measure, by the behaviour of the papal troops, who thinking nothing too rigorous towards heretics anathematised by the church, were guilty of great excesses in the Lutheran states, and aggravated the miseries of war by mingling with it all the cruelty of bigoted zeal."

With passions so aroused, by the report of cruelties so great, we might have expected to see a corresponding energy to bring such calamities to a close. It was now in their power, and the campaign might have been ended at the outset, had their leaders been united and firm. On their arrival at Ingoldstadt, they found the Emperor in a camp not remarkable for strength, with a small army, and surrounded only by a slight entrenchment. But the great object pursued by Charles from the first was to decline a battle, to weary out the patience of the confederates, and induce them to separate, when his victory over each prince in succession would be sure.

Before **Ingoldstadt** lay a plain of such extent, as afforded ample space for drawing out their whole forces, and bringing them to act at once. No army was ever more favourably situated; the soldiers were full of ardour and eager to seize the opportunity of attacking the Emperor; but alas! through the weakness or division of their leaders the advantage was lost, and so far as their credit is concerned it was lost for ever. “The Landgrave urged that, if the sole command was vested in him, he would terminate the war on that occasion, and decide by one general action the fate of the two parties. But the Elector urged, on the other hand, the discipline of the enemies' forces, the presence of the Emperor, the experience of his officers, and thought it would be unsafe to venture upon an action.” While the Protestant leaders were thus debating whether they ought to surprise the Emperor or not, the imperial reinforcements arrived and the opportunity was gone.

But notwithstanding their vacillation, it was at length agreed to advance towards the enemy's camp in battle array, with the view of drawing the imperialists out of the works. But the Emperor was too wise to be caught in this snare. He was fighting on his own ground, and with his own weapons and as such, he was more than a match for all the Protestants in Germany, who were on false ground and fighting with camel, not-with spiritual, weapons. They commenced and continued firing for several hours on the imperialists, but Charles adhered to his own system with inflexible constancy. He drew up his soldiers behind the trenches; restrained them from any excursions or skirmishes which might bring on a general engagement; rode along the lines; addressed the troops of the different nations in their own language; encouraged them not only by his words, but by the cheerfulness of his voice and countenance; exposed himself in places of greatest danger, and amidst the warmest fire of the enemy's artillery. Night fell, and the confederates, seeing no prospect of alluring them to fight on equal terms, retired to their own camp.

The leisure was employed with great diligence by the imperialists in strengthening their works; but the confederates, seeing they had lost their opportunity, turned their attention — with as little success — towards preventing the arrival of a powerful reinforcement from the Low Countries. Upon the arrival of the Flemings the Emperor began to act more on the offensive, though still with the greatest sagacity avoiding a battle. He had

often foretold, with confidence, that discord and the want of money would compel the confederates to disperse that unwieldy body; and for this he watched and waited with long patience. They had been on the field from midsummer to the end of autumn, and little had been done, and nothing gained on either side, when an unexpected event decided the contest, and occasioned a fatal reverse in the affairs of the Protestants, and prepared the way for the tragedy that followed.

THE TREACHERY OF MAURICE

Maurice was the son of Henry, and succeeded his father in the government of that part of Saxony which belonged to the Albertine line. "This young prince, then only in his twentieth year, had, even at that early period, begun to discover the great talents which qualified him for acting such a distinguished part in the affairs of Germany. As soon as he entered upon the administration, he struck out into such a new and singular path, as showed that he aimed from the beginning at something great and uncommon."³²⁰ He professed to be a zealous Protestant, but objected to join the league of Smalcald under the pretence that its principles were not sufficiently scriptural. He avowed his determination to maintain the purity of religion, but not to entangle himself in the political interests, or combinations to which it had given rise. Such was the consummate duplicity and the Satanic policy of this young man. At this very time, with great political sagacity, he was weighing both sides, and foreseeing that the Emperor was most likely to prevail in the end, he affected to place in him the most unbounded confidence, and to court his favour by every possible means, and also the favour of his brother, Ferdinand.

At the Diet of Ratisbon, in the month of May 1546, Maurice concluded a treaty with the Emperor, in which he engaged to assist him as a faithful subject, and Charles, in return stipulated to bestow on him all the spoils of the Elector, his dignities as well as his territories. But so little did the Elector suspect treachery in his young relative and neighbour, who had received many kindnesses from him, that, on leaving to join the confederates, he committed his dominions to the protection of that prince; and he, with an artful appearance of friendship, undertook the charge. The whole plan being now completed, the Emperor sent Maurice a copy of the imperial ban denounced against the Elector and the Landgrave, requiring him, upon the allegiance and duty which he owed to the head of the empire, instantly to seize and retain in his hands the forfeited estates of the Elector.

This artifice, which made the invasion appear to be one of necessity rather than of choice, was but a thin veil to conceal the treachery of both. After some formalities were observed, to give a specious appearance to his reluctance, Maurice marched into his kinsman's territories, and, with the

³²⁰ Dr. Robertson, vol. 6, p. 22.

assistance of Ferdinand, attacked and defeated the Elector's troops, and took all things under his own administration.

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE LEAGUE

When the news of these rapid conquests reached the good Elector, he was filled with indignation and astonishment, and resolved at once to return home with his troops, for the defence of Saxony. He was most unwilling to withdraw, as he preferred the success of the common cause to the security of his own dominions; but the sufferings and complaints of his subjects increased so much, that he became most impatient to rescue them from the oppression of Maurice and from the cruelties of the Hungarian soldiers, accustomed to the merciless modes of warfare practised against the Turks. This was the fatal blow to the league of Smalcald. This diversion, which had been contrived with so much subtlety, was successful, even to the desire of the heart of Charles.

