Chapter XI

THE TEMPESTUOUS YEAR, 1525—LUTHER'S MARRIAGE

For various reasons the year 1525 must be called a tempestuous year. First of all the Peasants' War stamped its character upon it. Germany experienced tumults such as it had never seen before, which shook Luther's work and influenced his mind. Seldom was he so vehemently perturbed as during these momentous months, in the course of which, strange to say, occurred his marriage.

The year 1525 witnessed the formation, on the one hand, of a more compact union of the Catholic princes opposed to the new movement, and, on the other, the preparation of the fatal Protestant alliance of Torgau and the emergence of the war-like figure of Philip of Hessen. It marked the energetic assembly of Mayence, which fanned the fury of Luther, but also the defection of extensive territories, among them Prussia, and the violent introduction of the religious change in the electorate of Saxony, brought about by the new Elector. Luther was compelled to wrestle with the Anabaptists and other fanatics, with powerful enemies in the Catholic camp, and with the triumphal march of Erasmus' polemical pamphlet on free-will, to which, in 1525, he opposed his treatise "On the Enslaved Will," a work begotten literally in storm and stress.

Beyond the German frontier Emperor Charles was engaged in a sanguinary contest with the king of France. Francis was captured at Pavia, but the victory of the imperial arms led to serious conflicts with the Italian States and with Pope Clement VII. At the same time, the power of the Turks assumed menacing proportions along the eastern border of the Empire and in the Mediterranean Sea, with no signs of an energetic defense, which was made impossible by the unsettled state of the Catholic forces and Luther's hostility towards the Christian undertakings against the Turks.

1. Luther and the Peasants' War

In 1524, the cities of Allstedt and Orlamünde in Thuringia had been violently excited by Thomas Münzer and Karlstadt, respectively.

Urged by the electoral court of Saxony, Luther visited these unsettled districts in August. In vain he negotiated with Karlstadt in an inn called the Black Bear at Jena. (At the end of the conference, Luther presented Karlstadt with a golden coin as a token that the latter might write against him.) Thence he proceeded to Orlamünde, where, as he writes, he was lucky that he was not "expelled with stones and mud." [1] Karlstadt, as we have seen, was thereupon officially banished from the electorate. Soon afterwards, however, he continued his agitation in the city of Rothenburg on the Tauber. Münzer meanwhile went to Mühlhausen, a highly developed industrial center, where evangelical preachers had already succeeded in creating a great ferment. A riot ensued, but Münzer was compelled to flee from Saxony and thereupon propagated his revolutionary ideas in southern Germany and allied himself with the Anabaptists of Zurich.

It was generally believed among citizens and peasants that a serious revolt against the princes and the clergy was imminent in 1524.

The revolt actually commenced in southwestern Germany in support of the movement which had been started by Münzer and his associate, Pfeifer, at Mühlhausen. It spread over a large part of Thuringia and the Harz mountain district. According to an exaggerated expression of Luther, Münzer, after his return to Mühlhausen, was *rex et imperator* of that city. [2] The sanguinary insurrection was supported by the discontented peasants, who had been misguided in spiritual matters, and was preached by this fanatic, "the servant of God against the godless, armed with the sword of Gedeon."

Peasant revolts against the rulers had not been infrequent towards the close of the Middle Ages, caused partly by the oppressive conditions under which the peasantry lived, and partly by the spread of insurrectionary and revolutionary social ideas. Now, however, these insurrections derived their impetus from the Lutheran ideas and slogans which had permeated the masses. It would be unhistorical to throw the entire responsibility for the gigantic movement upon Luther. Nevertheless, it cannot be gainsaid that the ideas and preachers of the new movement were intimately connected with it. The doctrine of evangelical liberty played the principal rôle.

In most districts the rebellious peasants not only demanded abso-

[1] Köstlin-Kawerau, *M. Luther*, 1903, Vol. I, p. 681.
[2] De Wette, II, p. 644.

lute liberty to change their religion, or at least the confiscation of church property and the cessation of clerical privileges, but they also increased their justifiable temporal demands in the name of the so-called evangelical liberty by claiming the most unwarrantable liberties, privileges, and tributes. This is illustrated by the Twelve Articles, which became current at the beginning of the Peasants' War. They were composed by Balthasar Hubmaier, a native of Waldshut, an apostate priest who had formerly been stationed at the cathedral of Ratisbon, but latterly had become a preacher of the new religion. The very first article demands for every congregation the right to elect and depose its pastor; the elected pastor is obliged to preach the gospel without any admixture and in plain terms. According to the last article, emancipation from most of the tithes, from the status of serfdom, from the manifold feudal burdens and obligations which is insisted on in the remaining articles, should be demonstrated from Sacred Scripture.

Fundamentally, however, brute force governed the movement. For the first time the masses, incited by the preachers of the new Evangel, became conscious of the power that inheres in union.

How often had not Luther himself summoned his followers to destroy the churches, monasteries, and dioceses of Antichrist.[3] True he desired this to be done by the authorities, but the peasants felt that they were the authorities. Then, too, without mentioning the authorities, he repeatedly pointed out, in his violent and inconsiderate language, that an insurrection of the masses was inevitable. It appeared to the peasants that their hour for acting had now arrived.

The conflagration began in August, 1524, in the southern region of the Black Forest, near Waldshut. It burst into flames at the beginning of 1525, in the territory of the prince-abbot of Kempten. In consequence of the advantages which the peasants of that place had gained for themselves, almost the entire peasantry of southwestern Germany, to the Lake of Constance and the Upper Rhine, rose in open rebellion. The resistance of the Swabian League in Württemberg was paralyzed by the invasion of the exiled Duke Ulrich. The peasants stormed and burned castles and monasteries and plundered churches. Priests and noblemen were subjected to horrible maltreatment. From Swabia the horror soon spread to the Odenwald and to Franconia. In the latter region alone 200 monasteries and castles were

[3] For examples see the above and later sections.

sacked and wholly or partly destroyed. The atrocities committed at Weinsberg constituted a horrible climax.

In South Germany, however, the irregular peasant bands at the beginning of May succumbed to the strategy of the leader of the Swabian League, Count George Truchsess von Waldburg. They were subjected to severe punishment. Duke Antony of Lorraine put down the peasants in Alsace, Landgrave Philip of Hesse crushed the insurrection in his territory with bloody arms.

Meanwhile, however, Thomas Münzer, operating from Mühlhausen, had incited the peasants of that district and also plunged some cities (Erfurt, Nordhausen, and Eisenach) into the maelstrom of the revolution. His movement was outspokenly communistic and religiously fanatical. It was more conspicuous for cruelty than the other revolutionary movements in Germany. Münzer soon met with his fate. Philip of Hesse, the Elector John, and Dukes George and Henry of Saxony, engaged his forces in a decisive battle near Frankenhausen on May 15, 1525, and defeated them. Three hundred captives, including Münzer, were executed. According to Cochlaeus and Landgrave Philip he died repentant and received the Viaticum in conformity with the Catholic rite.

The great rebellion had been put down and Germany freed from the danger of destruction. The condition of the peasantry became more oppressive than before, while the power of the princes grew.

What attitude did Luther maintain towards the various phases of the Peasants' War?

Prior to the commencement of hostilities, he published his "Exhortation to Peace." He had been requested by certain representatives of the South German peasantry to express himself on the Twelve Articles in the light of Holy Writ.[4] This he does by acknowledging the justice of some of the demands and insisting on reconciliation and peace. However, he employs such violent terms against the "oppression and extortion" of the authorities and the princes, "on whose neck the sword lies," and whose "presumption will break their necks," that the desire for revolution could be only strengthened among the masses.

In his "Exhortations" he is chiefly concerned with the "admonition" that the Gospel be sustained. But he charges the peasants with meddling in his

[4] Weimar ed., Vol. XVIII, pp. 291 sqq.; Erlangen ed., Vol. XXIV, 2nd ed., pp. 269 sqq.

project; you desire to assist the Gospel, he says, yet suppress it by your violent measures. For the rest, if the lords and princes "prohibit the preaching of the Gospel and oppress the people so intolerably, they undoubtedly deserve that God depose them from their thrones." In imagination he already sees the hands outstretched which are to execute the divine judgment. "Since, therefore, it is certain," he tells the princes, "that you govern tyrannically and madly, forbid the Gospel and harass and oppress the poor, you have no consolation nor hope except to be destroyed.

The tide of rebellion had already begun to rise in the district of Mansfeld and in Thuringia when, at the end of April and the beginning of May, Luther left Eisleben and traveled about in the affected districts, unsuccessfully endeavoring to stem the course of the rebellion by his sermons. His journey impressed him with the seriousness of the situation and the danger to his Gospel, nay, even to his life.

"At the risk of body and life," he writes, "I passed through them. In the case of the Thuringian peasants, I personally ascertained that the more one warns and teaches them, the more stubborn, proud, and furious they wax." [5]

He described his journey to Dr. John Rühel, a counselor of Count Albert of Mansfeld, in terms of great excitement, which dominated him for weeks after the journey. He wrote that "the peasants, no matter how numerous, are after all but robbers and murderers"; "that the devil had particularly aimed at him and by all means wanted him to be dead." He said that after his return home he intended "to prepare himself for death," but would not approve of the deeds of these murderers. He is determined to defy them and all his enemies to the utmost.

Towards the close of his letter, he mentions a particular act, which he is prepared to perform in defiance of the devil: "If I can arrange it, I will, to defy him, marry my Kate before I die, in case I hear that they continue. I hope they shall not deprive me of my courage and joy." [6] This is the first reference to a more intimate relationship existing between him and Catherine of Bora, and to their contemplated marriage.

Luther returned to Wittenberg on May 6. Shortly after his arrival he published a small pamphlet "Against the Murderous and Rapacious Hordes of the Peasants," which is a severe declaration of war against the rebels. It is a demand permeated with the most ardent passion, that the princes crush with inexorable might the rebels in their own

[5] Köstlin-Kawerau, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 709.
[6] Erlangen ed., Vol. LIII, p. 294 (*Briefwechsel*, V, p. 164).

blood. They [the rebellious peasants] "rob and rave and act like infuriated dogs. . . . Therefore, whosoever is able, should dash them to pieces, strangle them, and stab them, secretly or openly, just as one is compelled to kill a mad dog." Just now, he says, a prince can merit Heaven more effectively by shedding blood than by prayer. He will not forbid the princes to strike at the rebels even "without a previous offer of justice and fairness," although an evangelical government should make use of this means. He advocates mercy only for those who have been carried along by the revolutionary movement involuntarily and under compulsion. Forthwith, however, he drowns the plea of mercy by shouting: "Strangle them, whoso is able," etc.

The existence of a strange tension in his mind is revealed in his trembling reference to the proximate end of the world. "Perhaps," he says, "God intends to throw the world into a mass of confusion as a preliminary to the day of Judgment."

Shortly after his anxiety for the "mass of confusion" was relieved by the victory of the princes, Luther composed a new pamphlet on the death of Münzer. It was written after the middle of May, and entitled, "A Horrible Story and Judgment of God on Thomas Münzer." It is a refutation of the latter's prophetical claims and, in addition, an apologia of Luther's own Gospel, directed to his enemies in the Anabaptist movement. In view of reports of shocking cruelties perpetrated by the victors, he openly admonishes the princes "to be merciful towards the prisoners and those who surrendered." This exhortation, however, was not sufficiently strong. Rühel, counselor to the Count of Mansfeld, and many others, took offense at the excessive punishment which Luther wished to inflict upon the guilty parties. "Many of those who are friendly to you," thus Rühel warns him on May 26, "deem it strange that you permit the tyrants to strangle their opponents without mercy. . . . It is necessary that you apologize for this." Others reproachfully accused Luther of making himself a vassal of princes, because he approved and furthered their bloody measures. Some apostatized from him, forgetting what, as Luther complained, God had done for the world through him. The author of the dreadful pamphlet "Against the Murderous Peasants" insisted with characteristic obstinacy upon his rights. The devil, he contended, had possessed Münzer and his hordes. "When the peasants are seized by such a spirit, it is high time that they be strangulated like mad dogs," he writes to Rühel in defense of his attitude.

