

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

VOL. XVII.

OCTOBER, 1913.

No. 4.

MARTIN LUTHER.¹⁾

The effect of the scholastic system was to narrow the world of observation in the greatest degree, and to make the world of thought a matter of hair-splitting logic. It was this system which was in the ascendant at Erfurt during the student days of Luther, as he sat at the feet of men like Trutvetter and Arnoldi. Of scholasticism Luther made a very thorough study, and his rebellion against Aristotle was after he had made himself master of his system, and of the tyrannical hold his philosophy had upon the age. The teaching of the Church, as Luther found to his cost, had been completed by a rationalism in which Aristotle had been permitted to sit in judgment on Christ and the apostles.

Accordingly, we find him in 1516 indignantly declaring that if Aristotle had not been flesh, he would not hesitate to affirm that he was the very devil; and that it was a great cross to him that so much time was wasted in the universities in studying this writer. But if Luther thus rebelled, and with reason, at the old learning, he took enthusiastically to

1) Excerpts from *The Genius of Protestantism, A Book for the Times*, by the Rev. R. M'Cheyne Edgar, M. A., D. D. Edinburgh, Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier. 1900. 339 pp. — Dr. Edgar of Trinity College, Dublin, for fifteen years took a class over the history of the Reformation, and became convinced that Protestantism was an honest effort to get back to what was primitive and apostolic, and that Romanism, on the other hand, seems to give the primitive and apostolic the go-by, and to set up as a bran-new religion. — *William Dallmann*.

the new learning as provided in the classics; and "he read them," as Melanchthon tells us, "not like boys who pick out words, but for their doctrine and pictures of life. The maxims and judgments of these writers were closely examined, and, as his memory was faithful, most that he read was ever at his command." Cicero was his favorite author, and he studied him as a master in philosophy. "He has written more," said Luther, "than all the philosophers, and has read all the books of the Greeks." After him came Ovid and Virgil, Livy and Strabo, Plautus and Terence. He was also anxious to have corrupt allusions in these writers cut out, so as to keep pure the moral atmosphere of the schools. But what we are bound to notice is the fact, which we have on the authority of Melanchthon, that Luther's talents and attainments were "the admiration of the entire university." He was, in fact, the first man in the largest university of his time. Many do Luther grievous injustice because he did not, like Erasmus, pursue in learned leisure his classical studies, and decline the great struggle of the age. But the man who, in three months at the Wartburg, produced his translation of the New Testament and therein laid the foundation of German literature, and whose works, thrown off as the great battle demanded, and which run to more than one hundred volumes, the German and Latin treatises combined, are still prized and perused as the most vital of literatures, has a right to be regarded as one of the mightiest of the intellectual giants who have promoted the freedom and welfare of the human race. We have in Luther one of the foremost men in all the files of time. But what is especially interesting about him is the openness of his mind. He was the modern man all over, ready to take in what the new world provided, ready to appreciate Nature in her varying moods, ready to keep pace with the age, nay, to lead it. . . .

It is perfectly certain that if they themselves [the Reformers] had not been men enjoying assurance of salvation, they could never have accomplished, as they did, the emanci-

pation and salvation of Europe. And it is this very assurance which made them so intensely real and human in all their new life. Luther, of whom we necessarily must think most, in considering the meaning of the Reformation, was the most human and real of men. He was a far greater foe of shams and false appearances than such a man, for example, as Thomas Carlyle, for the simple reason that he was far surer of his position before God and among men than the Chelsea sage ever was. His whole experience got the note of reality it needed from his assurance of faith. He knew that behind Nature, as well as behind the Holy Scriptures, there was a personal God, a great Spirit, who had in love for the sake of His Son forgiven Luther his sin and extended to him peace and joy through believing. Accordingly, he could handle Nature as a poet, and see in all experience the evidence of God. . . . Luther became a doctor in the Holy Scriptures, as he chose to put it, rather than in theology, and gave his strength to the exposition, from the professor's chair, from the pulpit, and from the press, of God's Holy Word. . . .

Luther entered into the reality of a great experience when he felt before God justified by faith. He saw God as his rightful King extending His clemency to His sinful subject and calling him into communion. It was the written Word which had conveyed the divine peace. It had become a means of grace to his soul, a sword of the Spirit subduing him and consoling him. And so he could pass through the ordeal at the Diet of Worms heroically. The position he takes up when challenged by Eckius is, "I never will submit to popes and councils when they are manifestly in the wrong. But I'll submit to the Scripture God has given me, and to the conscience that is in me *here*."

"Brave words," it has been truly said, "though commonplace enough they seem to us. But they have startled that assembly like a peal of thunder; and from a hundred swords and croziers the lightning of defiance flashes back, and there are muttering thunders of Huss and of martyrdom by fire!