The departure of the Elector caused a separation of the confederates; and, once divided, they became an easy prey to the Emperor. A confederacy, lately so powerful as to shake the imperial throne, and threaten to drive Charles out of Germany, fell to pieces, and was dissolved in a few weeks. How empty everything is if God is not in it; and how weak everything is if He is not its strength! Charles saw his opportunity, put his army in motion, and did not allow the confederates leisure to recover from their consternation, or to form any new schemes of union. He assumed the tone of a conqueror, as if they had been already at his mercy. The union being dissolved, the princes stood exposed singly to the whole weight of his vengeance. With the exception of the Elector and the Landgrave, almost all the Protestant princes and states submitted, and implored the pardon of the Catholic Charles in the most humiliating manner. And as he was in difficulties from the want of money, he imposed heavy fines upon them, which he levied with most rapacious exactness.³²¹

With the exception of the Landgrave and the Elector, hardly any member of the league now remained in arms. And these two the Emperor had long marked out as the victims of his signal vengeance, so that he was at no pains to propose to them any terms of reconciliation. Various circumstances, for a short time, suspended the blow; but Charles, being relieved from his apprehensions of a fresh war with France, by the death of his great rival, Francis I, resolved to march against the Elector, who had nearly recovered all his dominions from the traitor Maurice.

In the spring of 1547 there was some hard fighting between the Emperor and the Elector at Muhlberg, on the Elbe, and at Mulhausen, but the latter was defeated, wounded, and taken prisoner, which virtually terminated the war. This decisive victory cost the imperialists only fifty men; but twelve hundred of the Saxons were slain, and a great number were taken prisoners. Maurice,

³²¹ Dr. Robertson's *History*, book 8.

as the reward of his treachery, was immediately put in possession of the electoral dominions. The city of Gotha, and the small territory attached to it, were settled on the Elector's family; but he himself was to remain a perpetual prisoner.

The Landgrave alone now remained in arms, and was not inclined to surrender. But Maurice, his son-in-law, prevailed on him to submit, assuring him that he and the Elector of Brandenburg, had the Emperor's guarantee for his personal liberty. But in all this Philip was cruelly deceived. And there is every reason to believe that these two nobles, while acting as mediators, were themselves deceived by the perfidious Charles. His object was to gain possession of the person of Philip, that he might have him absolutely at his disposal. But notwithstanding the assurances and entreaties of Maurice and Brandenburg, the Landgrave suspected the intentions of the Emperor, and refused to appear at his court. His reluctance, however, was at length overcome by these two princes signing a bond, in which they pledged their own lives and liberties for his. His doubts being thus removed, he repaired to the imperial camp at Halle, in Saxony.

Charles, who had assumed the haughty and imperious tone of **a conqueror**, was seated on a magnificent throne, with all the ensigns of his dignity, and surrounded by a numerous train of the princes of the empire. The Landgrave was introduced with great solemnity, and, advancing towards the throne, fell upon his knees. The eyes of all present were fixed on the unfortunate Landgrave — the most popular of the Protestant chiefs in Germany. "Few could behold a prince," says Robertson, "so powerful as well as high-spirited, suing for mercy in the posture of a supplicant, without being touched with commiseration, and perceiving serious reflections arise in their minds upon the instability and emptiness of human grandeur." But there was one heart that remained unmoved by that affecting scene: the unfeeling Spaniard, with Germany prostrate at his feet, viewed the whole transaction with cold indifference.

He insisted on unconditional submission. "Philip was required to surrender his person and territories to the Emperor; to implore for pardon on his knees; to pay one hundred and fifty thousand crowns towards defraying the expenses of the war; to demolish the fortifications of all the towns in his dominions, except one; to oblige the garrison which he placed in it, to take an oath of fidelity to the Emperor," etc., etc. The Landgrave, being entirely at the Emperor's mercy, ratified these conditions; and flattering himself that he had thereby fully expiated his guilt, rose from his knees, and advanced towards the Emperor, with the intention of kissing his hand, but Charles turned away abruptly, without deigning to give the fallen prince any sign of compassion or reconciliation.

Philip was allowed to retire, apparently at liberty, along with his friends Maurice and Brandenburg, and was entertained by the Duke of Alva with

great respect and courtesy; but after supper, when he rose to depart, the duke made known the orders he had to detain him. The unhappy prince was struck dumb; his heart sank within him; then he broke out into those violent expressions at the injustice and artifices of the Emperor, which the circumstances naturally provoked, but all in vain. Brandenburg and Maurice had recourse to the most bitter complaints, to arguments, and to entreaties, in order to extricate the distracted prince out of the ignominious situation into which he had been betrayed. They pleaded their own honour and bond in the matter; but the Duke of Alva was inflexible. Philip was his prisoner, and placed under the custody of a Spanish guard, and did not obtain his release till after a lapse of five years, and total reverse in the affairs of the Emperor set him at liberty, and introduced a new epoch in the history of the Reformation.

THE GERMANS TREATED AS A CONQUERED PEOPLE

The Emperor's triumph was now complete. He was master of Germany. In taking possession of Wittemberg he visited the **tomb of Luther**. While silently gazing on the peaceful resting-place of the monk who had stirred up all Europe to mutiny, and defied both the papal and the imperial power, the Spaniards entreated him to destroy the monument of the heretic, and to dig up his bones. But Charles nobly replied, "I have nothing more to do with Luther; he has gone to another judge, whose province we must not invade. I wage war with the living, not with the dead." But how different were his feelings when he turned from the memory of the man of faith to those that had raised the arm of rebellion against him! The two princes, Frederick and Philip, followed him in his train, and were thus led about in triumph from city to city, and from prison to prison, exhibiting them as a public spectacle to their former subjects, their families and friends. This was a bitter humiliation to Germany. Loud complaints arose from every quarter against this wanton abuse of power, and cruel treatment of its two most illustrious princes.

But the day of adversity brought out **the real character** of these two public men. Frederick, long a true Christian, accepted the affliction from the hand of the Lord, and bowed to it. He looked beyond second causes. He dropped the spirit of the warrior, and embraced that of the martyr. All historians agree in bestowing upon him the highest praise for his meekness, patience, and christian conduct. Even the Roman Catholic historian, Thuanus, says of him, "In the judgment of all men, he rose superior to his adverse fortune by the constancy of his mind."

