

The Life Of Dr. Martin Luther

[Content Page](#)



By
Martin Luther

Collected and arranged
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Part 1

PREFACE OF THE AUTHOR.

THE present work is not an historical romance, founded on the life of Martin Luther; nor is it a history of the establishment of Lutheranism. It is simply a biography, composed of a series of translations. Excepting in that portion of it which has reference to his childhood, and which Luther himself has left undescribed, the translator has rarely found occasion to make his own appearance on the scene. He has, in fact, scarcely done anything beyond selecting, dating, and arranging the scattered texts before him; it is almost invariably Luther himself who speaks; almost invariably Luther related by Luther.

Who indeed, except in a case of absolute necessity, would be presumptuous enough to mix up his words with those of such a man. The only course for the translator was to remain silent, and leave Luther to tell his own tale; this is the course which, as closely as possible, has been acted upon in the following pages.

The present work, first published in 1835, was drawn up in the years 1828-9. The translator of the *Scienza Nuova*, vividly felt at that time the necessity of redescending from theory to practice, of studying the general in the particular, history in biography, humanity in individual man. For this purpose he needed one who had exhibited himself to the world as of the very highest power; an individual who was at once a real personage and an idea; a man perfect in thought and action; a man whose whole life was known in fullest detail,

whose every word, whose every deed, had been marked and treasured up.

If Luther did not absolutely write his own Memoirs, he at all events prepared ample materials for the biographer.¹ His correspondence alone is scarcely less voluminous than that of Voltaire; and there is, moreover, scarcely one of his dogmatical or polemical works in which he has not unconsciously inserted some illustrative detail, some circumstance available to the biographer. Nor are the personal *memorabilia* supplied by Luther's own hand the only materials of this description which the compiler has at his disposal. There was not a word which fell from the great Reformer's lips which was not eagerly caught up by his disciples, transmitted forthwith to paper, and so to posterity; good, bad, and indifferent, everything was taken down; whatever Luther said, to whomsoever he said it, wheresoever it was said, at the fireside, in the garden, at table after supper, to his friends, to his wife, to his children, to himself, straightway the pen of his disciples did its work. As one inevitable consequence, a man so closely followed, so closely observed, must have constantly let fall something or other which he would afterwards wish to have recalled, and the Lutherans subsequently found occasion to regret that such things had been perpetuated; they would fain have blotted out this paradox, that passionate extravagance, but it was too late: *Quod scriptum est, scriptum est.*

It is, however, owing to this very circumstance that we are here enabled to lay before the world the genuine *Confessions of Luther*; confessions all the more true, that they were not deliberately drawn up by the confessor, but are collected for the most part from the words which fell from his lips from time to time, in open, honest, heedless intercourse with his friends and family. Those of Rousseau are, beyond question, far less honest; those of St. Augustine less complete, less various.

¹ We have followed for the German works of Luther, the edition of Wittenberg, 1539—1559, 12 vols. folio; for the Latin works, that of Wittenberg, 1545—1558, 7 vols. folio, and occasionally that of Jena, 1600—1612, 4 vols. folio; for the *Tischreden* (Table Talk), the edition of Frankfurt, 1568, 1 vol. folio; for the *Briefe* (Letters), that of De Witte, Berlin, 1825, 5 vols. 8vo. Besides Luther's own works, we have availed ourselves of Ukert, Seckendorf, Marheinecke, and other authors who have written upon or in connexion with the subject.

As a biography, that of Luther's, had he written it through-out himself, would take its place between the two we have just mentioned. It presents in combination the two aspects which they exhibit separately. In the Confessions of St. Augustine, passion, nature, human individuality only appear in order to be immolated to Divine grace. They are a history of a crisis of the soul, of a new-birth, of a *Vita Nuova*; the *Saint* would have blushed to relate more than he has done of the life of the man, which he had quitted. With Rousseau the case is precisely the reverse; here grace is nothing, nature everything; nature dominant, triumphant, displaying herself with a daring freedom, which at times amounts to the distasteful—nay, to the disgusting. In Luther we see, not the equal balance of grace and of nature, but their fierce and painful struggle. Many other men have undergone the trials of the flesh, and the still higher and more perilous temptations of doubt; Pascal manifestly so: he stifled them in his own breast, and died in the contest. But Luther has concealed nothing, he kept nothing to himself, he fought the battle out openly, and he has thus enabled us to see and sound in him this deep and awful wound of our Nature. He, indeed, is perhaps the only man in whom we can fully study this terrible anatomy.

Hitherto, the only point of view in which Luther has been presented to the observation of mankind, is his duel with Rome. The present work exhibits his entire life, his spiritual fights, his doubts, his temptations, his consolations. The man here occupies as much of our attention as the party-leader, and even more. We show him, the violent and terrible Reformer of the north, not only in his eagle's nest at Wartburg, as braving the emperor and the empire at the diet of Worms, but also in his house at Wittenberg, seated at table amidst his grave-visaged friends and disciples, his children playing beside him, or walking with him in his garden, on the margin of the little pond in the grounds of that sombre monastery once sacred to celibacy, but now become the abode of the married Luther and of his family; we hear him meditating aloud, and finding in all that he looks upon, the flowers, the fruits, the birds flying over his head or singing in the trees, topics for grave and pious thoughts.

Whatever sympathy, however may be felt with this

amiable and winning individuality of Luther, it must not be suffered to influence our judgment with reference to the doctrines which he, on all occasions, inculcates, or blind us to the consequences which are its necessary result. It must be borne in mind that this very man, who made so energetic, so immense a use of liberty, was he who revived the Augustine theory as to the annihilation of liberty. He sacrificed free-will to grace, man to God, morality to a sort of providential fatality.

In our own times, the friends of liberty have laid great stress upon the authority of the fatalist Luther; a circumstance, however, which, though strange at first sight, is susceptible of explanation. Luther fancied that he recognised himself in John Huss, in the Waldenses, the partisans of free-will. The solution of both the one circumstance and the other is, that these speculative doctrines, however opposed they may appear to each other, are upon common ground in their principle of action, the sovereignty of individual reason, resistance to the traditional principle, to authority.

It is not, therefore, inexact to say that Luther was, in point of fact, the restorer of liberty to the ages which followed his era. He denied it theoretically, indeed, but he established it in practice; if he did not absolutely create, he at least courageously signed his name to the great revolution which legalized in Europe the right of free examination. To him it is, in great measure, owing that we of the present day exercise in its plenitude that first great right of the human understanding, to which all the rest are annexed, without which all the rest are nought. We cannot think, speak, write, read, for a single moment, without gratefully recalling to mind this enormous benefit of intellectual enfranchisement. The very lines I here trace, to whom do I owe it that I am able to send them forth, if not to the liberator of modern thought?

This tribute paid to Luther, we the less hesitate to admit, that our own sympathies are not with him in the religious revolution he operated. This, however, is not the place for us to enumerate the causes which rendered the triumph of protestantism inevitable. We shall not, after the example of so many others, lay bare the sores of a church in whose bosom we were born, and which is still dear to us. We shall, in ano-

ther place, explain the grounds on which we regard the Roman-catholic doctrine as, if not more logical, at least, more judicious, more fertile, more complete, than that of any of the sects which have risen up against it. Its feebleness, and its grandeur also, is, that it excludes nothing which belongs to man; that it has sought to satisfy, at one and the same time, all the contradictory principles of the human mind. This, alone, readily laid it open to the attacks of those who reduce man to this or that particular principle, and reject all the rest. The *universal*, in whatever sense the word may be taken, is feeble against the *special*. *Heresy* is a *choice*, a *specialty*—there is *specialty* of opinion, *specialty* of country. Wickliffe, John Huss, were ardent patriots; the Saxon Luther was the Arminius of modern Germany. Universal in time, in space, in doctrine, the church was, as against each of its opponents, deficient in a common medium. She had to struggle for the unity of the world against the particular forces of the world. As a body infinite in numbers, she was hampered by the baggage, as it were, of the lukewarm and the timid. As a government, she had to encounter all the worldly temptations. As the centre of religious traditions, she received, from all parts, a crowd of local beliefs, against which she had great difficulty in defending her unity, her perpetuity. She presented herself to the world such as the world and time had made her. She appeared before it in the party-coloured robe of history. Comprehending humanity at large, she shared also its miseries, its contradictions. The little heretic societies, made fervent by zeal and by their danger, standing apart, and purer by reason of their youth, disavowed the cosmopolitan church, and compared themselves with her, much to their own satisfaction. The pious and profound mystic of the Rhine and Low Countries, the simple, rustic Waldensians, pure as a flower amid Alpine snows, triumphed when they accused of adultery and prostitution her who had received all, adopted all. In the same way, each brooklet, doubtless, may say to the ocean: I come from my own mountain; I know no other waters than my own; whereas, thou receivest the impurities of the world. “Ay,” is the answer, “but I am the ocean.”¹

¹ Upon the preceding passages the writer in *Blackwood*, already quoted, remarks.—“We would not desire a clearer statement of the

This is what it would be necessary to say and to develop. And there is no book which, more than the present, would seem to require such an introduction. To understand how it was that Luther was obliged to cause himself to undergo what he describes as *the most extreme misery*; to comprehend this great and unhappy man, who gives a new impulse to the human mind, who puts it in renewed motion at the very moment when he considers he is placing it at rest on the pillow of grace; to appreciate this futile attempt at union between God and man, it would be necessary to describe the more consistent efforts made, before and afterwards, by the mystics and rationalists—in other words, to sketch the history of the Christian religion.

I may be asked, why put this off, too! Why commence so many things, and always stop short less than half way? If the reader is anxious to know, I will readily tell him:

In the middle of my "Roman History," I met with Christianity in its origin; half through my "History of France," I encountered it again, aged and decrepit; here, I find it again.

general character of the Roman-catholic church than the above. But Monsieur Michelet has overlooked the real question, viz.—Whether this character corresponds with the character of Christianity? We feel quite sure that if his honest and conscientious mind would examine the matter, with the aid of the New Testament, he would find that Christianity itself is truly described as he has described heresy, viz.—It is a *choice*, a *specialty*. Indeed, a moment's reflection will show him that truth, compared with error, must always be a *choice*, a *specialty*, and that error has always the same kind of universality as he so much admires in catholicism. To carry on the same sort of parallel between *them* as he has established between protestantism and catholicism, Truth might say to Error, 'You are an adulteress, a prostitute;' to which Error might reply, 'Triumph as you like, you are but a little miserable creature, inhabiting obscure corners; but I am universal, *I receive all, I adopt all*; you are but a river, I am the ocean.' In his zeal to do honour to catholicism, Monsieur Michelet has precisely pointed out its general all-pervading characteristic, which most thoroughly condemns it, by completely identifying its features with those of falsehood. Falsehood also excludes nothing, rejects nothing. It also would embrace humanity in the gross, by winding itself about every fibre of the heart, and satisfying every contradictory principle. Though not logical, it is judicious, fertile, and complete in taking every point, touching every point, meeting every case, and compounding with every difficulty. Like catholicism, too, its grandeur is, that it is all-accommodating, all-enveloping; and its feebleness likewise resembles that of its stupendous offspring—it is feeble against a *specialty*—against Truth."

In whatever direction I turn, it bars my way, and prevents my passing on.

To touch upon Christianity! Those alone hesitate not to do so, who know not what it is. . . . For myself, I recall to mind the nights wherein I watched the bedside of a sick mother; she suffered from remaining long in the same position, she wanted to change her place, to turn round, but my filial hands hesitated—how could I think of agonizing her still more, by moving her limbs, so full of acute pain?—

'Tis now many years that these ideas have been working within me. In the present period of outward storms, they constitute the exciting reveries of my solitude. At all events, these conversations that I hold with myself are soothing in their influence, and I am as yet in no hurry to sever myself from such long-cherished thoughts.

August, 1835.

LIFE OF LUTHER.

BOOK THE FIRST.

1483—1521.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1483—1517.

Birth and education of Luther—His ordination and temptations—
His journey to Rome.

“I HAVE often conversed with Melancthon, and related to him my whole life, from point to point. I am the son of a peasant; my father, my grandfather, my great-grandfather were all mere peasants. My father went to Mansfeldt, and became a miner there. It was there I was born. That I was afterwards to become bachelor of arts, doctor of divinity, and what not, was assuredly not written in the stars, at least, not to ordinary readers. How I astonished everybody when I turned monk! and again, when I exchanged the brown cap for another. These things greatly vexed my father—nay, made him quite ill for a time. After that, I got pulling the pope about by the hair of his head; I married a runaway nun; I had children by her. Who saw these things in the stars? Who would have told any one beforehand they were to happen?”¹

¹ Tischreden (Table Talk) (Frankfort, 1568), 240. Cochläus, in his hostile life of the Reformer, gravely asserts that Luther was engendered by an incubus. An Italian Theatine, Cajetano Vicich, in his poem called *Thieudos*, says that Martin was born of Megæra, one of the furies, and sent express from hell into Germany. Many of his opponents designate him, as a matter of course, *son and disciple of the devil*.

“When he was a monk,” Cochläus adds, “he was suspected of having

Hans (John) Luther, or Lutter,¹ father of the Luther who became so celebrated, was of Mœrha or Moer, a village in Upper Saxony, near Eisenach. His mother (Gretha, or Margaret Lindemann) was the daughter of a tradesman of the same place, or rather, according to a preferable tradition, of Nieustadt, in Franconia. If we are to believe a modern writer, who, however, gives no authority for the statement, John Luther had the misfortune to kill, under the impulse of passion, another peasant, whom he found trespassing on a field of his with some cattle; and it was this which compelled him to retire, first to Eisleben, and afterwards to the valley of Mansfeldt. It is certain, at all events, that he did retire successively to these places. His wife, who accompanied him, lay in immediately upon their arrival at Eisleben.² The child was Martin Luther. The father, who was only a poor miner, found it a very difficult matter to maintain his family;

commerce with the devil. One day, when he was listening to the gospel, at the place where mention is made of a deaf and dumb devil, whom Christ compels to quit the body of a possessed person, Luther fell convulsively to the ground, exclaiming—*Non sum, non sum!* In one of his sermons, he tells the people himself, that he and the devil had known one another for a very long while; that they were in constant communication with each other; and that he, Luther, had eaten more than one grain of salt with Satan.—*COCHLÆUS, Life of Luther.*

Some Spaniards who were at the Diet of Augsburg (1530), seriously believed that Luther and his wife were destined to produce Anti-Christ.—*LUTHER'S Werke.* (1612,) i. 415.