Meantime, however, he was not so indifferent as he pretended to be towards the hostility that had arisen against him. A little while later he published his "Circular Letter on the Severe Booklet against the Peasants," wherein he proposes to render an account of himself to all "wiseacres who would teach him how he should write."

"What I teach and write remains true, even though the whole world should fall to pieces over it." "I will not listen to any talk of mercy, but will give heed to what the Word of God demands."

With his wonted propensity to claim the victory, he repeats his former exhortation: "Let him who is able, in whatsoever manner he can, cut and thrust, strangle and strike at random, as if he were in the midst of mad dogs." "The ass wants to be beaten, and the mob wants to be ruled by force." With the aid of the mob, "the devil intended thoroughly to devastate Germany, since he was unable to prevent in any other way the spread of the evangel." His Gospel was the guiding star of his conduct.

For the rest, Luther says he wrote only for the benefit of the authorities who wished to conduct themselves either as Christians or as honest folks. He hopes to be able to tell the truth "to the ferocious, raging, senseless tyrants" later on.[7]

Apparently he was able to salve his conscience because of his participation in the atrocities connected with the repulse of the Peasants' revolt.

In later years he once said: "I, Martin Luther, have slain all the peasants at the time of their rebellion; for, I commanded them to be killed; their blood is upon me. But I cast it upon our Lord God; He commanded me to speak as I did."

Even in these horrible circumstances he relies upon his usual claim that he is an instrument of God.

In addition to censuring his ferocity, the Catholics frankly reproved him for complicity in the disastrous war, which they attributed to his religious revolution and to his preachers, who had incited the people to rebellion. Cochlaeus and Emser pointed this out in published writings. Erasmus, that acute observer of his age, also told him that he was to blame. Ulric Zasius, a jurist, who at one time had favored him, harbored the same conviction.[8] The author of a polemical work printed at Mayence accused Luther thus: "In your public writings, you declared that they were to assail the pope and the cardinals with every weapon available, and wash their hands in their blood. . . . You called those 'dear children of God and true Chris-

[7] Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, pp. 208 sqq.
[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 211 sq.

tians,' who make every effort for the destruction of the bishoprics and the extermination of episcopal rule. . . . You called the monasteries dens of murderers, and incited the people to pull them down." [9] Other fair-minded contemporaries held up before his eyes the difference between the rather favorable opinion of the demands of the peasants which he had entertained at the beginning of their uprising, and the violent language in which he assailed them when he believed that his gospel and position were jeopardized by the raging hurricane. They maintained that the characterization of him as the newly risen vassal of the princes was not without foundation.

At the present time even Protestant writers who are unacquainted with the results of historical research, generally lament the unfortunate, nay, disastrous attitude which Luther maintained towards the origin and course of the great social revolution. One of the most esteemed historians of this phase of the Reformation, Fr. von Bezold, recalls Luther's dangerous proclamation of Christian liberty and his criticism of the Catholic clergy. "How else but in a material sense was the plain man to interpret Luther's proclamation of Christian freedom and his extravagant strictures on the parsons and nobles?" He reminds his readers of Luther's mutinous assault upon the decree of the diet of Nuremberg (1524) and of the impassioned invectives he wrote against the "drunken and mad princes." "Luther could not have spoken thus," he writes, "unless he was resolved to set himself up as the leader of a revolution." He wonders "how he could expect the German nation at that time to hearken to such inflammatory language from the mouth of its 'evangelist' and 'Elias' and, nevertheless, to refuse to permit themselves to be swept beyond the bounds of legality and order." However, like other historians who are favorable to Luther, Von Bezold sees an excuse in the latter's "ignorance of the ways of the world and the grandiose one-sidedness," which supposedly "attaches to an individual who is filled and actuated exclusively by religious interests." [10]

Genuine religious interests combined with political necessity resulted, at the close of the German revolution, July 19, 1525, in the formation of the League of Dessau, which was patterned after the League of Ratisbon. Joachim of Brandenburg, Henry and Eric of Brunswick, George of Saxony, and Albrecht of Mayence and Magdeburg joined the new League. A report of the Duke of Saxony, who

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 190; cfr. Janssen-Pastor, Vol. II, 18th ed., p. 491.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 189 sq. from Bezold, *Geschichte der deutschen Reformation*, Berlin, 1890, p. 447.

was the moving spirit of the League, designated as its object the "extirpation of the root of the rebellion, namely, the damned Lutheran sect," on the ground that the revolt inspired by the Lutheran evangel "could hardly be quelled except by rooting out the Lutherans." [11] At a convention held at Leipsic on Christmas day, 1525, the above-mentioned princes resolved to induce the Emperor to furnish assistance in conformity with the decrees of Worms.

The spiritual estates who assembled at Mayence on November 14 of the same year also adopted a measure with a view to call the Emperor to Germany and to induce him to intervene. Twelve bishoprics of the province of Mayence were represented at this meeting by priests, while the bishops held aloof. When the resolutions taken at Mayence became known to Luther, he attacked them in a pamphlet of terrific vehemence, composed at the behest of the new Elector of Saxony, but it was suppressed because of the intervention of Duke George. [12]

Now that the Catholics had taken a decisive position against the new movement, certain princes who were sympathetic towards Luther also formed an alliance. They had not accepted the invitation extended to them after the suppression of the peasants' uprising to ally themselves with the other victorious princes for the sake of insuring tranquillity for the future. Philip II, the young and proficient landgrave of Hesse, acted as one of the leaders of the new government. He formed an alliance at Gotha with the Elector John of Saxony for the defense and advancement of the new movement and later concluded the treaty of Torgau (May 2, 1526). The threats of the Emperor were of no avail, but merely induced the dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg and Philip of Brunswick-Grubenhagen, Henry of Mecklenburg, Wolfgang of Anhalt, and Albrecht of Mansfeld to join the Protestant alliance. So little had the Peasants' War taught men that salvation was not to be found in the disruption of the fatherland. Instead of uniting their forces, they were bent upon division.

Above all others Luther himself gave an unhappy example of internal dissension in his attitude towards the peasants. In his writings he treats them as a class with contempt and hatred. The peasantry

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 214.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 215. The document is printed in the Weimar ed. of Luther's writings, pp. 260 sqq.

repaid him for his attitude during the Peasants' War by open animosity or indifference towards himself and his "gospel." Luther's popularity with the lower classes declined perceptibly. When ill humor was upon him, he could scarcely refrain from heaping insults upon the peasants. [13]

In his estimation they are "swine"; they are "all going to the devil"; they are "not worthy of the many benefits and fruits which the earth yields."

They have not given adequate support to the princes. "You powerless, coarse peasants and asses, would that you were blasted by lightning! You have the best of it, you have the marrow and yet are so ungrateful as to refuse to give anything to the princes?" [14]

He went so far as to declare that it were best if serfdom and slavery were revived.[15]

According to a transcript of a sermon which he delivered in 1526, he declared that the authorities are called by God "to drive, strike, suffocate, hang, decapitate, break on the wheel the mob, so that they [*i. e.*, the rulers] may be feared." As "swine and untamed beasts are driven and forced," so the rulers must insist upon obedience to their laws.[16]

Luther zealously endeavored to gain the support of the high and mighty beyond the circle of the princes and lords who were already attached to his cause. In his desperate boldness he appealed by letter to King Henry VIII of England, who at that time was still loyal to the Catholic Church, requesting that he join him in the interests of his gospel, after he had aspersed him with the basest calumnies. The king sent a very humiliating reply, which was published together with Luther's letter. [17]

In a paroxysm of overwrought expectancy he even applied to Duke George of Saxony, the most active of his opponents, "exhorting" him "to accept the Word of God." On December 22, 1525, he requested the Duke in the humblest terms not to believe the flatterers and hypocrites who surrounded him and to desist from his ungracious resolve of persecuting Luther's teaching, which was certainly "the work of God." It was not "the same thing to fight against Münzer and against Luther." If it came to a test, this could be demonstrated by

[13] Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, pp. 216 sqq.; IV, pp. 210 sqq.; VI, pp. 70 sqq.
[14] *Ibid.*, VI, 73
[15] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 217.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 216.
[17] *Briefwechsel*, V, pp. 231 sqq. On the reply (1526), *ibid.*, p. 412.

the effects of his prayer against the Duke. "I regard my prayer and that of my followers as more powerful than the devil himself, and if that were not true, things would long ago have gone differently with Luther; even though people do not yet observe and notice the great miracle which God has wrought in me." [18]

A few days later Luther received a reply from Duke George, which showed him that his plea had failed to make an impression. [19]

In the very beginning of his reply, the Duke returns Luther's compliment concerning the flatterers and hypocrites by inviting him to look for them "in those places where you are called a prophet, a Daniel, an apostle of the Germans, an evangelist." The prophets of old had "all been honest, truthful and pious men," whereas L. was an apostate, surrounded by apostates. He (the Duke) would ever remain loyal to the Church, the rock of truth. There is no new Gospel. Luther pretends to have "pulled it forth from under the bench," but "it were better if it had remained there; for if you bring forth another such gospel we shall not retain a peasant [in Christendom]." "Your fruits cause us to entertain a great horror and aversion for your doctrine and gospels." "When have more sacrileges been committed by consecrated persons than as a result of your gospel? When was there greater spoliation of religious houses?" The severest censures are accumulated in the Duke's reply. Thus he reproaches Luther for having "slanderously and scandalously" inveighed against the Roman emperor, "to whom we have sworn allegiance"; for having revived all the errors of Hus and Wiclif and despised the councils of the Church; and for having "produced by his doctrines blasphemy of the Holy Eucharist, the most precious gift of God." Regarding the comparison between Luther and Münzer, he says, he is well aware that Luther is not Münzer, but "that God punished Münzer and his wickedness through us, should be a warning" to Luther. "We shall gladly allow ourselves to be used for this purpose as an unworthy instrument of God's will."

This unmistakable threat is supported by references to Luther's activities in Wittenberg. The Duke points out that Luther had established there an asylum, a citadel for apostates, including such as belonged to his territory. All monks and nuns "who despoil our churches and cloisters," he says, "find a refuge with you." The wretchedness and misery of the fugitive nuns is evident. "Were there ever more fugitive monks and nuns than are now at Wittenberg? When were wives taken away from their husbands and given to others, as is now the case under your gospel? When has adultery been more frequent than since you have written: when a wife cannot become a

[18] Erl. ed., Vol. LIII, pp. 338 (*Briefwechsel*, V, p. 281).
[19] *Briefwechsel*, V, pp. 285 sqq. (December 28).

mother by her husband, she shall go to another and bear offspring, which the husband is obliged to support?" [20] Lastly, Duke George mentions Luther's marriage, which had but recently taken place. The devil, he declares, has seduced him through the sting of the flesh. He should have recourse to prayer, in order to free himself from the spell of Eve, who deceived him. If you were able to get along without a wife for a time in order to please man, why are you unable to do so for God's sake? . . . Prostrate yourself at the feet of Christ, "then, by the grace of God, the monk shall be relieved of the nun." The writer recalls the judgment of God, "to whom you both have made a vow" to refrain from unchastity. On his part, he promises to pardon all the injuries inflicted upon him and volunteers to intercede for Luther "with our most gracious Lord, the Emperor," if he will return to his duty and to the Church.

2. LUTHER'S MARRIAGE

The tempestuous year, 1525, as we have seen, was a profoundly stormy one also in Luther's interior life. We have sketched the convulsions into which he was thrown by the peasants' revolt. In addition to this, he was overwhelmed with labor in virtue of his leadership of a new religion. Besides, there were the increasing worries about the durability of the work he had undertaken, and the increase in the so-called temptations which he habitually attributed to the devil.