But alas! the conduct of the Landgrave was just the opposite to that of the Elector. We have seen something of his profession of religion, and of his zeal for the union of Christians, as at the conference at Marburg; but in "the day of adversity his strength was small." Such was his impatience under his calamity that, in order to obtain his liberty, he voluntarily offered to surrender, not his dignities merely, but his religious principles. He never judged himself or his ways in the presence of God; therefore he could not see

His overruling hand in his trial. In these two men we may see illustrated the mighty difference between a mere form of religion (even when accompanied by an active, stirring mind) and the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ which takes possession of the heart. The day of trial discovers the essential difference. The one broods over the shameful treachery by which he was deprived of his liberty, and the injustice with which he is still detained, until he is driven to the wildest excesses of passion. The other is not insensible to the unfeeling cruelty with which he is treated; but he confesses his own failure, owns a wise and overruling providence in it all, waits upon God, renews his strength, and daily waxes stronger and stronger until, through divine grace, he can rejoice in his captivity, having the sweet sense of the presence of God with him, and that it will all result in a brighter crown in heaven.

But we now return to the **public transactions of the Emperor.**

Many of the other princes were next made to feel the power of the oppressor, though in a different way. He ordered his troops to seize the artillery and military stores belonging to those who had been members of the Smalcald league, and, “having collected upwards of five hundred pieces of cannon, a great number in that age, he sent part of them into the low countries, part into Italy, and part into Spain, in order to spread by this means the fame of his success, and that they might serve as monuments of his having subdued a nation hitherto deemed invincible. He then levied, by his sole authority, large sums of money, as well upon those who had served him with fidelity during the war, as upon those who had been in arms against him. By these exactions he amassed above one million six hundred thousand crowns — a sum which appeared prodigious in the sixteenth century.”³²²

The Germans, naturally jealous of their privileges, were greatly alarmed at such extraordinary stretches of power, but so great was their consternation, that all implicitly obeyed the commands of the haughty Spaniard; though at the same time, the discontent and resentment of the people had become universal, and they were ready to burst forth on the first opportunity with unmitigated violence. While Charles was thus giving laws to the Germans like a conquered people, Ferdinand was exercising the same despotism over the Bohemians, and stripped them of almost all their privileges.

³²² Robertson, book 9, p. 178.

SHORT PAPERS ON CHURCH HISTORY

CHAPTER 47

“THE INTERIM”

The Emperor, now complete master of the position, and having subdued, as he thought, the independent and stubborn spirit of the Germans, held a **diet at Augsburg**, when he demanded of the Protestants to submit the decision of the religious dissensions which had arisen in Germany to the council of Trent. The city and assembly were surrounded by the Emperor's victorious troops, no doubt to give effect to their master's wishes. He immediately took possession of the cathedral and some other churches, and, after they had been duly purified, restored the popish worship. But scarcely had the proceedings commenced, when Charles learnt, to his deep mortification, that the council had been removed by the pope from Trent to Bologna.

The great success and assumption of Charles in Germany naturally awakened the fears and jealousy of the pontiff. He foresaw that the Emperor's power in that country would greatly influence the decisions of the council, and that he might employ it to limit or overturn the papal authority. He therefore embraced the first opportunity to withdraw the papal troops from the imperial army, and to translate the council to Bologna, a city subject to the pope. This removal was strenuously opposed by the Emperor and by all the bishops in the imperial interest. The latter remained at Trent, while the Spanish and Neapolitan bishops accompanied the legates to Bologna. Thus a schism commenced in that very assembly which had been called to heal the divisions of Christendom, and which issued in an indefinite adjournment of the council: nor were means found of restoring the council of Trent, till Julius III succeeded Paul III in the papal chair, A.D. 1550; but the season was then past for the purposes of Charles.

As the prospect of a general council was now more distant than ever, the Emperor, in his pious concern for the religious dissensions of his northern subjects, deemed it necessary, in the *interim*, to prepare a system of doctrine, to which all should conform, until a council, such as they wished for, could be assembled. This new creed was styled **The Interim**. It was framed by Pflug, Sidonius, and Agricola, of whom the two former were dignitaries in the Romish Church; the last was a Protestant divine, but considered by his brethren as an apostate.

THE NEW CREED

This famous treatise contained a complete system of Roman theology; though expressed for the most part in “softest words, or in scriptural phrases, or in

terms of studied ambiguity.” Every doctrine peculiar to popery was retained; or, as Mr. Wylie sums it up, “The Interim taught, among other things, the supremacy of the pope, the dogma of transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, the invocation of the saints, auricular confession, justification by works, and the whole right of the church to interpret the scriptures; in short, not one concession did Rome make. In return for swallowing a creed out-and-out popish, the Protestants were to be rewarded with two paltry boons. Clergymen already married were to be permitted to discharge their office without putting away their wives; and where it was the wont to dispense the sacrament in both kinds, the custom was still to be tolerated. This was called meeting the Protestants half way.”³²³

This document, which brought the most desolating calamities and oppressions on the Protestants, was submitted by the Emperor to the Diet of Augsburg on May 15th, 1548. Having been read in presence of the diet, in due form, the Archbishop of Mentz, without giving time for any discussion, rose up hastily, thanked the Emperor for his pious endeavours to restore the peace of the church, and in the name of the diet signified their approbation of the system of doctrine which had just been read to them. This unexpected, unconstitutional declaration amazed the whole assembly; but not one member had courage enough to contradict what the archbishop had said. Overawed by the Spanish troops outside, the diet was silent. The Emperor at once accepted the declaration as a full ratification of the Interim, proclaimed it as a decree of the empire, to remain in force till a free general council could be held, and to which all were to conform under pain of his displeasure. The Interim was immediately published in the German as well as the Latin language.