Some of his opponents maintained, among other things, that he was a Bohemian—endeavouring to account for his heresy by identifying it with the opinions of Jerome of Prague and John Huss. Luther himself took notice of this, and charged the statement on a professor of Leipsic:—“A wretched quarrelsome fellow. Why, I was never in all my life nearer Bohemia than Dresden.”

¹ Lotharius, Ludher, Lutter. The name Lutter, observes Mr. Roscoe, in his life of Leo X., afforded one of the reformer's adversaries a subject for the following lines, more remarkable for scurrility than for wit:—

“*Germanis Lutter, scurra est, latro Bohemis ;
Ergo quod est Lutter, scurra latroque simul.*”

But, on the other hand, quere, *Lut-herr*, chief of men ?

² The house in which Luther was born was destroyed by fire in 1594. But it was afterwards rebuilt at the expense of the town, and is now used as a public school, to which there is a building attached as an establishment for the poor.

and it will be seen further on, that his children were fain at times to beg alms for their sustenance. Yet, despite his extreme poverty, instead of making them labour with him at his own occupation, he sent them to school.¹ He appears to have been a man of fine unsophisticated honesty and firm faith. When his pastor was affording him religious consolation in his last moments, he said: "Sir, that must be a poor creature who has not the soul to believe in God and his mercy." His wife survived him scarcely a year, dying in 1531.² They had at this time a small independence, which they doubtless owed to their son Martin. John Luther left a house, two forges, and about a thousand thalers in ready money.

The arms of Luther's father—for the German peasantry had arms, as well as their betters—were, simply, a hammer on a granite block. Martin was not ashamed of his parents: he has consecrated their names in his formula of marriage service:—*Hans, wilt thou take Gretha?*

"'Tis with me a pious duty," he says, in a letter to Melancthon, announcing John Luther's death, "to weep for him whom the Father of Mercy destined to give me birth—for him, by whose labour and sweat God nourished me, and made me what I am, such as that is. Oh, how I rejoice that he lived long enough to see the light of the truth! Blessed be God for ever, in all his counsels and decrees! Amen."

¹ "Luther, at six years old, could read and write with ease. His parents, though fond of their children, were very strict with them. Luther mentions that one day, for merely stealing a hazel-nut, his mother beat him till the blood flowed; and he says, that he had such fear of his father that he always hid in the chimney-corner when he had done anything to anger him."—AUDIN, *Histoire de Martin Luther*, 5th edit., 1845.

² "Margaret Lindemann, Luther's mother, was originally a servant at the baths—a virtuous, chaste, and God-tearing girl. She was considered the pride of Mœrha. John Luther, some time after he became a miner, managed to purchase out of his savings a plot of ground; and we find him, subsequently, filling a magisterial office, delegated to him by the friendship and esteem of his fellow-townsmen. It is not known how many children he had besides Martin. There were two who died of the plague which desolated Europe in the commencement of the 16th century; and one of his daughters married the scribe Ruhel de Mansfeldt, whose name occasionally occurs in Luther's correspondence. When Melancthon married, John Luther was invited to be present, and took his seat among the hel-lenists, doctors, savans, and literary men. there assembled."—AUDIN.

Martin Luther, or Ludher, or Lutter, or Lothel¹—for he signed his name all these ways—was born at Eisleben, on the 10th November, 1483, at eleven o'clock in the evening.² Sent at an early age to the free school of Eisenach (1489), he used to sing before people's houses to gain his daily bread, as was the wont, at that time and later, with many poor students in Germany. It is from himself that we learn this circumstance: "Let no one in my presence speak contemptuously of the poor fellows who go from door to door, singing and begging bread *propter Deum!* You know the psalm says—*Princes and kings have sung.* I myself was once a poor mendi-

¹ The papists, it has been observed, reckon Luther the *beast of the Apocalypse*, and have seriously endeavoured to discover in his name the famous mystical number—666. Lindanas and Astulphus have adopted the following calculation:—M, 30; A, 1; R, 80; T, 100; J, 9; N, 40; L, 20; A, 1; U, 200; T, 100; E, 15; R, 80=666. Floramond de Remond, too, calculates this number from the Greek word *Λουθηρανα, Lutherana*, thus:—Λ, 30; Ο, 70; Υ, 400; Θ, 9; Ε, 5; Ρ, 100; Α, 1; Ν, 90; Α, 1=666: while another writer calculates 566, from the name *Martin Lutera*.—*De Mysteriis Numerorum*, p. 650. It is worthy of remark, that a similar calculation of this jargon is made by the same enthusiast in Hebrew. These fanciful conjectures are refuted by David Pareno, (*Comment. in Apoc. xiii. 717*.) who denies that the number 666 can be found by these numeral letters. "Nomen Lutheri verum, Græcè vel Hebræcè, quomodocumque scribas, numerum 666 non reddit. Est Græce, λουτηρ, sicut 908; vel λουθηρ, 717; vel λουθερος, 847."

² No trifling disputes among the learned have there been on the date of Luther's birth, chiefly agitated by Roman-catholic writers, after he appeared, as they term him, *the grand heresiarch*. In this they turned astrologers, falsifying the day and hour of his birth, that they might draw his character to their liking—believing, or pretending to believe, that no man could have effected such a singular revolution in the church, unless he had been under the influence of the devil. Some maintained that he was born on the 22nd October, 1483—specifying even the hour and the minute, as Floramond de Remond, and the famous Jerome Cardan declare; while a writer named Gauricus, a Romish prelate, says it was on the 22nd October, 1484, at ten minutes past one P.M.—thus differing from his contemporaries a whole year, though he found his astrological reveries to coincide completely with those of Remond and Cardan. It is amusing to see the inference which Gauricus, in common with the others, draws from this calculation. 'This is strange, and, indeed, terrible; five planets, Jupiter, Venus, Mars, Saturn, and Mercury, to which may be added the Sun and Moon, being in conjunction under Scorpio, in the ninth station of the heavens, which the Arabians allotted to religion, made this Luther a sacrilegious heretic, a most bitter and profane enemy to the Christian faith. From the horoscope being directed to the conjunction of Mars, he died without any sense of religion

cant, seeking my bread at people's houses, particularly at Eisenach, my own dear Eisenach!"

After awhile¹ he obtained a more regular subsistence, and an asylum in the house of dame Ursula Cotta, widow of Hans Schweikard, who took compassion on the poor wandering boy. By the assistance of this charitable woman, he was enabled to study four years at Eisenach.² In 1501, he was entered at the university of Erfurt, in Thuringia,³ where his father, now in better circumstances, managed to support him. Luther, in one of his works, records the goodness of his benefactress, in words glowing with emotion; and he was through-

His soul, most impious, sailed to hell, there to be scourged for ever with the fiery whips of Alecto, Tisiphone, and Megæra.'

On the other hand, Tycho Brahe and Nicholas Prucker declare that Martin was born under fortunate auspices.

"I have often," says Melancthon, quoted by Audin, "asked Margaret at what hour of what day it was her son Martin came into the world; she recollected the hour and the day perfectly, but had forgotten the year. She stated that she was brought to bed on the 10th November, at eleven o'clock in the evening, at Eisleben, whither she had gone to buy provisions at the fair that was held every year in that place, and the child was baptized the next day, after the name of the saint whose festival they were celebrating at the time, St. Martin." Luther's brother, James, an honest worthy man, believed that the year of Martin's birth was 1488.

¹ "In the month of May, 1497, two scholars wended their way along the high road from Mansfeldt to Bernburg, knapsacks on their backs, sticks in their hands, and great tears rolling down their cheeks: they were, Martin Luther, aged fourteen, and his comrade, Hans Reinicke, about the same. Both had just quitted the paternal roof, and were proceeding on foot to Magdeburg, to avail themselves of the *currend schulen*, celebrated seminaries in the middle ages, which still subsist. Here each boy paid his board and education by means of alms collected from the richer townsmen, under whose windows they used to sing twice a-week, and of money they earned as choristers. Martin quitted this place in 1498, and directed his steps towards Eisenach."—AUDIN.

² "At Eisenach, Luther studied grammar, rhetoric, poetry, under a famous master, J. Trebonius, rector of the convent of the Bare footed Carmelites. It was the custom of Trebonius to give his lessons with head uncovered, to honour, as he said, the Consuls, Chancellors, Doctors, and Masters who would one day proceed from his school. The young scholar's ready comprehension, his natural eloquence, his rare power of elocution, his skill in composition, both prose and poetical, soon made him the object of his master's especial favour."—AUDIN.

³ "In the registers of the university we find, under the year 1501, the name of Luther, there written by the rector, Jodocus Truttveter—*Martinus Ludher, ex Mansfield*. In 1502, the name appears, *Martinus Luder*,

out life grateful, in a more especial manner, to the whole sex for her sake.

After having tried theology, he was induced, by the advice of his friends, to embrace the study of the law, which, at that period, was a stepping-stone to the most lucrative positions not only in state, but in church. He seems, however, never to have had any liking for this pursuit.¹ He infinitely pre-

Baccalaureus philosophiæ. Luther's instructors at Erfurt were Jodocus Truttvetter, whose death he afterwards accused himself of having hastened, by his rebellion against scholastic theology; Jerome Emser, who explained the poetics of Reuchlin; Gerard Hecker, an Augustine monk, who afterwards became a convert to protestantism, and introduced the Reformation into his convent; Bartholomew Usinger, surnamed Arnoldi, who vigorously opposed the new doctrine; John Grevenstein, who loudly protested against the execution of John Huss, and regarded the curate of Bethlehem as a martyr; and John Bigand, who remained throughout life zealously attached to his pupil."—AUDIN.

¹ "It was in the conventual library of Erfurt that Luther passed his happiest hours. Thanks to Guttenberg, printing had been bestowed on the world; Mayence and Cologne had reproduced the Scriptures in every variety of form. The monastery of Erfurt had purchased at heavy cost several Latin Bibles. When first Luther opened one of these, his eye fell with inexpressible delight upon the history of Hannah and her son Samuel. 'Oh, God!' he murmured, 'could I have one of these books, I would ask no other worldly treasure!' A great revolution then took place in his soul. Human words clothed in poetry, however noble, seemed to him worthless in comparison with the Inspired Word. He at once conceived a distaste for the study of the law, to which his father had wished him to devote himself. He was now twenty, and deep study had worn him; he fell ill. An old priest came to confess him: the patient was pale, and gave way to a depression which aggravated his sufferings. 'Come, my son,' said the good priest to him, 'courage, courage; you will not die of this sickness. God has a great destiny in store for you; He will make a man of you, and you will live to console others in your turn; for God loveth those whom he chastens.'"—AUDIN.

"He was admitted into holy orders in 1507. Hitherto his mind had been regulated in the usual manner by the system of which he formed a part, and the religious opinions which universally prevailed. But the discovery of a Latin Bible turned his thoughts into a new channel. Previously to this, he informs us he never saw the Bible in any shape, and knew no more of it than those selections from the gospels and epistles which are inserted in the Romish missal. The monks, who rarely received their religious opinions from this source, profoundly ignorant of its contents, and equally careless or indifferent, beheld with amazement the ardent application of Luther in his study of the Scriptures, and of theology in general. The learning and eloquence of Luther, the correctness of his moral conduct, the devotion which he manifested in the church, and the zeal with which he pursued his

ferred the *belles lettres*¹ and music. Music, indeed, was his favourite art. He cultivated it assiduously all his life, and taught it to his children. He does not hesitate to say that music appeared to him the first of the arts after theology: "Music is the art of the prophets; it is the only other art, which like theology, can calm the agitations of the soul, and put the devil to flight." He played both the guitar and the flute. It is probable that he might have been equally successful in the other arts, had he essayed them. He was intimate with the great painter, Lucas Cranach. He had, moreover, it appears, a taste for mechanics, and could turn a lathe skilfully.

This inclination to music and literature, the assiduous cultivation of the poets, which he alternated with the study of logic and of law, presented no indication that he was at an early period to play so important a part in the history of religion. Various traditions, moreover, would give us to believe that, notwithstanding his application, he took his share in the amusements of the German student-life of the period: that gaiety in indigence, those boisterous manners and martial exterior with a gentle spirit, a peaceful disposition within, that ostentation of vice and real purity of life. Assuredly, they who saw Martin Luther travelling on foot from Eisenach to Mansfeldt, on the third day of the Feast of Easter, in the

studies, were soon generally known and appreciated at Wittenberg; and in 1508, when Frederick, elector of Saxony, founded the university of Wittenberg, Luther was appointed first to the professorship of philosophy, and afterwards to that of divinity, in both of which chairs he raised the fame of the infant establishment, and attracted pupils from every quarter of Europe.

¹ "At Erfurt," says Melancthon, in his Life of Luther, "Martin read most of the writings that remain to us of the ancient Latins, Cicero, Virgil, &c. At the age of twenty, he was honoured with the title of Master of Arts, and then, by the advice of his relations, he began to apply himself to jurisprudence. In the monastery he excited general admiration in the public exercises by the facility with which he extricated himself from the labyrinths of dialectics. He read assiduously the prophets and the apostles, then the books of St. Augustin, his *Explanation of the Psalms*, and his book on the *Spirit and the Letter*. He almost got by heart the treatises of Gabriel Biel and Pierre d'Andilly, bishop of Cambray; he studied with earnestness the writings of Occam, whose logic he preferred to that of Scotus and Thomas. He also read a great deal of the writings of Gerson, and above all, those of St. Augustin."

year 1503; his sword on one thigh, his dagger on the other and wounding himself with his own weapons,¹ had no conception that the awkward student before them was so soon to overthrow the domination of the catholic church throughout one-half of Europe.