And once more Dr. Eckius stands forth, 'These are thy books! Dost thou retract or no?' A moment's pause as if he had faltered; but he does not, for he is praying. Speak, monk! the empire and the Church are listening for thy word! Speak, monk! the nations struggling to be free are listening! Speak, monk! the nations yet unborn are listening too! Speak, monk! even blinded revolutionary France amid her blindness lifts her head and listens! Speak, monk! nobles from England, from Whitehall, and Cromwell's Ironsides, and pilgrims from voyages across the deep, and negro slaves in the nineteenth century are listening! And who knows what beyond? *All* listening for thy word! And from above, the noble army of martyrs are bending down and listening! But Luther sees not these. Luther sees his 'fortress firm'—the Lord, his God—and rests on Him, and says, 'Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders, so helfe mir Gott!'—'Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, so help me God!' It may seem scarcely possible that moral bravery should go beyond this. But there was something bolder still (it seems to me) in Luther in the castle of Wartburg and the battle with the devil. For when the Worms Diet is dissolved, . . . with characteristic humbleness of mind this greatest man, undoubtedly the greatest hero of his day, is off to visit his humble relations amongst the peasantry of Mochra in the woodlands of Thuringia, and being seized at some turn of the woods by the vizored knights of Friedrich (who was greatly more careful of his safety than he was himself), as the prophets of old were hid in a cave from the wrath of Ahab and of Jezebel, so Luther is conveyed to the castle of Wartburg, the grim fortress crowning the hill behind Eisenach, and overlooking, miles on miles around, the sable forests of Thuringia. Here disguised as 'Junker Georg,' a rather fast young German gentleman, moustached, with feathered cap and green slashed doublet and a sword,—as we have seen him pictured after Luke Cranach's portraits of the 'Master George,'—he follows the huntsmen in the summer woods, the gay green huntsmen with their bugled halloo, and

the melodious murmur of the hounds; and were it not for his womanly tenderness when poor Puss is worried, or Reynard run down, and the comparison he continuously insists on making of poor Puss to the Church, and the huntsmen and hounds to the Pope and the devil, no one might even suspect that gay young count, this 'Master George,' was the monk of Wittenberg at all!

"And now the autumn is past, and summer ended, and dreary winter is coming on—and here in his 'Patmos,' as he calls it, in his castle in the clouds, in his nest among the birds of the air, he is engaged in translating the Bible, making that admirable version which, like our own, and Diodati's, springing from the period when the language had the bloom and freshness of its youthful vigor on it, can never, I believe, be superseded. 'I am here,' writes Luther, 'at once the idlest and busiest of mortals. I study the Hebrew and Greek Bible, and write without interruption, while the master of the castle treats me with a distinction far above my merit.' 'The translation of the Bible,' says Pfizer in his *Life of Luther*, 'was the greatest, the most meritorious, the most blessed of all Luther's works, and he actually finished the New Testament before leaving his Patmos. The belief that the translation of the Bible was the fruit of Luther's imprisonment is so general that the castle of the Wartburg and the German Bible are almost identified in the minds of the people; and it is indeed remarkable that a castle which, as the scene of the celebrated conflict of the Minnesingers, or troubadours, contributed to form an important epoch in German poetry, should likewise have been the cradle of a work which may justly be regarded as the foundation of the present German prose.'" (Footnote. Dr. William B. Robertson's *Martin Luther—German Student Life—Poetry*. Second Ed. Glasgow: MacLehose, 1892, pp. 53—57.)

Now we can have no better embodiment of the Protestant spirit than Luther thus engaged at the Wartburg. Reconciled to God through Christ, he is able to enjoy Nature and to

realize that it, too, is His heavenly Father's. But the leisure must be utilized for the common weal; and he must give the German people in their own tongue that Word of God which has made all things new to himself. Having experienced the peace-giving power of the divine Word, he must place the same privilege and means of grace before his countrymen.

His leaving the Wartburg is also a manifestation of the Protestant spirit, for it was the extravagance of agitators who depreciated the authority of the Holy Scriptures and professed to have immediate revelations which drew him from his seclusion on the mountain-top to Wittenberg. He ran great risks in doing so, but his calm deliverances, in eight sermons, on the duty of the Lord's people in the crisis, and which breathe the very spirit of toleration, restored the people to their senses and kept the movement within the bounds of the divine Word. He was able also to secure the help of others, better versed in Hebrew, in the translation of the Old Testament, so that his grand project, to which his friends had urged him, of providing a new and better translation of the entire Scriptures, was in due season accomplished. To the divine Word he bowed, and he wanted all his countrymen to take up the same attitude towards Him whose Word it was. No "inner light" is to be allowed to supplant the outer Word. It speaks to the spirit as no vision can do. It must be heeded, and all else judged thereby. A letter to Melancthon before his return reveals his attitude towards the visionaries: "I cannot approve of your timidity. When they make professions concerning themselves, they are not to be immediately heard, but, according to the direction of St. John, the spirits must be tested. You have also the advice of Gamaliel concerning deferring judgment, for there is nothing, so far as I have heard, that they have said or done that Satan cannot imitate. Only try, in my stead, whether they can prove their vocation. For God never sent any one, not even His Son, unless called by man, or approved by signs. Examine whether they have experienced spiritual distress. If you hear only smooth, tranquil, devout,

and religious things of them, even though they profess to have been carried to the third heaven, do not give them your approval, because the sign of the Son of Man is wanting. Try them, therefore, and listen not even to the glorified Christ unless you have first seen Him crucified."