THE INTERIM OPPOSED BY PROTESTANTS AND PAPISTS

The Emperor, proud of his new scheme, and believing that he was on the high road to victory, and the consummation of his plans, proceeded to enforce the Interim. But to his great astonishment he found all parties declaiming against it with equal violence. The Protestants condemned it as a system containing the grossest errors of popery. The papists condemned it because some of the doctrines of the holy catholic church were impiously given up. But at Rome the indignation of the ecclesiastics rose to the greatest height. They exclaimed against the Emperor’s profane encroachment on the sacerdotal office, and compared him to that apostate **Henry VIII** of England, who had usurped the title as well as the jurisdiction belonging to the supreme pontiff.

Among the Protestant princes there was great diversity of feeling, into the details of which we need not enter. Some yielded a feigned submission, but there were others who made a firm stand and a faithful protest against the Interim. Charles, well knowing the great influence which the example of his prisoner, Frederick, would have with all the Protestant party, laboured with

³²³ *History of Protestantism*, vol. 2, p. 118. See also Robertson’s *History*, vol. 6, book 9.

the utmost earnestness to gain his approbation of the scheme. But he was not to be moved either by the hope of liberty, or the threats of greater harshness. He now met the Emperor with weapons mightier far than all the imperial power — conscience and the word of God. And well would it have been for the Protestants and the cause of Protestantism, had no others ever been opposed to the threatenings of the pope and the Emperor. Some might have been honoured with martyrdom, but the country would have been saved from the desolations of war, and the moral glory of this divine principle would have been stamped on the Reformation.

After having declared his firm belief in the doctrines of the Reformation, he added, “I cannot now in my old age, abandon the principles for which I early contended; nor, in order to procure freedom during a few declining years, will I betray that good cause on account of which I have suffered so much, and am still willing to suffer. Better for me to enjoy, in this solitude, the esteem of virtuous men, together with the approbation of my own conscience than to return into the world, with the imputation and guilt of apostasy, to disgrace and embitter the remainder of my days.” For this magnanimous resolution, in which he set his countrymen a noble pattern, he was rewarded by the Emperor with fresh marks of his displeasure. “The rigour of his confinement was increased; the number of his servants diminished, the Lutheran clergymen, who had hitherto been permitted to attend him, were dismissed, and even the books of devotion, which had been his chief consolation during a tedious imprisonment, were taken from him.”

MELANCTHON'S SUBMISSION

It is deeply to be regretted that the Wittemberg divines did not testify more firmly for the truth, and against the popish scheme of the Interim. But the feeble **Melancthon**, partly through fear of Charles, and partly from his excessive complaisance towards persons of high rank, endeavoured to steer a middle course, and the other theologians followed him. He then introduced the pernicious principle of *essentials*, *non-essentials*, and things *indifferent* in religion. He decided that the whole instrument, called the Interim, could by no means be admitted; but that there was no impediment to receiving and approving it, so far as it concerned things not *essential* in religion, or things *indifferent*. This decision gave rise to several long and bitter controversies in the Lutheran Church. The genuine followers of Luther could not account as *indifferent*, the teaching and object of the Interim, and opposed with great fervour the Wittemberg and Leipsic divines. They charged them, with giving up their Protestantism for the Emperor's religion. This lax principle has been doing its evil work in all the Reformed churches from that day even until now. It is a convenient covering for those who have no conscience as to the authority of the word of God, and wish to serve their own ends. But surely no part of divine truth can be either *indifferent* or *non-essential*. “The words of the Lord,” says the psalmist, “are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” (Ps. 12:6) How different is the estimate of the

Spirit of truth and theology as to “the words of the Lord... *purified seven times.*”³²⁴

THE OPPOSITION OF THE FREE CITIES

The reception of the Interim in the different provinces depended entirely on the nearness or distance of the Emperor’s power. Where his arm had not reached, it was openly resisted, where his power was felt, there was at least an outward compliance with it; but it was in the free cities that Charles met with the most violent opposition to his new scheme. There the Reformation had made the greatest progress; its most eminent divines were settled in them as pastors, and schools and other seminaries for the instruction of the young flourished within their gates. They petitioned and remonstrated, but without effect; Charles was determined to carry into full execution the resolution he had formed — universal compliance with his odious Interim.

His first attempt was upon the city of Augsburg. “He ordered one body of his troops to seize the gates; he posted the rest in different quarters of the city; and assembling all the burgesses in the town-hall, he, by his sole authority, published a decree abolishing their present form of government, dissolving all their corporations and fraternities, and nominating a small number of persons, in whom he vested for the future all the powers of government. Each of the persons thus chosen took an oath to observe the Interim.” Persecution immediately followed; for many sought to maintain a good conscience before God and adhered to the truth of His word. The Protestant pastors were forced into exile, or rendered homeless in their native land; their churches were purified from Protestant defilement; the old rites were restored — masses, vestments, crosses, altars, candles, images, etc., and the inhabitants driven to mass by the soldiers of the Emperor. “In southern Germany alone four hundred faithful preachers of the gospel fled with their wives and families, and wandered without food or shelter; while those who were unable to escape fell into the hands of the enemy, and were led about in chains.” This state of things continued for nearly five years, during which time the sufferings and calamities of the faithful were far beyond the record of the chronicler, and have no place in the history of the church; but there was One who heard every sigh that was heaved, and saw every tear that was shed: “and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.” (Mal. 3:16, 17)

A NEW TURN IN THE TIDE OF EVENTS

The period of their sufferings, or rather of their *purifying* was nearly accomplished, and the day of their deliverance was nigh at hand, though nothing was farther from the thoughts of the oppressor. He imagined that his

³²⁴ See Mosheim’s *History of the Lutheran Church on the Controversies*, vol. 3; also Scott’s continuation of Milner on Melancthon’s submission, vol. 2.

victories were complete, his plans consummated, and that now he might rest a little from the toils of government, and taste the sweetness of retirement and repose. For this purpose he went to Innsbruck in the Tyrol, with only a few of his guards. But some already saw the storm gathering in various quarters, which was so soon to darken the whole firmament of his dominion and glory, and leave the master of two worlds without honour, and shut up in the solitude of a monkish cell. It happened in this way: —

There were still **four cities** of note holding out against the authority of the Emperor. These were Magdeburg, Bremen, Hamburg, and Lubeck. But as the resistance of Magdeburg stands connected with events which changed the whole face of affairs in Germany, we will speak of this city only.