During that period, Melanchthon, too, was oppressed by worry and lack of sleep; nay, "brought to the brink of the grave." But none of Luther's friends suffered as he did in consequence of the state of fear through which he passed. His correspondence of 1525, especially with Spalatin, reflects these painful struggles. "How does Satan rage," he groans; "how he rages everywhere against the Word." [21] Again he laments: "Satan is enraged against Christ, because he has discovered Him to be the stronger." "The rage of Satan," he says, "is not the least significant sign that the end of the world is approaching." "Of these there are greater signs than many believe." [22] It is astounding that the condition of physical exhaustion which he had experienced shortly before, was not more frequently repeated. Mention was made of the fact that he had once been found lying

[20] Cf. Erl. ed., Vol. XVI, 2nd ed., pp. 513 sq.
[21] Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, pp. 167 sq.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

stretched out on the floor unconscious. He had been overcome by "melancholy and sadness," coupled with incapacity to digest his food.

In 1523 he suffered from a peculiar indisposition. Fever and insomnia were among the symptoms. Johann Eberlin (Apriolus), a renegade Franciscan, and John Magenbuch, a student of medicine at Wittenberg at that time, attended the patient. When his condition had improved, Eberlin sent a detailed account of the sickness, coupled with a request for advice, to his friend Wolfgang Rychard at Ulm, a physician who was personally acquainted with Luther. The account is no longer extant, but the Latin reply addressed to Magenbuch was published by the Protestant historian, Theodore Kolde. It first mentions the necessity of curing Luther's insomnia, calling him the new Elias of whom Eberlin had written, "among other things," that "it is not to be marveled at that a man who, like master Elias, is overwhelmed with so much intellectual labor, should experience dryness of the brain and lose sleep as a consequence." A poultice composed of women's milk and violet oil was to be applied to the patient's head. Then the letter continues: "If the pains of the French sickness disturb his sleep, they may be alleviated by means of a poultice made of the marrow of a stag, mixed with earth-worms, and boiled with some saffron and quicksilver (*vinum sublimatum*). This, if applied on retiring, will induce sleep." [23] These odd remedies are in conformity with the state of medical science at that period. But attention has been attracted by the passage referring to the French sickness. The *malum Franciae* is notoriously syphilis. That Luther was a victim of this disease is not confirmed by any other source, whereas it is known, on the other hand, that this disease spread over Europe from France and Spain as a kind of pestilence at that time. It was also well known from experience that sexual intercourse was not the only means by which venereal diseases could be contracted.

Oppressed by interior afflictions, Luther in March, 1525, wrote a letter to his intimate friend Amsdorf at Madgeburg, beseeching him to come in haste to Wittenberg, in order to aid him "with consolation and friendly services," since he was "very melancholy and much tempted." The captain of the garrison, Hans von Metzsch, also desired his help because of the troubled state of his mind. [24] No other

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 163: ". . . *et si cum hoc dolores mali Francie somno impedimento fuerint, mitigandi sunt cum emplastro, quod fit ex medulla cervi,*" *etc.*

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

details have come down to us. In the case of Metzsch, who was a bachelor, it is highly probable that there was question of interior conditions, such as afflicted him four years later, when Luther urged him to marry forthwith, and hence, it has been assumed by Protestants that Luther's temptations were of the same kind. [25] It was, indeed, related to the serious question of his marriage, which had not as yet been solved at that time.

Although he vigorously recommended marriage to others, even to priests and religious, Luther long resisted the idea of taking a wife unto himself. He feared that such a step would injure his personal reputation and that of his gospel. He foresaw that his opponents would avail themselves of his marriage to launch a more vigorous and successful attack upon him. "We are the spectacle of the world" (*speculum mundi sumus*), was the phrase he used in 1521.[26] Later he said: "The devil keeps a sharp eye on me, in order to render my teaching of bad repute or to attach some shameful stain to it." [27] He knew, moreover—and this helped to decide the issue—that the Elector Frederick, solicitous about conserving the old conditions as much as possible, did not favor the marriage of priests and monks. It is possible also that he was restrained by those moral considerations and qualms of conscience which still survived in him, and at times asserted themselves with tempestuous vigor, since his monastic days, when he had lived in conformity with his sacred vows.

Among others, Spalatin and Amsdorf actively promoted Luther's marriage. On November 24, 1524, he still wrote that he had no inclination to matrimony, but it appears that only a few months afterwards he was ruled by other sentiments. [28] It is quite characteristic of him that these sentiments triumphed at the very height of the Peasants' War, in the days when he was subjected to the greatest mental stress, when he feared that he was destined to die and his work to perish. His titanic nature required a reaction against the devil. Marriage was to furnish this reaction in spite of all the powers of hell and the papacy. His announcement to the counselor of Mansfeld, Rühel, under date of May 4, 1525, referring to "his Katy" and the defiance of the devil, says enough. There are on record other vigorous and defiant declarations relative to his marriage, such as the

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 169. Cfr. Köstlin-Kawerau, *M. Luther*, Vol. I, pp. 796 and 729, note 2.
[26] 1 Cor. IV, 9; cf. *Briefwechsel*, V, p. 218.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 134.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

announcement that he was in duty bound to proclaim by his example the value of the married state in the eyes of the world. These declarations were intended to conceal from himself and others the fact that, in the last analysis, the force of nature, which he did not restrain by prayer, impelled him to break the solemn vow he had made.

According to Melanchthon's testimony, Luther entered into too frequent and close relations with the fugitive nuns who had come to Wittenberg. It should be remembered that some of them found lodging with different families in the city, while others found a temporary refuge in Luther's monastery.

In his oral intercourse with people, Luther exercised an even greater freedom of speech than in his writings. He indulged in unbecoming jokes. On Easter, 1525, he jokingly wrote to Spalatin that he himself was a "famous lover" and had set him an example; for he had had three wives on his hands at one time, of whom he had lost two and was scarcely able to keep hold of the third; that it was really astonishing that he had not become a woman long ago, since he had written so often about marriage, and had so much to do with women (*misceor feminis*).[29] The three wives appear to be the three women whom common report had designated as likely to wed Luther.

In the pious style of this letter he described his actual marriage as entirely dependent on the will and direction of God. "Take care lest I do not precede you in marriage, for God is wont to bring to pass what we least expect." In a similar vein he wrote to an inquisitive lady, Argula von Staufen, who inquired about his intentions concerning marriage as early as November, 1524. He told her that he was "in the hands of God, as a creature whose heart He could fashion as He would"; his feelings were yet foreign to matrimony; "but I shall neither set bounds to God's operation in my regard, nor listen to my own heart."[30] Mystical thoughts even in this slippery field. His enemies speak without mysticism. He knows it: "Alas, poor monk, how he must feel the weight of his cowl, how pleased he would be to have a wife"—thus Luther, while he still sojourned at the Wartburg, heard in spirit his Catholic opponents speak against him and his whole undertaking.[31]

These scruples were finally overcome by his peculiar mentality,

[29] *Briefwechsel*, V, p. 157, April 16, 1525. Cfr. Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, p. 140.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 173.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

"through the operation of God." In a letter dated June 2, 1525, he frankly and freely requested Dr. Rühel to tell the Cardinal of Mayence: "Should my marriage fortify His Grace, I am quite willing to trot on ahead of him by way of example, since it is my intention anyway, before I depart this life, to be in the state of matrimony, which I regard as demanded by God, even if it be nothing more than an espousal or Joseph's marriage." If the Elector desired to know more about the reason why he had deferred his marriage (thus he writes somewhat obscurely to Rühel), tell him "that I have always feared that I was not fit for it." [32] Is it necessary to connect the Joseph's marriage with this unfitness? "Scandal for scandal, necessity breaks even iron and gives no scandal,"—thus he had exclaimed in his published invitation to the nuns to break their solemn vow of chastity. [33] "The desire to be pure"—thus runs another phrase taken from the very heart of his dogmatic system—"may not be brought about by good works, but the birth of Christ must be renewed within us by means of faith. . . . Sin is incapable of injuring me; the force of sin has been spent. We adhere to Him who has vanquished sin." "In sum, despite good works, everything depends upon doctrine and faith." [34] The Catholic view of the matter is that the marriage which he contemplated was not only a shameful sacrilege, but, in addition, invalid because of the sacred vow of chastity made by Luther and its solemn acceptance on the part of the Church.

The flames of the Peasants' Uprising were still ablaze in the background of his mind. The news of the bloody punishment inflicted by the victorious princes harrowed the souls of thousands, but it did not deter Luther from enacting the scene of his marriage before the eyes of the world. On the contrary, the horrors of the age, as we saw, helped to mature his resolution to wed.

His choice fell upon one of the ex-nuns who had left the convent, a circumstance which, in the eyes of Catholics, invested the step he took with the character of a grave scandal. Catherine von Bora herself

[32] Erl. ed., Vol. LIII, p. 308 (*Briefwechsel*, V, p. 186). On the last passage Enders remarks: "At this late date it is hardly possible to establish whether Albrecht ever entertained the idea of following the example of his relative, the grand master." As late as 1525, after Luther's marriage, he sent a present of 20 gold gulden to Catherine Bora. Köstlin-Kawerau, I, p. 738.—The decisive victory over the peasants at Königshofen was gained on the same day on which Luther promised to "trot on ahead."

[33] Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, p. 143.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 148.

had been very active in the prosecution of her choice.[35] She spurned other alliances which were open to her. Her mind was set upon higher aims. Either Luther or Amsdorf, she said, would be her husband. She understood how to influence Luther with female artfulness. With her chubby face she was not exactly a striking beauty, but she was endowed with great prudence, energy, and a facile tongue. Luther afterwards said that he had always observed signs of pride about her and pretended that he had not married her for love.[36] She gave promise of becoming an industrious and devoted housewife. In general she satisfied this expectation without any particular display of intellect. The rumors which had arisen to the effect that Luther had had sexual relations with her prior to their marriage are unproved and can be satisfactorily accounted for by the habitual freedom with which he mingled in society and also, partly, by the haste with which he married.

The wedding took place at his home, in the evening of June 13, as the result of a sudden resolve on Luther's part and without the previous knowledge of most of his friends. Bugenhagen, Jonas, Lucas Cranach and his wife, and the jurist Doctor Apel were the only witnesses. Bugenhagen seems to have officiated in his capacity of minister. A public wedding followed on June 27, in which a number of invited guests participated, comformably with the custom that prevailed in those parts.

In one of the first epistolary comments on his marriage, Luther again voices the sentiment with which he had overcome his principal scruple: "I have become so low and despicable by this marriage," he says jokingly, "that I hope the angels will laugh and all the devils weep." Thereby, he says, he had "condemned and challenged the judgment of those who in their ignorance resist things divine."[37] This remark was aimed at his lawyer friend, Jerome Schurf, who had said: "If this monk takes a wife, all the world and the devil himself will laugh, and Luther will undo the whole of his previous work."[38] Schurf afterwards relented somewhat. The jurists generally, how-

[35] Cf. Kroker, *Lutherstudien*, Weimar, 1917, pp. 140 sqq. According to this Protestant writer, Catherine's interview with Amsdorf as mediator, contained in a Vienna manuscript, is quite credible.

