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Doctrinal Theology.

CHRISTOLOGY

Christology is the doctrine of the holy Scriptures concerning the Person and the Office and Work of Christ, the Redeemer and Savior of mankind. The doctrine of Christ is not a product of human speculation, or of a process of evolution from the consciousness of the church. *Search the Scriptures*, says Christ, *for they are they which testify of me,*¹⁾ and the risen Lord himself taught his disciples from the same source; *beginning at Moses and at all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*²⁾ Christ is also the central subject of the New Testament. *The Gospels were written, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ.*³⁾ The modern distinction between the historical Christ and the Christ of Scripture is a delusion. The Christ of Moses and the prophets, the apostles and evangelists, and no other, is the historic Christ, that was, and is, and shall be. All other Christs, the Christs of Ebionites and Docetists, of Gnostics and Manichaeans, of Nestorians and Eutychians and Apollinarians, of Monophysites and Monothelites, of Socinians and other Unitarians, of Schleiermacher and Strauss and Schenkel and Renan, are caricatures or fictions,

1) John 5, 39.

2) Luke 24, 27.

3) John 20, 31.

Historical Theology.

LUTHER'S CONDUCT AT WORMS.

When the first Diet of Charles V was convened at Worms, the man of first importance in the German empire, and in the world, was not the youthful Emperor, who had, aside of purchasing votes, done little or nothing of great and lasting consequence, but Martin Luther, an Augustinian friar and Professor of Wittenberg; and the days of Worms were among the most important, not only in Luther's life, but in the history of the Christian church and of the world. Luther's appearance at Worms, his refusal of the recantation demanded of him, and his statement of cause for such refusal, decided the movement of the balance which held the thralldom of the nations in one and the freedom of millions in the other scale. It is but natural that so prominent a figure should not only have attracted the searching gaze of thousands in those eventful days, but also invited the scrutiny of those who in later days were or considered themselves called upon to record the facts and estimate the forces of that gigantic conflict of which the venerable town of Worms saw one of the decisive actions in those April days of 1521. And while such characters as Charles V and the papal legate, Jerome Aleander, have been by no means the gainers by what they put on record against their names,¹⁾ Luther appears to best advantage in the most penetrating searchlight of historical research, as he stands and moves in the foreground of the

1) That Charles V, in consequence of his licentiousness, in later years suffered from what was then known as the "French disease," syphilis, has long been on record. From Aleander's journal, lately discovered, it appears that a "fair lady" of the Campus Martius bore him a son during the Diet of Worms, having in two previous years born two children to two other lovers.

grand historic tableau of which he is the most significant figure.

Our present purpose is not a detailed portraiture of the great hero of the Reformation as he appears at Worms. Our endeavor shall, on this occasion, only be to place into the proper light two points which have attracted considerable attention and have been largely misconstrued and misrepresented.

The first question we propose to answer is this:—How are we to account for the fact that Luther, on the 17th of April, at his first appearance before the Emperor and the princes and States, instead of answering the question put to him, asked for time to consider before making his answer? For this apparent hesitancy and lack of resolute determination Luther was at once and in the presence of the assembly sternly reprimanded by the imperial *Orator*, Dr. Eck, the Official of the Bishop of Treves, and to this day Romanist historians endeavor to hold up to ridicule the man who, having for days and weeks known what was expected of him, and after all the professions of dauntless courage with which he had courted the prospects of a hearing before the diet, did not know what to say or had not the courage to say what he was as free to say then as later. “Though such a request was very silly, the mild and clement Charles V granted it,” says a modern Roman catholic author of a “*Life of Luther compiled from reliable sources.*”¹⁾ Others, more kindly disposed, have apologized for what they, too, considered a weakness in the Reformer’s conduct. “To us,” says a protestant writer,²⁾ “his mode of action appears most touching and worthy of our admiration, when we see that he too was human as we are, subject to the common weakness of our nature, which makes us embarrassed in view of unaccustomed splendor and trembling at threaten-

1) Rev. William Stang.