The Bible in its entirety, as man's rule of faith, was thus laid before the German people as the basis of Protestantism. Luther and his fellow-Reformers became the great expositors of Holy Scripture. When he became "Doctor of Theology," he preferred being called "Doctor of the Holy Scriptures." When he entered upon his duties as theological professor, it was not to lecture upon the scholastics, but to discard these for the Holy Scriptures. Five years before he nailed up his theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg, he had substituted the study of the Scriptures for the study of the schoolmen in the classroom of the University. And his commentaries on the Psalms, Galatians, and the other portions of Scripture give to us in its most vivid form the Protestant spirit. Indeed, so enamored was Luther of the treasure of Holy Scripture that he never gave up popular exposition for any systematic theological treatise. . . . He was the most popular and copious expositor of certain portions of the Divine Word that the world has ever seen. . . . And Protestantism has followed up this exegetical work of the Reformers by vast libraries of exposition. The contribution of the Church of Rome to the exposition of God's Word is a mere drop in the bucket when compared with the commentaries of Protestantism. An occasional commentator, like Schand, of Munich, appears among the Romanists to redeem the Church from the charge of utter neglect of the divine Word; but so far as the understanding of Holy Scripture is concerned, it is to Protestantism, and not to the "infallible guide," the earnest student must look for assistance. God's Word has never been so faithfully and earnestly studied as by Protestantism. We stand in the true Protestant succession when we study this best of books with the very marrow of our bones, because it has proved itself

“holy oracles” from which divine guidance may be constantly obtained.

Luther’s “Address to the Nobility of the German Nation” was the battle-cry to the noble *laymen* of the Church to come forward and fight for reformation. His “Freedom of a Christian Man” is the “pearl” of all the Reformer’s writings. It is really the clarion call to the downtrodden serfs of Europe to enter into Christian liberty. It was Protestantism finding and enfranchising the individual. The individual was sacrificed first to the secular authority of the “world-king,” and secondly to the spiritual authority of the “world-priest.” The two ideas of a world-king and of a world-priest so dominated Europe that the individual seemed of no account, and the Emperor and the Pope all in all. The Reformation was the finding and the ennobling of the individual. . . . Luther was nature and grace the determined foe of all shams. . . .

Luther, in his “Resolutio,” affirms that the power of the keys belongs not to the Pope, but to the Church, and that the Church is not the hierarchy, but the communion of saints. The ministry, he maintains, exercises the power in the name of the Church. And a study of the proof passages will show that Luther is right. The delegated power is evidently made over to the Church, and Peter and the other apostles were to exercise it in the name of the Church.

The Reformer thought he found the doctrine [of the priesthood of all believers] in Augustine, but he was helped to it chiefly by Tauler. It becomes in Luther’s hands, however, a power which it never was with the mystic. We may see it in its full force in the “Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation.” The universal priesthood of all believers and the equal rights and dignity of the laity and clergy are its great themes. He bases his doctrine upon 1 Pet. 2, 9: “Ye are a royal priesthood, a holy nation,” and on Rev. 5, 10: “And hast made us unto our God, kings and priests.” He maintains that priesthood comes to all believers in Baptism, and cannot be conferred by ordination afterwards. The Chris-

tian ministry was regarded by Luther as an office to which suitable men are to be elected by the congregation of priests, to be exercised in the name of the believing people. "For, since we are all priests alike," he says, "no man may put himself forward, or take upon himself, without our consent or election, to do that which we have all alike power to do." In his address on the "Abuse of the Mass," in 1522, we find him saying: "Only one Priest do we have, *viz.*, Christ, who offered Himself for us all. This is a spiritual priesthood common to all Christians, whereby we are all priests with Christ, *i. e.*, we are all the children of Christ, the High Priest, and need no other priest or mediator. As every priest (Hebr. 8, 1) is set apart to pray for the people and preach, so every Christian, for himself, may pray in Christ and come to God (Rom. 5, 2). . . . In the New Testament the external priesthood is overthrown, for it makes prayer, access to God, and teaching common to all men." And, only to give another quotation, we find him saying in his work on "The Freedom of the Christian Man": "Nor are we only kings and the freest of all men, but also priests forever, a dignity far higher than kingship, because by that priesthood we are worthy to appear before God, to pray for others, and to teach one another mutually the things which are of God. For these are the duties of priests, and they cannot possibly be permitted to any unbeliever. Christ has obtained for us this favor if we believe in Him, that, just as we are His brethren and co-heirs and fellow-kings with Him, so we should be also fellow-priests with Him, and venture with confidence, through the spirit of faith, to come into the presence of God, and cry, 'Abba, Father!' and to pray for one another, and to do all things which we see done and figured in the visible and corporeal office of priesthood." And any large acquaintance with the works of Luther will show that he made the doctrine one of the corner-stones of his edifice. Protestantism is committed to the "priesthood of all believers."

