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CORDATUS' CONTROVERSY WITH MELANCHTHON.

The period of unrest at the university of Wittenberg during the year 1536 and the following years affords material for reflection to the psychologist, the historian, and the dogmatist. We behold men whose names have become household words in the Lutheran Church in a curious disagreement with each other. When righteous men differ, they expose not only their points of difference, but also themselves, their character, to public view. And when the matter at issue between them concerns the common faith of Christians, every believer has reason to take notice of the difference and to try to understand its weight. The study of a theological controversy, when rightly pursued, is very useful. It aids the student materially in fixing in his own mind both the $\tau\acute{\iota}$ and the $\pi\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ of a doctrine, the matter proposed for man's belief and the correct manner of proposing it. The personal features of a controversy — and what controversy was ever without such features? — may not be pleasant and delectable. But even from these features the student may draw wholesome lessons for his own conduct.

In the controversy before us we find a close friend of Luther arrayed against another very dear friend of the Reformer. Cordatus, the pastor of Niernekg, is usually represented as a narrow-minded, quarrelsome character, an orthodox verbalist, a self-seeking worshiper of Luther. His frequent changes of pastorate — Koestlin even speaks of his being driven out of Bohemia — seem to indicate a morose temperament. His

WARTBURG LETTERS OF LUTHER.

(Continued.)

TO SPALATIN.¹⁾

To my brother in the Lord, George Spalatin, court preacher of the Duke of Saxony, my friend and master.

Jesus.

Grace! At last I have received all, my dear Spalatin. I have tried the pills according to directions and soon had an evacuation and a bloodless stool without strain. But the flesh which was injured and torn by a previous laceration is still sore, yea, I have suffered no less pains than before, because, either through the violent action of the pills or through some accident that I cannot account for, the rectum was protruded. I shall await developments.

I am pleased with all that you write me regarding Wittenberg.²⁾ Christ be praised, because He has raised up others in

1) The original of this letter is found in the General Archives of Anhalt. It has been published in Aurifaber I, 340 b, De Wette II, 79, and in the Erlangen Correspondence III, 199.—St. Louis Ed. XV, 2538.

2) Spalatin had gone with the Elector from Coburg to Wittenberg, where they tarried about ten days, till July 4. During this time certain reforms were instituted at the university.

my place, so that I observe that I am not needed any longer. Only Philip, who yields too much to his emotions, is bearing the cross with greater impatience than is becoming a disciple, not to say such a great master of such great men. Take care of him and see to it that our most gracious sovereign do not suffer him to be in want in his domestic affairs. I am displeased because the publication of the treatise concerning confession has been prevented. It would have been a useful object-lesson to the wrathful papists and would have shown them the kind of "fear" that has seized the Wittenbergers because of my absence, since without me they had dared to undertake such things.

Amsdorf writes that a certain clerk of Duke John has written to a lady in Torgau that I am at Castle Wartburg, and that hence a rumor has arisen, yea, has spread everywhere. This rumor will gain credence because it emanates from court, no matter whether the party referred to really knew or only suspected my whereabouts, and we shall have tried in vain to conceal this matter successfully. Thus Satan, our persecutor, is betraying the matter.

However, I learn from my host that the assertion is strongly made everywhere (that I am at Wartburg), and we shall not be able any longer to keep the matter secret, although we are still making brave efforts, and are indignant because our faithful and successful labors are rendered void by such carelessness. By the way, I am well physically and fairly lively in spirit; hence, Philip is fabricating useless dreams about me. If my disease is not abated, I shall go to Erfurt and employ physicians.

It is not surprising that Charles is being merged in wars.³⁾ Poor youth! He will never have a successful issue in any enterprise and will have to bear the punishment of other men's wickedness, because at Worms, being surrounded by ill advisers, he slapped truth in the face and scorned it; and he will

3) Luther refers to the rising of the comuneros in Spain and the war against Francis I of France.

embroil Germany in his own disaster, because Germany consented to his wicked decision. But the Lord will know them that are His. (2 Tim. 2, 19.)

I have seen the decision of the Parisian sophists, with Philip's apology, and rejoice with all my heart. For Christ would not blind them thus, unless He had determined to take this matter in hand and to begin to terminate the tyranny of these people. The treatise against Latomus I have sent to press some time ago. There is nothing else that I must write about, and I am at last a true eremite. Farewell, then!