In 1505, an accident gave to the career of the youthful Martin an entirely new direction. He saw one of his friends killed at his side by a stroke of lightning. He sent forth a cry at the terrible spectacle : that cry was a vow to St. Anne that he would become a monk, if he were himself spared. The danger passed over, but he did not seek to elude an engagement wrung from him by terror. He solicited no dispensation from his vow. He regarded the blow with which he had seen himself so nearly threatened, as a menace, as an injunction from Heaven. He only delayed the accomplishment of his vow for a fortnight.

On the 17th July, 1505, after having passed a pleasant convivial evening with some musical friends, he entered the Augustine monastery at Erfurt, taking with him nothing but his Plautus and his Virgil.

Next day, he wrote a brief farewell to various persons, sent word to his father of the resolution he had carried into effect, and returned the ring and gown he had received from the university on being admitted to his mastership of arts ; and for a month would not allow any one to see him. He felt the hold which the world still had upon him ; he feared the possible effect upon him of his father's venerated features, filled with tears.² Nor was it until two years had expired,

¹ It was while on his way to visit his friends that this accident happened to him ; when just out of Erfurt, his knife or dagger fell from its sheath, and severed the crural vein. The Brother who was accompanying him took him on his shoulders, and carried him back to Erfurt, where the wound was cured.—AUDIN.

² "His monastic life was that of a thorough hermit. 'If,' says he 'Augustin went straight to heaven from the walls of an abbey, I, too, ought to do so : all my brethren would give me this testimony. I fasted, I watched, I mortified, I practised all the cenobite severities, till I absolutely made myself ill. It is not our enemies who will believe this—the men who talk only of the pleasantness of the monastic life, and have never undergone any spiritual temptation.' Sometimes he alleviated the monotony of his days by singing a hymn. He was particularly fond of the Gregorian chant ; and his greatest delight was to take a part with some young chorister. His own voice was a fine counter-tenor. At other times, he

that John Luther gave way, and consented to be present at his son's ordination. A day was selected for the ceremony on which the miner could quit his avocation, and he then came to Erfurt with several friends, and ere he returned, gave to the son he was thus losing, the savings he had managed to put by : twenty florins.¹

We are not to suppose that in undertaking these formidable engagements, the new priest was impelled by any peculiar degree of religious fervour. We have seen with how mundane an equipment he had furnished himself on entering the cloister ; let us now hear his own statement, as to what were the feelings he carried with him thither. "When I said my first mass at Erfurt, I was well nigh dead ; for I had no faith. My only

would leave the monastery at daybreak, proceed into the country, and at the foot of some tree, preach the word of God to the shepherds. Then he would go to sleep, lulled by their simple minstrelsy. His novitiate was one of peculiar hardship and trial. His superiors, who had perceived the somewhat haughty tendency of his mind, tried his fitness for his adopted vocation in various ways. Luther, more frequently than any other person undergoing the novitiate, was set to sweep out the cells, to open and shut the church doors, to wind up the clock, and to go, a large bag at his back, to beg for his monastery. (*Primum ejus officium*, says Pfefferkorn, indeed, *in cœnobio fuit cloacæ expurgatio.*) Fra Martin murmured against these inflictions. The university of Wittemberg interfered, as did the worthy Staupitz, who put an end to these physical trials."—AUDIN.

Luther had great difficulty in supporting the obligations imposed on him by the monastic regulations. He relates how, at the commencement of the Reformation, he still endeavoured, but without success, to read his Hours regularly. 'If I had done nothing,' he says, 'but relieve men from this tyranny, they owe me a large debt of gratitude.' This constant repetition, at a fixed hour, of the same meditations—this materialization of prayer, which weighed so heavily on the impatient turn of mind of Luther, his contemporary, Ignatius Loyola, was endeavouring to exalt into still higher honour by his singular *Religious Exercises*.

¹ "After the ceremony, those present sat down to dinner. Hans sat by his son, who had hoped to receive from his father's lips expressions of joy and congratulation. 'My dear father,' at length said he, 'why are you so sad? Why should you regret my assuming the monk's robe? It is a becoming robe, is it not?' Hans rose, and addressing the company—'Is it not written in the Word, that a man should honour his father and his mother?' 'It is,' said they. Hans looked expressively at his son, who remained silent. The rest began to talk of indifferent matters. Suddenly Hans exclaimed—'Pray Heaven this be not a snare of the devil! But come, let us drink.' Luther trembled greatly when he ascended the altar ; at the canon he was seized with such a fear, that he would have fled without completing the ceremony, had he not been detained."—PFIZER'S *Luthers' Leben*.

notion about myself was that I was a very worthy person indeed. I did not regard myself as a sinner at all. The first mass was a striking thing, and produced a good deal of money. They brought in the *horas canonicas*, surrounded by large flambeaux. The *dear young lord*, as the peasants used to call their new pastor, had then to dance with his mother, if she were still alive, the spectators all weeping tears of joy; if she were dead, he put her, as the phrase ran, under the chalice, and saved her from purgatory."¹

Luther having obtained what he had sought, having become priest, monk, all being accomplished and the door of the world closed upon him, became a prey, we will not say to regret, but to sadness, to perplexities, to temptations of the flesh, to the mischievous shafts and subtleties of the mind. We of the present day can hardly comprehend what this rude strife of the solitary soul can have been. We keep our passions more in order, or rather, we kill them at the birth. Amid our enervating distraction of business, of facile studies and enjoyments, our precocious satiety of the senses and of the mind, we cannot figure forth to ourselves the spiritual warfare which the spiritual man of the middle ages waged with himself, the dolorous mysteries of a life of abstinence and fanatic dreamings, the infinite hard fights that have been fought, noiselessly and unrecorded, in the monk's dark, narrow cell. An archbishop of Mayence used to say: "The human heart is like a millstone; if you put wheat under it, it grinds the wheat into flour; if you put no wheat, it still grinds on, but then, 'tis itself it wears away."²

"When I was a monk," says Luther,³ "I frequently corresponded with Dr. Staupitz.⁴ Once, I wrote to him: *Oh, my sins! my sins! my sins!* Whereto he replied, *You would fain be without sin; you have no right sin, such as murdering of parents, blaspheming, adultery, and the like. Thou hadst better keep a register of right and true sins, that so thou mayst not afflict thyself about small matters. Remember that Christ came hither for the pardon of our sins.*"⁵

¹ Tischreden, 281.

² Ibid. 230.

³ Ibid. 102.

⁴ Vicar-general of the monastery into which Luther had entered.

⁵ "Luther did not attend to this counsel. Often was he seen at the foot of the altar, his hands clasped, his eyes, full of tears, raised towards Heaven, earnestly beseeching pardon for his sins. Often, on returning to

“I often confessed to Dr. Staupitz, and put to him, not trivial matters, but questions going to the very knot of the question. He answered me as all the other confessors have answered me; *I do not understand*. At last, he came to me one day, when I was at dinner, and said: ‘How is it you are so sad, brother Martin?’ ‘Ah,’ I replied, ‘I am sad, indeed.’ ‘You know not,’ said he, ‘that such trials are good and necessary for you, but would not be so for any one else.’ All he meant to imply was, that as I had some learning, I might, but for these trials, have become haughty and supercilious; but I have felt since that what he said was, as it were, a voice and an inspiration of the Holy Spirit.”

Luther elsewhere relates, that these temptations had reduced him to such a state, that once for a whole fortnight, he neither ate, drank, nor slept.

“Ah, if St. Paul were alive now, how glad I should be to learn from himself what sort of temptation it was he underwent. It was not the thorn in the flesh; it was not the worthy Tecla, as the papists dream. Oh, no, it was not a sin that tore his conscience. It was something higher than despair resulting from the sense of sin; it was rather the temptation of which the Psalmist speaks: *My God! my God! why hast thou*

his cell for the night, he would kneel at the foot of his bed, and remain there in prayer until daybreak.”—PFIZER.

“One morning, the door of his cell not being opened as usual, the brethren became alarmed; they knocked; there was no reply. The door was burst in, and poor Fra Martin was found stretched on the ground, in a state of ecstasy, scarcely breathing, well-nigh dead. A monk took his flute, and gently playing upon it one of the airs that Luther loved, brought him gradually back to himself.”—SECKENDORF, *De Lutheranism*.

“When I was young,” says he, in his Table Talk, “it happened that I was taking part, in my priest’s habit, in a procession on Corpus Christi day, at Eisleben. All at once, the sight of the holy sacrament, borne by Dr. Staupitz, so terrified me, that I perspired at every pore, and thought I should die with fear. When the procession was over, I confessed to Dr. Staupitz, and related what had happened to me. He replied:—*Thy thoughts are not according to Christ; Christ does not terrify, he consoles*. These words filled me with joy, and were a great relief to my mind.”

“Doctor Martin Luther related, that when he was in the monastery at Erfurt, he once said to Dr. Staupitz—‘Ah, dear doctor, our Lord God acts in an awful manner towards us! Who can serve him, if he thus strikes all around him?’ To which he replied—‘My son, learn to form a better judgment of God: if he were not to act thus, how could he overcome the headstrong and wilful. He must take care to the tall trees, lest they ascend to heaven.’—*Tischreden*, 150.

forsaken me; as though the Psalmist would have said: *Thou art my enemy without cause*; and, with Job: *Yet I am innocent, nor is iniquity in me*. I am sure that the book of Job is a true history, of which a poem was afterwards made. Jerome and other fathers never experienced such trials. They underwent none but trivial temptations, those of the flesh, which indeed, have quite enough pains of their own accompanying them. Augustin and Ambrose, too, had trials, and trembled before the sword: but this is as nothing compared with the Angel of Satan, *who strikes with the fists*. If I live, I will write a book on temptations, for without a knowledge of that subject, no man can thoroughly understand the Holy Scriptures, or feel the due love and fear of the Lord."

"... I was lying sick at the infirmary. The most cruel temptations tortured and wore out my frame, so that I could scarcely breathe. No man comforted me: all those to whom I represented my piteous condition, replied, *I know not*. Then, I said to myself: Am I then the only one amongst you who is to be thus sad in spirit? Oh, what spectres, what terrible figures did I see constantly before me! But, ten years ago, God sent me a consolation by his dear angels, enabling me to fight and write for Him."

A long time after this, only the year which preceded that of his death, he himself explains to us the nature of these so terrible temptations. "Even when I was at school, in studying the Epistles of St. Paul, I was seized with the most ardent desire to understand what the apostle meant in his epistle to the Romans. One single phrase stopped me: *Justitia Dei revelatur in illo*. I hated this expression, *Justitia Dei*, because, according to the custom of doctors, I had learned to understand by it that active justice, whereby God is just, and punishes the unjust and sinners. Now, I, who led the life of a harmless monk, and who yet felt painfully within me the uneasy conscience of a sinner, without being able to attain an idea as to the satisfaction I might offer up to God, I did not love, nay, to say the truth, I hated this just God, punisher of sin. I was indignant against Him, and gave silent utterance to murmuring, if not altogether to blasphemy. I said to myself: 'Is it not, then, enough that wretched sinners, already eternally damned for original sin, should be overwhelmed with so many calamities by the decrees of the deca-

logue, but God must further add misery to misery by his gospel, menacing us even there with his justice and his anger?" It was thus the trouble of my conscience carried me away, and I always came back to the same passage. At last I perceived that the *justice*¹ of God is that whereby, with the blessing of God, the just man lives, that is to say, *Faith*; and I then saw that the meaning of the passage was thus: *The gospel reveals the justice of God, a passive justice, whereby the merciful God justifies us by faith.* Thereupon, I felt as if born again, and it seemed to me as though heaven's gates stood full open before me, and that I was joyfully entering therein. At a later period, I read St. Augustin's book, *On the Spirit and the Letter*, and I found, contrary to my expectation, that he also understands by the justice of God, that wherewith God clothes us in justifying us. I was greatly rejoiced to find this, though the thing is put somewhat incompletely in the book, and though the father explains himself vaguely and imperfectly, on the doctrine of imputation."²

To confirm Luther in the doctrine of grace it only needed for him to visit the people from among whom grace had departed. We refer to Italy. We shall be dispensed from painting in detail that Italy of the Borgias. It certainly presented at this period something which has seldom, nay, which has at no other time, been exhibited in history: a systematic and scientific perversity; a magnificent ostentation of wickedness; in a word, the atheist priest proclaiming himself monarch of the universe. That was a feature peculiar to the period. Another feature, belonging to the country, and which is of all time, was that invincible paganism which has ever subsisted in Italy. There, do what you may, nature is pagan; and as is the nature of a country, so will its art be. It is a noble drama, the scenery, so to speak, by Raffaello, the sounding poetry by Ariosto. The grave solemnity, the elevation, the divinity of Italian art, the men of the North were far from appreciating. In what they there saw before them they recognised mere sensuality, mere temptations of the flesh, against which they deemed it their surest defence to close their eyes, to pass on quickly, and, as they passed, to mutter or shout, as it might be, a curse against the unclean thing.