[36] Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, p. 185.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

ever, supported by canon law, raised objections to the marriage.[39]

Luther, on the contrary, repeatedly indulged in such assurances as: "God willed it"; "the Lord plunged me suddenly into matrimony, while I still clung to quite other views."[40] Jonas, one of the witnesses present on June 13, forces himself to use similar language, although his sentiments were divided. "I do not know," he says, "what strong emotion stirred my soul; now that it has taken place and is the will of God, I wish [them] every happiness."[41] The chief reason for the unprecedented haste was the growth of slanderous rumors. Bugenhagen testifies to this fact with unconcealed discomfiture, when he states that evil tales constrained Luther to marry so unexpectedly. Luther himself announces his marriage to his friend Spalatin in these significant words: "I have shut the mouths of those who slandered me and Catherine von Bora."[42]

For the rest, he is not deficient in adducing reasons for his marriage, but on the contrary, quite resourceful. Beside the law of nature, he mentions the will of God as revealed to him, and the malice of his slanderers. In addition there is the motive that, prior to his imagined assassination, which he believed to foresee in this period of storm and stress, he was bound to "defy the devil" because the latter was causing the world to apostatize from him.[43] Moreover, he was under obligation to annoy and irritate his papistical opponents, "to make them still madder and more foolish" before the end of the world. He likewise felt bound to show obedience to his father, who at one time wanted him to marry. Finally, and as a seventh reason, he was obliged to "have pity" on poor, abandoned Catherine.

A peculiar impression is created by the pleasantries in which he indulges and to which he gives utterance in proportion as the voices of the critics grow louder, even in the ranks of his followers. Thus he writes to his friend Leonard Koppe that he is now "entwined in the meshes of his mistress' tresses." Elsewhere he speaks of the thoughts which come to a man when he sees "two tresses of plaited hair" next to himself upon awakening.[44] Writing to his friend Link, he attempts an indelicate pun on the name of Bora, which sounds like

[39] Erl. ed., Vol. LV, p. 157 (*Briefwechsel*, XI, p. 90).
[40] Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, p. 175.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 174.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 175.
[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 181 sq.
[44] Köstlin-Kawerau, I, pp. 738 sq.; cfr. Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, p. 183.

bier, thus: "I lie on the bier [*Bore* = modern German, *Bahre*], *i. e.*, I am dead to the world. My '*Catena*' [*Kette* or chain] rattles her greetings to you and to your Catena (*catena* meaning chain, hence Katie)." [45] A mannish demeanor, which he perforce observes in his wife, frequently causes him to indulge in a jocose interchange of "Kate" with "Kette" (chain). In the invitation to the public marriage celebration he styles her his "Herr Caterin." Afterwards he frequently calls her his "Herr" (Lord), "Herr Moses," or "Most Holy Doctoress." [46]

His indelicate jests concerning his marriage and the reasons by which he sought to justify it, were of no avail to him in face of the numerous, unpleasant criticisms to which he was subjected. At Wittenberg, those who thought unfavorably of the marriage did their utmost to relay to him every damaging report. The Frankfurt patrician Hamman von Holzhausen wrote as follows to his son Justinian, a student at the University of Wittenberg: "I have read your letter telling me that Martinus Lutherus has entered the conjugal state; I fear he will be evil spoken of and that it may cause him a great secession." [47]

Yet, despite his jocularity, Luther was "sad and uneasy," as Melanchthon says. The latter was filled with bitter indignation. Cautious as he was, he did not express himself openly, but in a Greek letter to his friend Joachim Camerarius he unreservedly revealed his sentiments, or rather the chagrin which struggled within him against his devoted, almost servile demeanor toward the person of Luther. Without reserve he points to the occasion of the misfortune.[48]

In this letter of June 16, 1525, Melanchthon complains, in the first place, that Luther "had not consulted any of his friends beforehand." "Perhaps you will be surprised," he continues, "that at this unhappy time, when upright and right-thinking men everywhere are being oppressed, he is not suffering, but, to all appearance, leads a more easy life (μᾶλλον τουφᾶν) and endangers his reputation, notwithstanding the fact that the German nation stands in need of all his wisdom and strength. It appears to me that this is how it happened: The man is approachable in the highest degree, and

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

[46] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 309.

[47] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 184.

[48] The whole Greek text of the letter in Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, pp. 176 sq., note 3. Cfr. the quotation from Jerome Dungersheim, *ibid.*, p. 145. Melanchthon was more agreeable to Luther and the latter's nearest friends in referring to the marriage.

the nuns who waylaid him with all their snares, have attracted him to themselves. Perhaps his frequent association with them, although he is noble and high-minded, has rendered him effeminate or has inflamed him. In this way it appears that he has come to grief in consequence of the untimely change in his mode of life. It is clear, however, that there is no truth in the gossip that he had previously had illicit intercourse with her [Bora]. Now the thing is done, it is useless to find fault with it, for I believe that nature impels man to matrimony. Even though his life is low, yet it is holy and more pleasing to God than the unmarried state. And since I see that Luther is to some extent sad and troubled about this change in his way of life, I seek very earnestly to encourage him by representing to him that he has done nothing which, in my opinion, can be made a subject of reproach to him."

Concerning Luther's "having come to grief," the writer finds consolation, first, in the fact that advancement and honor are dangerous to all men, even to those who fear God, as Luther does, and, secondly, in the hope that Luther's new state of life may teach him greater dignity, so that he may lay aside the buffoonery (or mania for making ribald jests, *βωμολοχία*), for which we have so often found fault with him. Camerarius, therefore, should not allow himself to be disconcerted, even though he may feel painfully aggrieved. "Through frequent mistakes of the saints of old God has shown us that He wishes us to prove His Word, and not to rely upon the reputation of any man, but only His Word. He would be a very godless man indeed, who, on account of the mistake of the doctor, should judge slightingly of his doctrine."

These forced reflections rather reveal the timid, learned humanist than the open-minded man, let alone the theologian. Melanchthon's displeasure, moreover, may have been increased by the domestic strain that existed between his middle-class wife and Catherine von Bora, who was of noble descent. When Camerarius later on edited the collected letters of Melanchthon, he had the original of the above letter before him, but did not dare to print it as it was, but suppressed some passages and falsified others. The genuine text was not made known until 1876, when it was published by A. Druffel according to the original holograph in the Chigi Library at Rome. The falsified text, however, was incorporated in the *Corpus Reformatorum* (1834), a work which has been frequently used up to the present time.

The newly married couple made their home in the former Augustinian monastery at Wittenberg. Elector John relinquished the one-time abode of the monks, which Luther had turned over to him,

to be used by him and his relatives as a residence. Catherine converted the monastic cells into rooms for the students who became her boarders and thereby helped to increase her modest income. With little consideration the entire furnishings of the monastery, including the plates, yea, even pious memorials such as the drinking glass of St. Elizabeth, were turned to profane uses.[49] As master of the house, Luther gradually forgot the sadness and malaise concerning the change in his mode of life, which Melanchthon referred to.

The restless activity with which he continued his literary labors also helped to divert his mind completely at times from his qualms of conscience.

3. LUTHER'S PRINCIPAL WORK: ON THE ENSLAVED WILL

Mention has already been made of Luther's impassioned work, "Against the Heavenly Prophets," which appeared in the beginning of 1525. In a pamphlet boiling with indignation he attacked, about the same time, the two Bulls of Clement VII on the ecclesiastical Jubilee of 1525. Now comes Antichrist again, he writes, with his putrid, reeking, mendacious indulgence-wares, which have long ago been derided by mankind. Germany in the end will fare worse than Jerusalem.[50] He had two "Sermons" printed in order to take the field against the framing of new ecclesiastical ordinances: marriage, the laying aside of the religious habit, the eating of flesh meat and similar matters must not be subject to the tyranny of the pope.[51] An illustrated satire, published by him in the beginning of 1526, was entitled: "The Papacy Described and Depicted in its Members." In this work the secular and regular clergy appear in their habits and are ridiculed in verse. In the introduction Luther says that there is by far not enough of such derision; that kings and princes had flirted with the papal harlot and still indulged in this practice. It is necessary, according to the Apocalypse of St. John (XVII, 1 sqq.), to fill her cup until she lies crushed like dirt in the street, and until there is nothing more despicable than this Jezabel.[52] This he en-

[49] Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, pp. 313 sqq.

[50] Weimar ed., Vol. XVIII, pp. 255 sqq.; Erl. ed., Vol. XXIX, p. 297.

[51] Köstlin-Kawerau, II, p. 141; Weimar ed., Vol. XV, pp. 571 sqq.; 609 sqq.; Erl. ed., Vol. XVII, 2nd ed., pp. 223 sqq.

[52] Weimar ed., Vol. XIX, pp. 7 sqq.; Erl. ed., Vol. XXIX, pp. 359 sqq.; cfr. Grisar-Heege, *Luthers Kampfbilder* 3 (*Lutherstudien*, n. 5), pp. 24–37, with illustrations.

deavored to do to the best of his ability in many passages of the second part of the *Kirchenpostille*, which he had printed at the end of 1525.

Besides the works mentioned and those which Luther wrote during 1525, especially against the peasants, he now published his exhaustive treatise "On the Enslaved Will" (*De Servo Arbitrio*).[53] According to his own statement, it excels all his other works in importance and is devoted to the principal doctrine and cornerstone of his system.

This Latin work was intended to convey to all countries his defense against Erasmus's attack in the matter of free-will and grace and to demonstrate man's absolute inability to do good. For a long time he had hesitated to engage in an encounter with the great humanist. The pleas of his wife, as he himself confessed at a later period, finally determined him to tackle the task. True, theology was a rather indifferent matter to Catherine, indeed, it was beyond her ken; but she could not tolerate the reproach that Luther was unable to reply.[54] With bitter chagrin she had heard of the triumphs of his adversaries, and that the many humanistic admirers of Erasmus would apostatize from the new "gospel." When Luther began to write his reply, in the second half of 1525, he felt, as he himself expressed it, as if a knife had been placed at his throat by Erasmus.[55] As far as he himself was concerned, he was now resolved to strangle the doctrine of free-will and all its representatives, and to demonstrate that man can do no good without the co-operation of God. He produced a work full of contradictions, marked by passion and irritability, a work which endeavors to worst the adversary with extremes. He not only divests man, by numerous misinterpreted Biblical passages, of his capacity for discerning and choosing what is good, including even the purely naturally good, if God does not substitute his omnipotent efficacy for the human intellect and will; but in Luther's eager desire for combat everything is absolutely subordinated to a blind fate, subject to the sole activity of God. If God foreknows all things, which is beyond controversy, then all things must happen by necessity, and He must be the inevitable cause

[53] Weimar ed., Vol. XVIII, pp. 600 sqq.; *Opp. Lat. Var.*, VII, pp. 113 sqq. For detailed information on this work, cfr. Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, pp. 223 sqq.

[54] Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 264.

[55] Köstlin-Kawerau, M. *Luther*, Vol. I, p. 659.

of all. God brings everything to pass even where there is no question of the influence of grace for the salvation of man (*citra gratiam*).

"Whatever God has made," he says, "He moves, impels, and urges forward (*movet, agit, rapit*) with the force of His omnipotence, which none can escape or alter; all must yield compliance and obedience according to the power conferred on them by God. God in particular moves the will "by means of His omnipotence, in consequence of which man necessarily entertains this or that desire, as God gives it to him, and as He forcibly impels it with His movement (*rapit*). . . . Whether good or bad, every volition is driven by force to wish and to act." [56] Luther in other passages conceded the existence of free-will "in inferior matters," but not in respect of the good, which is a contradiction. He himself shows that he "in reality does not wish to be exactly understood in the sense of this restriction." [57]

With the same intensity he assumes the domination of the devil in the realm of morals, but he was not sufficiently concerned with the compatibility of the sovereign authority of God on the one hand and the activity of the devil on the other. "If we believe"—these words of his can be read only with anguish of heart—"if we believe that Satan is the prince of this world, who constantly attacks the Kingdom of Christ with all his might and never releases the human beings he has enslaved without being forced to do so by the power of the Spirit of God, then it is clear that there can be no free-will." [58] Either God or Satan rules mankind. This is his favorite idea, which destroys free-will, the noblest gift of our nature. "The case is simply thus," he resolutely writes; "if God is within us, the devil is not there and we can only desire what is good. But if God is absent, the devil is present, and then we can desire only what is evil."