In a diet held at Augsburg in the year 1550, it was resolved to send an army against Magdeburg, and besiege it in form. By an artful dissimulation of his real intentions, and by a seeming zeal to enforce the observance of the Interim, the notorious Maurice of Saxony undertook to reduce the rebellious city to obedience. This proposal received the sanction of the diet, and the full approbation of the Emperor.

Deep thoughts had been revolving in the mind of Maurice and many others, previous to this appointment. By the late successes of Charles, the fears of many were awakened. The Vatican was the first to raise the alarm. The pope repented of having contributed so largely to the growth of a power that might one day become his master. Already Charles had shaken the foundations of ecclesiastical authority, in presuming to define articles of faith, and to regulate modes of worship. Efforts were made to form alliances with foreign powers, that a vigorous resistance might be made at once, before his power became too formidable to be opposed.

But it was now apparent to all, that Charles was bent on exacting a rigid conformity to the doctrines and rites of the Romish Church, instead of allowing liberty of conscience, as he had always promised. The nation felt that they had been grossly deceived. They had been told over and over again before the war began, that it was no part of the Emperor's plans to alter the Reformed religion. But now both the religion and the liberties of Germany were at the feet of the perfidious monarch. This could not fail to alarm the princes of the empire, and none more so than Maurice. He was addressed in satires as "Judas," and accused by his countrymen as the author of these calamities. In this painful position Maurice made his choice. Only one thing will atone for the betrayal of the Protestant Confederacy — the complete overthrow of the Emperor's power in Germany; and this he resolved to accomplish.

"He saw," says Robertson, "the yoke that was preparing for his country; and, from the rapid as well as formidable progress of the imperial power, was convinced that but a few steps more remained to be taken, in order to render

Charles as absolute a monarch in Germany as he had become in Spain.” Maurice was a Protestant — politically — at heart, and by his Electoral dignity, the head of the party. Besides, his passions concurred with his love of liberty. He longed to avenge the cruel imprisonment of the Landgrave, his father-in-law, who, by his persuasion, had put himself into the Emperor’s hands.

When he divulged his bold purpose to the princes, they were slow to believe him; but at length, being satisfied of his sincerity, they readily promised to assist him. Having gained the confidence of the Protestant party, he next applied all his powers of art and duplicity to deceive the Emperor. The jealousy of Charles had been somewhat excited by hearing of Maurice’s friendship with some of the Protestant princes; but now, by his apparent zeal against the citizens of Magdeburg, all his suspicions were allayed, and he was inspired with fresh confidence in Maurice. As general of the army, he had a large force under his command, but he managed to protract the siege of Magdeburg till his plans were matured. He secretly formed leagues with several German princes, and entered into an alliance with the powerful king of France, Henry II, who proved a most effective ally, though a Catholic.

THE REVOLUTION IN GERMANY

A.D. 1552

When Maurice’s preparations were accomplished, he published a **manifesto** containing his reasons for taking arms against the Emperor, namely, that he might secure the Protestant religion, which was threatened with immediate destruction; that he might maintain the laws and constitution of the empire; that he might deliver the Landgrave of Hesse from the miseries of a long and unjust imprisonment. By the first proposal he roused all the friends of the Reformation to support him, who had been rendered desperate by oppression. By the second he interested all the friends of liberty in his cause — Catholics no less than Protestants. By the third he drew to his standard all the sympathy which had been universally excited by the Landgrave’s unjust imprisonment, and by the rigour of the Emperor’s proceedings against him. At the same time Henry of France issued a manifesto, in which he assumed the extraordinary title of “Protector of the liberties of Germany, and of its Captive Princes.”

The Emperor, as we have seen, was reposing at Innsbruck, within three days’ journey of Trent, and narrowly watching the proceedings of the council now sitting there. Maurice still concealing his designs under the veil of the most exquisite address, despatched a trusted messenger to assure the Emperor that he would wait upon him in a few days at Innsbruck; for which friendly visit the Emperor was in daily expectation. But the time for action was now come. The trumpet of war was sounded; and with a well-appointed army of twenty thousand foot and five thousand horse, Maurice pushed on by secret and forced marches, determined to surprise the Emperor and seize his person.

The imperial garrisons, by the way, offered no resistance, but tidings reached the imperial quarters, that all Germany had risen and was in full march upon Innsbruck.

THE EMPEROR'S FLIGHT

It was now late in the evening. The night was dark, and the rain falling heavily; but danger was near, and nothing could save the **Emperor but speedy flight**. He had been suffering for some time from a severe attack of the gout, and was unable to escape on horseback. Placed in a litter, the only motion he could bear, he travelled by the light of torches, taking his way over the Alps by roads almost impassable. His courtiers and attendants followed him with equal precipitation, and all in the utmost confusion. In this miserable plight the late conqueror of Germany arrived with his dejected train at Villach, a remote corner in Carinthia.

Maurice entered Innsbruck a few hours after the Emperor and his attendants had left it; but rather than pursue them, he abandoned all the Emperor's baggage, together with that of his ministers, to be plundered by his soldiers. There was now nothing left for the fallen Emperor but negotiation, or rather to submit to the terms proposed to him; and this he committed to his brother Ferdinand. Maurice, backed by all Germany, was absolute.