¹ Rendered in our English version, *the righteousness.*

² Lutheri, *Op. Lat.* (Jenæ, 1612,) 1, *præf.*

On its more austere side, its politics and its jurisprudence, Italy was equally a stumbling-block for the northerners. The German nations have always instinctively rejected and anathematized the Roman law. Tacitus relates that on the defeat of Varus, the Germans eagerly took their revenge for the judicial forms to which he had essayed to subject them. One of these barbarians, as he nailed to a tree the head of a Roman legist, pierced his tongue, bitterly exclaiming, "Hiss now, hiss now, viper, if thou canst!" This hatred of the lawyers, perpetuated throughout the middle ages, was, as will be seen, given energetic expression to, on all occasions, by Luther, and naturally enough. The lawyer and the theologian are asunder as the two Poles; the one has faith in liberty, the other in grace; the one in man, the other in God. The first of these faiths has ever been that of Italy. The Southern reformer, Savonarola, who appeared somewhat before Luther, limited his views to a change in works, in manners; he contemplated no reformation in faith.

Behold Luther in Italy.¹ It is a moment of ineffable joy, of boundless hopes, in which we begin the descent of the Alps, to enter for the first time that glorious land. And for Luther, there was the further aspiration to confirm his wavering faith in the holy city, and throw aside all the growing burden of uneasy doubt at the tomb of the apostles. Old Rome, too, the Rome of classic ages, was a powerful attraction to him, as the seat and sanctuary of the learning he had cultivated with such ardour in his poor Wittenberg.

He was received at Milan in a marble convent, and from that he visited one convent after another, or, rather one palace after another, for such they were. In each he found good cheer, sumptuous entertainment. The simple-minded German was somewhat astonished at all this magnificence of humility, at all this regal splendour of penitence. He once ventured to suggest to the Italian monks that they would do well, at least to abstain from meat on Friday; the impertinence was near costing him his life; it was with the greatest difficulty he got out of the hands of the offended epicures.

¹ He was deputed thither by his monastery, in 1510, to adjust some differences before the pope, which had arisen between it and the pope's vicar general.

Undeceived and sorrowful, he proceeded on foot over the burning plains of Lombardy. He reached Pavia ill; he went on, and when he entered Bologna, he was sick well nigh unto death. The traveller's poor head had been too violently assailed by the sun of Italy, and even more than by this, by the strange things, the strange manners, the strange discourse he saw and heard around him on his way. He kept his bed for awhile in Bologna, the throne of the Roman law and of the legists, and looked upon himself for some time as a dead man. Ever and anon, he murmured to himself, to strengthen and confirm his mind, the words of the prophet and apostle: *The just shall live by faith.*

In one of his conversations, he gives us naïvely an idea of how terrible Italy was to the imaginations of the simple-hearted Germans: "The Italians only require you to look in a mirror to be able to kill you. They can deprive you of all your senses by secret poisons. In Italy, the air itself is pestilential; at night, they close hermetically every window, and stop up every chink and cranny."¹ Luther assures us that both himself and the Brother who accompanied him, were taken ill, solely in consequence of having slept with the casement open, but they ate two pomegranates, by which means it pleased God to save their lives.²

He went on his journey,³ merely passing through Florence without stopping, and at length entered Rome. He proceeded to the convent of his order, near the *Porto del Popolo*.⁴ "On arriving, I fell on my knees, raised my hands to Heaven, and exclaimed: 'Hail, holy Rome! made holy by the holy martyrs, and by the blood which has been spilt here.'" In his fervour, he adds, he hastened to view the sacred places, saw all, believed all. He soon perceived, however, that he was the only person who did believe; Christianity seemed totally forgotten in this capital of the Christian world. The

¹ Tischreden, 440.

² The occasion on which he cured himself and his companion by eating pomegranates, was when he had drunk some stagnant water on the way side.—AUDIN.

³ His object in making all possible haste was to arrive at Rome by St. John's Eve; "for," says he, "you know the old Roman proverb: 'Happy the mother whose child shall celebrate mass in Rome on St. John's Eve.' Oh, how I desired to give my mother this happiness! but this was impossible, and it vexed me greatly to find it so."

⁴ Tischreden 441.

pope was no longer the scandalous Alexander VI., but the warlike and choleric Julius II. This father of the faithful breathed nothing but blood and ruin. We know that his great artist, Michel-Angelo, represented him overwhelming Bologna with his benediction. The pope had just at this time commanded the sculptor to prepare for him a funereal monument, as large as a church: of this projected monument, the *Moses*, with some other statues which have come down to us, were to have formed a part.

The sole thought that occupied the pope and Rome at this juncture, was the war against the French. Luther had manifestly slight chance of a favourable opportunity for discoursing of grace and the inefficacy of works, to this singular priest who besieged towns in person, and who only just before, had refused to enter Mirandola otherwise than by the breach he had made in its walls. His cardinals, apprentice-officers under him, were politicians, diplomatists, or, more generally, men of letters, upstart *savans*, who read nothing but Cicero, and who would have feared to hurt their Latinity by opening the Bible. When they spoke of the pope, it was of the *Pontifex Maximus*; a canonized saint was, in their language, a man *relatus inter Divos*; and if they at any time referred to grace, they phrased it thus: *Deorum immortalium beneficiis*.

If our poor German took refuge in the churches, he had not even the consolation of a good mass. The Roman priest despatched the divine sacrifice with such celerity, that before Luther had got through the gospel, the minister said to him, *Ite, missa est*.¹ "These Italian priests often say mass in such a manner that I detest them. I have heard them make a boast of their fearful temerity in free-thinking. Repeatedly, in consecrating the host, they would say, 'Bread thou art, and bread thou wilt remain! wine thou art, and wine thou wilt remain!'" The only thing to be done was to flee, veiling the head, and shaking off the dust from the feet: Luther quitted Rome at the end of a fortnight.

He carried back with him into Germany the condemnation of Italy, and of the Roman church. In the rapid and mournful journey he had made, the Saxon had seen sufficient to condemn, but not sufficient to comprehend. And, in truth,

¹ Fischreden, 441.

for a mind intent upon the moral point of view of Christianity, there needed a rare effort of philosophy, an historical enthusiasm, hardly to be expected in those days, to discover religion in that world of art, of jurisprudence, of politics, which constituted Italy.

"I would not," he says somewhere,¹ "I would not for a hundred thousand florins have missed seeing Rome, (and he repeats these words thrice.) I should have always felt an uneasy doubt whether I was not, after all, doing injustice to the pope. As it is, I am quite satisfied on the point."²

¹ Tischreden, 441.

² "On the recommendation of Dr. Staupitz, Luther, at about this time, was appointed professor of philosophy in the new university of Wittemberg. The prince's letter requiring him to come and occupy this chair was so urgent, that Luther had scarce time to bid adieu to his friends. His portmanteau was a light affair: it contained a coarse stuff robe, two Bibles, one Latin and one Greek, some ascetic books, and a small stock of linen. The books named, with a few volumes of Latin poetry, a Concordance, and some of Aristotle's treatises, comprehended the entire library of the monk of Wittemberg. The physics and ethics to which his attention was now directed, were by no means so much to his taste as theology, *that mistress of the world, that queen of the arts*, the study of which he so loved, and upon which he has passed so many a magnificent eulogium. Accordingly, to one of his friends, who had asked him how he liked his college life, he said: "Thank God, I am well; but I should be much better if I were not compelled to profess this philosophy." The philosophy was that of Aristotle, that devil's master, as Luther afterwards called him, who wanted to build upon man, instead of upon God. The senate of Wittemberg, on the recommendation of Dr. Staupitz, named Luther town preacher, the bishop sanctioning the appointment. This was a new mission for Martin, and he grew alarmed at his responsibility. He feared he should not be equal to the task, and he related to Dr. Staupitz the terrors that besieged him. The doctor encouraged him. "You want to kill me, doctor," exclaimed Luther. "I shall not be able to carry on the thing for three months." "Well, my son," said Staupitz, "even if you die, 'twill be in the service of the Lord; how noble a sacrifice!" Luther yielded. He preached by turns in his monastery, in the royal chapel, and in the collegiate church. He soon showed how mistaken he had been with respect to the extent of his powers; his success was of the most marked description. His voice was fine, sonorous, clear, striking; his gesticulation emphatic and dignified. He had told Staupitz that he would not imitate his predecessors, and he kept his word. For the first time, he presented the spectacle of a Christian orator ceasing to quote the old masters of the schools, and drawing, instead, his images from the inspired writers. Whenever he had leisure, he returned to his beloved theology; he especially loved to peruse the epistles of St. Paul and the sermons of Tauler. His dearest wishes were ere long in a way to be accomplished: he was admitted bachelor in theology, and could now, without giving up his professorship, read lectures on the sacred text. This daily exercise prepared

CHAPTER II.

1517—1521.

Luther attacks indulgences—He burns the pope's bull—Erasmus, Hutten, Franz von Sickingen—Luther appears before the Diet of Worms—He is carried off.

THE papacy was far from suspecting its danger. Ever since the thirteenth century, men had been disputing with it, had been railing against it, but apparently with no effect. The world, it imagined, had been quietly and permanently lulled to sleep by the dull and uniform clatter of the schools. It seemed as though scarcely anything new remained to be said about the matter. Everybody had talked and talked, till they had all fairly lost breath. Wickliff, John Huss, Jerome of Prague, persecuted, condemned, burned though they were, had nevertheless lived long enough to say all they had to say. The doctors of the most catholic university of Paris, the Pierres d'Andilly, the Clemenges, mild Gerson himself, had all, very respectfully, had a fling at the papacy; yet papacy

him for the great struggle he was about to sustain against the papacy. Never in any Saxon professional chair had there been heard so luminous an explanation of the Old and New Testaments, as that made by Luther. He conceived a passion for this kind of labour, passed whole nights in preparing for it. Sometimes eminent doctors came to listen to his course, and retired full of admiration. The venerable Pollich, known by the soubriquet of *Lux Mundi*, heard him, and, struck with wonder, exclaimed: "This father has profound insight, exceeding imagination: he will trouble the doctors before he has done, and excite no slight disturbance."—On the 16th Oct. 1512, St. Luke's day, Luther was admitted doctor of divinity, and on the 17th, he was invested with the insignia of the doctorate, by Andrew Bodenstein (Carlstadt.) Luther quitted the chair for a while to fulfil other occupations confided to him by Staupitz, who, compelled by his avocations to absent himself, charged his protégé to visit the convents in his province. This afforded Luther an opportunity of investigating the interior life of the cloister. According to him, "The Bible is a book which is rarely found in the hands of the monks, who know St. Thomas much better than St. Paul." His powers were very extensive; he could depose persons guilty of scandalous conduct. At Erfurt, he recognised as his superior, John Lange, who was afterwards one of the first to throw off the monastic robe and

endured nevertheless; it managed, with patient tenacity, to live on from hand to mouth, if nothing better, and so the fifteenth century passed away. The councils of Constance and Bâle made a great noise, indeed, but produced very little effect. The popes let them have their say, procured the revocation of the Pragmatic Sanction, quietly re-established their preponderance in Europe, and founded a powerful sovereignty in Italy.

Julius II. conquered for the church; Leo X. for his family. This youthful pope, a thorough man of the world, a man of pleasure, a man of letters, a man of business, in common with all the other Medici, had the passions of his age, as well as those of the former popes, and those of his own particular period. His aim was to make the Medici family monarchs. He himself played the part of the first king of Christendom. Independently of the costly diplomatic relations which he maintained with all the states of Europe, he kept up a scientific correspondence with the most distant regions. He opened communications even with the extreme north, and employed persons to collect the monuments of Scandinavian history. At Rome he was proceeding with St. Peter's, the construction of which had been bequeathed to him by Julius II.; the latter pontiff, in resolving on the work, had not calculated his resources; and indeed, when Michel-Angelo brought such

marry. The convent of Nieustadt was a prey to great disputes among its inmates; Luther re-established order, calling upon Michael Dressel, the prior, whose vacillation had occasioned most of the disorder, to resign his post. His letter to this monk is a mixture of firmness and gentleness; if he opens wounds, he has honey at hand to soften them. Humility and love are the two virtues he recommends to him: "Humility, above all," says he, "the mother of charity." He gives in a letter to Lange an amusing account of his occupation at this time:—"I had need have two secretaries to keep up my correspondence; pity my unhappy fortune. I am conventual *Concionator*, table preacher, director of studies; I am vicar, or in words, eleven priors in one, conservator of the ponds at Litzkau, pleader and assessor at Torgau, Paulinic reader and collector of psalms; add to all these, the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil." There was one assault, at this period, which he nobly withstood: the plague appeared at Wittemberg, and his conduct on the occasion stands out gloriously: his friends conjured him to imitate their example, and fly: "Fly," exclaimed the brother, "my God! no! for a monk, the world will not perish. I am at my post: obedience tells me to remain there till obedience shall make it a duty for me to withdraw. Not that I have no fear of death, I am not the apostle Paul—but the Lord will deliver me from fear."—AUDIN.

or such a plan, who would have thought for an instant of haggling about the cost? It was he who said of the Pantheon: "I will raise that temple three hundred feet in the air." The impoverished Roman state was not in a position to carry out the magnificent projects of men with conceptions so vast, that the ancient empire, when sovereign of the world, could scarce have realized them.

Leo X. had commenced his pontificate with selling to Francis I. what did not belong to him, the rights of the church of France. At a later period, as a means of raising money, he created thirty-one cardinals at once;¹ but these were small matters. He had no Mexico to have recourse to. His mines were the old faith of the nations, their easy credulity. He had entrusted the working of this mine in Germany to the Dominicans, who had accordingly succeeded the Augustines in the sale of indulgences. The Dominican, Tetzal,² a shameless mountebank, went about from town to town, with great display, pomp, and expense, hawking the commodity in the churches, the public streets, in taverns and ale-houses. He paid over to his employers as little as possible, pocketing the balance, as the pope's legate subsequently proved against him. The faith of the buyers diminishing, it became necessary to exaggerate to the fullest extent the merit of the specific; the article had been so long in the market, and in such great supply, that the demand was falling off. The intrepid Tetzal stretched his rhetoric to the very uttermost bounds of amplification. Daringly piling one

¹ On the 13th June, 1517. The sameday, a storm overthrew the angel that stood on the top of the Castel di San Angelo, struck an infant Jesus in a church, and knocked the keys out of the hands of a statue of St. Peter.—RUCHAT, i. 36.