"The human will," he continues with a figure of speech which has become famous, "stands like a saddle-horse between the two. If God mounts into the saddle, man wills and goes forward as God wills. . . . But if the devil is the horseman, then man wills and acts as the devil wills. He has no power to run to one or the other of the two riders and offer himself to him, but the riders fight to obtain possession of the animal." [59]

With a horrible temerity Luther declares this viewpoint to be the essence and kernel of religion. It is his opinion that, without it, the dogma of the Redemption falls, since with free-will Christ would lose His unique and eminent significance, human works would

[56] Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, p. 265.
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 273.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 274.

prevail, and self-righteousness, Pharisaism, and hypocrisy would occupy the place of self-effacing humility.

Thus he leads his readers back to the pseudomystical errors whence his entire system of theology sprang.

Protestant investigators, who generally display annoyance at these propositions, incidentally and briefly touch upon the question whether this "form of piety is not to be judged pathologically." [60] The pseudomystical traces and many of the details concerning the mental constitution of the youthful Luther, which have been heretofore adduced, furnish an affirmative reply to this question. Thus the Protestant theologian Kattenbusch describes Luther's frame of mind when he composed the latter work, as "not normal" nor "religiously healthy." [61] And Otto Scheel speaks of the "fundamental idea" of the "De Servo Arbitrio" as the product of a morbid frame of mind.[62]

As a matter of fact, the morbid state of Luther's soul repeatedly breaks forth in this book. He realizes that the predestination of the damned is an inference from his denial of free-will. He states that he often took grave offense at it and "arrived at the verge of despair," so much so that he "wished he had never been born." But a marvelous change had come over his ideas. He recognized "how salutary and how near to grace this despondency was"; for whoever shares the conviction that all things are dependent upon the will of God, choses nothing for himself in despairing of himself, but only expects God to act. He is next to salvation, although he be dead and strangled in consequence of his consciousness of guilt, and spiritually immersed in hell. Such a one is succored by the belief that the merits of Christ cover his sins, the *sola fides, i. e.*, the conviction that man is justified by faith alone. "This," he says, "is familiar to everyone who has read our works." [63]

This doctrine of determinism, like his whole system, grew out of personal motives and was patterned after his own abnormal mental states.

In his acrobatic exposition he even goes so far as to idolize the consolation which he derives from his denial of free-will: "Without this doctrine I believe I would be constantly tortured by uncertainty and compelled to

[60] Julius Köstlin; cfr. Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, p. 274.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 284.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 284.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 279.

expunge all my work. My conscience would never enjoy certain ease. . . . If free-will were offered to me, I would not accept it at all. I would not want anything to be placed within my power, so as to give a practical proof of my salvation, because I would nevertheless fear that I could not withstand the spiritual dangers and the attacks of so many devils." [64]

He arbitrarily conceals from himself predestination to hell with its horrors, but firmly insists upon the monstrosity of the absolute predestination to eternal punishment of human beings who could not act otherwise than they did. He suggests that we simply should not think of it! He has recourse to a mysterious *hidden God,* who, in His unlimited majesty, may have other norms that our human sense of justice can devise. The essence of God is truly inscrutable. The statement in the Apocalypse that God wills the salvation of all men, applies to the *Deus revelatus* in the Gospel of Christ; but there also exists a hidden God, a *Deus absconditus,* whose decrees may be quite different.

Relative to these doctrines, the Protestant theologian Kattenbusch, whom we have already quoted, says: "Luther expressly advances it as a theory that God has two contradictory wills, the secret will of which no one knows anything, and another which He causes to be proclaimed; . . . in other words, that He is free to lie." [65] No less frank are the words of another Protestant theologian, A. Taube: From Luther's statements we must "conclude that God, as He is preached [in Sacred Scripture], is not in every instance the same God as He who actually works, and that in some cases in His revelation He says what is quite untrue." [66] It cannot be denied that Luther, led astray by Ockham's theory of an arbitrary God, introduced a new concept of God, which, however, is forthwith disproved by the inference just described.

Now, while he upholds, by means of his *Deus absconditus,* the absolute predestination to hell of every man as a possibility, and while he represents it as an actuality in the case of such as are already damned, he does not wish this subject to be made a topic of reflexion and discussion. It is a point which he emphasized innumerable times in his books and letters. As a means of preventing despair he recommends, in an almost importunate manner, that no

[64] *Ibid.,* pp. 268 sq.

[65] Kattenbusch, "*Deus absconditus bei Luther,*" in the *Kaftanfestschrift,* pp. 170 sqq. Grisar, *Luther,* Vol. II, p. 169, note 1.—Isaias (45, 15) praises the *Deus absconditus,* but as God of mercy who wills to save all men. Thus in verse 19, according to Luther's own translation: "I have not said in vain to the seed of Jacob: Seek me." Cf. verses 22 and 24. —R. Otto (*Das Heilige,* 7th ed., Breslau, 1922) says (p. 118): Luther flees from the *Deus absconditus* "like a badger into the fissures of a rock," and (p. 120), owing to his personal states of fear he reduces the whole of Christianity to fiduciary faith. According to Scheel, Luther with his *iustitia passiva,* introduces a "completely new theory of God." (Article, "Iustitia Passiva" in the Briegerfestschrift. Cf. Grisar in the *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie,* Vol. XLII, 1918, p. 599.

[66] Grisar, *Luther,* Vol. II, p. 269. Cfr. *ibid.,* p. 263.

thought be given to predestination; God, the Incomprehensible, must be adored in silent submission. In his practical work, on the other hand, he frequently writes as though man's salvation lay solely within his own power, by co-operating with divine grace. Thus involuntarily he returns to the Catholic doctrine.

There is no fundamental distinction in the dismal doctrine of predestination as taught by Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli, except that the latter two, particularly Calvin, are more systematic in their exposition of it. Köstlin, the biographer of Luther, is constrained to concede this when he says: "In the resoluteness with which Luther accepts the most rigorous consequences of the doctrine of predestination he is essentially one with Zwingli and Calvin, the other leaders of the Reformation." [67]

Luther appeals to the authority of St. Augustine, that famous Doctor of the Church, in confirmation of his doctrine. But he wofully distorts Augustine's utterances and merely asserts without proof: "He is on my side." [68]

Luther never abandoned his position relative to determinism and predestination, though he modified his expressions. He characterized his book "De Servo Arbitrio," while still in its formative stage, as a "thunderbolt" against the Erasmic and popish heresy of free-will,[69] and always regarded it as a work which his opponents "shall not be able to refute in all eternity." [70] "I do not recognize any of my writings as genuine," he writes as late as 1537 to Capito, "except those on the Enslaved Will and the Catechism." He says he would not shed any tears if the others should be lost.[71]

It is incomprehensible that some Protestant theologians extol the deeply religious spirit which is supposed to prevail in the "De Servo Arbitrio." [72] They admire its profound humility in the presence of God's omnipotence and the self-annihiliation that pulsates throughout the book. But they do not reflect that the motto of the unfortunate treatise is not true humility, but the suicide of human nature. In his preface to the new critical edition, the Weimar editor styles the "De Servo Arbitrio" "the most splendid Latin and perhaps

[67] Köstlin-Kawerau, *M. Luther*, Vol. I, p. 664.
[68] *Ibid.*
[69] Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, p. 284.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 291.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 292.
[72] *Ibid.*, pp. 292 sq.; cfr. Vol. VI, pp. 452 sq.

the most splendid polemical work of Luther,"[73] but adds: "It must not be concealed that the whole conception has a strongly pantheistic and mechanistic appearance."[74]

Luther's attitude towards the Commandments of God also aroused strong opposition. If man is not free to observe the Commandments, why should there be any at all, and why should punishment be threatened for those who despise them? In consequence of this and other writings of Luther, many placed themselves beyond the Commandments. "Let us do as we please."[75] Luther strongly opposes this tendency. But his defense of the Commandments consists in this: God gives His commandments with the wise intention of teaching us how little we can do of our own accord. The law and its threats should arouse within us a sense of our incompetence, enkindle a desire for redemption by grace, and thus lead us to salvation through self-annihilation.

The assertion of God's relation to sin was equally unintelligible to many readers of Luther's treatise.

If man lacks free-will, who is it that causes sin? Luther feels that it will not do to hold God directly responsible for sin. He does not assert that there is an immediate impulse to evil originating with God. But, quite consistently with his system, he speaks of the treachery of Judas thus: "His [Judas'] will was the work of God; God by His almighty power moved his will as He does all that is in this world."[76] He holds that Adam, at least in spirit, was abandoned by God in Paradise and placed in a situation in which he could not but fall.

"He is God," says Luther, "and therefore there is no reason or cause of His willing," because no creature is above Him, and He Himself is "the rule of all things." Whatever He does in His arbitrariness is good, "not because He must or ought to will thus." "His [man's] will must have reason

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 284. Shortly after its appearance, the work was translated into German by Jonas under the title, "*Dass der freie Wille nichts sei.*" Recently a new edition of this translation was published by Gogarten, with an introduction which strongly assails the appreciation of Luther as a hero of civilization. Albert Ritschl styled the treatise "*De Servo Arbitrio*" "an unfortunate piece of bungling" (Joh. v. Walter, *Das Wesen der Religion nach Erasmus und Luther*, 1906, p. 124). In 1559, Melanchthon, referring to the fantastic ideas of Luther contained in this work, speaks of them as "*stoica et manichaea deliria.*" Cfr. Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. VI, p. 153.

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 284.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 288.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 282.

and cause, not so, however, the will of the Creator." [77] These are Ockhamistic subtleties and aberrations.

Relative to the Fall of Adam the essential point is that his sin, as the Protestant Kattenbusch puts it, "is caused by God," whereas "fundamentally nothing is gained" by the other reflections of Luther.[78] And that is the sin of our first parents, through which, according to Luther, the whole human race was plunged into original sin, a misfortune which—again following Luther—radically tainted the entire race.

Since Luther held such views of God and sin already at an earlier period of his career, it is no wonder that a controversy arose at Erfurt among the preachers of the new religion, which could not be terminated by the treatise "On the Enslaved Will." In reference to this controversy Luther's friend Lang, the leader of the Reformation at Erfurt, wrote to him for information. "I perceive," Luther replied, "how indolent you are whilst Satan is on the offensive everywhere." "Why do you quarrel among yourselves about the evil which God does . . . we do evil because God ceases to work in us," etc.[79] This advice did not restore peace at Erfurt, since the preachers there were a quarrelsome lot. Luther refused to send them an official letter of instruction as he had been requested to do by Lang, but declared: "Let them practice faith and love; everything else is well known."

Erfurt, the city which had harbored the whilom peaceful cells of Luther and his fellow-monks, was on the verge of a profound agitation.

4. THE STORMS AT ERFURT

The city of Erfurt, which was subject to the archbishop of Mayence, affords a typical illustration of the storms which accompanied the progress of the religious revolution in 1525. It will repay us, therefore, to review the events which occurred there in the course of this year, and Luther's attitude towards them.