2) Friedr. Soldan, *der Reichstag zu Worms*. 1883. P. 75.

ing danger. . . . In that splendid assembly, knowing himself to be at variance with the supreme secular powers, and face to face with a world of enemies, he might well feel himself for a moment forsaken, forsaken even of his God." But is Luther in need of such or similar apologies?

Two questions were sprung upon Luther when he was first taken before the assembly convened at Worms. The one was, whether the twenty books piled up before him were his. The other question was, whether he would retract and recant what those books contained. Is it reasonable to suppose that Luther had expected or even deemed it probable or possible that, when he went to Worms, he was being taken before the Diet for the purpose of simply having these questions put to him and answering them by *Yes* or *No*? From the words of Dr. Eck it would seem so. For when Luther had requested a respite, he said, "Although you, Martin Luther, might have sufficiently understood from the imperial mandate for what purpose you had been brought hither, and are therefore unworthy of being granted more time for consideration, yet," etc. But this was a falsehood. Here is the imperial mandate, the original of which is still extant.

*Karll von Gottes Gnadenn Erwelter Rhomischer
Keysserr*

Zu allenn tzeitenn Mherer des Reichs etc.

Ersamer lieber andechtigerr. Nachdem wir vnnd des heyligen Reichs Stennde yetz hie versamlett fuergenommen vnd entschlossenn der Lerenn vnnd Buecher halbenn: so eyn tzeitherr von dir aussgangenn seinn, erkundigung von dir zuentpfahenn haben wir dir herzekommen vnnd von dannen widderumb an ein sicher gewarssam vnser vnd des Reichs Frey gestrackh sicherhait vnd gelaytt gegeben, das wir dir hienebenn zusenden Mit Beger du wollest dich fürderlich erhebenn Also das du in den ainvndzwaintzigstenn tagen in solchem vnnserrn geleitt bestimbtt gewisslichenn hie bey

uns seyest vnd nit aussbeleibest, dich auch keyns Gewalts oder vnrechtens besorgen. Dann wir dich bey dem obgemelten vnnssern Gelaitt vesstiklich handthabenn wellenn. Vnns auff solch dein Zukunfft entlich vorlassenn vnd du thust daran vnnsrer ernstlich maynung. Geben in vnnsrer vnnd des Reichs Stadt Wormbs am Sechsten tag des Monedes Marci Anno etc. 1500 vnd im ainvndzwaitzigstenn vnnsers Reichs im andernn Jarenn.

CAROLUS.

Ad mandatum domini

Imperatoris

pp. m.

Albertus Cardinalis

Moguntinus

archicancellarius subscripsit.

Which is in English:—

Charles, by the grace of God Roman Emperor elect,
Semper Augustus, etc.

Honorable, dear, devout (Doctor). We and the States of the holy Empire now here assembled, having purposed and resolved to receive information of you concerning the doctrines and books some time since issued by you, we have given you our and the realm's free and safe conduct to come hither and to return hence to a safe place, sending you such conduct with the request that you would start without delay, so that within twenty-one days you may in such our conduct be certainly here with us and not fail to come, neither fear any violence or injury. For we shall firmly protect you with our abovesaid conduct. We are confident of your coming, and you will thereby perform our earnest desire. Given in our and the imperial city of Worms this sixth day of the month of March, Anno 1500 and twenty-one, and the second year of our reign.

Charles.

By order of our lord, the Emperor,
Albert, Archbishop of Mentz.
Arch-chancellor.