It will be well to reveal here the real basis of "Protestant

Missions." When Luther laid such emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, he distinctly recognized one of the duties of the priests to be to pray for others, and, if necessary, to teach them; and he supposes a believer in a heathen district where there are no ministers available, and he shows it to be his duty, no matter what his calling may be, to instruct the heathen in the Gospel. The idea consequently is this, As priests, believers stand between the living God, to whom we have access through the only High Priest, and the unbelieving world. We are so far mediators that we should pray for the world which lies in the wicked one, and do our best to instruct it in the Gospel. The missionary enterprise is a clear consequence of the priestly, consecrated position we occupy as believers before God. And, as a matter of fact, the Reformers were as missionary in spirit as their circumstances permitted. They had not the same access to heathen lands as the Roman Catholic powers in the sixteenth century. They had not the facilities their enemies enjoyed. But they were splendid missionaries at home, if they could not do much among the heathen. Like Luther at the Wartburg translating the Scriptures for the common people, they everywhere applied themselves to the instruction of their fellows in the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. They were preeminently "doctors of the Scriptures," like their illustrious leader, and they seized every opportunity of promoting a knowledge of Christ among men. Sanctification takes of necessity a practical turn with all who realize that they are "priests of God."

The divine idea from the first was a universal priesthood of believing souls, rather than any sacerdotal class, and Protestantism awoke to the grand idea and proceeded to put it into practice. We have next to notice how this priesthood is endowed. Now Luther was very clear as to the call of this believing priesthood to teach and administer the sacraments and exercise the authority of the Church. He maintained that Christ gave to the believing people the commission to teach the nations and to exercise the power of the keys. As the

Protestant movement really turns upon this particular point, it will be necessary to study it with some care.

In his "Address to the Nobility" he takes up the matter in its rudimentary form:—

"If a little company of pious Christian laymen were taken prisoners and carried away to a desert, and had not among them a priest consecrated by a bishop, and were there to agree to elect one of them, married or unmarried, and were to ordain him to baptize, to celebrate the mass, to absolve and to preach, this man would as truly be a priest as if all the bishops and all the popes had consecrated him. That is why in cases of necessity every man can baptize and absolve, which would not be possible if we were not all priests. This great grace and virtue of Baptism and of the Christian estate they have almost destroyed and made us forget by their ecclesiastical law. In this way the Christians used to choose their bishops and priests out of the community; these being afterwards confirmed by other bishops, without the pomp that we have now. . . . For, since we are all priests alike, no man may put himself forward, or take upon himself, without our consent and election, to do that which we have all alike power to do. For if a thing is common to all, no man may take it to himself without the wish and command of the community. And if it should happen that a man were appointed to one of these offices and deposed for abuses, he would be just what he was before. Therefore a priest should be nothing in Christendom but a functionary; as long as he holds his office, he has precedence of others; if he is deprived of it, he is a peasant and a citizen like the rest. Therefore a priest is verily no longer a priest after deposition. But now they have invented 'characteres indelebiles,' and pretend that a priest after deprivation still differs from a simple layman. They even imagine that a priest can never be anything but a priest, that is, that he can never become a layman. All this is nothing but mere talk and ordinance of human invention. It follows, then, that between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, or, as they call it, between spiritual and

temporal persons, the only real difference is one of office and function, and not of estate: for they are all of the same spiritual estate, true priests, bishops, and popes, though their functions are not the same." In his sermon on 1 Pet. 2, 9 he says: "All those now called priests should be all laymen like the rest; only some should be chosen by the congregation, as its officers, to preach. The distinction, therefore, is one that is only external, and respects the office, to which one is called by a congregation; but before God there is no distinction. Only some are selected from the mass in order to exercise for the congregation the office which belongs to all, and not that one has more power than another." "Since He is Priest, and we are all His brethren, all Christians have the authority and command to preach and proclaim God's grace and virtue, etc., and to go before God, that one may intercede for the other and offer himself to God. Nevertheless, as St. Paul says that everything should be done in order, not every one should teach and administer the sacraments in the congregation, but to whom the office is entrusted, and the rest should listen in silence." The power of the keys, moreover, Luther assigns to the Church. "Christ gives the keys to the entire congregation, and not to St. Peter. This is shown in Matt. 18, 18—20, where Christ gives them to St. Peter for the entire congregation."

Luther's position, then, is this. The priesthood of believers gathered into congregations has the duty of preaching God's Word, administering the sacraments, and exercising discipline committed to it; but that all things may be done decently and in order, they select and call to the office of the ministry those of their number who are qualified for the work. This call is the minister's credential to enter upon the work, and he enters on the office in the name and as the representative of the assembled Church.

The practical outcome of a priesthood of all believers, standing in a state of grace between God and the world, is to lead them to missionary enterprise. The reign of the priest

was over — the reign of the preacher had come. It was fitting that Luther, the very greatest preacher of modern times, should inaugurate the movement. What Europe and the world needed in the sixteenth century, and needs in the nineteenth, is PREACHERS, — not “priests” with fancied sacramental miracles, — but preachers. The marching orders of the Church, to make disciples of the nations, can be fulfilled only by the preachers. And so we see in Protestantism a great evangelistic movement. The Reformers were to a man great preachers. Their effort, moreover, was to provide preachers and teachers for mankind.

