

OF LUTHER'S ADVERSARIES

DCLXI.

Such fellows as Tetzels, Cochlaeus, Lemnius, I nothing regard. We should have no dealing with such backbiters and slanderers, they are most detestable; they appear not openly in the field, nor come right in our sight, but, in their poisoned hatred, scorn everything we do. They boast highly of the Fathers; let them; we have one Father, which is in heaven who is above all fathers; their piece and patchwork is of no weight. They write under the inspiration of a corrupt and vicious heart, and we all know that their works are mere impudent lies. The article of the Holy Trinity is nowhere written expressly in Holy Scripture, yet it is believed; therefore, they say, we ought also to believe traditions and ordinances of men without God's Word.

DCLXII.

This Wetzell they have preferred at Leipzig, is a mischievous fellow. He was condemned to die, and would have been executed, but was saved at my intercession, and honourable entertained; now he requites me by his insolences. However, 'tis a wretch that has condemned himself; he is not worthy to be answered; he will have a judge. The papists will gain nothing by their railing. When they blaspheme, we should pray, and be silent, and not carry wood to the fire.

I am glad this fellow is at Leipzig; he is there like a mouse taken in a trap, for he is full of evil opinions; when they break out, he will get his payment. He got much poison from Campanus, who wrote a blasphemous book under this title: Against all that were and are in the world since the apostle's time. He has lost the general praise. He is reserved in his preaching; and cold, colder than ice. He dares not break out and say what he has in his heart; he goes like a shackled hare; he fears his hearers; his mouth is shut, his words captive, as in a dungeon. The words of an eloquent man should move others, and pierce the heart. But they that teach nothing uprightly or purely, are but half-learned; dunce-like, bold and presumptuous: as Carlstad is with his *Touto*, out of which he made *Autos*.

DCLXIII.

The emperor Sigismund was, as it were, made captive by the papists. They made him do what they pleased; to wear a deacon's coat, and at Christmas, to read the Gospel to the pope; so that every emperor is now said to be a deacon of the Romish Church, the pope's mass-servant. The

emperor, after he performed this ceremony, had never any success against the Turks or in Germany. The kingdom of Bohemia is fallen, which before was a very fair kingdom.

DCLXIV.

Latomus was the best among all my adversaries: his point was this: "What is received of the church, ought not to be rejected." As the Jews said: "We are God's people;" so the papists cry: "The church cannot err." This was the argument against which the prophets and apostles fought; Moses says: "They moved me to jealousy with that which was not God, and I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." And St Paul: "That he is a Jew which is one inwardly;" and Isaiah: "In him shall the Gentiles trust."

"It is impossible," say they, "that God should forsake his church, for he declares, `I am with you always, unto the end of the world,'" The question is, to whom do these words: with you, refer? which is the true church whereof Christ spoke? The perplexed, broken and contrite in heart, or the Romish curtexans and knaves?

DCLXV.

Philip Melancthon showing Luther a letter from Augsburg, wherein he was informed, that a very learned divine, a papist, in that city, was converted, and had received the Gospel. Luther said: I like those best that do not fall off suddenly, but ponder the case with considerable discretion, compare together the writings and arguments of both parties, and lay them on the gold balance, and in God's fear search after the upright truth; out of such, fit people are made, able to stand in controversy. Such a man was St Paul, who at first was a strict Pharisee and man of works, who stiffly and earnestly held over and defended the law; but afterwards preached Christ in the best and purest manner against the whole nation of the Jews.

DCLXVI.

That impious knave, Martin Cellarius, thought to flatter me by saying: "Thy calling is superior to that of the apostles;" but I at once checked him, replying sharply: "By no means; I am in no degree comparable to the apostles." He sent me four treatises he had written about Moses temple and the allegories it involved; but I returned them at once, for they were full of the most arrogant self-glorification.

DCLXVII.

Erasmus of Rotterdam is the vilest miscreant that ever disgraced the earth. He made several attempts to draw me into his snares, and I should have been in danger, but that God lent me special aid. In 1525, he sent one of his doctors, with 200 Hungarian ducats, as a present to my wife; but I refused to accept them, and enjoined my wife to meddle not in these matters. He is a very Caiaphas.

"Qui Satanam non odit, amet tua carmina Erasme,

Atque idem jungat furias et mulgeat orcum."

DCLXVIII.

Erasmus is very pitiful with his prefaces, though he tries to smooth them over; he appears to see no difference between Jesus Christ our Saviour, and the wise pagan legislator Solon. He sneers at St Paul and St John; and ventures to say, that the Epistle to the Romans, what ever it might have been at a former period, is not applicable to the present state of things. Shame upon thee, accursed wretch! `Tis a mere Momus, making his mows and mocks at everything and everybody, at God and man, at papist and protestant, but all the while using such shuffling and double-meaning terms, that no one can lay hold of him to any effectual purpose. Whenever I pray, I pray for a curse upon Erasmus.

