

CHAPTER XIX

THE ECCLESIASTICAL SCHISM ANTERIOR TO LUTHER'S DEATH

I. THE EVE OF THE RELIGIOUS WAR. THE COUNCIL

In the early forties of the sixteenth century Germany was in a strained condition, politically and religiously, and no signs of an early turn for the better were visible. The Turks, more menacing than ever before, continued their assaults upon the eastern frontiers of the Empire. In 1541 they gained a foothold in Hungary, whence they threatened destruction against Germany. In the west, the King of France was entering upon his fourth war against Charles V, which dragged on from 1542 to 1544.

To fill the measure of domestic misery caused by the religious schism, the Bundestag of Schmalkalden, in March, 1540, declared against the toleration of Catholic worship. The fruitlessness of the religious conference of Worms and of the diet of Ratisbon (up to May 22, 1541) convinced the Catholic spokesmen, John Eck, Julius von Pflug, and John Gropper, as well as all other intelligent observers, that the hope of religious reunion was vain.

The diet of Ratisbon closed with the armistice of the so-called Interim. Two later diets, that of Spires (1542), and that of Nuremberg (1543) endeavored to unite the nation against the Turkish peril. But the Protestants, because of their extravagant religious demands, obstinately refused to come to the assistance of the Emperor, as they were in duty bound to do. The victory of Charles V over the Duke of Cleve, notwithstanding the support which the latter received from France and from the Elector of Saxony, proved to be an advantage for the Catholic cause. In July, 1542, however, that cause was injured by the violent and victorious irruption of the Schmalkaldian forces into the duchy of Brunswick, which resulted in the imprisonment of Henry of Brunswick, the Catholic Duke "Heinz," whom Luther pursued with implacable hatred (October 20, 1545).

Halle, the see city of Cardinal Albrecht of Mayence, which had so long defended itself against Lutheranism, was Protestantized by Justus Jonas through the efforts of Luther, and Albrecht was compelled to establish his residence at Mayence and Aschaffenburg. He transferred his celebrated collection of relics to these and other cities. The antinomian, Agricola, who, to escape the wrath of Luther had taken refuge with the Elector of Brandenburg, supported the measures which that prince employed to promote the Reformation. The religious upheaval continued unimpeded in the duchy of Saxony. The bishop of Meissen, John von Maltitz, complained as early as 1540 to Bishop John Faber, of Vienna, that the Catholic press of his diocese had been reduced to silence, and the prescriptions of the Lutheran "inspectors" were enforced, whilst the bishop was unable to bestir himself. "I fear," he wrote, "that the wrath of God will be visited upon the Pope, the Emperor, and King Ferdinand, because they permit the decline and suppression of the Catholic faith." The deeds of violence, he continued, were too potent; divine services could no longer be conducted at Meissen and the sermons in the local church were preached by a Lutheran minister who had been forced upon the people.¹

It was a lamentable accommodation by which, in 1543, the new religion was permitted to invade the bishoprics of Münster and Osnabrück. The venerable see of Cologne, the "German Rome," was assailed by the innovators with every prospect of success under the administration of the weak-kneed and uneducated elector, Herman von Wied.

In his reports to Rome, the far-seeing papal legate, Morone, uttered bitter complaints—and not without reason—concerning the attitude of the great majority of German ecclesiastical princes. He charged that many flourishing parts of the German Church had been lost in virtue of their dilatoriness and worldly-mindedness and predicted that the ruin would assume unlimited proportions if the bishops did not arouse themselves and offer resolute resistance.

In consequence of the deficiency of the German resistance, the Emperor also lapsed into a complaisance which displeased the more zealous Catholics. Notwithstanding his loyalty to the Church, he succumbed to the influence of the subversive movement which had been going on for many years. His advisers, even Granvella, were not competent

¹ L. Cardauns, according to Vatican manuscripts in the sixth volume of the *Nuntiaturberichte* (1910), pp. 233 and 237 sq.

to cope with the difficulties of the situation. At the diet of Spires, in February, 1544, the empire made undue concessions to the innovators, although the position of the Emperor had been fortified by the return of Landgrave Philip of Hesse to his former allegiance. In the recess of June the tenth, the religious controversy was adjourned by leaving the adherents of the new theology in substantial possession of their usurped ecclesiastical rights and properties. It was resolved that a "free Christian council of the German nation" should shortly attempt a settlement. The very term, "a free council," was bound to excite the apprehension that the papal authority would be eliminated. If the council were restricted to the German nation and conducted as a mixed spiritual-temporal assembly, composed of Catholics and Protestants, as was to be feared, it was bound to give rise to the greatest anxiety. In either event, the expectations connected with a legitimate general council of Christendom, as planned by the Church authorities, could not be realized.