Universities have been following Christ's footsteps so far as they have tried to train preachers of the Gospel. It was this idea which Melancthon uttered in his celebrated inaugural lecture at Wittenberg, when, as the rising humanist, fresh from his studies at Tuebingen, he declared: “Theology must be studied by the aid of the Greek and Hebrew. When we go to the sources, then are we led to Christ. I shall begin my work with Homer and the Epistle to Titus.” It was only natural that men who valued so highly the new learning as a help towards Christ and the preaching of His Gospel should *not* lay any special stress on *ordination*. It is a remarkable fact that Melancthon himself, although a Bachelor of Divinity, *never received ordination*. And yet we have at least one picture by Lucas Cranach of Melancthon baptizing an infant. It exists in the Parish Church of Wittenberg. They had no idea of ordination being a gift of *power* without which the ministry could not be exercised effectively. In fact, Luther traces the fitness for the office to the believer's baptism, that is to say, he sees in his personal acceptance of the Gospel and entry into the priesthood of believers the indispensable preparation for office in the Church of God. Ordination is *authority* to exercise the ministerial office.

Luther's view of ordination may be seen in his “Letter to the Bohemians.” He wrote a letter to the Council of Prague, showing how the Christian ministry arises from the needs of

the Christian congregation, and requires no external authority, whether from Rome or elsewhere. It is plain, therefore, that although he had himself what would be regarded as valid "Roman orders," he set no store by these, but valued only his position as an "ambassador of Christ," recognized by the Christian people.

There are some who think that the body and blood of Jesus are behind the consecrated elements, and given along with them. The word "Consubstantiation" has been applied to this view, although such a word never occurs in the works of Luther. He could not shake himself free from the idea that the words of institution are an assurance of the gift of the body along with the bread. But he altogether repudiated the idea of the sacrament being a sacrifice. "In marked contrast with the medieval theory, Luther taught that the sacraments were not rites in which man brought something to God, but that they were institutions and acts of God in which He offered and conferred the grace of the Gospel." Thus Luther says: "In the mass we give nothing to Christ, but only receive from Him." And in another place: "The mass is nothing but the divine promise or testament of Christ, commended by the sacrament of His body and blood." It is, we think, most important that Luther's position should be clearly defined. One would imagine from references to his Marburg Conference with the Swiss Reformers that he was contending for something like the doctrine of the Real Presence as held by the Tractarian School. But at their sacrificial idea Luther would have stood aghast. He would have regarded their contention that there is a sacrifice presented to God in the Eucharist as treason to the all-sufficiency of the Savior's sacrifice. The Reformers were unanimous regarding this most important point that the sacrament cannot be made a sacrifice.

It was in the year 1523, six years after the Ninety-five Theses of Luther had been nailed to the church-door at Wittenberg, that nine nuns, weary of their rash vows, and convinced that the Christian life could be lived as usefully in society,

sought to escape from the Nimptschen Convent, in the dominions of the hostile Duke George. They had written to their families, but, yielding to the ideas of the time, their families had declined to take them back. Their flight was, consequently, arranged for by Luther. As it had a most important influence on the Reformation and Protestantism, we may take the description of the incident and its meaning from Dr. Robertson:—

“When Leonard Koppi, burgher of Torgau, knighted for the nonce by royal Luther,—this honest chivalrous Sir Leonard was as brave a knight as ever stormed a giant’s castle for the rescue of distressed damsels,—this Sir Leonard drove his wagon filled with nine herring barrels right through the dominions of Duke George; and there, in the moonlight, all the nine, the sacred nine, the pretty Eva von Schoenfeldt and Kate and all the rest of them, went out from Kate’s window by a ladder down to the court; ‘softly, softly,’ they went over the court,—where Kate in her haste, like another Cinderella, loses her slipper,—‘softly, softly,’ over the wall, and dropped into the brawny arms of Sir Leonard! One,—two,—three,—all the nine are over, and are stowed away in the herring barrels, and Sir Leonard drives off again, straight back through the dominions of Duke George. ‘*Abend, Koppi!* What hast thou there in that wagon?’ ‘Herring barrels, Herr Huntsmann!’ ‘Barrels of herrings you mean?’ ‘Ja, Ja.’ *That* was a narrow escape, for that was a huntsman of Duke George. And so in safety they are brought to Torgau and in safety to Wittenberg. But Luther is sorely puzzled what to do with the poor girls; their parents disown them, and will have nothing to do with the runaway nuns. Shut out from the sanctuary of their girlhood and home, they naturally think,—poor nuns, the human heart, the trusting, loving, hoping, yearning human heart, has not been crushed out of them yet, and dreams of bridegrooms and of marriage bells did hunt them wickedly, even in the cloister, poor daughters of Jephthah!—now when the gates of sweet and happy life have suddenly reopened, they naturally

think of the higher sanctuary of marriage, and so the pretty Eva does get married presently to a young physician at the Prince's Court, and by and by, though not without some swineherds in the way, for Luther certainly would have preferred the beautiful and careless Eva had he thought of it in time; and there is one Baumgarten to whom Katherine, it would seem, had plighted vows, and to whom Luther now writes to come without delay, and take his Kate or he would lose her altogether,—as the things go, the marriage bells are ringing in the Castle Church, the bridal pair is blessed by Dr. Bugenhagen, the Elector sends in venison, the Wittenbergers silver goblets of beer and wine, and to the belfried monastery where Cranach, Melancthon, and the other wedding guests are assembled, Luther brings home his bride."