DCLXIX.

Carlstadt opposed me merely out of ambition, for he flattered himself that on earth was not a more learned man than he. And although in his writings he imitated me, yet he played strange tricks with my manner. He wanted to be the great man, and truly I would willingly have left the honour to him, so far as it had not been against God. For, I praise my God, I was never so presumptuous as to think myself wiser than another man. When at first I wrote against indulgences, I designed simply to have opposed them, thinking that, afterwards, others would come and accomplish what I had begun.

DCLXX.

We ought utterly to condemn and reject Campanus, and not to esteem him worthy of an answer, for thereby he becomes more audacious and insolent. Let us despise him, so will he soonest be smothered and suppressed.

DCLXXI.

Luther being informed that the preaching of James Schenck was everywhere extolled, said: O! how acceptable to me would this report be, if with his preaching he brought not in such sweet-mouthed, smooth, and stately words, of which St Paul complains to the Romans, whereby hearers are deceived. They are like the wind *Cecias*, which blows so mild and still, so soft and warm, that the blossoms of trees, and other herbs and flowers, are enticed to spring forth to their destruction. Even so the devil, when he preaches Christ in his ministers, intends to destroy Christ; and although he speak the truth, yet even therewith he lies. An honest man may well go up the stairs when a knave lies hid behind them; for the devil can well endure that Christ sit upon the tongue, meantime he himself lies hid under it, so that the people are tickled and inflamed with what they hear; but such smooth tattling last not long; for Satan, through his gospel, will pervert the Gospel, because presumptuous and secure spirits acknowledge not their sins. And where there is no tinder to make it catch, there Christ has no room or place wherein he may work; for he is come only to them that are of perplexed, broken hearts and spirits. But these condemners of the law are haughty and proud spirits, just as the people in Popedom, under the tradition of the law, were far from observing the law, that being

altogether strange to them. Therefore the preaching of the law is a preparation for the Gospel, and gives matter for Christ to work upon, who is the only work-master of faith.

DCLXXII.

On the 15th of April, 1539, certain positions, printed at Leipzig, were sent to Luther, wherein John Hammer subtly maintained that the law concerned the Christians nothing at all; he also divided repentance into three parts, and said: The Jews had one kind of repentance, the Gentiles another kind, and the Christians a third. Whereupon Luther said: Who could have ever thought such extravagant spirits should come? 'Tis an utter and mischievous error, to distinguish repentance according to persons, whereas there is only one kind of repentance given to all mankind, seeing that all, one as well as another, have angered and offended one only God, whether Jews, Gentiles, or Christians. It is as gross, abominable, and manifest error, as it were to say that man have another kind of repentance than women have; princes than subjects; masters than servants; rich than poor - making God to be a respecter of persons: as though the prophets had not taught uprightly of repentance, and as though the repentance of the Ninevites was not upright and true; whence, at last would follow, that if we preached not repentance out of law, Christ was not under the law, whereas he was, for our sakes under the curse of the law.

DCLXXIII.

On the 13th of September, 1538, a warm disputation was held, nearly five hours long, in which Luther powerfully inveighed against innovators, telling them that they would destroy the Gospel, and abolish the law, and would bring to evil those minds which were too secure. He said he would resist them to his last breath, did it cost him his life. In the evening, he discoursed of the heresy of Arius; when that innovator began to preach his doctrine, Peter, patriarch of Alexandria, denounced it as erroneous, and against Christ's honour, seeing that he who denies the divinity of Christ, certainly deprives him of his honour. Arius began by denying that Christ was God, affirming that he was only a creature, though a perfect creature. But when the godly bishops resisted him, he said, secondly, that Christ, the most perfect of creatures, yea, above the angels, had made all other creatures. Thirdly, he alleged that Christ was God, emanating from God, as light from light; and he taught so subtly, that many people joined him, and shared his opinions. The pious bishop of Milan, Auxentius, against whom Hilary wrote an epistle, fell into his errors.

Arius finished by saying, that Christ was not born of the Father, equal God, but was of one substance with the Father, and would not give up this assertion as to his creation. Then began the strife about the word *Homousion*, which was inserted in the Athanasian creed, but which is nowhere written in the Holy Scripture, that he was born of the Father, yet it was pertinent, and in respect to his human nature rightly spoken.

The heresies of Arius continued very long, above three hundred years. There were in highest flourish under Constantine; under Domitian they tyrannized; under Jovian, Valentinian, and Gratian, they somewhat decreased. They lasted the time of seven emperors, until the Goths came. The great Turk, to this day, is an Arian. We thus see that there is no heresy, no error, no

idolatry, however gross, which does not obtain partisans and supporters. Its manifest, in the present day, at Rome, where the pope is honoured as a God.

DCLXXIV.