On November 9 of the same year Pope Paul III convoked the ecumenical council which had so often been deferred because of the belligerency of the times. It was to meet at Trent on the fifteenth of March, 1545.

The Bull of convocation proclaims that it was intended to put an end to the religious schism, to effect the reform of the whole of Christendom, and to achieve unity in the defense of the Cross against the Crescent. On the twelfth of December of the same year, the council was opened by a splendid address by Cardinal Del Monte, the future Julius III. Attended by only thirty-four voting members, the council faced the prospect of being compelled soon to transfer the seat of its deliberations elsewhere. In March, 1547, the state of public affairs forced it to continue its deliberations at Bologna. The opening of the Tridentine Council took place at almost the same time when the congress of the Schmalkaldic League, assembled at Frankfort on the Main, issued its protest against the ecumenical council, which had so often been demanded by the Protestants themselves.

On August 24, 1544, the Pope had addressed grave remonstrances to the Emperor because of the latter's attitude toward the religious schism in Germany.

In a Brief transmitted to Cardinal Morone, which was communicated also to King Ferdinand and the Catholic estates of the empire, he wrote that he was deeply grieved to see that the recess of the diet of Spires excluded from

the deliberations of religious affairs the Pope, who from the foundation of the Church had been invested with supreme authority in all such matters. The Emperor had reason to fear the penalties set forth in Holy Writ against those who infringed upon the rights of God and His representatives. The Emperor is not the directive head of the Church, but only its protector. The increasing complaisance of Charles had made the reclamation of the separated brethren all the more difficult. He must withdraw the concessions which (in a spirit of undue clemency) had been made to the enemies of the Church, otherwise, the Pope could no longer be content with mere admonitions.²

Owing to his Christian convictions, Charles was not prepared to satisfy the opponents of the papacy by allowing matters to develop into a rupture with Paul III. In defense of himself, he caused an oral reply to be made to some of the charges contained in the papal Brief. "After calm deliberation he could not but perceive that the complaints which were preferred by the Pope with so much determination were not without justification."³

In 1556, Charles V, under the pressure of his office, which weighed heavily upon him, transferred his crown to Philip II, and retired to the Spanish monastery of San Yuste, where he spent the remainder of his life.

In opposition to the Catholic estates, and still more in view of the approaching council, the Protestants endeavored to unite their forces and organize more effectively. A result of this endeavor was the so-called "Wittenberg Reformation," which on the fourteenth of January, 1545, Luther and the theologians associated with him at Wittenberg presented to the Elector of Saxony in response to the latter's request for an official demonstration. Melanchthon had drafted the document in such a cautious and apparently mild form that Chancellor Brück wrote that there is "no trace of Doctor Martinus' boisterousness" in it. This "Wittenberg Reformation" treats successively of doctrine, the sacraments, the office of preaching, the episcopal government, etc. It pretends that the bishops ought to be retained—provided they embrace the new theology! This was a well-known and favorite dream of Melanchthon's. He does not speak of forcing new bishops into office. Notwithstanding the fact that the authors of the document appeared to be moderate in their language, the pronounce-

² The text is most accurately reproduced in Ehses, *Concil. Trident.*, Vol. IV, pp. 364 sqq.; cfr. Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, Vol. V (1909), pp. 504 sq.

³ Thus Pastor, *l. c.*, p. 507.

ment characterizes the papacy as "idolatry." Whatever might savor of concession is rejected. Only a few external forms of the old Catholic worship are tolerated, mainly as a means of deceiving those who were accustomed to them.⁴

2. "CONSECRATION" OF THE BISHOP OF NAUMBURG AND DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH AT TORGAU

The manner in which Luther at that time intended to proceed with the installation of bishops for his churches, was exemplified in the celebrated case of the "consecration" of Nicholas Amsdorf as "Evangelical bishop" of Naumburg.⁵