The marriage took place on the 13th of June, 1525, more than two years after the flight of the nuns. It was no case, therefore, of marry in haste and repent at leisure. To return to Dr. Robertson:—

"That Protestants should find fault with Luther for this marriage seems to me something strange. No doubt it was a breach of his monastic vows, and from the Roman Catholic point of view it behooved him rather to have acted like St. Dunstan, who, when the beautiful lady poked her nose betwixt the bars of his cell, seized it with the tongs, so that she roared and bellowed like a fury, which showed what the fair tempter really was—no lady at all, but Satan. But seriously, it seems to me the very thing, above all others, that Luther should have done was to marry a runaway nun, and that not only on such grounds as these: that it is not good for man to be alone; that marriage is a sacred ordinance; that he was now on the wrong side of forty and quite able to choose for himself, and that Caleb shunning matrimony because of its inconvenience is (as Luther himself says) like 'one who runs into a river to escape a shower of rain'—not only on such general grounds as these is Luther's marriage to be vindicated, but also on the very special ground that it was needed to bear

witness that his teaching on the subject was sincere; that human life has not been consecrated in two halves, but consecrated as a whole; and that the wisest, best, and holiest way to heaven is not the one half through the monastery and the other through the nunnery, or asunder, but that of both together, and both 'in the Lord.' This Luther taught, and to show his teaching was sincere he married the runaway nun; and I am sure that through restoring life to its proper condition, not in the convent, but in the house and in the home, Luther by his marriage struck one of the hardest blows at papacy; and the ringing of his marriage bells and the soft kiss of his Katherine inaugurated a new and better era for the social life of Christendom, and was as dreadful thunder as the Pope had heard yet."

There was no unseemly haste about Luther's action; he tried to have Katherine settled by marriage to others; but, being a woman of spirit and of good family withal, although she had no dowry to entice the Reformer with, she declared she would marry either Amsdorf or Luther himself. He was thus led to a very unworldly union with a most worthy woman, whose fine management brightened the Reformer's last twenty-one years. Thus it came about that the old Augustinian convent at Wittenberg, from which the monks had one by one departed under the influence of the new teaching, became by the favor of the Elector the home of Luther after his manly marriage, and the emblem of what Protestantism has done for the world. It has supplanted the artificial life of monasteries and nunneries by the healthier life of the family, and all that gathers round the sweet name of Home!

The condition of the people before the Reformation was miserable in the extreme. There were revolts of serfs in 1476, 1492, 1493, 1502, 1513, and 1514, indicating how grievous their state must have been. When the Reformation came, and Luther spoke so strongly against Pope and princes in the interests of spiritual liberty, it was only natural that the peasants should be inspired with fresh hope of deliverance from their

oppressors. To this they were incited by men of no stability of judgment like Carlstadt and Muenzer, with the result that Germany witnessed a Peasants' War, and the Reformers were put to their wits' end to stem the torrent and to bring about peace. A comparison of Melancthon's advice in the emergency with Luther's will be entirely in favor of Luther. Melancthon's severity in the circumstances is quite remarkable; he had not the knowledge of peasant life nor the sympathy which belonged to Luther. The downtrodden peasants had drawn up in twelve articles their grievances, and we had better look at these to appreciate the justice of their case:—

"1. The right to choose their own pastors, who should preach the Gospel purely and plainly without any additions, doctrines, or ordinances of men.

"2. Exemption from the small tithe. The tithe of grain they were willing to pay for the support of pastors.

"3. Release from serfdom, since they as well as the princes had been redeemed by the blood of Christ.

"4. The right to fish and hunt, since when God created man, He gave him dominion over all animals, over the fowl of the air and the fish in the waters.

"5. A share in the forests for all domestic uses.

"6. A mitigation of feudal services.

"7. Payment for labor in addition to what the contract requires.

"8. Reduction of rents.

"9. Security against illegal punishment, and a desire to be dealt with according to the old written law.

"10. The restoration of the meadows and of the corn land which at one time belonged to a community.

"11. The abolition of the right of heriot, by which widows and orphans had been shamefully robbed.

"12. The resolution to submit all these articles to the test of Scripture, and to retract one, or all of them, if found not to agree with the Word of God."

What did Luther do when these reasonable demands were laid before him? He recognized their reasonableness, and sat

down and penned a noble appeal to the "Princes and Lords," chiding them for their severity, and pleading with them for the people. He next wrote to "The Peasantry," declaring his sympathy with their just demands, but urging them to seek redress in other ways than by rebellion. He acted a noble part as mediator amid the storm; and if neither the princes nor the peasants acted as he advised, but preferred to fight out their quarrel to the bitter end, the Reformer was entirely right in the course he adopted. He may have been extravagant in his denunciation of the rebels when he saw that they would not listen to reason; but he had as little right to involve the Reformation in a revolution of the peasants as the apostles would have had if they had involved primitive Christianity in a war of the slaves against their masters. Protestantism must trust in the sword of the Spirit as, after all, a mightier weapon than the sword of steel, and productive of deeper results.