Philip Melancthon has a good conscience, and therefore takes matters to heart. Christ well and thoroughly exercised our forefathers; he who belongs to Christ must feel the serpent's sting in the heel. No doubt the mother of our Lord was a poor maid, for she was betrothed to a carpenter, also poor.

Let us then be merry and contented in poverty and trouble, and remember that we have a rich Master, who will not leave us without help and comfort; in so doing, we shall have peaceful consciences, let it go with us as God please. The ungodly want this peace in their hearts; as Isaiah says: "They are as the waves of the sea; neither have the covetous usurers any peace of conscience."

DCLXXV.

Erasmus was poisoned at Rome and at Venice with epicurean doctrines. He extols the Arians more highly than the Papists; he ventured to say that Christ is named God but once in St John, where Thomas says: "My Lord and my God." His chief doctrine is, we must carry ourselves according to the time, or, as the proverb goes, hang the clock according to the wind; he only looked to himself, to have good and easy days, and so died like an epicurean, without any one comfort of God.

DCLXXVI.

This do I leave behind me as my will and testament, whereunto I make you witnesses. I hold Erasmus of Rotterdam to be Christ's most bitter enemy. In his catechism, of all his writings that which I can least endure, he teaches nothing decided; not one word says: Do this, or do not this; he only therein throws error and despair into youthful consciences. He wrote a book against me, called *Hyperaspites*, wherein he proposed to defend his work on free-will, against which I wrote my *De servo Arbitrio*, which has never yet been confuted, nor will it ever be by Erasmus, for I am certain that what I wrote on the matter is the unchangeable truth of God. If God live in heaven, Erasmus will one day know and feel what he has done.

Erasmus is the enemy to true religion, the open adversary of Christ, the complete and faithful picture and image of Epicurus and of Lucian.

DCLXXVII.

I care not at all for an open enemy of the church, such as the papists with their power and persecutions; I regard them not, for by them the true church cannot receive hurt, nor can they hinder God's Word; nay, the church, through their raging and persecution, rather increases. But it is the inward evil of false brethren that will do mischief to the church. Judas betrayed

Christ; the false apostles confused and falsified the Gospel. Such are the real fellows through whom the devil rages and spoils the church.

DCLXXVIII.

I know not well how to render the word *hypocrita*. Mere hypocrite, as we commonly accept it, is too mild and soft a name for a false brother; it should convey almost as much as *sycophanta*, a wicked villain, who for his own private gain does mischief to others. Such hypocrites were the servants of king Saul, who, for the sake of their bellies, spoke against righteous David, backbiting him in the king's presence, whereby the land was stained. *Hypocrita* is not only a hypocrite or a flatterer that pretends love towards one, and speaks that which tickles the ears, but one that produces mischief under color of holiness, as the examples in the twenty-third of Matthew clearly show. St Jerome says: Feigned holiness is a double evil.

DCLXXIX.

The greatest and fiercest strife that Christians have, is with false brethren. If a false brother would openly say: I am a Pilate, a Herod, an Annas, that is, if he would put off the name of a believing Christian, and profess himself an open enemy to Christ, then we would patiently endure all the evil he could work upon us. But that such should bear the name of Christians, we cannot and will not endure; this rule and government over the conscience, we divines take properly unto us, and say: It is ours through the Word, we will not suffer ourselves to be bereaved of it, by any means.

DCLXXX.

We have hooted away the friars and priests, by the preaching of the Gospel, and now the false brethren plague us. Truly, its a right sentence: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

DCLXXXI.

I marvel that nothing is written of the villany Judas did to Christ. I am persuaded he did it for the most part with the tongue; for Christ, not in vain, complains of him in the 41st Psalm. Doubtless, he went to the high priests and elders, and spake grievously against Christ, saying: I baptize also, but now I see, its frivolous and nothing worth. Moreover, he was a thief; he thought to make great gain in betraying Christ (as Wetzell and others think by our means to be made great lords); he was a wicked, desperate villain, or Christ would have forgiven him, as he forgave Peter. But Peter fell out of weakness; Judas out of wickedness.

DCLXXXII.

Judas was as necessary among the apostles as any three of them. For he confuted many arguments of the heretics, who alleged that no man can baptize, but he that has the Holy Ghost. What he did in his office was good and right, but when he played the thief, he did

wrong and sinned. Therefore we must separate and distinguish his person from his office; for Christ commanded him not to steal, but to execute his office, to preach, to baptize, etc. Judas likewise confuted what some object to us, who say: There are among you protestants, many wicked wretches, false brethren, and unchristian-like offenders. Herein comes Judas and says: I was also an apostle, I behaved and carried myself, as an understanding worldly-wise companion and politician, much better than the others, my fellow apostles; no man thought that such mischief was hid in me. Judas at the Lord's supper, was directly the pope, who also has got hold of the purse, is a covetous wretch, a thief, and belly-god, who will also speak in praise of Christ: in truth, its a right Iscariot.

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