Where, in this entire "Imperial Mandate," is there, implicitly or explicitly, a statement or indication whereby Luther might have been made to understand that he was called to Worms for the purpose of making a recantation of all he had ever written? Even if the Mandate had been simply a citation with assurance of personal safety, saying nothing whatever of the purpose of the measure, Luther would have been fully justified in expecting something far different from what now faced him at his first appearance before the Diet. The Emperor, on his way to Worms, had come to an agreement according to which the Elector was to bring Luther with him to the Diet, and in reply to a request of Frederick, that nothing should be done against Luther without a previous hearing in due form, Charles had, in a letter dated Nov. 28, 1520, stated his willingness to have Luther "sufficiently examined by men of learning and superior understanding," and that he would see to it that he should suffer no injury, and this had been at once communicated to Luther by Spalatin. Luther had responded that if he were called he would surely come. "Consider me ready for everything except that I should flee or recant. Flee I will not, and much less will I recant."¹⁾ But the conditions which the Emperor had attached to his offer were such that the Elector found them unacceptable; and the Emperor himself changed his mind to please the Pope, who, in a bull of January 3, 1521, definitely and conclusively condemned and excommunicated Martin Luther as an obdurate heretic who had refused the recantation demanded by the previous bull, *Exsurge, Domine*, of June 16, 1520. By the bull *Decet Romanum pontificem*, Luther's case in the tribunal of the Roman see was closed and judgment pronounced and sentence and penalty imposed, not only upon Luther himself, but upon all his adherents and abettors, who were by this bull officially stigmatized as *Luther-*

1) De Wette, *Luthers Briefe*, I, 534 f.

ans.¹⁾ By this measure, the final judgment of the supposed Head of Christendom, the plan of citing the condemned monk even for the purpose of public recantation was to be shut out. The bull itself stated that the time for recantation, which the preliminary bull had limited to sixty days, was over and past. It should, however, be noted that the recantation demanded by the bull *Exsurge, Domine*, was not a sweeping retraction of all that Luther had ever written, but a revocation of certain assertions termed "errors" and specified, forty-one in number, in the body of the bull and again referred to in the bull *Decet Romanum pontificem*.

Soon, however, the wind had again veered around and blew from a different direction with considerable velocity and turbulence. The Diet fairly bristled with grievances against the prevailing order or disorder of things, and among the dissatisfied princes there were those who, like Duke George of Saxony, were Luther's bitter enemies, but at the same time knew and acknowledged that they could find no better champion of the German cause than Doctor Martinus of Wittenberg. Even the Emperor would have been willing to play the Friar as the highest card against the pope if circumstances had appeared such that it might be safely done. For Pope and Emperor, though apparently

1) The passage here referred to is this: "*Ut igitur cum Martino et aliis haeretibus excommunicatis et anathematizatis et maledictis merito copulentur, et sicut in delinquendo dicti Martini pertinaciam sequuntur, ita poenarum et nominis participes fiant, secumque Lutherani vocem et debitas portent poenas;*" i. e., "That they may be deservedly coupled with Martinus and other excommunicated, anathematized and accursed heretics, and, as they follow the said Martinus in headstrong delinquency, so they may also share his punishment and name and bear with them the name of *Lutheran* and the due penalties." It thus appears that the name of Lutherans was not chosen by the followers of the Reformer as a badge of honor, in what has been censured as man-worship, but that it was inflicted upon them as an opprobrious term by their sworn enemy, the Pope, speaking *ex cathedra*. As a parallel we may here observe that the *Mis-sourians* were first statedly called by that name in the publications of one of their earliest and most persistent opponents, Grabau. And it is probable, that the term *Christians* had a similar genesis at Antioch.

partners, were by no means always on the same side of the game. The question, whether Luther should be summoned, was discussed in private and in public, *pro* and *contra*, by friends and enemies, with growing numbers in the affirmative, in spite of all that Aleander could do and did to the contrary, until a papal brief demanding that the Emperor should issue an edict against Luther in execution of the papal Bull brought matters to a crisis. By a speech of three long hours Aleander endeavored to prevail upon the States to proceed against the condemned heretic at once and without a further hearing. But the majority of the German princes looked with little favor upon the draft of an imperial edict submitted to them, in which the Emperor stated that, as Luther had been declared a manifest heretic and condemned by papal Holiness, "it was not necessary nor proper to give him any further hearing." They reminded the Emperor, "by way of warning,"¹⁾ that the publication of the edict as intended might bring on an insurrection in Germany. They held that Luther should be given safe conduct to come and go, that he should be heard by learned and expert men, not by way of disputation, but by enquiry whether he acknowledged and maintained the writings and articles issued against the Christian faith professed by them and their ancestors; and if he recanted the same, that he should be further heard and equitably dealt with on the other points and matters at issue. If, however, he should persist in maintaining all or several articles contrary to the Christian church and the faith which they and their ancestors had hitherto believed and maintained, they would stand by His Imperial Majesty in sustaining the faith of their fathers, and the imperial edict should then be promulgated throughout the realm. Here a distinction was made between such articles as were considered at variance with the doctrines of the church and the faith of the fathers, and the other