The legitimate bishop of this city, Philip, palsgrave of the Rhine and duke of Bavaria, had died in 1541, after exposing his people entirely too much to the infiltrations of Protestantism. The selection of a successor precipitated a crisis, owing to the arbitrary and violent measures taken by the elector, John Frederick of Saxony, who was resolved upon obtaining possession of this ancient and wealthy bishopric. The see of Naumburg was directly subject to the imperial government and enjoyed the personal protection of the emperor. The elector's powers were limited to certain privileges of arbitration. After Bishop Philip's death a Lutheran preacher, Nicholas Medler, in compliance with the elector's instructions, began to function as "superintendent of Naumburg" and to deliver sermons in the cathedral. Soon after the admirable and scholarly provost, Julius von Pflug, was legitimately elected by the chapter. The elector forcibly prevented Pflug from entering upon his new office. He prosecuted the conquest of the city and the territory with such vehemence that his procedure seemed rash even to the Wittenberg theologians. Luther wrote to the elector: "What cannot be carried off openly, may be won by waiting." Pflug, however, was not recognized as bishop by the Wittenbergers, who at first intended to erect only a Lutheran consistory in the city of Naumburg, but changed their mind and favored the appointment of a new bishop by the elector. Up to this time, no steps had been taken anywhere in Germany towards the direct installation of a Protestant bishop. Melanchthon in particular hesitated to go to such lengths, as his "Wittenberg Reformation" evinced.

⁴ On the "Wittenberg Reformation," see Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. V, pp. 385 sqq.; Vol. III, pp. 448 sq.

⁵ For the following see Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 192 sqq.

The curious procedure at Naumburg remains practically an isolated case.

Luther and his friends wanted to force the issue by the election of Prince George of Anhalt, canon of Magdeburg and Merseburg, who shared the Wittenberg views. The elector, however, feared that, owing to his position, this prince might not prove an easy tool in his sovereign's hands. Not until 1545 did Prince George attain to the "episcopal dignity," when Luther "consecrated" him bishop of Merseburg, which see had been occupied in 1541 by August, the brother of Duke Maurice of Saxony, and had since then been governed by George as spiritual administrator. The "consecration" of Prince George of Anhalt, besides that of Amsdorf at Naumburg, was the only act of the kind which Luther performed.⁶

In lieu of George von Anhalt, the Saxon elector destined Nicholas von Amsdorf for the see of Naumburg. Amsdorf at the time was actively engaged in preaching Luther's doctrine at Magdeburg. Luther thoroughly approved of the appointment and eulogized Amsdorf in a letter to the elector as "learned and proficient in Holy Scripture, more so than the whole crowd of papists; also a man of good morals and upright life." Melanchthon was not so favorably disposed towards this hot-blooded theologian, nor did he approve of his conduct, but charged him with having had adulterous relations with the wife of his deacon at Magdeburg.

In order to give the proceedings connected with the "consecration" at Naumburg a semblance of legitimacy, the Protestant councillors of that city and of Zeitz, and the Protestant members of the gentry, were asked to vote for Amsdorf. Many of them had sworn everlasting fidelity to the Catholic Chapter under the former bishop. Luther solved their scruples by advising them that no oath taken by the sheep to the wolves could be of any account, and that "no duty could be binding which ran counter to God's commandment to do away with idolatrous doctrine."⁷

On January 20, 1542, Luther himself "consecrated" the new Protestant "bishop" in the sacred precincts of the cathedral of Naumburg. This magnificent structure, one of the most beautiful medieval cathedrals of Germany, a noble type of the later Romanesque and Gothic style, was begun as early as 1045 under Bishop Cadalus, and through

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 193 sq.

⁷ Köstlin-Kawerau, *Martin Luther*, Vol. II, pp. 554 sq.

the mouths of its numerous and wonderful statues of saints and pious princes seemed to utter a loud protest against the unheard-of proceedings within its walls. Many guests of high rank assembled in the choir between the magnificent rood-loft, with its richly ornamented passages, and the altar. The elector had arrived two days previously, accompanied by an escort of 200 mounted knights, all clothed in black. At his side were his brother, John Ernest, and Duke Ernest of Brunswick. The councillors and knights of Zeitz and Naumburg acted as electors and witnesses. In response to an address by Nicholas Medler, they signified their choice in the name of the congregation, to which the people assented by saying "Amen." Luther deemed it very important to emphasize on this occasion his old idea of the importance of the congregation in contrast with the arbitrary action of the elector. The entire ceremony was to proceed in accordance with the example of the earliest centuries of the Church, in which the bishop, as it were, married the congregation of the faithful who had elevated him. The accompanying ancient rites, however, were omitted; above all the transfer of legitimate ecclesiastical jurisdiction to the new "bishop." In place of the neighboring bishops who, in conformity with the practice of antiquity, were wont to participate, three superintendents and an apostate abbot were invited to perform the rite of the laying on of hands. Melanchthon, in his usual weakness, had also complied with the summons to be present.