After the first "anticlerical upheaval" (*Pfaffensturm*), Luther, who had just returned from the Wartburg, issued a printed "Epistle to the Church of Erfurt," warning the members against disturbances

[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 282 sq.
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 283.
[79] April 12, 1522 (*Briefwechsel*, III, p. 331.)

and setting forth his own attitude: "As yet I have not raised a finger against them [the papists]; Christ has slain them with the might of His tongue." [80] At Erfurt, he delivered a sermon which was calculated to arouse strong animosity against "the fat and lazy priests and monks," as he characterized them, "who only feed their big bellies." "We must crush the seed of this Satanic head." He boldly maintained that the secular rule of the archbishop of Mayence had no right to exist, and "in virtue of the orthodox faith you are spiritual and should judge all things." "Faith does everything, and good works, too, result from it." [81]

The religious upheaval at Erfurt, however, failed to produce these good fruits, but engendered bad moral conditions, so that even Eobanus Hessus, a friend of the Reformation, known as "King of poets," wrote in 1524: "Immorality, corruption of youth, contempt of learning, and dissensions, such are the fruits of your Evangel." "Oh, unhappy Erfurt!"—he cries in a letter of this same year, in which he stigmatizes "the outrageous behavior of these godless men of God," namely, the apostate priests and new preachers. He sees the battle-field of the passions tinged with "blood." [82]

The scholarly Augustinian, Bartholomew Usingen, who had once been Luther's professor at the University of Erfurt, also predicted a bloody revolution for the same year (1524), which was to break out at Erfurt and reach the most remote districts. In his gloomy forebodings he prophesied that the religious storm would bring about the decline of the empire and the loss of Germany's ancient greatness. "Why," he remonstrates with one of the revolutionary preachers of Erfurt, "why have you ordered out the pickax, the mattock, and the spade in your sermons, if the Word of God is sufficient for the Church? Why have you called out to the mob that the peasant must abandon the soil in order to come to the aid of the gospel?" [83] Oblivious of the debt of gratitude which he owed him, Luther, who was familiar with the energy with which Usingen championed the cause of the Church, denounced the venerable man as a fool. In a tone of frivolity he jeered at the teachers of the university to which he was indebted for his education, and who still remained Catholic, decrying them as the "sophists of the biretta and the pointed hats."

[80] July 10, 1522; Erl. ed., Vol. LIII, p. 139 (*Briefwechsel*, III, p. 431).
[81] Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, p. 347.
[82] *Ibid.*, pp. 349 sq.
[83] *Ibid.*, pp. 336 sqq., where proof is adduced for the following statements.

The Reformation received every imaginable assistance from the majority of the town-councilors at Erfurt. Thus encouraged, Johann Lang, a renegade Augustinian monk, proposed the slogan, "The gospel must be sustained by the aid of the sword." [84] The Catholic canons of St. Mary's and St. Severin's were repeatedly compelled to protest against acts of violence. By confiscating their possessions the town-council intended to force them and the remaining clergy to yield. On April 27, 1525, when the revolutionary spirit already stalked through wide stretches of Germany, and the war-cries of the peasants resounded, the treasuries of the two afore-mentioned churches were subjected to a close search by the magistrate. Splendid works of art, which had been given by the forefathers, and faithfully preserved by the Church, were squandered and destroyed.

When the day of the peasants' revolt dawned in the vicinity of Erfurt, they impetuously demanded the new liberties. Their object was equality with the citizenry, who were hostile to the magistrates. They made their peremptory demands in the name of the new gospel. "God has enlightened us to march upon Erfurt with arms," one of their leaders exclaimed.[85] The representatives of fourteen villages in the district of Erfurt, having met in a tavern, swore "with upraised hands" "to fortify the Word of God, and to form an alliance for life, with the object of abolishing the ancient tribute of which they had freed themselves." On April 25 or 26, they appeared with scythes, hoes, and carbines beneath the walls of the city. The magistrate at once conceived the clever idea of diverting the malcontents upon the clerical estate and the Electorate of Mayence. Having completed their negotiations with Hermann von Hoff, president of the Erfurt town-council and an opponent of the clergy, they opened the gates of the city to the threatening mob, on condition that it would spare the property of the citizens. The palace of the archbishop and the custom house, however, were turned over to them. The salt-kilns and almost all residences of the clergy were eventually stormed and plundered by the mob, who with unspeakable barbarity disposed of the sacred vessels, images, and relics belonging to the churches, assisted by many of the lower citizenry. "Lutheran preachers like Eberlin von Günzburg, Aegidius

[84] *Ibid.*, p. 350.

[85] *Ibid.*, pp. 357 sqq., there further proofs are adduced, particularly from the excellent work of Eitner, *Erfurt und die Bauernaufstände im 16. Jahrhundert*, Halle, 1903.

Mecheer, and Johann Lang, mingled with the citizens and peasants before the palace at Mayence and harangued them." Every convent occupied by nuns was confiscated, and the inmates were expelled without mercy in order to furnish quarters for the peasants. The Augustinian monastery, where Luther had sojourned as a monk, was desecrated by the invaders.

Sentence of death was pronounced upon the ancient cult by the adoption of a resolution which decreed that pastors were to be installed and deposed only by the congregations and that "the pure Word of God" alone was to be preached in the pulpit, "clearly and without any addition of human commandments, ordinances, and doctrines." Johann Lang, "the apostate, fugitive, and married monk," as a contemporary Catholic writer calls him, was appointed preacher at the cathedral. Most of the clergy left the city.

With the consent of the magistrate the archiepiscopal rule was declared terminated.

The magistrate was soon deposed and replaced by two committees, one constituted of the lower citizenry, the other of the peasants, who jointly assumed the government of the city. The former members of the magistracy were threatened with decapitation. The preachers, however, succeeded in restoring their authority.

As a norm for the future guidance of the community, which was deeply divided, twenty-eight very accommodating articles were proposed by the town-council and received the "new seal" of the municipality and the peasantry. The preaching of the pure Word of God and the free election of pastors again headed the list. For the rest, the citizens and peasants hedged the town-council about with many limitations. On account of certain debatable points, it was agreed to leave the regulation of the town to Luther, who, however, wisely refused. His intervention could only have made matters worse. He was not qualified for such pacific labors and had no talent for public organization. Moreover, at that time, when the defeat and punishment of the peasants had already begun, he was agitated by that unhappy frenzy against the mob which crops out in his writings. On this account, the twenty-eight articles were placed before him only for his written opinion.

The town-council knew how little the demands which had been extorted from it and which were so favorable to the peasants, could be expected to meet with the approval of Luther. In matter of

fact he pronounced the articles absolutely "inept" and wrote[86] that they clearly revealed that they were being proposed by "men who are too prosperous," whose demands were being made at the expense of the magistracy and to the detriment of the public welfare. He claimed that "they wanted to subvert the existing order of things with unheard-of presumption and malice"; that these articles reduced the council to the level of servants of the community; that they caused the "city of Erfurt to be lost" to the princes; and that it had even been resolved to withhold from the Saxon Elector, the legal protector of Erfurt, the tax to be paid by his subjects for protection. The "mob" should not be allowed to govern all things, to bind the magistrate hand and foot and set it up as an "idol" and let it see how "the horses drive the coachman." It is worthy of note that, whilst he was in this restraining mood, Luther found it quite inadmissible that congregations should appoint their own pastors and demanded that the town-council should at least exercise a certain "supervision" in this matter.

However, he was pleased with that article which provided that persons who plied an indecent trade should no longer be tolerated, and that the "house of common women" should be closed—a measure which he advocated also for other cities.[87] For the rest, we may remark that, during the archiepiscopal régime, a house of correction for the punishment of loose women had existed at Erfurt, but had been razed to the ground when the peasants entered the town.

Luther is silent about the abolition of the sovereignty of the archbishop of Mayence. In a sharp letter issued May 26 through his viceregent, Archbishop Albrecht had refused to relinquish his rights over the city and demanded the expulsion of the Lutheran sects and an expiatory tribute. But the Elector John of Saxony promised the town-council that he would support them on the religious issue and act as their "liege lord, territorial and protecting prince," since he, too, was devoted to the Word of God. Relative to the secular government of Mayence, John, no less than the other protector, Duke George of Saxony, insisted upon an amicable understanding. This demand became effective only after the Elector of Mayence threatened to appeal for armed intervention to the dreaded Swabian League. The remnant of the peasants withdrew from the

[86] On September 19; Erl. ed., Vol. LVI, p. XII (*Briefwechsel*, V, p. 243).
[87] Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, p. 359.

occupied city, Albrecht's sovereignty was reëstablished, and the expelled clerics were reinstated. They had yielded only to superior force. The Catholic element at Erfurt was still numerous, wealthy, and influential. The city council was compelled to promise the Archbishop to reconstruct the demolished buildings and to make restitution, as far as possible, for the spoliation which he and the churches had sustained. In addition, the town-council was obliged to pay him 2,500 gulden and to indemnify the two collegiate churches, namely, the cathedral and the church of St. Sever, to the extent of 1,200 silver marks. These two stately churches have remained in the possession of Catholics up to the present time.

On the other hand, however, Lutheranism obtained complete liberty to propagate itself. At the time of the restoration of the two churches, Cardinal Albrecht, who was formally reinstated in 1530, declared with a striking and far-reaching indulgence, "as regards the other churches, and matters of faith and ritual, we hereby and on this occasion neither give nor take, sanction nor forbid anything to any party." [88]

The Augustinian monastery at Erfurt, that submerged seat of Catholic piety, did not survive the revolution of 1525. On July 31 of that year, Adam Horn, the last prior, received permission from John von Spangenberg, the vicar-general of the dispersed Congregation, to abandon the monastery, since he was no longer safe in it. Usingen joined the brethren of his Order at Würzburg. The last trace of Nathin is found in 1523. Of an aged monk, who remained loyal to the Church and was compelled to live outside the cloister, Flacius Illyricus relates that he used to recall the religious zeal which Luther had displayed in the monastery and his dutiful observance of the rule.[89]

A courageous and eloquent Franciscan, Dr. Conrad Kling, rallied the Catholics of Erfurt about himself. When he preached in the capacious hospital, the audience was so numerous as to overflow into the churchyard outside.

The Catholic members of the town-council, encouraged by Kling, to the annoyance of Luther championed the cause of Catholicity with such success that the Lutheran preachers saw their mission in the city rendered precarious. They complained to Luther that their

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 361.
[89] *Ibid.*, p. 361, note 2.

revenues were restricted and they were reduced to "hunger, misery, and destitution." The people demanded to know who had sent them. Suffering from public contempt, they thought of abandoning the town, when, in 1533, Luther encouraged them to remain and sustained them by means of a letter which he had composed jointly with Melanchthon and Jonas.[90] Their mission, he said, was not to be contested, since they had been "openly and unreservedly" called by the town-council; they should "be patient for a year or a short time." Referring to the end of the world, he said that the treatment to which they were subjected was but an "unsightly, horrible aspect of the end of the world, and of the last fury and wrath of Satan, equally terrible to behold." He promised to appeal to the Elector of Saxony, "who does not favor the religious services of the papists," against the reprobate monk Kling.

The acts of the soldiery against the peasants, and Luther's state of mind against the mob, inspired him at that time to compose a work which he curiously entitled: "Whether Soldiers can be in the State of Grace." [91] He says previous ages did not raise this question, and pretends it was the first time that it was found necessary to solve a case of conscience for the soldiers. He tries to show that it is "divine" to subdue the mob and unjust enemies with violence. The plea sounds like a justification of his pronouncements against the murderous peasants, especially when he asserts that it is God, not man, who destroys unjust, hostile force. "It is God who hangs, quarters, decapitates, slaughters, and makes war." [92] Subjects—the mob—may in no instance constitute themselves judges of authority. It is foolish to yield too much to the mob, lest it become frenzied; the mob is rather to bear and suffer the utmost, as a Christian duty, even if the authorities do not observe the oaths they have taken. No one may rise against tyrants; but if the masses, nevertheless, expel or slaughter them, it is to be regarded as a divine fate; the sword of Damocles hangs suspended over their heads all the time.

5. THE NEW STATE CHURCH

Luther was absolutely right in assuring the Erfurt preachers that the Elector John of Saxony was pro-Lutheran. In fact, he put the case too mildly when he said that John did not favor the religious

[90] Erl. ed., Vol. LV, p. 25 (*Briefwechsel*, IX, p. 341).

[91] Weimar ed., Vol. XIX, pp. 628 sqq.; Erl. ed., Vol. XXII, pp. 244 sqq.; this pamphlet was written towards the close of 1526.

[92] Erl. ed., Vol. XXII, p. 250.

services of the papists. The Elector had been completely won over to the new religious system by Luther, who knew how to approach and influence Frederick's successor, who was inadequately instructed in matters of religion.