² This Tetzal or Totzel, *italice* Tottila, was a man of notoriously immoral character. At a subsequent period his own party abandoned him. "The lies and frauds of this Tetzal," wrote Miltitz to Pfeffinger, "are perfectly well known to me; I have warmly reproached him for them, and proved them against him in the presence of many spectators. I have sent an account of all his conduct to the pope, and await his judgment. By a letter of an agent of the Fuggers, whose duty it was to keep an account of all the money received from the indulgences, I have convicted Tetzal of having taken every month eighty florins for himself, and ten for his servant, beyond the amount paid him for the two, and for the keep of three horses. This is without reckoning what he has otherwise embezzled or wasted. You see how the wretch served the holy Roman church and the archbishop of Mayence, my excellent lord."—SECKENDORF, i. 62.

lie upon another, he set forth, in reckless display, the long list of evils which this panacea could cure. He did not content himself with enumerating known sins; he set his foul imagination to work, and invented crimes, infamous atrocities, strange, unheard of, unthought of; and when he saw his auditors standing aghast at each horrible suggestion, he would calmly repeat the burden of his song: "Well, all this is expiated the moment your money chinks in the pope's chest."

Luther assures us that up to this time he had no very definite notion what indulgences were. But when he saw the prospectus of them proudly set forth with the name, arms, and authorization of the archbishop of Mayence, whom the pope had charged with the superintendence of their sale in Germany, he was seized with indignation.¹ A problem of mere speculation would never have placed him in antagonism with his ecclesiastical superiors. (But this was a question of good sense, of common morality.) A doctor of divinity, an influential professor in the university of Wittenberg, which the elector had just founded, provincial vicar of the Augustins, and entrusted by the vicar-general with the pastoral visitation of Misnia and Thuringia, he doubtless deemed himself responsible more than any other person for the Saxon faith so extensively confided to him. His conscience was struck: if he spoke, he ran great risks; if he remained silent, he believed he should incur damnation. †

"It was in the year 1517, when the profligate monk Tetzels² a worthy servant of the pope and the devil—for I am certain that the pope is the agent of the devil on earth—came among us selling indulgences, maintaining their efficacy, and impudently practising on the credulity of the people. † When I beheld this unholy and detestable traffic taking place in open day, and thereby sanctioning the most villanous crimes, I could not, though I was then but a young doctor of divinity, refrain from protesting against it in the strongest manner,

¹ "When I undertook to write against the gross error of indulgences, Dr. Staupitz said: 'What, would you write against the pope? What are you about? They will not permit you to do this!' 'But suppose they must needs permit it?' replied I."—*Tischreden*, 384.

² The character of Tetzels was notoriously immoral. It is said that he had been convicted of adultery, and ordered to be thrown into the Inn, but received a pardon at the intercession of the elector Frederick of Saxony. He died of a broken heart in 1519.

not only as directly contrary to the Scriptures, but as opposed to the canons of the church itself. | Accordingly, in my place at Wittemberg—in which university, by the favour of God and the kindness of the illustrious elector of Saxony, I was honoured with the office of professor of divinity—I resolved to oppose the career of this odious monk, and to put the people on their guard against the revival of this infamous imposition on their credulity. When I put this resolution into practice, instead of being abused and condemned, as I have been, by these worthless tyrants and impostors, the pope and his mercenaries, I expected to be warmly encouraged and commended, for I did little more than make use of the pope's own language, as set forth in the decretals, against the rapacity and extortion of the collectors. I cautioned my hearers against the snares which were laid for them, showing them that this was a scheme altogether opposed to religion, and only intended as a source of emolument by these unprincipled men. It was on the festival of All-Hallows Eve that I first drew their attention to the gross errors touching indulgences; and about the same time I wrote two letters, one to the most reverend prelate Jerome, bishop of Brandenburg, within whose jurisdiction Tetzal and his associates were carrying on their scandalous traffic; the other to the most reverend prelate and prince, Albert, archbishop of Magdeburg, pointing out to them the consequences of this imposition, and praying them to silence Tetzal. My letter to the archbishop was in these terms:

“ To the most reverend father in Christ, my most illustrious lord, prince Albert, archbishop of Magdeburg and Mayence, marquis of Brandenburg, &c. Luther to his lord and pastor in Christ, in all submission and reverence.

JESUS.

“ The grace and mercy of God, and whatever can be and is. Pardon me, most reverend father in Christ, illustrious prince, that I have the temerity, I who am the lees of mankind, to raise my eyes to your sublimity, and address a letter to you. Jesus, my Lord and Saviour, is witness for me, that, long restrained by the consciousness of my own turpitude and weakness, I have long delayed commencing the work which I now undertake with open and upraised brow, impelled by the fidelity I owe to Jesus Christ; deign then,

your grace, to cast a look upon the grain of sand who now approaches you, and to receive my prayer with paternal clemency.

“ ‘ Persons are now hawking about papal indulgences, under the name and august title of your lordship, for the construction of St. Peter’s at Rome. I say nothing about the vapourings of the preachers, which I have not myself heard ; but I complain bitterly of the fatal errors in which they are involving the common people, men of weak understanding, whom, foolish as they are, these men persuade that they will be sure of salvation if they only buy their letters of plenary indulgence. They believe that souls will fly out of purgatory, the moment that the money paid for their redemption is thrown into the preacher’s bag, and that such virtue belongs to these indulgences, that there is no sin, howsoever great, even the violation, which is impossible, of the Mother of God, which the indulgences will not absolutely and at once efface.

“ ‘ Great God ! And is it thus that men dare to teach unto death, those who are entrusted to your care, oh reverend father, and make more difficult the account which will be demanded from you in the great day ! When I saw these things I could remain silent no longer. No ; there is no episcopal power which can insure to man his salvation ; even the infused grace of our Lord cannot wholly render him secure ; our apostle commands us to wash out our salvation in fear and trembling : *The righteous scarcely shall be saved*, so narrow is the way which leads to life. Those who are saved are called in the Scripture, brands saved from the burning ; everywhere the Lord reminds us of the difficulty of salvation. How, then, dare these men seek to render poor souls fatally confident of salvation, on the mere strength of purchased indulgences and futile promises ? The chiefest work of bishops should be to take care that the people learn truly the gospel, and be full of Christian charity. Never did Christ preach indulgences, nor command them to be preached : what he preached and commanded to be preached, was the gospel. . . . I would implore you to silence these ill preachers, ere some one shall arise, and utterly confuting them and their preachings, cast discredit upon your sublimity, a thing to be avoided, but which I fear must needs occur, unless you take

measures for silencing these men.' . . . I intreat your grace to read and consider the propositions, wherein I have demonstrated the vanity of these indulgences, which the preachers thereof call all-powerful.'¹

“ To this letter I received no answer, and indeed I knew not at the time that the archbishop had bargained with the pope to receive one-half of the money raised from these indulgences, and to remit the other half to Rome. These, then, were my first steps in the matter, until the increased insolence and the lying representations of Tetzal, which seemed to be fully sanctioned by the silence of his superiors, as well as my determination to maintain the truth at all hazards, induced me to adopt more decisive measures than a mere personal remonstrance, in a series of cautions to those with whom I was more particularly connected, to beware of these arch impostors and blasphemers. So finding all my remonstrances disregarded, on the festival of All Saints, in November, 1517, I read, in the great church of Wittemberg, a series of propositions against these infamous indulgences, in which, while I set forth their utter inefficiency and worthlessness, I expressly declared in my protest, that I would submit on all occasions to the word of God and the decisions of the church. At the same time I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that my opinion would be preferred above all others, nor yet so blind as to set the fables and decrees of man above the written word of God. I took occasion to express these opinions rather as subjects of doubt than of positive assertion, but I held it to be my duty to print and circulate them throughout the country, for the benefit of all classes—for the learned, that they might detect inaccuracies—for the ignorant, that they might be put on their guard against the villanies and impositions of Tetzal, until the matter was properly determined.”

These propositions were affixed to the outer pillars of the

¹ To this letter, dated All Saints' Eve, 1517, the propositions presently given were appended. The bishop of Brandenburg had sent him a letter in reply, by a Carthusian monk, in which he pointed out to him that in what he was doing, he was assailing the church, and advised him to remain silent for the sake of peace.

gate of the church of All Saints, at midday, on the 31st October, 1517. They open thus :

“ From a desire to elicit the truth, the following theses will be maintained at Wittemberg, under the presidency of the reverend father Martin Luther, of the order of the Augustins, master of arts, master and lecturer in theology, who asks that such as are not able to dispute verbally with him, will do so in writing. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Let us quote from the ninety-five propositions which form the series, the following :

“ When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says, ‘ Repent,’ he means that the whole life of his followers on earth shall be a constant and continual repentance.

“ This word cannot be understood of the sacrament of penance (that is to say, of confession and satisfaction) as it is administered by the priest.

“ Yet the Lord does not mean, in this, to speak only of internal repentance : internal repentance is null, if it does not produce externally all kinds of mortification of the flesh.

“ Repentance and grief, that is to say, true penitence, last as long as a man is displeased with himself, that is to say, until he passes from this life into the life eternal.

“ The pope cannot and will not remit any other penalty than that which he has imposed at his own good pleasure, or in conformity with the canons, that is, with the papal orders.

“ The pope cannot remit any condemnation, but only declare and confirm the remission that God himself has made of it ; unless he do so in the cases that pertain to himself. If he does otherwise, the condemnation remains wholly the same.

“ The laws of ecclesiastical penance should be imposed only on the living, and in no respect concern the dead.

“ The commissioners of indulgences deceive themselves when they say, that by the pope’s indulgence man is delivered from all punishment, and saved.

“ The same power which the pope has over purgatory throughout the entire church, every bishop has in his own diocese, and every vicar in his own parish. Besides, who knows whether all the souls in purgatory desire to be redeemed ? They say St. Severinus’ did not.

“ They preach devices of human folly, who assert, that the moment the money sounds at the bottom of the strong box, the soul flies away out of purgatory.

“ This is certain, to wit, that as soon as the money sounds, avarice and the love of gain spring up, increase, and multiply. But the succour and the prayers of the church depend only on the good pleasure of God.

“ Those who think themselves sure of salvation with their indulgences will go to the devil with those who taught them so.

“ They teach doctrines of Antichrist who assert, that to deliver a soul from purgatory, or to buy an indulgence, there is no need of contrition or repentance.

“ Every Christian who feels a true repentance for his sins has a full remission of the penalty and of the transgression, without its being necessary that he should have recourse to indulgences.

“ Every true Christian, living or dead, has part in all the good things of Christ or of the church, by the gift of God, and without letter of indulgence.

“ Still we must not despise the pope’s distribution and pardon, regarded as a declaration of God’s pardon.

“ True repentance and sorrow seek and love chastisement ; but the pleasantness of indulgence detaches from chastisement, and makes one conceive a hatred against it.

“ Christians must be taught, that the pope thinks not nor wishes that any one should in any wise compare the act of buying indulgences with any act of mercy.

“ Christians must be taught, that he who gives to the poor or who lends to the needy does better than he who buys an indulgence.

“ For the work of charity enlarges charity and makes the man more pious, whereas indulgences do not render him better, but only more confident in himself and more self-secure from punishment.

“ Christians must be taught, that he who sees his neighbour in want, and who, in spite of that, buys an indulgence, does not buy the pope’s indulgence, but lays upon him the wrath of God.

“ Christians must be taught, that if they have nothing superfluous, it is their duty to reserve what is required for

their houses to procure necessaries, and that they ought not to lavish it on indulgences.

“ Christians must be taught, that to buy an indulgence is a free-will act, and not one by command.

“ Christians must be taught, that the pope, having more need of a prayer offered with faith than of money, more desires the prayer than the money when he distributes indulgences.

“ Christians must be taught, that the pope’s indulgence is good, if one does not put one’s trust in it, but that nothing can be more pernicious if it cause the loss of piety.

“ Christians must be taught, that if the pope knew of the extortions of the indulgence-preachers, he would rather the metropolitan church of St. Peter were burnt and reduced to ashes than see it built with the skin, the flesh, and the bones of his sheep.

“ The change of the canonical penalty into the purgatorial is a tare, a tanel of dissension ; the bishops were manifestly asleep when this pernicious plant was sown.

“ The pope must needs desire that if these pardons, things so trivial, are celebrated with a bell, a ceremony, a solemnity, the gospel, a thing so great, should be preached with a hundred bells, a hundred ceremonies, a hundred solemnities.

“ The true treasure of the church is the sacro-sanct gospel of the glory and grace of God.

“ Many have reason to hate this treasure of the gospel, for by it the first become the last.

“ Many have reason to love the treasure of the indulgences, for by them the last become the first.

“ The treasures of the gospel are the nets with which they fish for men of worth.

“ The treasures of the indulgences are the nets with which they fish for men worth money.

“ To say that the cross placed on the arms of the pope, is equivalent to the cross of Christ, is blasphemy,

“ Why does not the pope in his very holy character, clear out purgatory at once, wherein so many souls are suffering ? This would be bestowing his power far more worthily, than for him to deliver souls for money (money so gained brings calamity with it); and for what purpose, moreover ? For a building!

“What is this strange compassion of God and of the pope, which, for so many crowns, changes the soul of an impious wretch, enemy of God and man, into a soul holy and agreeable to the Lord ?

“Cannot the pope, whose treasures at this time exceed the most enormous accumulations elsewhere, cannot he with his own money, rather than with that of impoverished Christians, raise a single church, for the metropolitan cathedral ?

“What does the pope remit, what does he give, to those who, by their complete contrition, have already purchased a right to plenary remission ?