THE PEACE OF PASSAU

On the 2nd of August, 1552, the famous **treaty of Passau** was concluded. By this treaty it was agreed that the Landgrave should be set at liberty, and conveyed in safety to his own dominions; that within six months, a diet should be held of all the states, to deliberate on the best means of terminating the existing religious dissensions, and that in the meantime no molestation whatever should be offered to those who adhered to the Augsburg confession; that, if the diet thus to be held, should fail to effect an amicable adjustment of their religious disputes, the treaty of Passau should remain in force for ever. Thus was peace restored to the empire, and entire freedom conceded to the Protestant faith. This was followed by the "**Recess of Augsburg**" in 1555, which not only ratified the peace of Passau, but enlarged the religious liberties of Germany. It was this memorable convention which gave to the Protestants, after so much slaughter and so many calamities and conflicts, that firm and stable religious peace which they still enjoy. But alas! the youthful Maurice, who played so conspicuous a part, both in the defeat and the triumph of the Protestants, fell in battle, in less than a year after the peace of Passau, so that he was not permitted to see the full results of his bold undertaking.³²⁵

All these arrangements and treaties were deeply mortifying to the disappointed ambition of Charles. Protestantism, which he had intended to crush entirely, was flourishing throughout the empire. The mass-priests were

³²⁵ Mosheim, vol. 3, p. 157. Wylie, vol. 2, p. 122. Scott, vol. 2, p. 83.

dismissed; the banished pastors were brought back with great joy to their beloved flocks. The esteemed Frederick, who had been carried about from place to place by the Emperor for five years, had found his way home to his affectionate family and friends, but everything shaped itself in dark and gloomy colours before the troubled mind of Charles. He never had a heart for friendship, and, it is said, he never made a friend. Thus, faint and weary, the friendless Emperor hid himself in the fastnesses of Carinthia. From civil history we learn that, at this very moment, war was going on in Hungary against the still advancing Turks. Henry II, according to his agreement with Maurice, took the field early, with a numerous and well appointed army, and completely defeated the Spanish forces in Lorraine and Alsace. Italy was on the eve of outbreak and anarchy. But the Emperor was in exile; his treasury empty; his credit gone; his armies scattered and dispirited; and, feeling himself rapidly falling from the lofty elevation which he had so long maintained, he resolved to withdraw entirely from the affairs of this world, in order that he might spend the remainder of his days in retirement and solitude.

Accordingly, at the comparatively early age of fifty-six, he filled all Europe with astonishment, by resigning the imperial crown to his brother Ferdinand, and the remainder of his vast possessions in Europe and America to his son Philip II, whom he had already, on his marriage with Mary of England, invested with Naples and Sicily. The following year, after settling his affairs, he retired to the monastery of St. Juste, near the town of Placentia, in Spain. But he was still suffering so severely from the gout, that he had to be conveyed sometimes in a chair, and sometimes in a horse-litter, suffering exquisite pain at every step, and advancing with the greatest difficulty. Like most of the religious houses in those days, the monastery of St. Juste was beautifully situated: — “it lay in a little vale, watered by a small brook, and surrounded by rising grounds covered with lofty trees; from the nature of the soil, as well as the temperature of the climate, it was esteemed the most healthful and delicious situation in Spain.” Here Charles lived about two years, and died on the 21st of September, 1558, in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

REFLECTIONS ON THE FOREGOING PAGES

On the **cloister days of the Emperor** we need not dwell. They were chiefly spent in light and mechanical amusements when relief from the gout permitted him. One of these was a kind of theatrical lamentation at his funeral before his death. He ordered his tomb to be erected in the chapel; his body was laid in the coffin with great solemnity, the monks weeping (?); then marching in funeral procession with black tapers in their hands to the chapel. The service for the dead was chanted, the coffin sprinkled with holy water, the mourners retired, and the doors of the chapel were closed. Then Charles rose out of his coffin and withdrew to his apartment, full of those awful sensations which such a revolting farce was calculated to create. He died almost immediately after.

Yes! he died — died to all his dignities and humiliation, to all his ambition and disappointments, to all his plans and his policy! Yes! he who had sacrificed hundreds of thousands of human lives, and spent millions of money with the ultimate view of extinguishing Protestantism, died in the narrow sphere of a monkish cell, while Protestantism was now filling the vast firmament of human thought with its light and glory. There we leave the great Emperor — the greatest perhaps, as to dominions, that ever sat upon a throne. He is before the tribunal where motives as well as actions are weighed, and where all must be tried by the divine standard.

But, alas! we search in vain for anything like repentance in that inveterate enemy of the Reformers. Within the holy walls of St. Juste, so far from repenting of his conduct towards them, his only regret was that he had not treated them with greater severity. When informed that Lutheranism was spreading in Spain, and that a number of persons had been apprehended under suspicion of being infected with it, he wrote letters from the monastery to his daughter, Joanna, governess of Spain, to Juan de Vega, president of the council of Castile, and to the Inquisitor-general, charging them to exert their respective powers with all possible vigour, “in seizing the whole party, and causing them all to be burnt, after using every means to make them Christians before their punishment; for he was persuaded that none of them would become sincere Catholics, so irresistible was their propensity to dogmatize.” Again, he says, “If they do not condemn them to the fire, they will commit a great fault as I did in permitting Luther to live. Though I spared him solely on the ground of the safe-conduct I had sent him... I confess, nevertheless, that I did wrong in this, because I was not bound to keep my promise to that heretic... but in consequence of my not having taken away his life, heresy continued to make progress; whereas his death, I am persuaded, would have stifled it in its birth.”³²⁶

Here we have the **real heart of Charles**. There is no longer any reason for artifice and dissimulation, or pretended toleration to the Protestants. He has done with his wars and his politics, he has no longer a double part to play; and the real spirit of the papist is openly expressed. The one regret of his old age is, that he did not seize the prey in his youth. He seems to gnash his teeth with rage when he thinks of Luther, and grieves that he did not violate his promise. But there was One who was watching over the life of Luther and the infant Reformation; and so kept the hands of Charles full for upwards of thirty years, that he had no leisure to wage war against the Lutherans. But some think that this was ever before him as the one grand object of his life and his reign — the extermination of heresy.