John of Saxony became the patron of Lutheranism and the founder of the State Church.

The state-controlled Church was greatly promoted by the status of the congregations which had adopted the new religion, but were too weak to stand on their own feet. Sprung from the contests which the members waged against one another, and organized in the main as a result of the violent procedure of the magistrate, these congregations promised little durability, because of the want of internal cohesion. Hence, as was indicated before, Luther considered the territorial lords as the natural pillars of his Church. The secular rulers alone were in a position to defend the preachers of the new evangel, to remove undesirable persons from office, and to overcome the external consequences of the existing dissension among the citizens.

Thus, with Luther's co-operation, the system of territorial churches was born as the result of a certain necessity. It was nurtured and strengthened by the prospects of secularization, held out to the territorial rulers, of the rich ecclesiastical possessions, and also by the prospect of an increase of authority. The prevailing tendency of the age, which consisted in the self-exaltation of the powers of the princes and their endeavor to make themselves independent of the Empire and the authority of the Emperor, aided them very effectively. Since their victory over the peasants, the politicians felt that an approximation to absolutism was the only salvation in these chaotic conditions. For parishes and schools were threatened with extinction, and the rural population was sinking back into barbarism. Hence, it appeared to be the principal social and spiritual task of the government to take complete charge of church affairs, not only for individual communities, but for the country as a whole. After the social revolution had been crushed, the influential classes benevolently and submissively co-operated with the princes to forestall future revolutions.

As long as Spalatin occupied the position of court-preacher at the court of the new Elector of Saxony, he was a helpful assistant to Luther in the latter's attempt to establish a compulsory national

church. Both men regarded it as their primary duty to fan the flames of the anti-Catholic prejudice of their ruler.

Spalatin wrote to the Elector on October 1, 1525: "Dr. Martinus also says that your Electoral Grace is on no account to permit anyone to continue the un-Christian ceremonies any longer, or to start them again." [93]

In a letter to Spalatin, dated November 11, which was intended for the Elector, Luther expounded the thesis that by stamping out the Catholic worship rulers would not be forcing the faith on anyone, but merely prohibiting such open abominations as the Mass. Moreover, he demanded that the right to emigrate should be extended to obstinate papists.[94]

The Elector was unable to resist this powerful appeal.

On February 9, 1526, he received a letter directly from Luther, which was intended to encourage him to attack the idolaters. Should he protect them, "every abomination would burden his conscience before God." In the second place, he should reflect that "mutiny and factionism" would sweep over the cities and the rural districts in consequence of the existence of diverse kinds of worship. Again he declares: "Only one kind of doctrine may be preached in any one place." John replied in a friendly tone, assuring Luther that he would "know how to conduct himself in a Christian and correct manner."

Soon the Elector intervened in the appointments to ecclesiastical positions and in the government of the new religious society. The principle of territorial sovereignty in ecclesiastical affairs was established rather by practice than by open declarations. With astounding dexterity Luther often acted as if he regarded the territorial lord as a kind of patriarchal ruler, similar to the rulers of Israel in the Old Testament. He gradually advanced to this position after 1520, when, in his sermon "On Good Works," in which he addressed the secular authority for the first time, he demanded that "kings, princes, and the nobility" should commence to reform ecclesiastical conditions according to his ideas.[95] As long as possible, he had upheld his impractical ideal of a congregational religion, especially since the Elector Frederick was not in favor of a more compact organization of the new religious system. But now, under John, his policy, openly favored by the court, was completely changed.

[93] Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, p. 331.
[94] *Ibid.*
[95] K. Holl, *Luther*, 2nd ed., 1923, p. 327.

He considered three points in particular.[96] First the disposition to be made of the property belonging to the Catholic Church. Who was to get this property when confiscated? With a highly characteristic conception of jurisprudence, he answers this question thus: As a matter of course, it accrues to the territorial lord, though it should be preserved as much as possible for ecclesiastical uses. And it will be necessary that the ministers of the new religion be adequately supported therefrom. None other than the prince can look to this, since the nobility, as experience has demonstrated, endeavor to enrich themselves by the confiscation of church property under all kinds of pretexts; and also because the newly established congregations show themselves unwilling or incapable of supplying the ordinary necessities of the preachers.

The second point he stresses is this: Consistent with the utmost liberty possible, doctrine and ritual ought to be made uniform throughout the land; which is impossible without the help of government. As a result Luther now (1525) begins to direct his efforts towards a visitation, to be ordered by the princes.

The third point is the continuation of the Mass in many places. "The unity of our Church," says Luther, "suffers in consequence thereof." [97] The prince alone, he says, can suppress the Mass—an object which Luther pursued with passionate zeal.

On the thirty-first of October he conferred with the Elector relative to the disposition of the church property and the support of his ministers. As John does not show himself averse, Luther takes up the second point, the internal condition of the congregations. This he does at first by innuendo, then by definitely indicating his wishes.[98] On November 30, 1525, he proposed a visitation to be held under the auspices of the Elector. He suggests "that Your Electoral Grace order the visitation of all parishes in the entire principality," so that evangelical preachers may be appointed and properly supported for the congregations that desire them.

The desired visitation was realized by the electoral instruction of 1527, which definitely completed the régime of territorial churches. True, it was not all done according to Luther's notions. He grievously complained of the undue restraints which the State imposed upon the authority of the Church. Thus the contradictoriness of his attitude avenged itself upon him.

Nothing is so little to the point as to say of Luther's attitude and view of things as Holl does: "Everything has been clearly and

[96] Cfr. for the following Holl, *op. cit.*, pp. 361 sqq.
[97] *Ibid.*, p. 363, n. 1.
[98] *Ibid.*, p. 364.

harmoniously worked out." [99] In reality, Luther does not conceive of the Church as a true society and is as little able to appreciate a Christian State "as a Christian cobbler shop," to quote another Protestant author, since he divides the kingdom of the world from the kingdom of God by a deep chasm.[100] Because he repudiated both the ancient Church and the traditional conception of the State, he had no foundation for his church except the good pleasure of the princes.

6. PROGRESSIVE DESTRUCTION OF CATHOLICISM

1525 was a year of tempests in the history of the propagation of Lutheranism, which brought great conquests. The extent to which the religious revolution spread among the higher and lower strata of society was unexpectedly great.

The want of rapidity in the progress of the new movement in the Electorate of Saxony, attributable to the dissatisfaction of the rural population with the leadership of Luther, was supplied by the activity of the territorial government, which was counseled and directed by Lutheran politicians who were zealous for the interests of the crown, particularly by the electoral chancellor, Gregory Brück. It was also supplied by the married preachers, who congregated in this Electorate, and not in the least by the municipal magistrates who, in virtue of their new rôle, had suddenly been projected into important cultural and civil positions.

In the adjacent Duchy of Saxony, on the other hand, the watchfulness and energy of Duke George, the territorial ruler, prevented the new religion from spreading to any large extent.

The gates of Hesse were opened to the new religion by the young Landgrave, Philip II, who has been undeservedly surnamed "the Magnanimous." As a result of the frivolous and immoral life of his mother (commonly called Madame Venus), this ruler lacked a strict religious and moral training. He was lively and talented, but devoid of religious sentiments or wants. A regent when but twenty years old, Philip II met Melanchthon and became interested in Lutheranism. On July 18, 1524, he issued a mandate in which he granted free scope to the propagation of Luther's teachings within his

[99] *Ibid.*, p. 350.
[100] *Ibid.*, p. 347.

jurisdiction. He embraced the new religion himself and obstinately defended this step against the well-intentioned and forceful remonstrations of his father-in-law, Duke George. In March, 1525, on the occasion of a meeting with the Elector John of Saxony and the latter's son, Philip assured them that he intended to dedicate his country and his people, nay, his very life to the new gospel. He spurned the invitation of Duke George of Saxony to join the League of Dessau for the pacification of Germany after the Peasants' War, and for the suppression of the ferment of unrest, namely, the Lutheran religion.

In opposition to that League, Landgrave Philip conceived the idea of a military league of evangelicals, which was formed at Torgau and Gotha between him and the Elector of Saxony. None of the German princes were more determined than the young ruler of Hesse to gain recognition for this League and to extend it far and wide. In the background of his mind, however, were other soaring ambitions. It was his intention to resist the power of the Hapsburgs and to frustrate the contemplated elevation of the Archduke Ferdinand to the imperial throne. "With Philip's espousal of the evangelical cause," says Theodore Kolde, "a political element [*rectius*, a new political element] entered into nascent Protestantism." [101] It redounded to its extreme advantage, but also brought with it many disadvantages. For his bold policy soon induced Philip to form a close alliance with the South German and Swiss Zwinglians, with whose aid he expected to oppose the Emperor. His policy, however, was an explosive that created internal dissension.

Philip's dictatorial conduct manifested itself when, on July 12, 1526, accompanied by 200 cavaliers, he entered Spires to attend the diet, where, despite the objections of the presiding officer, Archduke Ferdinand, he permitted the preaching of "evangelical" sermons from the open gallery of his headquarters, which was accessible to the public. His reply to the Archduke's remonstrances was that he would tolerate no interference, even were he to forfeit his life. The insignia which his retinue bore on their sleeves to indicate the new religion they professed, were composed of the initials V.D.M.I.A. (*Verbum Dei manet in aeternum*). The Elector of Saxony had adopted the same insignia for his followers. Both the Landgrave and the Elector gave expression to their military alliance by vesting their retinue with uniforms of the same color.

[101] *Realenzyklopädie für prot. Theologie und Kirche*, Vol. XV, 3rd ed., p. 299.

In the beginning of April, 1525, Luther wrote exultingly to George Polentz, Bishop of Samland: "Behold the miracle! With a rapid stride and with full sails the Gospel hastens to Prussia!" [102] In the same year the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Albrecht of Brandenburg-Ansbach, illegally proclaimed himself first Duke of Prussia, one of the territories of that Order, thus becoming the founder of the Lutheran State Church in the ecclesiastical district entrusted to his Order.

Albrecht, one of the fifteen children of the Margrave Frederick, had received a defective training, since his father, owing to his limited income and his numerous progeny, aimed at having his son make a living by obtaining a situation with ecclesiastical or secular courts, rather than by means of a thorough education. He procured two canonical benefices at the archiepiscopal court of the Elector of Cologne. Thereafter he plied the soldier's trade and for some time, having been taken ill, stayed at the residence of the Hungarian court. The Knights of the Teutonic Order elected him Grand Master in 1511, at the recommendation of Duke George of Saxony. He took the customary vow of perpetual chastity, as prescribed by the statutes of the Order, and promised, under oath before the altar, to preserve and defend, as a possession of the Holy See, the territory of the Order that belonged to the Church. Allured by material ambitions, however, he formed a secret alliance with Luther, beginning with June, 1521, through his confidential adviser, Oeden. This alliance purposed to effect an arbitrary reorganization of the Order. It was in contravention of the papal directions, to which Albrecht was in duty bound to adhere, and which were designed to effect the amelioration of the condition of the unmarried knights and the clergy of the Order—a condition which was very much in need of reform. Afterwards he paid a personal visit to Luther at Wittenberg. Incompetent to pass judgment on the latter's teachings, he was, nevertheless, familiar with the decision of the Church.

The ardent demands which Luther made upon Albrecht, such as the secularization of the Prussian territory of the Teutonic Order, and that he himself should marry, infatuated his mind. They were invitations which Luther, in his desire to gain a mighty position in the east, confirmed and generalized in his "Admonition to the Teutonic Order to avoid false chastity," published in 1523.

[102] *Briefwechsel*, V, p. 159.