If the world is going to be ruled by the democracy, the ruler had better get an education. This truth, which is being forced into prominence at present, was seen and felt by the Reformers. We have already seen how great a man intellectually Luther was. He was the pride and glory of the University of Erfurt. He became the master spirit of Wittenberg. He and Melancthon were at one about education. Luther has a right to be regarded as the "father and founder of popular education." In 1524, he wrote his "Appeal to the Aldermen of all the German Cities in Behalf of Christian Schools." He declares: "For the maintenance of civil order and the proper regulation of the home, society needs accomplished and well-trained men and women. Such men are to come from boys, and such women from girls." He lays great stress on the languages, calling them "the scabbard in which the Word of God is sheathed; the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; the cask in which this wine is kept; the chamber in which this food is stored." And this interest in education is of the essence of Protestantism. For Protestantism proposes through the guidance of a book to lead the world back to God through Christ. The Holy Scriptures are the text-book of Protestantism.

The world must be taught to appreciate this one Book. Everything which can contribute to the understanding of the Bible must be promoted by an enlightened Protestantism. Hence the education of the people flowed as a necessary consequence from the Protestant relation to Holy Scripture.

Let us notice how, as a matter of fact, the Reformation laid its hand upon education. We have seen that Melanchthon was the rising humanist at the time of the Reformation. He never was an ordained minister, but this did not hinder him from becoming the leading theologian of the Lutheran party. He soon became recognized as the great authority on educational subjects. He is named with justice "the Preceptor of Germany." He had a genius for organization. It was he who carried out the educational program launched by Luther.

Nuernberg was the first of the German cities to respond to Luther's appeal, and everything was done by that enlightened city to secure Melanchthon as the rector of the schools of the place. But Melanchthon refused to be tempted by the additional comfort the place would have given him; he would remain true to Wittenberg and the Elector. He was invited, however, to visit Nuernberg and help to organize the education of the place. He did so and delivered on the occasion a famous oration in praise of learning. "Without learning," he maintained, "there can be no good men, no love of virtue, no refinement, no proper notions of religion and of the will of God. It is the duty of rulers to foster schools. But there are some who do not know the value of learning, and others are so wicked as to think that their tyranny would be promoted by the abolition of all laws, religion, and discipline. What shall I say of the bishops who have been appointed by the emperors to superintend learning? The colleges of priests were scholars to whom leisure and endowments were given that they might serve as teachers. Nor did it appear unfortunate that letters should be cultivated by this class of persons. But now we behold none more hostile to the liberal arts than the sacerdotal fraternity."

Thus early do we see Protestantism ranging itself on the

side of learning, while sacerdotalism of set purpose opposes it. We should add that by his scheme of graduated school education, by his series of text-books, and by his personal influence sought by no less than some fifty of the German cities, Melancthon became not merely, as Doellinger admits, the literary head of the mighty educational movement, but practically the mold of German education for the past 350 years. His fundamental principle was that all thorough training in theology must rest on a philological and philosophical foundation. He was accustomed to say: "Every good theologian and interpreter of the heavenly doctrine must be first a linguist, then a dialectician, and finally a witness." Protestantism created new universities and reorganized old ones, so that the present state of higher education, as well as of school education in Germany, is due to the Protestant spirit. "Protestant Germany is still building on the educational foundations laid by Melancthon more than 350 years ago."

The first Protestant university is Marburg, founded by Philip of Hesse in 1524. Melancthon's influence is everywhere decisive. Tuebingen is reconstituted by Duke Ulrich, 1535; Leipzig by Duke George, 1539; Basel, after three years' suspension is reopened, 1532; Frankfort-on-the-Oder is reopened by Joachim of Brandenburg, 1537, who also founds the new university of Koenigsberg, 1541; Greifswald is reconstituted on a Protestant foundation, 1539; Rostock in 1540—50; Heidelberg by the Elector Frederick II in 1544; Jena is founded, 1558, by John Frederick; Helmstaedt by Julius of Brunswick in 1568; Giessen followed in 1607; Rinteln in 1621; Altdorf in 1622. "We see following one another in rapid succession the renowned series: Breslau, Goettingen, Erlangen, Bonn, Berlin. Catholic Germany has been distanced by Protestant." Since the middle of the eighteenth century the seat of intellectual activity has been transferred from South to North Germany.

Into the competition between Protestant and Roman Catholic institutions we cannot here enter. It is sufficient to affirm that if we want the highest scientific attainment, the broadest

culture, the fullest education, we must seek these amid the Protestant institutions of England, of America, of Holland, and of Germany; we cannot have them in the Roman Catholic institutions of the Latin nations. Education for the last four centuries has had its favored homes among the Protestant nations.