But in that very contest on which he had staked everything, all was lost — his dominions, his throne, his crown, his grandeur. Never was the hand of God more strikingly displayed in the affairs of any prince. In one moment, and by

³²⁶ *History of the Reformation in Spain*, by Dr. McCrie, p. 119.

one stroke, all was changed. “His power collapsed when apparently at its zenith. None of the usual signs that precede the fall of greatness gave warning of so startling a downfall in the Emperor’s fortunes. His vast prestige had not been impaired. He had not been worsted on the battle-field; his military glory had suffered no eclipse; nor had any of his kingdoms been torn from him.”³²⁷ Of all the great men who started with him in life, such as Francis I, Henry VIII, Leo X, and Martin Luther, he was the sole survivor. His rivals had passed away before him, and none seemed left to dispute his possession of the field. But the hand of the Lord in retributive justice was lifted up against the oppressor of His people, and who could shelter him? Already a finger had written on the walls of his palace, “Mene, Mene, God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it.” And, instantly, the brazen gates of his power could no longer protect him, he was compelled to flee before a power which his insidious and fraudulent policy had created. The rod which he had thus prepared for the destruction of Germany was used of God for his own complete and ignominious overthrow. What a reality is the government as well as the grace of God in the earth! He controls the movements of the mightiest monarchs, and cares for the smallest things in creation. This, faith well knows, and finds its rest and consolation therein. “The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.” (1 Peter 3:12)

THE CALAMITIES OF THE PROTESTANTS

The other lesson so plainly written on the foregoing pages is this — that God is a jealous God, and will not give His glory to another. He will have His work done by His own means and in His own way. No greater calamity could have befallen the Reformation than that its friends should have given up the divine position of faith, and descended to the world’s platform of diplomacy and arms. Had it triumphed by these means, it would have lost its true character, or perished in the land of its birth, and the Reformers would have become a mere political power. But God would not have it so, and He suffered them to be shamefully defeated and stripped, until they were utterly defenceless and cast upon Himself. They had neither league nor sword, nor treasures, nor castles, nor any means of defence. They were brought back to their first principles — faith in the word of God, and martyrdom. But these divine and invincible principles seemed to have died with their great leader and to have been buried in his grave; and it was only through great suffering and humiliation that his followers were led to see their mistake.

But no sooner were they brought to feel that they had no means of defence but the word of God and a good conscience before Him, than deliverance came. The Lord had said, “The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous.” (Ps. 125:3) Such is the goodness and the tender mercy of our God. He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous. But it is always dangerous to

³²⁷ *History of Protestantism*, vol. 2, p. 121.

give up the principles of God's word, and to be governed in our ways by the maxims and policy of this world; and this holds true in all the affairs of life; but on the subject before us the word of God is plain, as saith the apostle, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," yes, "*mighty through God.*" And as the blessed Lord says, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (2 Cor. 10:4; Matt. 26:52)

The **Reformation in Germany**, embracing the Lutheran churches, was now definitively established. But the Reformed churches, embracing the followers of Zwingle and Calvin, were excluded from the privileges secured in the treaties of Passau and Augsburg, nor was legal toleration extended to them till the peace of Westphalia, nearly a century later. By this famous treaty the pacification of Passau was confirmed to the members of the Reformed churches, and the independence of Switzerland declared for the first time. "The balance of power," by which the weak amongst the nations might be effectually protected, and the powerful restrained from those aggressive schemes of ambition which had been too frequently indulged, was one of the important results of the negotiations and discussions in Westphalia.³²⁸

THE RISE OF THE JESUITS

Before taking our leave, finally, of the reign of Charles V, we must just notice **two memorable events** which occurred during that reign, because of the relation they bore to the Reformation, and the great religious struggle which was then agitating all classes of society. We refer to the Council of Trent and the rise of the Jesuits. Having said a little about the former, we will only at present speak of the latter.

We can easily conceive that the enemies of the Reformation were now at their wits' end. What was to be done? That which had been looked forward to for thirty years, as the sure means of crushing it, had not only failed, but ceased to be an opposing power, while the Reformation was rapidly increasing its area and multiplying its adherents. The pope had lost immensely in dignity, influence, and revenues in the contest, and the imperial power could no more be appealed to. The friars, black, white, and grey, were dispersed and their monasteries destroyed: what was next to be done? was a grave question for the evil heart of Jezebel, and those with whom she took counsel. Men-at-arms had failed; peace and persuasion must be our tactics now, suggested the presiding spirit. An army must be raised whose uniform should be the priestly garb, whose vows must be poverty, chastity, the care of Christians, and the conversion of infidels; and the character of whose mission must be persuasive and pacific. Under these appearances a counter-work to the Reformation must be immediately instituted. This plausible proposal was unanimously agreed to; and never was suggestion more plainly from beneath — even from the depths

³²⁸ *Universal History*, vol. 6, p. 87; Wylie, vol. 2, p. 122.

of Satan; and never was there one more satanically executed, as the history of the Jesuits proves. The springs of human feeling, sympathy, and pity seem to have been dried up in every member of that society, and the hell-inspired springs of bigotry and cruelty, which have no parallel in history, most surely possessed them.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

The **Society of the Jesuits**, a religious order of the Romish church, was founded by Ignatius Loyola, the son of a Spanish nobleman, born in the year 1491 at Guipuzcoa, in the province of Biscay. In his youth he was employed as a page at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, but he grew weary of its gaieties, and longed to be engaged in the wars of his country. In 1521 we find him defending Pampeluna against the French; but the young intrepid Loyola was severely wounded in both legs. Fever followed, and the future restorer of the papacy was nearly brought to a premature grave.

By nature ardent, romantic, and visionary, he devoured greedily, during his long illness, the romances of Spanish chivalry, founded on the conflicts of his nation with the Moors; and when these were exhausted, he betook himself to a series of still more marvellous romances — the legends of the saints. With a morbid intensity he studied those books of mystical devotion, until he resolved to emulate in his own life the wondrous virtues ascribed to a Benedict, a Dominic, or a Francis. Accordingly, on his recovery, he retired to a Benedictine monastery at Montserrat, near Barcelona, and there he passed the night at the celebrated shrine of the Virgin Mary. He suspended his lance and shield before an image of the Virgin, vowed constant obedience to God and His church, thereby abandoning a temporal for a spiritual knighthood.