1) *warnungsweis*

points and matters, grievances and charges preferred against the see of Rome by princes and States. It was in compliance with these resolutions that the Emperor issued the citation quoted above and commissioned the imperial herald, Caspar Sturm, to conduct Luther in safety from Wittenberg to Worms. The Emperor fully understood, what the princes demanded. Luther was to have a hearing: that was the sum and substance of what was wanted. What was foremost in the minds of the many were not the articles of faith, but the grievances of the nation, and if it had not been for these, Luther would never have been summoned to appear before the Diet. Though schedules of alleged errors had been drawn from Luther's writings, one of them by Glapio, the Emperor's confessor, from Luther's book on the *Babylonian Captivity*, the same Glapio and others admitted that much of what Luther had written was good and worthy of all consideration. On the other hand, long lists of grievances against the curia were drawn up and circulated, and hopes were entertained, that Luther might be prevailed upon to retract his most offensive statements and thus render himself available for a championship for which no living man was better qualified than the author of that brilliant *Book to the Christian Nobles of the German Nation* and the tracts for the people, by which he had already begun a campaign which tended toward an emancipation of Germany from Roman tyranny. If evidence hereof had been desired, it was amply furnished by Luther's journey to Worms, which was a series of ovations from beginning to end. Why? Chiefly because of what Luther had so clearly and distinctly set forth in his books and pamphlets on the burning questions of the day. And to these books and pamphlets the imperial summons also referred. In this mandate, which was placed into Luther's hands on March 26, the one purpose of his appearance at Worms was stated in these terms: "Having purposed and resolved to receive information of you concerning the doctrines and books some

time since issued by you." *Erkundigung von dir zu empfangen*, were the words of the original. This certainly did not and could not mean that Luther was to be placed before the simple alternative of *yes* or *no* on the question, whether he would recant all he had written. *Erkundigung empfangen*, to receive information, concerning doctrines and books, if it said anything at all, said that the Emperor and States were desirous of learning certain things they did not know concerning Luther's doctrines and books. *Erkundigung* is the acquisition of a thorough knowledge or understanding of a thing. So Luther understood the word; as when he says, *Wie man ein ding keret, hinden vnd vorn besihet, das man will eigentlich erkunden*,¹⁾ i. e., "as we turn and view behind and before what we would accurately learn to know." To say, what Dr. Eck said, that from the imperial summons Luther might have known that he had been called for the purpose of simply recanting all his books, was so glaring and palpable a falsehood that the opposite and the contrary were true; the opposite, inasmuch as Luther could *not* read or even guess such a thing from the Emperor's words; and the contrary, as the words clearly stated something else and very different, declaring the willingness and desire of the Emperor and States to gain from Luther a better knowledge of points connected with or contained in his books, of which he, the author, was the authentional interpreter. The absence of any mention of recantation, and the explicit statement that *Erkundigung* was wanted of him, must have been all the more conspicuous to Luther as he had, but a week before, received from Spalatin a copy of the articles he would be called upon to recant. On receipt of those articles he had declared that if he should be summoned to Worms to make retraction, he would not go; for if he would retract at all, he might do so in Wittenberg as well. This being his mind, the very fact of his

1) Gloss to 1 Chron. 20, 3.

compliance with the summons is conclusive evidence that Luther did not expect to be inveigled into what must have seemed to him a veritable fool's errand, to see himself called upon to recant, not only a string of purported errors laid to his charge, but all his books in a bulk! That this was really what Luther thought and felt appears from a letter which he wrote to his friend Lucas Kranach, the painter, on April 28, when these scenes were still fresh in his mind. In the course of this letter he says, *Ich meinet, Kaiserliche Majestät sollt ein Doctor oder fünfzig haben versammelt, und den Mönch redlich überwunden; so ist nichts mehr hie gehandelt, denn so viel: Sind die Bücher dein? Ja. Willt du sie widerrufen? Nein. So heb dich. O wir blinde Deutsche, wie kindisch handeln wir, und lassen uns so jämmerlich die Romanisten äffen und narren.* "I thought, His imperial Majesty would have assembled some fifty Doctors and honestly overcome the monk. Now no more has been done than this: Are these books thine? Yes. Wilt thou retract them? No. Then be off! Oh the blind Germans that we are! How childish is our conduct to permit these Romanists thus miserably to ape and fool us!"¹⁾