“Fie on the prophets, who say to Christ’s people : *The cross ! the cross !* and show us not the cross.

“Fie on the prophets who say to the people of Christ : *Peace ! Peace !* and give us not peace.

“Christians must be taught to follow Christ, their Chief, through pain and punishments, and through hell itself ; so that they may be assured that it is through tribulations heaven is entered, and not through security and peace, &c.”

These propositions, negative and polemical, received their complement in the dogmatical theses¹ which Luther sent forth at about the same time :

“It is not in the course of nature for man to desire God to be God. He would rather himself be God, and that God were not God.

“It is false that the appetite is free to go as it will in the two senses : it is not free, but captive.

“There is not in nature, in the presence of God, anything but concupiscence.

“It is false that this concupiscence may be regulated by the virtue of hope. For hope is contrary to charity, which seeks and desires that only which is of God. Hope does not proceed from our merits, but from our passions, which efface our merits.

“The best, the infallible preparation and sole disposition for receiving grace, is the choice and predestination decreed by God from all eternity.

“On the part of man, nothing precedes grace, but the non-disposition to grace, or rather, rebellion.

¹ Opera Lat. ii. 56.

“ It is false that invincible ignorance can be put forward as an excuse. The ignorance of God, of oneself, of good works, is the invincible nature of man.”

“ Some copies of my propositions,” continues Luther, “ having found their way to Frankfort-on-the-Oder, where Tetzal was then acting as inquisitor and selling indulgences under the archbishop-elect of Mayence, he, foaming with rage and alarm at the propositions I had set forth, published a set of counter-resolutions in reply, to the number of one hundred and six, in which he maintained the most insolent and blasphemous doctrines respecting the pretended power and infallibility of the pope ; and in a second series of propositions, he assumed the office of general interpreter of the Scripture, and railed against heretics and heresiarchs, by which name he designated myself and my friends, and he concluded his insolence by burning my themes publicly in the city of Frankfort. When the news of this madman’s proceedings reached Wittemberg, a number of persons collected together, and having procured Tetzal’s productions, retaliated upon him by burning them in the great square, amid the cheers and derision of a large proportion of the inhabitants. I was not sorry that such a mass of absurdity and extravagance should meet with the fate it really merited ; but, at the same time, I regretted the manner in which it was done, and solemnly affirm that I knew nothing of it at the time, and that it was done without the knowledge either of the elector or of the magistrates.

“ I soon found that Tetzal was not the only opponent resolved to take the field against me, although I had maintained nothing in my propositions inconsistent with the avowed doctrines of these hirelings ; and had, indeed, advanced my propositions more by way of doubt than in a positive manner. John Eck¹ made his appearance in a violent attack upon me : but as his observations were more in the nature of mere abuse than of conclusive argument, that person did a vast deal of harm to his own party, while he rendered me unintentional service. Another antagonist also entered the lists against me, in the person of Silvestro Prierio, a Dominican,² who with the

¹ Vice-chancellor of the university of Ingoldstadt.

² Master of the Apostolical chamber at Rome, and licencer of books

pedantry peculiar to his office of censor in the metropolis of popery, chose to answer all my propositions in a way most convenient to himself, by declaring, in a manner altogether begging the question, that they were all heretical. In my reply, I exposed the absurdity of this method of proceeding, which, however, is the usual style of argument adopted by the Romish tyrants and their slaves. Prierio again attacked me ; but when I found the man asserting that the authority of the pope was superior to the councils and canons of the church, and that even the sacred Scriptures depended for their interpretation on the mere dictum of that representative of Antichrist, I thought it unnecessary to reply further, than by simply declaring my conviction, that the said Prierio's book, being a compound of blasphemies and lies, must certainly have been the work of the devil ; and that if the pope and cardinals sanctioned such writings, which I did not then believe, although I now know it well, Rome must be the seat of Antichrist, the centre of abomination, and the synagogue of Satan. Who is Antichrist, if the pope is not Antichrist ? O Satan, Satan, how long wilt thou be suffered to abuse the patience of God by thy great wickedness ? Unhappy, abandoned, blasphemous Rome ! the wrath of God is upon thee, and thou richly deservest it, for thou art the habitation of all that is impure and disgusting ! a very pantheon of impiety !¹

“ In this way passed the year 1517, I maintaining the truth, and these apologists for impiety railing against me with their false accusations ; for hitherto pope Leo had taken no notice of the matter, not wishing, as I was afterwards informed, to interfere at all, thinking that the zeal of both parties would soon subside. Meantime I began to consider what measures to adopt, for I knew that no reasonings of mine would have any weight with such obstinate and insolent disputants as Tetzel, Eck, and Prierio, bigoted slaves² of that system of

¹ “ *Habitatio draconum, lemorum, larvarum, et juxta nomen suum confusio sempiterna, idolis avaritiæ, perfidis, apostatis, cynædis, priapis, latronibus, simonibus, et infinitis aliis monstris ad os plena.* ”

² While, however, Luther occasionally utters these strong expressions to denote the abhorrence in which he held the opinions of his adversaries, he was always respectful in his public controversies. Prierio he usually styles *the reverend in Christ*, and *reverend father*, while Prierio addresses Luther as *carissime Luther*.

iniquity and licentiousness which I myself had witnessed when at Rome.”¹

The publication of these theses and the sermon in German, which Luther delivered in support of them,² struck upon the whole of Germany like a huge thunderbolt. This sacrifice of liberty to grace, of man to God, of the finite to the infinite, was at once recognised by the German people as the true national religion, as the faith which Gottschalk proclaimed in the time of Charlemagne, from the very cradle of German Christianity, the faith of Tauler and of all the mystical preachers of the Low Countries. The people, accordingly, threw themselves with the most hungry avidity upon this religious pasture, from which they had been shut out ever since the fourteenth century. The propositions were printed in thousands, devoured, spread abroad, diffused in every direction. Luther himself was alarmed at his success. “I am sorry,” said he, “to see them so extensively printed and distributed; this is not a good way wherein to set about the instruction of the people. I myself feel some doubts upon points. There are things I should more closely have investi-

¹ Another opponent took the field, in the person of James Hoogenstraaten, a German divine, of the Dominican order, who, however, subsequently wrote with equal virulence against Erasmus and others. This monk, in the true spirit of his order, told the pope, that, in his opinion, it would be best to convince Luther by chains, fire, and flames.

² “In the first five paragraphs, and again, more especially in the sixth, which is extremely mystical, he explains in a very clear manner the doctrine of St. Thomas: he then proves, from Scripture itself, against that doctrine, that the sincere repentance and conversion of the sinner can alone secure pardon for his sins:—‘Even though the church should really declare that indulgences efface sins better than works of satisfaction, it were a thousand times fitter for a Christian not to buy them, but rather to do the work of repentance, and suffer the penalties; for indulgences are and can only be dispensations from good works and from salutary penalties. It were far better and surer to give what you can spare towards the construction of St. Peter’s, than to buy the indulgences preached for that purpose. But, first of all, if you have to spare, you should give it to your poor neighbour—that is better than to give it to raise up stone walls; and if there be no one in your neighbourhood who requires your assistance, then give it to the churches of your own town. If any then remain, give it to St. Peter, and not before. My desire, my prayer, and my advice is, that you buy not these indulgences. Leave it to bad, idle, sleepy churchmen to buy them; you can dispense with them. Whether men can be drawn from purgatory by the efficacy of indulgences, I cannot say; but I do not believe they can. Some doctors say they can; but they cannot prove it, and the

gated and ascertained, others which I should have altogether omitted, had I foreseen this result."

And he at this juncture seemed exceedingly disposed to throw up the whole matter, and to submit without further cavilling. "I will obey, implicitly," said he; "I had rather so than perform miracles, even though I had the gift of performing miracles."

Tetzel himself shook this pacific resolution by burning, as has been seen, Luther's propositions in public, whereupon the students of Wittemberg forthwith made reprisals upon Tetzel's own propositions. Though this circumstance was one, as Luther has informed us, which he regretted, he followed it up by sending forth his *Resolutions*, in support of his first propositions. "You will see," he wrote to a friend, "my *Resolutiones et responsiones*. Perhaps, in certain passages, you will find them more free than was absolutely necessary; and if they seem so to you, they will *à fortiori*, appear perfectly intolerable to the flatterers of Rome. They were published before I was aware, or I would have modified them in some respects."¹

church says nothing about the matter; and, at all events, the surest way is to have recourse to prayer. What I teach is true, is founded on Scripture. Let the scholastic doctors keep to their scholastics; all of them put together are not enough to warrant a preaching up of indulgences. The indulgences, instead of preaching expiation, leave the Christian in the mire of sin. If we are not allowed to say anything against indulgences, there ought not to be so much said about their efficacy. They that preach up indulgences make fools of you; they are not looking after your salvation, but after your pennies. Let some charitably charge me with heresy, because I have told out truths that do harm to their shop, what care I for their brawling? Empty pates, that never opened the Bible, who know nothing of the doctrines of Christ, or even about themselves, and are ever groping in the dark. God give them understanding." These extracts seem less a sermon than notes on which for Luther to dilate. They are derived from the seventh volume of his works. ["One of the fathers came up to Luther after the sermon, pulled him by the sleeve, and said, shaking his head—'Doctor, you are going too far, you will do us much harm. The Dominicans are laughing in their sleeves at us.' 'Father,' replied Luther, 'if it comes not from God, it will fall: if it proceeds from his Holy Spirit, it will triumph.'"—AUDIN.]

¹ "If," observes Mr. Roscoe, "Tetzel and the rest did not discredit Luther's doctrines by their arguments, they exasperated his temper by their abuse to such a degree, that he was no longer satisfied with defending victoriously the ground which he had already assumed, but, carrying the war into the precincts of his adversaries, he began, with an unsparing hand, to lay waste all that seemed to oppose his progress."—Roscoe, *Life of Leo X.*

The report of this controversy spread beyond the confines of Germany, and, in due course reached Rome. It is said that Leo X. believed, in the first instance, that the whole affair was merely a professional squabble between the rival Augustines and Dominicans, and that he observed respecting it: "Monkish jealousies; nothing more. Fra Luther is a man of fine genius."¹

"While I was attacked and misrepresented, beloved reader, I knew well the malevolence of Tetzal, Eck, and the rest of them. Nor in this feeling was I mistaken, for I found that everywhere they were assiduously inculcating among the people that I was not only an obstinate heretic, but the enemy of all religion whatever. By disseminating these and other lies, unnecessary for me to mention, they hoped to excite the prejudices of the people against me, and while they carried on their detestable traffic of indulgences, retain the poor souls in the chains of that disgusting and odious despotism under which the pope and his satellites blind and overwhelm their unfor-

¹ Luther elsewhere gives a different account of the matter:—"When my first positions (he says in his Table Talk) concerning indulgences were brought before the pope, he said, 'A drunken Dutchman wrote them; when he hath slept out his sleep, and is sober again, he will then be of another mind.' In such sort he contemneth every man." Luther, however, gave the Italians, in the way of contemptuousness, as good as they brought. "If this Sylvester," he writes on the 1st September, 1518, "does not cease annoying me with his trash, I will put an end to the matter, and, giving the rein to my thought and my pen, show him that there are men in Germany who thoroughly comprehend his tricks, and those of his fellow Romans, and I don't care how soon I do this. For a long time past, the Romans, in their juggling, their quips, and their craft, have been amusing themselves at our expense, as though we were heavy blockheads."

"I am delighted that Philip (Melancthon) has himself experienced for himself the Italian character of mind. It is a philosophy that will not credit aught but on experience. As to myself, I can no longer place trust in any Italian, not even in the emperor's confessor. My dear Cardinal loved me so tenderly, that he would have poured out for me every drop of blood in—my veins. They are bad fellows. When you can get hold of a good Italian, he is very good; but a good Italian is as great a prodigy as a black swan." (21st July, 1530.)

"I want Sadoletto to believe that God is father of men, even out of Italy; but you cannot drive this into an Italian's head."

"The Italians," adds Hutten, "who charge us with incapacity to produce any writer of genius, are compelled to admire our Albert Durer, and do so with such fervour, that their painters, to sell their own works, are vain to put our Albert's name to them."

tunate and superstitious slaves. So to show the whole world the characters of these men, and how unscrupulous they are in publishing daring lies to serve their own purposes—a common practice in that mystery of iniquity called popedom, of which, I verily believe, the devil is the agent—I wrote to the pope Leo the following most submissive letter, for at that time my eyes were not fully open to the abominations of Rome.

“To the most holy father, Leo X., Martin Luther, of the Augustin order of monks at Wittemberg, wishes eternal salvation.

“I have heard, most holy father, that some most idle charges have been made against me to you, which bring me under your holiness' censure, as though I had contrived a plot to undermine the authority of the church, and the power of the supreme pontiff. I am called a heretic, an apostate, a traitor, and no end of odious names. My ears are shocked, my mind is lost in amazement, at these accusations. One testimony to my upright conduct is with me, however, the testimony of a good and quiet conscience. I do not mention these circumstances as if I had never heard of them before, for the men to whom I refer, who pretend to be most trustworthy and honest, have cast such names upon me in my own country; and, conscious of their falsehood, have imputed to me the most ignominious conduct, that they may justify their own villanies. But you, most holy father, are the best judge of the matter in dispute; you only, impartial and unprejudiced, are worthy to hear it from me.

“At the time that the jubilee of the apostolic indulgences was announced, certain persons, under the sanction of your authority, imagining they might say and do what they pleased, publicly taught the most blasphemous heresies, to the serious scandal and contempt of the church, as if the decretals contained nothing in them condemning the impositions of these extortioners. Not content with the unwarrantable language which they used in propagating their poison, they moreover published little pamphlets, and circulated them among the common people, in which—proving that I say nothing unjust of the insatiable and monstrous imposition of their conduct—they themselves maintained these same blasphemies and

heretical doctrines, and so determinedly, that they bound themselves by oath to inculcate them fixedly on the people.