To celebrate his self-dedication to Our Lady, he withdrew to the adjacent town of Manresa. Holiness, in the view of such men, does not consist in the moral likeness of the soul to Jesus, but in the mortification of the body. Next to his skin he wore alternately an iron chain, a horsehair cloth, and a sash of prickly thorns. Three times a day he laid the scourge resolutely on his bare back. This was not to mortify the *deeds* of the body, but the poor unoffending body itself. Such is the blinding power of Satan, and such the suited darkness for his purpose. After travelling barefoot to Rome, Jerusalem, and other places rendered sacred by the Saviour's history, he eventually found his way to Paris. Here he met with Francis Xavier, who afterwards became the great apostle of India. Other kindred spirits joining them, a small band of zealous associates gathered round Loyola, which gave origin to the society of Jesus — about eight or nine in all.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE ORDER OF JESUITS

On the 15th of August 1534, being the festival of the assumption of the Virgin Mary, in one of the subterranean chapels of Montmartre, and after receiving

the sacrament, they all took the usual vows of poverty and chastity; and then took a solemn oath to dedicate themselves to the conversion of the Saracens at Jerusalem, and the care of the Christians, and to lay themselves and their services unreservedly at the feet of the pontiff. “The army thus enrolled was little, and it was great. It was little when counted, it was great when weighed. To foster the growth of this infant Hercules, Loyola had prepared beforehand his book, entitled ‘Spiritual Exercises.’ This is a body of rules for teaching men how to conduct the work of their own *conversion*. It consists of four grand meditations, and the penitent, retiring into solitude, is to occupy absorbingly his mind on each in succession, during the space of the rising and setting of seven suns... It professes, like the Koran, to be a revelation. ‘The Book of Exercises,’ says a Jesuit, ‘was truly written by the finger of God, and delivered to Ignatius by the Holy Mother of God.’”³²⁹

After some delays, the pope, Paul III, approving the plan of Loyola and his companions, granted a bull in 1540, authorizing the formation of the body under the name of “The Society of Jesus;” and in April of the following year, Ignatius was installed as “The General Superior,” who was to be subject to the pope only. The order had now a formal existence. Its members were to dress in black, like the secular clergy; and not being confined to cloisters, they were able to mix themselves up with all classes, and were soon found occupying courts, confessionals, and pulpits, superintending educational establishments, and otherwise securing the affections and co-operation of the young. Crowds of enthusiastic converts flocked to the new standard in all countries, and from all gradations of society.

THE JESUITS' REAL OBJECT

Thus far we have trodden on ground over which the real character of the Jesuit does not appear — we have only had to do with vows intended to deceive; but were we to pursue their history, we should have to trace in every land the blood-stained footprints of the treacherous and cruel followers of Loyola. Spreading themselves over the world, we find them secretly executing the decrees and private wishes of the Vatican. Their one grand object was to extend the power of the pope, and the one grand fundamental principle of the fraternity was immediate, implicit, unquestioning, unhesitating obedience to him, through their general, who resides in Rome. The organization of their society is by far the most comprehensive of any in existence. “The Jesuit monarchy,” it has been said, “covers the globe.” In almost every province of the world they have Generals Provincial, who correspond with the General Superior at Rome; so that by means of the confessional, he sees and knows almost everything that is done and said, not only in the Romish church, but in private families, and throughout all parts of the habitable globe. No place is too distant, no difficulties or dangers too great, and no means too nefarious

³²⁹ *History of Protestantism*, vol. 2, p. 384.

for the Jesuit, if there is the slightest hope of extending the power of the papacy.

The **Gunpowder Plot**, which was planned to destroy at one blow the nobility and gentry of England, is attributed to Jesuitical influence; and so are many other plots which were intended to accomplish the death of Queen Elizabeth. The gigantic wickedness of the Spanish Armada, and the crowning slaughter of the St. Bartholomew massacre, to say nothing of the many seditions, torturings, poisonings, assassinations, and massacres on a smaller scale, must be attributed to the policy, and to the seed sown by the Jesuits. So mighty did their power become, and so ruinous, that it was often found necessary for the government to suppress them. According to modern history, they were expelled from Portugal in 1759; France 1764; Spain and Spanish America, 1767; the two Sicilies, 1768; and in 1773 suppressed by the pope Ganganelli, Clement XIV. But soon after he had signed the order for their banishment, he fell a victim to their vengeance, and died by poison. In 1801 they were restored by Pius VII; in 1860 they were dismissed from Sicily; but we need scarcely add, that they soon found ways and means to return. The late pope, Pius IX, confirmed the restoration of the order; so that they now occupy a very proud position in Rome. They have the command of most of the collegiate establishments in the city, and in so many other places, that merely to name them would fill a page.³³⁰

Thus was the enfeebled power of popery greatly revived — *its deadly wound was healed*. By means of the Reformation, many of the most opulent and powerful kingdoms of Europe had thrown off their allegiance to the pope. This was a fatal blow to his grandeur and power. It abridged his dominions, abolished his jurisdiction within their territories, and diminished his revenues. But more than this, it is well known that Charles V seriously contemplated the reduction, if not the subversion, of the papal power. Such was the low, and almost expiring condition of the papacy, when the army of the Jesuits came to its help, which may be viewed as an illustration of Revelation 13:3, though far from the full accomplishment of those solemn prophecies.

We now turn to our general history, and would briefly glance at the progress of the Reformation in different lands.

³³⁰ For a thorough exposure of the iniquity of the moral code of the Jesuits, see the *Provincial Letters* of Pascal, a Jansenist. For details of their organization, training, operations, see *History of Protestantism*, vol. 2; *Faiths of the world — Jesuits*; *Universal History*, Bagster, vol. 6, p. 82; Hardwick's *History of the Reformation*, p. 329.