Luther preached to the superintendents of the Church on the text of St. Paul, where he teaches that "the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the church of God." After the sermon Amsdorf knelt before the altar, surrounded by the four assistants, and the "Veni Creator" was sung. Luther reminded the future bishop concerning his episcopal duties, and on the latter giving a satisfactory answer, in common with the four others, he laid his hands on his head; after this Luther alone offered a prayer for him. This was followed by the "Te Deum," sung in German. The "consecration" took place in a manner similar to the ordination of preachers, namely, by imposition of hands and prayer.

Shortly after the ceremony Luther wrote to a friend that it was "a daring act" on the part of the "Heresiarch Luther," which "will arouse much hatred, animosity, and indignation against us"; and that he was hard at work "in hammering out a book on the subject."⁸ This

⁸ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. V, p. 195.

book was to justify the "consecration" at Naumburg and to present the procedure as a model. It was composed at the request of the elector and appeared in 1542, under the title *Exempel, einen rechten christlichen Bischof zu weihen* (Example How to Consecrate a Genuine Christian Bishop). In many respects it is opposed to the cautious and mild "Wittenberg Reformation," which knows naught of such an "example of how one might wish to reform bishoprics and organize bishoprics in a Christian manner." Luther states in this book that the new bishop was ordained "without any chrism, without even any butter, lard, fat, grease, incense, charcoal, or any such-like holy things." He dismisses his opponents with insolent remarks, even resorting to language borrowed from the category of human evacuations, and adduces in the following form a list of Catholic apologists: "Doctor Sow (Eck), Witling, Blockhead, Dr. Dirtyspoon (Cochlaeus), Lick-dish, Urinal, Heinz, Mainz, etc. Extensive repetitions, moreover, are characteristic of the book. Luther had evidently overwritten himself. His disgust with life, due to bad health, the forerunner of his fatal sickness, spoiled his work.

In his later correspondence with the new "bishop," Luther refers to Amsdorf's bitter complaint that practically nothing was being done by the elector to establish order in the ecclesiastical régime of Naumburg. Luther bewailed with him that the government "so often take rash steps, and then, when we are down in the mire, snore idly and leave us in the lurch." "All Germany," he says, "presents a terrible scene of demoralization and decadence."

"It is Christ's business to see to this," he writes on another occasion, "since He Himself by His Word has called forth so much evil and such great hatred on the part of the devil." In a pseudo-mystical strain he consoles himself and Amsdorf by reflecting that it would be safest to allow oneself to be "carried along" by the guidance of God, who has created the bishop and disposed everything that has happened. "The blinder we are, the more God acts through us." We can only look forward hopefully to the end of the world.

Amsdorf, the whilom Catholic priest, found little pleasure in his episcopal status. He and his preachers received but a meager sustenance. Soon after Luther's death he was deposed as a result of the decisive victory of the imperial forces over the Schmalkaldic League.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

He had to retire to Magdeburg, where he did his best to develop that city into a strong citadel of ultra-Lutheranism. In Magdeburg he also wrote his notorious book: "That Good Works are Injurious to Salvation."¹⁰

Due to the change of events that followed the battle of Mühlberg, in which the Protestant forces were defeated, the venerable cathedral of Naumburg once more decked itself out in festive garments to welcome its legitimate bishop, Julius von Pflug. But the bishopric had been Protestantized, and Catholics were permitted to celebrate divine service only in the cathedral at Naumburg and the collegiate church of Zeitz. A painting in the cathedral, though unfortunately much damaged, preserves the features of the noble Bishop Pflug, who, after a life replete with hardships and disappointments, died in 1564 and was interred in Zeitz. He was particularly saddened by his experiences with the Augsburg Interim of 1548, in the drafting of which he had participated. Pflug's expectation of obtaining papal consent to sacerdotal marriages and the lay-chalice, for the sake of reconciling the non-Catholics, proved futile. Other remedial measures were necessary. It pained him to see how many members of his clergy lived in concubinage in this era of mental and moral confusion—a fact that explains the propositions which he himself and others submitted for the sake of obtaining far-reaching concessions from the Holy See.