“If these men deny the facts I speak of, their pamphlets are in existence to prove their conduct to have been what I say. They carried on this traffic prosperously, and the poor people were thoroughly deceived by false hopes; as the prophet says, *the very flesh was taken from their bones*, the impostors themselves living meantime in all luxury and gluttony.

“One argument they oftenest put forwards was the authority of your name, threatening summary punishment upon all who differed from them, and branding them as heretics. The language they used is indescribable, nor shall I say how fiercely they resented opposition, and even the merest doubt respecting them. If this mode of propagating error be sanctioned, schisms and seditions cannot fail to appear.

“Soon stories began to get abroad, in the shops and public places, concerning the avarice of these indulgence-hawkers, and prejudicial to the authority of the holy see; this is well known throughout the country. I confess that I myself, for the sake of Christ, as I believed, burned with indignation at the preposterous proceedings of these men, though I did not for a while make up my mind what to do. I privately sent intimations to certain prelates of the church as to what was going on. Some treated me with utter silence, others wrote to me slightly; the influence of your alleged authority prevailing with them. At last, finding humble remonstrance of no avail, I resolved to challenge these indulgence-sellers to prove their dogmas in disputation with me. I published a list of propositions, inviting only the doctors, if they were so disposed, to discuss with me, as may be seen in the preamble to my propositions.

“And this is partly why they rage so, being furious that I, only a master in theology, should claim to discuss in the public school, though after the custom of all universities and of the whole church, not only concerning indulgences, but also concerning the power of remission of sin, the divine authority of indulgences, and other important matters. Now though I resent their denying me the privilege conceded by your most holy licence, 'tis with reluctance I take up the controversy with them, and declare against their proceedings, wherein

they mix up the dreams of Aristotle with theology, and set forth silly matters concerning the divine majesty above and beyond the power vested in them. Now what shall I do? I cannot recal that which I have done, and I perceive a determined hatred bursting forth against me. I am publicly discussed, according to the various views people take. By some I am called ignorant, stupid, unlearned, in this most refined and illustrious age, which even, as to learning and the arts, eclipses the age of Cicero. Others call me a paltry imitator. But I am compelled to answer geese in their own language.

“Therefore, that I may mitigate the anger of honest enemies, and satisfy the doubts of many, I forward to your holiness my humble propositions, and I do so, secure in your protection and authority, by which all may understand how entirely and implicitly I reverence and respect the ecclesiastical power and authority, and at the same time how falsely, how infamously, my opponents have maligned me. Were I what they call me, it is not probable the illustrious prince Frederick, duke of Saxony and elector of the empire, a prince devotedly attached to the catholic and apostolic truth, would tolerate such a pest in his own university, nor should I have the support of our own learned and virtuous body. I put forward these things in my favour, knowing they will carefully be suppressed by those who seek to embitter you against me.

“Wherefore, most holy father, I prostrate myself at the feet of your clemency, with all which I have and am. Bid me live, or slay me, call, recall, approve, disapprove, as it pleases you; I acknowledge in your voice the voice of Christ speaking and presiding in you. If I am worthy of death, I shall not refuse to die; for ‘the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof, who is blessed for evermore. Amen.’ May he preserve you to all eternity! Trinity Sunday, 1518.”

“Protest of the reverend father, Martin Luther, of the Augustin order at Wittemberg.

“Because this is a theological disputation, touching which some individuals inclined to peace may peradventure take offence, by reason of the recondite nature of the subject, I protest:

“First, that I have never held or taught anything but what

is contained in the sacred Scriptures, in the writings of the fathers of the church, and acknowledged by the Roman church in the canons and pontifical decretals. Yet, if any opinion of mine cannot be refuted or proved by these authorities, I shall hold it for the sake of discussion only, for the exercise of reason, and for the promotion of knowledge and inquiry, always having respect to the judgment of my superiors.

“Further, I venture to challenge, by the law of Christian liberty, what were the acknowledged opinions of St. Thomas, Buonaventure, and the other casuists and schoolmen, without any gloss or interpretation. I am resolved to refute or to admit, as circumstances may render necessary, according to the advice of St. Paul, ‘Prove all things : hold fast that which is good.’ I know the opinion of certain Thomists, that St. Thomas should be approved in all things from the church, but St. Thomas, at all events, is sufficiently acknowledged for an authority. I have shown enough in what I may be wrong, but I am no heretic, though my enemies roar and rage in their vociferations that I am so.”

And Luther here inserts his ninety-five propositions for the pope’s perusal, occupying seventy-two folio pages.

“Moreover,” proceeds Luther, “I thought it necessary to write to several noble and reverend prelates, in justification of my conduct ; and to refute the calumnies of those scandalous monks who were deceiving the people and ensnaring their souls, and more especially to the illustrious prince and most reverend father, Albert, archbishop of Magdeburg, to whom I also sent my disputations.

“To my reverend father, Staupitz, I wrote thus :—

“I remember, reverend father, among the many most delightful and pleasing conversations with which, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I was often peculiarly edified by you, to have occasionally heard you observe respecting the doctrine of penitence, as connected with indulgences, especially referring to those who are troubled in conscience, and those pretenders who torture them with innumerable and burdensome advices, on the manner of confession—and we hailed the sentiment as truly in accordance with divine authority—that that is true penitence which results exclusively from a sense of the love and justice of God, its origin rather than its end and accomplishment.

“ ‘ Your observation made as deep an impression on my mind, as though I had been pierced with the sharp arrow of the hunter, and I began to consult the Scriptures as to the real nature of penitence. The declaration rendered this occupation in many respects most pleasant and delightful to me, and I became satisfactorily convinced that whereas formerly there was no term in the Scriptures at which I felt more uneasiness than that of penitence, even when I would have attempted diligently to please God, and to exhibit a fixed and determined love to him, now there was none which yielded me greater pleasure and delight. Thus the commandments of God become enticing, not only as they are made known to us in his holy word, but as we see them exemplified in the obedient sufferings of our blessed Saviour. While thus meditating, certain individuals began to tune their pipes and to give us some strange music, and with much parade they sounded their new instruments respecting indulgences, which drew me into the field of controversy. In short, by neglecting or perverting the true doctrine of penitence, they had the presumption to enhance, not repentance, not even its most worthless part, which is called *satisfaction*, but the remission of that to me most worthless part, as it never had been previously held and estimated. And now they teach those impious, false, and heretical tenets with such boldness—I had almost said insolence—that he who presumes to express an opinion to the contrary, however diffidently, is forthwith branded as a heretic, as one who should be consigned to the flames of hell, to be eternally punished.

“ ‘ Unable to restrain the ravings of these men, I resolved in the gentlest possible manner to dissent from them, to call in question mildly their headstrong and impious assertions, trusting to the authority of all learned men and of the church, maintaining that it is better to render satisfaction (for sin, by repentance) than that the satisfaction should be remitted for money, namely, by the purchase of indulgences; nor has any doctor ever taught otherwise. I therefore disputed with and differed from them, and because I did so, I provoked their utmost resentment against me, (alas! that such things should be said of souls) my sole offence being in my interference with these zealots in their schemes for obtaining money from the people. And these men so practised in their profitable

knavery, when they could not refute me, pretended that I was injuring the authority of the pope.

“ ‘This is the reason, reverend father, why I am now talked of malignantly in public, who have always been a lover of retirement, choosing rather to attend to the improvement and cultivation of the mind, than to make myself at all an object of public observation. But it behoves me to take these things patiently, and so far, I would rather be the topic of their slander than of their praise.

“ ‘I request, therefore, that you will accept these my brief explanations, and transmit them as soon as possible to the holy father Leo X., because the representation of these malignant men may be injurious to me, and I have no other advocate in that quarter. I do not wish you, however, to be brought into trouble on my account; I desire to answer for myself, and to bear the whole responsibility. Our Saviour Christ knows whether what I have advanced be of myself, or agreeable to his will, without whose approbation the sanction of the pope is of little avail, nor that of any prince whom he guides and commands. But, nevertheless, I expect a decision to be pronounced at Rome.

“ ‘To the threatenings with which I am assailed, I have little to say, except with Reuchlin, that he who is poor has nothing to fear, because he has nothing to lose. He who is deprived of fame and rewards, loses what I neither possess nor desire. One unworthy thing remains, my humble body, fatigued by cares and anxieties; so that whatsoever, with God’s permission, they may do by force or stratagem, they can only deprive me of a few hours of life. ’Tis sufficient for me to know my blessed Lord and Saviour, to whom I shall sing praises as long as I live; if any one will not sing praises with me, that is not my concern; he may growl by himself if he pleases. May the Lord Jesus Christ preserve you, my beloved father, in his holy keeping for ever.

“ ‘MARTIN LUTHER.’ ”

These two letters, of the 30th May, 1518,¹ are dated from Heidelberg, where the Augustins were then holding a pro-

¹ After despatching these letters, we find Luther this year sedulously engaged in delivering a course of lectures *on the Commandments*, in the church of Wittemberg; also four discourses:—*on the efficacy of Excommunication*;

vincial synod, and whither Luther had proceeded for the purpose of maintaining his doctrines against all comers. This famous university, close to the Rhine, and consequently on the most frequented high road in Germany, was certainly the most effective arena in which to champion the new doctrine.

Rome began to put itself in motion.¹ The master of the ceremonies to the sacred palace, the old Dominican, Sylvestro de Prierio, wrote in support of the doctrine of St. Thomas against the Augustin monk, and drew down upon himself a crushing reply, (towards the end of August, 1518.) Luther immediately received orders to appear at Rome within sixty days.² The emperor Maximilian had in vain called upon them not to precipitate matters, undertaking himself to do all the pope might order to be done with respect to Luther. But the zeal of Maximilian himself had begun to be somewhat distrusted at Rome. There had reached the holy city certain expressions of his which sounded disagreeably in the ears of the pope. "That which your monk is doing is not to be despised," the emperor had said to Pfeffinger, one of the elector of Saxony's councillors; "the game with the priests is beginning. Take care of him; it may happen that we shall have need of him." More than once he had bitterly complained of the priests and clergy: "This pope," said he, speaking of Leo X., "has acted towards me like a rogue. I

on the suitable preparation of the mind for receiving the Holy Sacrament, and on the manner in which Christ's Passion should be considered; on Threefold Justice; and on Twofold Justice. Also an exposition of the passage in Ecclesiastes, "There is not a just man on the earth, who doeth good and sinneth not;" with an abridged Instruction for the Confession of Sins according to the Decalogue. In none of these discourses does Martin make any allusion to himself or his position.

¹ The first step taken by the pope had been to write to Dr. Staupitz, exhorting him to use conciliatory means to reclaim Luther, and to soften the animosities which his controversy with Tetzl and his associates had excited. "The reverend father, Dr. Staupitz, my dear friend, and the chief of the Eremites, who was himself convinced of the truth, who loved the word of God, and loathed the impieties and blasphemies of Rome, as soon as he received his instructions from the pope, communicated them to me, and by letters and conversations urged me to reconciliation and forbearance. To do pope Leo justice, these instructions were written in a manner friendly towards me, breathing the spirit of paternal care and solicitude for the peace of the church. I listened to these instructions; I assured my reverend father of my willingness to obey in all things, save those of conscience and duty."

² The citation bears date 7 August, 1518

can fairly say that I have never found in any pope I have met with sincerity or good faith; but, please God, I hope this will be the last of them."¹ These expressions were menacing. It was recollected, moreover, that Maximilian, by way of definitely settling the dispute between the empire and the holy see, had thought of making himself pope. Leo X. accordingly took good care not to leave to him the decision of this dispute, which every day assumed fresh importance.

Luther's main hope was in the protection of the elector. This prince, whether out of the interest he took in his new university,² or from a personal attachment to Luther, had always shown him peculiar favour.³ He had proposed to take

¹ Seckendorf, De Lutherismo, 44.

² The increasing celebrity of Luther attracted to Wittemberg an immense concourse of students. It was a complete hive, Luther himself tells us. An author, nearly contemporary, says:—"I have heard from our preceptors, that students from all nations came to Wittemberg to hear Luther and Melancthon. As soon as they got within sight of the town, they returned thanks to God with clasped hands; for from Wittemberg, as heretofore from Jerusalem, proceeded the light of evangelical truth, to spread thence to the uttermost parts of the earth."—(*Sculletus, annaibus, anno 1517.*) The patronage accorded by the elector, however, was not the most liberal in the world. "I have asked you a dozen times," writes Luther to Spalatin, "to ascertain from the prince, whether it is his intention that this academy should crumble away and perish. I should much like to be satisfied on the point, so that I may not fruitlessly detain here those who are called upon from other quarters. The people at Nuremberg are warmly soliciting Melancthon to join them, the rumour is so prevalent that this school is given up. But we must not press the prince too closely."

After the death of the elector, Luther sent to Spalatin a plan for the better organization of the university. (20th May, 1525.)

³ The elector himself wrote to Spalatin: "Our Martin's affair is proceeding favourably, Pfeffinger has good hopes for him." (Seckendorf, 53.) He sent word to Luther that he had got the legate to write to Rome to have the matter referred to particular judges, and in the meantime exhorted Luther to rest patient, and that, perhaps, the papal censure would not be sent at all. (Seckendorf, 44.)