On the day of the Apostles' Assignment, 1521.⁴⁾

MARTIN LUTHER.

The two following letters are easily understood from the foregoing. They are an artifice on the part of Luther, and their aim is to deceive people as to his whereabouts. They were probably written soon after July 15.

TO SPALATIN.⁵⁾

To George Spalatin Esq., the servant of Christ, court-preacher of the Elector of Saxony, my friend in the Lord.

Grace! I believe that my letter has reached you, my dear Spalatin. Herewith I send you another and other matters besides.⁶⁾ Listen, now, to my little scheme. Since the rumor regarding my whereabouts is growing so strong that people cannot be dissuaded from accepting it, even though they do not dare to claim its certainty, I should like to have you, or some one else, purposely, as by some carelessness, lose the enclosed letter which is addressed to you, in such a manner as to play

4) *Teilung der Apostel*, i. e., the day when each apostle had a particular territory assigned him in which he was to preach the Gospel. Kurtz mentions the legend § 16, 4; the day is July 15.

5) The original of this letter is found in the General Archives of Anhalt. It is found in Ms. in Cod. Dessav. A. No. 85, and in Cod. Jen. a, fol. 108. It is printed in Aurifaber II, 8, De Wette II, 31, and in the Erlangen Corresp. III, 201, also in Walch XXI, 743.—St. Louis Ed. XXIa, 356.

6) *E. g.*, part of the Postils, which Spalatin transmitted to Melancthon with instructions to send it to press.

it into the hands of our adversaries surreptitiously and as though it were to have been kept concealed with great secrecy. And would to God that my letter would fall into the hands of that hog at Dresden who, no doubt, would readily and gladly publish it. Ponder the advisability of this ruse. You will learn from the carrier that I am well. I hope for improvement. Farewell in the Lord.

From the desert. 1521.

TO SPALATIN.⁷⁾

Grace! I hear, my dear Spalatin, that the rumor is spreading that Luther is at Castle Wartburg, near Eisenach. What causes people to surmise this is the fact that I was captured in the forest in that neighborhood. But while people are thus guessing I am safely concealed here, if only the brethren who are with me keep faith. If the books which I have published should betray me, I shall change my hiding place. It is surprising that nobody is now thinking of Bohemia.

I hear that St. George, Duke of Saxony, is still very angry. May he relish his anger, and would to God that he might remain angry as long as he is a papist. I dispose of him in the same manner as did the Landgravine of Hesse, now the consort of the Count of Solms: she knew how to answer this big man befittingly when she instructed her representatives to tell him to remember his grandfather Podiebrad and his mother, who was Podiebrad's daughter.⁸⁾ Don't you know what this keen-witted woman replied to the Duke's representatives at the Diet of Worms?

7) The Ms. of this letter is found in Cod. Jen. a, fol. 10. It has been printed in Aurifaber II, 8 b, De Wette II, 30, Erlangen Corresp. III, 202, Walch XXI, 744. — St. Louis Ed. XXI, 357.

8) It is likely that Duke George censured Anna, landgravine of Hesse and widow of landgrave William II, for marrying Count Otto of Solms-Laubach in 1519, which marriage the Duke regarded as a mesalliance. Lady Anna reminded the Duke that he was himself of Bohemian extraction, having been born in wedlock to his father Albrecht by Zdena, or Sidonia, the daughter of Podiebrad, which marriage was also regarded as a mesalliance. See *Table Talk* by Cordatus, No. 772, St. L. Ed. XXII, 1902.

At Erfurt Satan has directed his aim against us so as to bring our people into ill repute, but he will not accomplish anything; for it is not our people that are doing these things.⁹⁾ Since he cannot resist the truth he intends to disgrace it by the silly zeal of fools. I am surprised that the council is tolerating these things. I am well at present, thank God, and enjoying respite from the papists.¹⁰⁾ Pray for me! Farewell! Our gracious prince desires that my whereabouts remain unknown for the present, and it is for this reason that I do not write to him at all. Once more, farewell!

From my habitat, 1521.

Your

MARTIN LUTHER.

(To be continued.)