The Grand Master permitted evangelical preachers, such as Briessmann, Speratus, and, later on, Poliander, to enjoy untrammeled liberty of action in Königsberg, his residential city. Thence they extended their activity into the country. The apostasy of two bishops who belonged to the Prussian territory of the order, Georg von Polentz, bishop of Samland, and Eberhard von Queiss, bishop of Pomesania, opened the gates wide to the Reformation. The Grand Master permitted both apostates to continue in office, while he himself almost continuously sojourned abroad and succeeded in concealing his intentions of secularization and marriage. When the report of his intended marriage was noised about, his brother John warned him in touching words and pleaded with him not to disgrace his name and family by breaking his vow. However, he merely received an evasive reply.

In spring, 1525, Albrecht of Brandenburg believed that the time had arrived for carrying out his plan.

On April 9, he concluded a dishonorable and humiliating peace with King Sigismund of Poland, who had warred upon the territory of the Order. In return, Albrecht accepted as a fief from Poland the entire territory of the ecclesiastical State of Prussia. At the same time he declared himself secular "Duke of Prussia." Six days after this event went forth a ducal mandate ordering a change of religion for all the inhabitants of the territory. It imposed a penalty upon the clergy who were disobedient or rebellious to the new evangel. On July 1, 1526, the castle of Königsberg witnessed Albrecht's solemn marriage to Dorothy, a young daughter of the Danish King. His example was imitated by the two bishops who had become Lutherans. They were the first apostate bishops of the age of the Reformation. In a new ordinance for the government of the territory, the first territorial diet, convened at Königsberg on December 6, 1525, had formulated laws to correspond to the new and altered religious conditions. The banner of ducal Prussia, which Albrecht was forced to accept from King Sigismund, waved over the assembly hall. In place of the former black cross of the Order on a white background, appeared the black eagle, which has remained the Prussian coat-of-arms up to the present day. The protests of the Knights of the Teutonic Order outside of Prussia, the declaration of the ban and the executory mandates of the Empire were alike futile against the accomplished violation. The solemn protest of the Pope, whose right

to the territory of the Order had been grossly outraged, was equally futile. Naturally, the opposition of those inhabitants of the territory who remained loyal to the ancient religion and were determined not to adapt themselves to the religious innovation which had come upon them like a raging storm, was likewise ineffectual.

"Thus at an early date," says a Protestant historian of the Reformation, "Lutheranism took its place among the political factors, and its development was to a certain extent dependent upon the tendencies and inclinations of the [civil] authorities and ruling sovereigns of that day." [103]

The forcible intervention of the secular governments furnishes the key to the solution of the mystery why the Reformation made such rapid progress.

As early as 1523, a fanatical furrier named Melchior Hoffmann, a native of Swabian Hall, made his appearance in Livonia as a lay preacher of Luther's doctrines. An attack was made upon the residences of the cathedral canons and upon churches and cloisters at Dorpat, in January, 1525. Owing to dissensions that had arisen between the preachers of the new religion, Hoffmann obtained a favorable testimonial for his person from Luther at Wittenberg. In conjunction with Bugenhagen, Luther wrote his admonition "To the Christians in Livonia." In this letter, which was forthwith published, he exhorts his followers not to cause any trouble on account of differences due to external customs.[104] Following Luther's trail, Hoffmann became absorbed in eschatological chimeras. Thus he prophesied that the year 1533 would witness the end of the world. He became one of the leaders of the Anabaptists. Indeed, it was due chiefly to the influence which he exercised in his ceaseless journeys, that the Anabaptist sect was transplanted from Upper to Lower Germany. After a stormy career at Reval, Stockholm, Holstein (disputation at Flensburg, 1529), in East Frisia, and elsewhere, Hoffmann finally made his appearance in Strasburg, which had been thoroughly upset by the reformers. Owing to the "Gospel of the Covenant" which he preached enthusiastically, he and his followers ("Melchiorites") became accomplices in the atrocities which were perpetrated by the Anabaptists at Münster. Nowhere is the spiritual affinity between the Anabaptist system and Lutheranism so clearly manifested as in the internal ex-

[103] W. Friedensburg, quoted by Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, p. 333.
[104] Erl. ed., Vol. LIII, pp. 315 sqq. (*Briefwechsel*, V. p. 198).

periences and inspirations which moved this "apostolic herald," as he described himself, despite the fact that Luther combated him after 1527 and wished to see him return to his former craft of furrier. For this reason Hoffmann in his writings stigmatized Luther as a "Judas" who persecuted the faithful. This remarkable prophet of the Anabaptist movement died as a prisoner of the Zwinglians about 1543 at Strasburg, after extensive wanderings, in which he believed himself accompanied by heavenly voices.

The Anabaptists of Upper Germany possessed a type of overexcited preacher and leader in the weaver Augustine Bader. He was a friend of Denk, Hetzer, and Hut, Anabaptist leaders of Southern Germany, and not only passed himself off for a prophet, but also for a future "king," which rank he intended to obtain with the aid of the Turks. Secretly his adherents had supplied him with the insignia of royalty, made of gold-plated silver, such as a crown, scepter, poniard and chains, together with a sumptuous costume. Destiny, however, overtook him in a nightly assembly at Blaubeuren; he was apprehended as an insurrectionist, tortured with glowing tongs, and burnt in the market-place of Stuttgart on March 30, 1530.[105]

The adherents of the new religion, who proceeded against Melchior Hoffmann, at Strasburg, obtained control of that city in 1529. In that year, the magistrate, being under the dominant influence of Zwinglian-minded preachers, completely abolished the Mass. Even as far back as 1524, the authorities of the city had authorized the destruction of images in churches. The defection from the Church was especially promoted by Matthew Zell, an apostate priest, who had married the daughter of a Strasburg artisan in 1523; also by Caspar Hedio, until 1523 preacher at the court of Albrecht of Mayence; but above all by Martin Bucer, a native of Schlettstadt, at one time a Dominican and afterwards pastor at Landstuhl. In 1523, Bucer entered upon an epistolary correspondence with Zwingli and soon after embraced many of the latter's rationalistic teachings, especially the denial of the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Owing to the violent procedure of himself and his friends, Strasburg, after 1524, experienced the progressive destruction of sacred images, as demanded by Zwingli. The most severe measures of repression were adopted against the Catholics. The Zwinglian gospel, however, produced so little fruit that Bucer was forced to write after

[105] G. Bossert in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, Vols. X and XI (1912–1914).

some years: "Among us in Strasburg there is scarcely any church, no recognition of the Word of God, no frequentation of the Sacraments." [106]

As matters fared in the free imperial city of Strasburg, so they developed in other imperial cities and in cities subject to episcopal rule. Insurrection, iconoclasm, and sacrilegious violation of churches accompanied the introduction of the new gospel in Basle by Oecolampadius, in 1529, in St. Gall by Vadian in 1529, and in Constance by Blaurer—to mention only those cities which were Protestantized according to the Zwinglian idea.

The year 1525 also marked a decisive change in the free imperial city of Nuremberg. Here one could observe how another motive fatally co-operated in the religious upheaval, namely, the activity of renegade priests and religious. A number of Augustinians at that place, who were friendly to Luther, commenced by deserting their cloister. Shortly afterwards, apostate members of the secular and regular clergy began to preach the reformed religion. At first the magistrate of the town prohibited only the discussion of controversial questions from the pulpit. Two provosts and the prior of the Augustinians abolished the Mass. John Walther, an Augustinian preacher at the church of St. Sebaldus, the abbot of St. Aegidius, and the provost Pressler embraced the state of matrimony. One of the prime movers was Andrew Osiander, a renegade priest and preacher who later became famous as a Protestant controversialist. He, too, married. At the diet of Nuremberg, in 1524, the Catholic prelates were mocked by the excited mob. The condition of the many loyal or doubting Catholics became even worse after the impetuous Wenceslaus Link, a companion of Luther's in the monastery of Wittenberg, came to Nuremberg from Altenburg in the company of his wife and, in August, 1525, commenced to function there as custodian and preacher in the New Hospital. In this latter year the town-council formally decreed the adoption of the Lutheran religion. Lazarus Spengler, clerk of the town-council, was mainly instrumental in bringing about this decision.

During the period of the religious upheaval, Spengler and other members of the town-council, like Jerome Ebner and Caspar Nützel, succeeded in preserving from destruction at least the images, altars, and other objects of religious art for which the imperial city

[106] Janssen-Pastor, *Gesch. d. deutschen Volkes*, Vol. III, 20th ed., p. 106.

was famous. The ornaments of the churches also survived, to a great extent, the subsequent iconoclastic assaults of Zwinglianism; and even at this late day they evidence the profoundly religious life and artistic fervor of Nuremberg's Catholic period.

By the adoption of tyrannical decrees the magistrates shackled the old religion. The exercise of pastoral functions was denied to the religious orders, the clergy were classified as civilians, and those who complied willingly were assured the life-long enjoyment of their benefices. The monastery of St. Aegidius, with a community numbering twenty-five persons, surrendered to the town-council in 1525. The Augustinian convent, of which no less than twenty-five members, allured by liberty and matrimony, had embraced Lutheranism, likewise surrendered. The Carmelite and Carthusian monasteries eventually also surrendered, although many of their inmates remained loyal to the ancient religion, among them being the courageous prior of the Carmelite monastery, Andrew Stoss, a son of Vitus Stoss, the celebrated sculptor. He determinedly resisted the town-council for a long time. Thus, in the course of one single year, 1525, Nuremberg experienced a complete transformation. The Dominicans remained loyal till 1543, when five of the last remaining members surrendered their monastery to the city authorities.

The most notable resistance was offered by the Order of Friars Minor, whose members suffered every kind of persecution and the most bitter poverty until the last survivor passed away, in 1562. The Poor Clares, pious daughters of the Saint of Assisi, remained loyal under the rule of their highly cultured abbess, Charitas Pirkheimer, a sister of the famous humanist, until their gallant community became extinct. Deprived of their preacher and confessor, these nuns, eighty in all, most of whom were of patrician descent, were forced to listen to the sermons of Osiander and other Protestant dominies behind the latticework of their cloister. The Gothic choir of their church, preserved to this day, solemnly towers aloft amidst the modern buildings that surround it, a monument to the heroic fortitude of these nuns. The unpretentious old cloister, once the residence of the venerable, prudent, and matronly Charitas Pirkheimer, was demolished only a few years ago.

Chapter XII

THE DECISIVE YEARS, 1525–1530

I. CHARLES V, CLEMENT VII, AND THE TURKS

The first war between Charles V and Francis I of France ended in the defeat of the French at Pavia, on February 24, 1525, and the capture of their king. The imperial army, composed of Spaniards, Italians, and the dreaded German lansquenets, won a decisive victory. The treaty of peace concluded at Madrid between Charles and Francis on January 14, 1526, was entirely too severe for France. The release of the King was purchased at an exorbitant price.

Pope Clement VII, an astute politician, was of the opinion that the treaty and the oath of King Francis were not binding because they had been obtained by force. It has been frequently asserted that he formally released the King from his oath; but the statement is uncertain.[1] Nevertheless the Pope, fearing the ascendancy of the Emperor in Italy, and apprehensive of his own position in Rome, unfortunately shaped his policies to favor Francis. This proved fatal to the status of the Church in Germany. The action of the Emperor and the Empire against the religious upheaval was paralyzed by the demands made upon the latter in the war-like complications which had arisen, especially in Italy. The so-called Holy League of Cognac, which had been formed in opposition to the Emperor between certain Italian States and France, strengthened by the accession of the Pope, led to a profound schism between the supreme spiritual and the first temporal authority in Christendom.

In the new conflict between the Franco-Italian and the imperial forces, which lasted from 1526 to the "Ladies' Peace" of Cambrai (1529), Rome was stormed and fearfully sacked in 1527 by the mutinous soldiers under Bourbon, the imperial field-marshal, and George von Frundsberg, the commander of the "Landsknechte." The capital of Christendom, degraded by the morals of the Renaissance, suffered

[1] Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, Vol. IV, Part II, p. 208.