Indeed, under these circumstances, the question proposed to Luther on the 17th of April was a piece of shameless effrontery for which Luther was not and could not be prepared. The words of Dr. Eck, as we find them recorded in the Latin *Acta* were to this effect: *Martine Luthere, sacra et invicta Caesarea Maiestas huc vocari te iussit, ut his duabus de causis te interrogarem, Primum, fatearisne libros hos praesentes, qui tuo nomine praetitulati circumferuntur, tuos esse, illosque pro tuis agnoscas necne? Deinde, an illos et eorundem contenta retractare et revocare, vel inhaerere eisdem potius et inseverare velis,*²⁾ i. e., "Martin Luther, His sacred and invincible Majesty the Emperor has

1) Opp. Erl. Germ. 53, p. 65.

2) Opp. Luth. Lat. Jen. II, 412b.

ordered you to be called hither that I might question you on these two points: first, whether you confess these books here present, which are being circulated with your name on the titles, to be yours, and acknowledge them as your books or not; and further, whether you are willing to retract and revoke them, or rather to stand and abide by them."

Had the situation been less grave, Luther might have answered these questions, unexpected as they were and must have been, without a moment's thought or hesitation. For as to the first question, Luther could not have denied his authorship of the books before him; there was no man under the sun or moon who could have written them but he; they bore the stamp and imprint of his mind, even though his name had not been given on the title pages. And as to the second question, his mind had been long ago made up and his resolution fixed, and his answer had already been given over his signature that, come what might, he could not recant. But here was a predicament for which he was not and could not have been prepared, and that upon an occasion which might never return, when every word he spoke might be of incalculable consequence. What should he do? Should he tell the Emperor and his spokesman and the like of them that they were a faithless, treacherous set, having lured him from Wittenberg to Worms under the pretext of obtaining information from him concerning his doctrines and writings, merely to ask him whether he would do what they well knew he would not do? Should he give vent to his righteous indignation at this shameless duplicity of men who, when they saw all their wiles frustrated with which to the last hour they had endeavored to prevent his coming, had hit upon a way of turning the solemn occasion into a colossal farce? If he had, he might have changed the intended comedy into a tremendous tragedy, precipitating a conflict right there at Worms which might have cost the Emperor and Dr. Eck and hundreds of others their lives. Many a sword and poniard had been loosened in the scab-

bard, and many who had hurled curses and imprecations at Aleander's head wherever he had shown himself outside of his lair near the Emperor's quarters were anxious to go from words to blows at any provocation by the Romanists under whose insolence they chafed and ground their teeth. Or should Luther simply say, No, he would not recant, and thereby exhibit himself as an obstinate, headstrong, stiff-necked heretic in the eyes of the majority who had not read his books and judged only from the papal bulls and what such men as Eck and Aleander had added by way of comment before and during the Diet? This was precisely what the Romanists desired and, probably, expected, and, with this result in their favor, they would have made easy game of the German princes who had pledged their support to the papal bull and the imperial edict against Luther if he should prove recalcitrant and refuse to recant the errors scored against him. In either case the day would have been lost to Luther and the cause for which he had appeared. And a smaller man than he would have boldly, perhaps ostentatiously, walked into the pitfall prepared for him. But Luther saw what Sickingen would have failed to see, and did what Hutten would have disdained to do: he openly and candidly confessed that he was not ready for the question as proposed, and asked for time to consider. And Luther did more. He said, *Quia de fide est quaestio et animarum salute, et quia divinum verbum concernit, quo nihil maius est tam in coelo quam in terra, quod nos merito revereri convenit omnes, temerarium et iuxta periculosum fuerit me quidquam incogitatum proferre, cum et minus quam pro re et maius quam pro vero non praemeditatum asserere possim, quorum utrumque me in sententiam adducet, quam Christus tulit cum ait, Qui me negaverit coram hominibus, negabo eum coram Patre meo, qui in coelis est. Peto igitur hac de causa, et quidem suppliciter, a Caesarea Maiestate spatium deliberandi, ut citra divini verbi iniuriam et animae meae periculum interrogationi satisfaciam; i. e.,* "Whereas this is a question of