The members of Luther's own order, the Augustins, who viewed the Dominicans as rivals, were not displeased at Luther's invectives against the latter, and in some degree coalesced with him in lessening the credit of the sellers of indulgences. This circumstance originated the common but false report, circulated by Roman-catholic and other writers, that Luther's conduct resulted from disappointment that his own order had not been selected for the traffic. Hume says, in his History of England, 'that the Augustin friars had been usually employed in Saxony to preach indulgences, and from this trust had derived both profit and consideration; and Arcimbaldo, having given this employment to the Dominicans, Martin Luther, au

upon himself the expenses attending his protégé's obtaining his doctor's degree. In 1517, Luther thanks him, in a letter, for having sent him, at the beginning of winter, cloth to make him a gown. He felt pretty sure, too, that the elector by no means owed him any grudge for getting up an excitement of a nature to annoy the archbishop of Mayence and Magdeburg, a prince of the house of Brandenburg, and consequently an enemy to that of Saxony. Finally, the elector had announced that he recognised no other rule of faith than the words of Scripture themselves; and this afforded Luther a powerful argument for deeming himself secure in that quarter. Luther reminds the elector of this circumstance in the following passage of a letter, dated 27th March, 1519. "Doctor Staupitz, my true father in Christ, has related to me that conversing one

Augustin friar, professor in the university of Wittemberg, resented the affront thus put upon his order, and began to preach against the abuses that were committed in the sale of indulgences; and being provoked by opposition, proceeded even to deny indulgences themselves.' These assertions of Hume's are founded on a passage of Father Paul, in his History of the Council of Trent, which, as Mr. Maclaine, in his able translation of Mosheim, observes, has been abundantly refuted by Prierio, Pallavicini, and Gravesor, Luther's inveterate enemies. Father Paul affirms:—'It was a custom in Saxony, that whenever indulgences were sold there by order of the popes, the friars of the order of the Eremites were employed to publish them. The pardon-mongers, ministers of Arcimbaldo, would not go to them, because, being so accustomed to manage this merchandise, they might use some device to draw secret profits to themselves; so they went to the Dominicans. These, in publishing the indulgences, in order to amplify the value of them more than had been done before, spake many strange things, which gave cause of scandal; whereon Martin Luther, an Eremite, being stirred up, began to speak against the new pardoners; first, reprehending these excessive abuses only; afterwards, being provoked by them, he set himself to study the matter, being desirous to see the foundation and root of the doctrine of indulgences.'

Now, in the first place, the Augustin friars had *not* usually been employed to preach indulgences in Saxony; that privilegè had been conferred alternately on the various mendicant orders, and sometimes on all of them collectively—namely, the Augustins, the Carmelites, the Dominicans, and the Franciscans; but from the year 1229, it had been principally entrusted to the Dominicans. In all the records which relate to indulgences, the name of an Augustin is rarely found, and not a single instance in which the pontiff grants the office to that order. From 1450 to 1517, when indulgences were sold with the most shameless impudence, no Augustin monk was employed, if we except a monk named Palzius, a truckler to Raymond Peraldi, the papal quæstor. *Secondly*, Arcimbaldo was never appointed to publish the indulgences, his district being Flanders

day with your electoral highness respecting these preachers who, instead of giving forth the pure word of God, preached to the people nothing but miserable quirks or human traditions, you said to him, that the Holy Scripture speaks with so imposing a majesty,¹ with such completeness of proof, that it has no need of all this adventitious aid of polemics, and that it places in one's mouth, involuntarily, these words: 'Never man spoke thus: this is the finger of God; this teaches not as the scribes and pharisees teach, but as the direct organ and mouthpiece of Almighty Power.' Staupitz approving these words, you went on: 'Give me your hand, and promise me, I entreat, that henceforth you will follow the new doctrine!'" The natural continuation of this passage is to be found in a manuscript life of the elector, by Spalatin. "With what pleasure would he listen to such sermons, and

and the Upper and Lower Rhine. *Thirdly*, Luther was not instigated by the superiors of his order to attack the Dominicans. The act was quite his own. It was of little consequence to him who promulgated the indulgences. *Fourthly*, the traffic in indulgences had become so notoriously infamous, that even many Franciscans and Dominicans, towards the end of the 15th century, opposed it publicly in their writings; and the very commission which first excited Luther's indignation, had actually been tendered by Leo to the Augustins, and by them refused. *Lastly*, Luther was never accused by the most hostile of contemporary writers on this subject. Guicciardini candidly admits, that Luther's opposition 'was, doubtless, honest, and, at all events, from the just occasion given for it, in some degree excusable. Not to mention, however, this historian, or Erasmus, Sleidan, and de Thou, who, although popish writers, may be charged with partiality to Luther, those whom the reformer assailed with more vehemence than prudence, Cajetano, Hoogenstraat, Prierio, Emser, and Tetzel himself, make no such allegation. 'Even,' observes Maclaine, 'the lying Cochleus was silent on this head, though, after the death of the great reformer, he broached the calumny I am here refuting. Can it be imagined that motives to action which escaped the prying eyes of Luther's contemporaries, should have discovered themselves to us, who live at such a distance of time from the period of action—to M. Bossuet, to Mr. Hume, and other abettors of this ill-contrived and foolish story? Either there are no rules of moral evidence, or Mr. Hume's assertion is entirely groundless. and of no application

¹ Schenck had been commissioned to buy relics for the collegiate church of Wittemberg; but in 1520, the commission was revoked, and the purchased relics sent to Italy, to be sold for what they would fetch. "For here," writes Spalatin, "the common people despise them, in the firm and very legitimate persuasion, that all that is necessary is to learn well the Scriptures, to have faith and confidence in God, and to love one's neighbour."—SECKENDORF, 223.

read the word of God, especially the Evangelists, from whom he was always citing fine and consolatory sentences. But that which more especially was always on his lips was the expression of Christ in the gospel according to St. John: 'Without me, ye can do nothing.' He made use of this sentence as an argument against free will, even before Erasmus of Rotterdam had ventured to support, in several writings, this wretched freedom of the will in opposition to the word of God. He used often to say to me: 'How can we have free will? since Christ himself has said: Without me ye can do nothing, *Sine me nihil potestis facere.*'"¹

Yet it would be an entire misconception to understand from the above passages that Staupitz and his disciple were merely the instruments of the elector. The Reformation of Luther was evidently a spontaneous principle of his own. The prince, as we shall have occasion to observe elsewhere, was rather alarmed at the daring of Luther. He embraced, he loved, he profited by the initiated Reformation: he would never himself have commenced it.

Luther had written on the 15th February, 1518, to his prudent friend Spalatin, the chaplain, secretary and confidant of the elector: "Here are bawlers who go about saying, to my infinite vexation, that all this is the work of our illustrious prince, that it is he who has urged me on to it, for the sake of spiting the archbishop of Magdeburg and Mayence. I wish you maturely to consider whether or no it is desirable to mention the matter to his highness. I am truly afflicted to see him suspected on my account. To be a cause of discord between such mighty lords, is an awful thing." He holds the same language to the elector himself, in his account of the conference at Augsburg. On the 21st March, writing to M. Lange, afterwards archbishop of Saltzburg, he says: "Our prince has taken Carlsta^{lt} and myself under his protection, and without any solicitation on our part. He will not permit them to drag me to Rome. This they know, and it is this vexes them so;" which would obviously lead us to suppose that Luther had already received from the elector definitive promises. Yet, on the 21st August, 1518, in a letter, still more confidential,

¹ Seckendorf, 70.

to Spalatin, he says: "I do not at all see at present how I can escape the censures with which I am threatened, if the prince does not come forward to my succour, though I would rather undergo the censure of the whole world, than have his highness blamed for my sake. This, therefore, is the course which it appears to our learned friends best for me to pursue, that I should demand of the prince a safe-conduct (*salvum, ut vocant, conductum, per meum dominum*). He will refuse it me, I am certain, and I shall then, say our friends, have a valid excuse for not appearing at Rome. I would ask you, then, to obtain from our illustrious prince, a rescript setting forth that he refuses me the safe-conduct, and makes me responsible, if I persist in setting out, for all the dangers I may incur. By so doing, you will render me an important service. But the thing must be done at once: time presses, the assigned day is near at hand."

Luther might have saved himself this letter. The prince, without having communicated with him on the point, had been taking measures for his security.¹ He had managed that

¹ The university of Wittemberg also addressed two letters on the subject, one to the pope, the other to Charles de Miltitz, a Saxon nobleman, who had previously been in military service, but was now papal councillor and apostolic chamberlain. The letter to the pope was couched in the following terms:

"The University of Wittemberg to the holy Roman pontiff, Leo X., testifying the integrity of Father Martin Luther, and excusing him for not proceeding to Rome:

"Most holy father, your most courteous and truly pastoral kindness will not, we humbly submit, accuse us of forwardness and presumption, when we make bold to approach your holiness by these our letters, seeing that piety and truth sanctioning our dutiful regard, will, we hope, secure to us your consideration, as it is munificently bestowed on every occasion.

"A certain brother, Martin Luther, master of arts, and professor of divinity, a faithful and worthy member of our body, has petitioned us, trusting to the success of our application, and requested our mediation with your holiness, to which we have affixed our testimonial of his life and doctrine, which are now called in question by questionable persons.

"By a commission, instituted under the authority of your holiness, to investigate certain disputes connected with indulgences, our brother is cited to appear personally at Rome. But, on account of the state of his health, and the dangers attending the journey, he is not able to undertake what he would otherwise be most anxious to do. On duly considering this his petition, we add our certification respecting him:

"We, the most obedient and devoted sons of your holiness, humbly and

Luther should be examined by a legate in Germany, in the free town of Augsburg ; where he himself was at this time, and where he had doubtless come to an understanding with the magistrates to guarantee the safety of Luther during the dangerous conference. It was, we may be pretty sure, to this invisible Providence hovering over Luther, that we are to assign the almost painful anxiety evinced by these magistrates to preserve the reformer from the snares that might be laid for him by the Italians. As to him, he went straightforward on, strong in courage and in simple faith, quite uncertain to what extent the prince was disposed to act in his favour.

“ I have said, and I repeat it, I would not in this business have our prince, who is throughout blameless, take the least step towards defending my propositions. If he can do it without compromising himself, let him guard me against actual violence ; but if he cannot safely do this, I am ready to meet the utmost peril that may threaten me.”¹

earnestly implore you, most holy father, that our brother may be thought worthy of credit. Our opinion of him is, that he has never swerved from his true duty towards the holy Roman church, nor become infected with heretical opinions. He has merely exercised his right of debating freely, which his adversaries have also done ; he has asserted nothing. We ourselves, holy father, would be held as a body determined to have no fellowship with any who oppose the genuine doctrines of the catholic church, resolved, in the midst of all things, by your favour and that of holy church, to be obedient to our Lord Jesus Christ, who, we pray, will move your holiness to listen favourably to our petition.

“ Given at Wittemberg, September 25, 1518.”

¹ “ Luther departed from Wittemberg at daybreak, on foot, without a penny in his pocket, and dressed in a worn-out gown. Great and small, clergy and laymen, were waiting to take leave of him at the gates. When he appeared, they cried—‘ Luther for ever !’

“ ‘ Christ for ever, and his word !’ replied Martin. Some of the crowd quitted the main body, and approached him. ‘ Courage, master,’ said they, ‘ and God help you !’

“ ‘ Amen !’ replied Luther

“ His friends accompanied him several miles on the way, and then separated from him with a warm embrace :

“ ‘ *In manus tuas Domine, commendo animum meam !*’ said Luther.

“ ‘ Amen !’ returned his disciples, in chorus.

“ Luther went gaily on his way, though ever and anon terrible pains in his stomach wellnigh impelled him to turn back ; but his heart was stronger than the malady. On his road, when he found no monastery to take up his abode in, he availed himself of private hospitality.

“ At Weimar, he passed the night of the 28th in the house of the curate

The pope's legate, Thomas de Vio, cardinal of Caieta, was certainly a judge little open to suspicion. He had, indeed, himself written that it was permissible to interpret the Scripture, without following the torrent of the fathers, *contra torrentem patrum*, and this freedom had rendered him somewhat liable to an imputation of heresy; but, as the pope's man in this affair, he took it up entirely as a political matter, and assailed the doctrine of Luther only in the point of view, where it shook the political and fiscal domination of the court of Rome. He limited himself to the practical question of the *treasure of the indulgences*, without extending his interogatories to the speculative principle of grace.

"In the year 1518, the 9th of October," says Luther, "when I was cited to Augsburg, I came and appeared: Frederick, prince-elect of Saxony, having appointed me a strong convoy and safe-conduct; and recommended me to the people of the city, who were very attentive, and warned me in no case to have conversation with the Italians, nor to repose any trust

Myconius, who soon after threw off the monk's gown, and married a young girl of Gotha. Luther preached next day in his church.

"Some days after, he embraced at Nuremberg his friend Wincelous Linck, who made him a present of a handsome black gown, and accompanied him, together with an Augustin named Leonard, to Augsburg. For some way, all three travelled on foot; but, at a few miles from the city, Luther could scarcely walk; a vehicle was then hired by Linck, and all three proceeded by it the remainder of the journey. On the evening of his arrival in Augsburg, Luther wrote thus to his friend Philip Melancthon, then a professor in the university of Tubingen, afterwards his colleague and associate at Wittemberg:

"There is nothing new or wonderful here at present known to me, except that I am the subject of conversation throughout the city, my name in every man's mouth. All are anxious to see him who is to be the victim of such a conflagration. You, meantime, will continue quietly and faithfully to discharge your duty, without alarm, instructing rightly, as you have ever done, the youth under your care. For you and for them I go onward, ready to be sacrificed, if such be the will of Heaven. I am not only ready to die, but, what were far worse to me, to be deprived of your dear society, rather than retract the truths I have maintained, or be the means of affording the stupid and bitter enemies of liberal studies and elegant learning an opportunity of achieving a triumph. Italy is prostrate in Egyptian darkness, and her people are ignorant of Christ and of those who love Christ. But we know some influential men who regard true religion. The wrath of God may be administered by our agency, as it is written—'I will make their princes as children, and the feeble shall reign over them.' Farewell, beloved Melancthon, and avert the wrath of God from us by your faithful prayers. Augsburg, October 12, 1518.'"—AUDIN.

TO THE TOP