It has been a source of difficulty and of regret with some ardent friends of Christian missions that the Reformers did not exhibit an immediate interest in the missionary enterprise. But if we try to appreciate their real position, we shall be led to a conclusion not unfavorable to these great men. The man who could arrange for the deliverance of the nuns at Nimpt-schen, and get them suitably looked after until they were married, was not deficient either in philanthropy or enterprise. But Luther and his fellow-Reformers had to take things as they found them. Let us look at the matter in this way. We shall take Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin as the typical Continental Reformers. These three men exercised commanding influence in Europe, yet they were all their lives in the most straitened circumstances. Though great authors, they drove no bargains about their books. Luther, if we remember right, never received anything for his literary labor, and Calvin was only able to meet a few pressing debts out of what the booksellers allowed him. Melancthon had to rock the cradle with one hand while he held his book with the other. If it had not been for the splendid management of Luther's Katie, the Reformer would have been in pinches till the very close of his career. . . . In fact, these three most influential Reformers were three of the poorest men in Europe. With the battle at their very doors, fighting for very life, so to speak, how could they be expected to contemplate or to organize a mission to the heathen? Luther was kept all his life waiting for the council which the Pope so hesitated to summon; and the "missionary enterprise" of the time consisted chiefly in the Pope's influence being brought to bear on the emperor to *attack the Turks!* The Church of Rome had made missionary enterprise militant by inspiring the crusades, and it would require time before the

Reformers could appreciate "the marching orders" of the Church. Besides, Luther had an idea that the end of the age was at hand, and all that he could do was to save as many in Christendom as he could through a preached Gospel. Add to all this the fact that the Protestants in the first age of the Reformation were not geographically in a situation to establish missions among the heathen. The dominion of the sea was then in the hands of the Roman Catholic Powers, and in the seventeenth century Protestants were kept too busy defending their faith in Europe to think of enterprise abroad. It was no wonder, in these circumstances, that Protestantism could not at once take up the problem of missions. In fact, the design of Providence in the sixteenth century seems to have been to give the Church of Rome her chance of showing what her missions mean. It was when Romanism failed to save the heathen world that Protestantism got its opportunity. Meanwhile the Reformers had ample work on hand in consolidating the churches, in organizing education, and in resisting their implacable foe.

The Church of Rome perpetually boasts of her antiquity; but will the facts of the case sustain the bold pretension? We say, no. The Council of Trent was the final settlement of her platform; she is not quite three centuries old, and Protestantism is beyond all contradiction her senior. The symbol of Pope Pius IV, to which every Roman Catholic is now required to give his assent, bears date thirty-four years later than the Confession of Augsburg, which contains the grand essentials of the Protestant faith. If the Church of Rome shall tauntingly interrogate Protestants, "Where was your religion before Luther?" they may retort upon her and ask, "Where was your religion before the Council of Trent, which added twelve new articles of faith to the Nicene Creed?" But shall Protestants content themselves with this retort, or shall they not rather take higher ground, and say at once to the Romanist, "Our religion is where yours never was, in the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever"? It was the glory of the Reformation that it made a bold stand for ancient apostolic truth, in opposition

to the corrupt novelties of eleven hundred years of steady and resolute departure from the faith of Christ. Protestantism was not itself a novelty, but the exposure of a novelty. It came not to proclaim a new doctrine, but to 'contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.'" (Dr. Morrison's *Protestant Reformation*, 1843, p. 488.)

We are now in a position to appreciate what the Protestant movement means, and to consider whether it is a spent force, or one that is destined to abide and to conquer. We have seen how it began in the experience of the immortal Luther, who was too matter of fact to be put off with anything but realities. Once he had "regained Paradise" through assurance of faith, he could not but invite his fellows to the same privilege. The word of promise, God's sure Word, became the charter of the new experience which renovated Europe. Before the "Faithful Promiser," Luther and his fellow-Reformers bowed as subjects grateful for salvation, and rejoicing in God's sovereignty. Every would-be lord of the conscience fled like owls and bats before the rising Sun of Righteousness, leaving the conscience to the guidance of Christ. The saintly souls, lifted into fellowship with God in Christ, became in consequence a grand communion, and realized their unity with the spirits of the just made perfect, as well as with those being made perfect here. As priests unto God, they were encouraged to carry consecration into all things and to swallow up the secular and worldly in a higher and still higher Christian life. Ministers and sacraments were instruments and means of grace for souls who are being sanctified; and the "wonders" seen in Holy Scriptures become the only miracles of the modern world. The individual, moreover, is not the only subject of salvation; the family is being saved, and society is being saved through the Protestant spirit; education, missionary enterprise, and national progress are all best secured by Protestantism. And then, beyond this present life and world, Protestantism discerns an everlasting opportunity of showing gratitude to God and of obeying His commands.

No wonder that Froude says regarding the Reformers: "The history of the last three centuries has been a signal evidence that in taking the Bible for their rule in the place of the Decretals, they had forfeited no privilege and lost no grace."

"Some people are troubled when we tell them that the Reformation has been the mother of all the liberties; they are somewhat afraid of so much glory, and say that it would be desirable that the Reformation had not given birth to so many liberties. The Reformation will produce many other liberties yet; it is not at the end of its work; once the rights of man before God are recognized, many other rights flow out of these; only it will be to desire that the other liberties which support themselves upon the Protestant principle should be penetrated by the same spirit and profess the same respect for God. With the proviso of submission profound and complete to God and to duty, there is nothing to fear from any liberty. We do not wish to submit to any man because we wish to submit to God; we wish to have plenty of liberties that we may lay them at the feet of God; when all liberties have this character, there is everything to hope from them and nothing to fear." (A. Coquerel Fils, Paris, 1864.)