faith and the salvation of souls, and whereas it concerns the divine word, than which there is nothing greater in heaven and in earth, and to revere which behooves us all, it would be rash and highly dangerous for me to utter anything not duly considered, since I might without previous deliberation assert less than the occasion demands and more than truth permits, and in both cases I should fall under the sentence pronounced by Christ, saying, Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. For this reason I beg and beseech His Majesty the Emperor to grant me time to consider, in order that I may do justice to the question without injury to the divine word and danger to my soul." The entire work of the reformation had from the very beginning been to Luther a matter, not of expediency, but of conscience, performed in close and strict adherence to the word of God. In this spirit he had spoken and written and done what he had spoken, written and done from the publication of his ninety-five theses against the abuse of indulgences to the burning of the papal bull and decretals, and even in his coming to Worms he had been prompted by his conscience, being fully persuaded that when the Emperor called him, he was called by the Lord. This, then, was the real predicament in which Luther saw himself unexpectedly placed: how far could he conscientiously go without, in form or substance, committing himself to a violation of his Master's word and without endangering or injuring a cause which was not his own but God's?

So, far from being an object of censure or apology, the Reformer, at his first appearance before the Diet, rather claims our unqualified admiration as a man who, even in a position into which he had been thrown or lured entirely unprepared, he was not for a moment inconsistent, but then as ever the honest, conscientious, God-fearing Luther, who, free from bravado and from fear of men, baffled the evil designs of the scheming, treacherous Romanists and set an

example to friend and foe and for all times by putting aside every other consideration when his own and other people's conscience was at peril and the word and truth of God was at stake. Great indeed was Luther on the 18th of April, when he made his explicit, ponderous answer, every part and paragraph of which was what careful preparation and a master mind and a heroic faith by the guiding hand of God could make it. But that Thursday could never have been without the Wednesday preceding it, and to do justice to the situation of the 17th required fully as great a man as the task he so brilliantly accomplished on the 18th, and called into action qualities of heart and mind and traits of true greatness which the following day did not bring out into like prominence. Thus the two days of Worms must go together as among the most important in all history.

A second point in Luther's conduct at Worms which has been misconstrued is this. When Luther, at his second appearance before the Emperor and States had closed his great speech, the Emperor's spokesman, charging him with having shirked the cardinal question, demanded *simplex et non cornutum responsum, an velit revocare vel non*, "a simple answer without any horns, whether he would recant or not." Thereupon Luther replied, *Quando ergo serenissima Maiestas vestra Dominationesque vestrae simplex responsum petunt, dabo illud neque cornutum, neque dentatum, in hunc modum: Nisi convictus fuero testimoniis Scripturarum, aut ratione evidente (nam neque Papae, neque Conciliis solis credo, cum constet eos errasse saepius et sibi ipsis contradixisse), victus sum Scripturis a me adductis captaque est conscientia in verbis Dei; revocare neque possum neque volo quidquam, cum contra conscientiam agere neque tutum sit, neque integrum;*¹⁾ i. e., "Whereas your most Serene Majesty and your Lordships demand a simple answer, I shall give it without horns and teeth, in this wise:

1) Opp. Lat. Jen. II, 414 a.

Unless I be convicted by testimonies of the Scriptures, or by evident reason (for I believe neither the Pope nor the Councils alone, because it is certain that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am vanquished by the Scriptures adduced by me, and my conscience is bound by the words of God; I neither can nor will recant anything, as it is neither secure nor right to do anything against one's conscience." In this summary answer, it has been said, Luther declares his willingness to have his doctrines tested by two things, the word of God and human reason, *testimoniis Scripturarum aut ratione evidente*, and thus it appears that Luther did not hold the Scriptures to be the sole *principium cognoscendi et judicandi* in spiritual things and matters of conscience, but granted human reason its place beside the word of God. This assertion might seem to gain strength from the fact that in the course of the negotiations subsequently carried on with Luther before his departure from Worms, one of the committeemen appointed by the Diet to confer with him, Joachim, Elector of Brandenburg, asked him, *Num dixisset se non esse cessurum, nisi convictum Sacra Scriptura*, "whether he had said he would not yield unless he were convicted by the holy Scriptures;" and Luther replied, *Etiam Domine clementissime, vel rationibus clarissimis et evidentibus*,¹⁾ "Just so, kind Lord, or by most clear and evident arguments of reason."

To understand this distinction it is necessary to remember that Luther had written on a great variety of subjects, some of them not strictly theological. Especially in one of his latest books, *to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, which was perhaps better known than any of the rest, he entered upon a number of grievances and recommendations pertaining rather to the sphere of civil legislation and the administration of public affairs, as the total abolishment of mendicancy, a thorough reform of the uni-

1) Ibid. fol. 415b.

versities, sumptuary laws and the restriction of foreign commerce, matters which he had expressly distinguished from the "spiritual ailments" previously considered. He had recommended that all the holidays except Sunday be abolished or, if the great Saints' days should be celebrated, that it be done on the previous or following Sundays, or only with a morning service, the rest of the day being given to regular labor. He had laid down a plan for negotiating with the Bohemians and the Beghards and bringing about a restoration of these people to the fold of the catholic church. What Luther had proposed concerning these matters was what he considered conducive or even necessary to the best interests of the people, and he could not honestly recant what he still held to be good and wise counsel. But as he had not claimed in behalf of these proposals the authority of the word of God, so he was ready to reconsider them in the light of sound and sober argument and to yield to better judgment where his own judgment might be shown to have gone below or above the mark.

Here then, we have one class of utterances contained in Luther's writings concerning which he might declare his readiness to yield to arguments of reason without conceding to human reason what he would reserve to the word of Scripture only as the one and only infallible and authoritative source and norm of Christian doctrine and rule of life. Besides, there were in Luther's publications historical statements, references to papal bulls and decretals, exegetical arguments, the correctness, pertinence, or stringency of which might have been questioned for historical or grammatical or logical reasons and by arguments based thereon. By declaring his willingness to hear and consider such arguments Luther did nothing which a theologian might not do to-day without for a moment or in any sense abandoning his position that theological truths or Christian doctrines must be determined by the plain word of Scripture only. Even among the propositions condemned in the papal Bulls

there were several of which Luther himself had said that he had not based them on scriptural ground, but given them as his opinion. "These three articles," we hear him say, "I have only advanced for discussion, in the manner of the schools, and often acknowledged that such is my opinion, but that I know of no ground or certainty which I might point out in the matter. . . . If you would argue thereon, let it remain a mere notion or private opinion, as I do."¹) He had resented the arrogance of the Romanists who had condemned him "without Scripture and reason" and refused to answer "his Scripture and reason."²) But while he is not willing to recant even an opinion which is still his opinion, he is only consistent and knows precisely what he is about when he declares his willingness to hear either Scripture or reason and in the light of either reconsider his *opinion*. This leaves the principle intact that in matters, not of opinion, but of faith and doctrine, the word of Scripture only can and must decide between truth and error. Thus also in this point, Luther's conduct at Worms was without reproach, an example to every theologian and all Christians to the end of time.

A. G.

1) Grund und Ursach aller Artikel etc. Opp. Erl. Germ. 24, pp. 149 f.

2) *Dass aber die Papisten und Bullisten mich darin verdammen und kein ander Ursach setzen, denn ihr eigen muthwilliges Dünkel, ohn Schrift und Vernunft aufgeblasen, dazu auf meine Schrift und Vernunft nit antworten, lass ich mich nicht anfechten.* Ibid. p. 149.