After having been so successful in seizing the bishopric of Naumburg, the elector of Saxony sought to obtain control of that of Meissen also. Luther and Amsdorf assisted him in this undertaking. In consequence, a feud (known as the "Wurzer Fehde," after the town of Wurzer) arose between him and the youthful Duke Maurice of Saxony, an adherent of the new religion.¹¹ In order to terminate the controversy, both parties agreed to divide the spoils. The elector appropriated that part of the bishopric which lay about Wurzen, which he forthwith Protestantized, whilst the remaining part, including Meissen, fell to Duke Maurice, who also exercised violence in religious matters. Both in Meissen and in Wurzen treasures of Catholic art were removed from the churches and dissipated with that brutal barbarity which was employed against so many churches abounding

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

¹¹ On the "Wurzer Fehde" and Luther's attitude toward the same see Grisar's *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 200 sqq.

in rare and noble works of art.¹² In his feud with the elector, Luther denounced Maurice of Saxony as "a mad blood-hound." For various reasons, this prince developed such a degree of antipathy to Protestantism, that he abandoned the Schmalkaldic League and commenced to gravitate toward the Emperor. As a result, the elector and Luther became all the more intimately allied.

When, in 1544, John Frederick of Saxony had completed the castle-church at Torgau on the Elbe, the first newly erected Protestant church in Saxony, he invited Luther to officiate at its dedication. The ceremony, which Luther performed as if he were a bishop, paralleled the pseudo-consecration of the Protestant bishop of Naumburg. The ancient church ritual was set aside for the "service of the Word." The intimate participation of the congregation in the act, which was supposed to take place in the name of the people, was once more clearly expressed. Luther's sermon, which replaced the rite of consecration, was published by Caspar Creutziger (Cruciger).¹³ In it he develops, among others, his doctrine that every Christian believer is a priest. He so strongly emphasized the unity of his act with the congregation that here, too, one is constrained to think of opposition against the elector. In this address he incidentally ascribes to the Christian congregation the right of transferring the celebration of Sunday to some other day of the week, if circumstances demand it. He boldly stated, without fear of contradiction, that man is the master of the Sunday, not Sunday the master of man.¹⁴ Another novelty was the singing of a fugue, composed by John Walther, which contained the words: "*Vive Luthere, vive Melanchthon, vivite nostrae lumina terrae* (Long live Luther, long live Melanchthon, long live the lights of our earth), with an ostentatious amplification of their merits.¹⁵

3. ATTACKS UPON THE ARCHBISHOPRIC OF COLOGNE AND THE DUCHY OF BRUNSWICK

In 1543 Luther joyfully boasted to Duke Albrecht of Prussia that the archbishopric of Cologne had embraced his Evangel in earnest,

¹² For illustrations see Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 203 sqq.; II, 352 sq.; Vol. IV, p. 196; Vol. VI, 277 sq.

¹³ Erlangen ed., Vol. II, pp. 218 sq.; Köstlin-Kawerau, *M. Luther*, Vol. III, pp. 573 sq.

¹⁴ Erl. ed., Vol. II, p. 223.

¹⁵ Text, *ibid.*, p. 219.

despite the strenuous opposition of the canons of the cathedral, and that matters were progressing famously in the duchy of Brunswick.¹⁶

Herman von Wied, archbishop and elector of Cologne, was a worldly-minded man, uninstructed in ecclesiastical matters, of whom Charles V once said to Philip of Hesse: "Why does he start novelties? He knows no Latin, and, in his whole life, has only said three Masses, two of which I attended myself. He does not even understand the Confiteor. To reform does not mean to bring in another belief or another religion."¹⁷

After 1539 Bishop Herman was persuaded by the preacher Peter Medmann, and still more by Martin Bucer, to effect a change in religion in the archdiocese of Cologne. The powerful resistance which he encountered in his cathedral chapter as well as in the city council led Luther to speak of "seven devils, who sit in the highest temple, whom God will overthrow, who breaks down the cedars of Lebanon."¹⁸ In the courageous defense of the Catholic cause at Cologne, three men distinguished themselves: John Gropper, a member of the secular clergy, a true guiding spirit of the archbishopric in its hour of danger; Eberhard Billick, the learned and indefatigable provincial of the Carmelites, and Peter Canisius, a member of the newly-founded Society of Jesus.

The situation became critical when Melanchthon, in 1543, settled at Bonn and, in conjunction with Bucer, devoted his energies to promoting the plans of the misguided archbishop. Melanchthon wrote a pamphlet against Billick, in which he accuses the Rhinelanders of "idolatry." In order to draw the people away from the Church, he, aided by Bucer, published the so-called "Cologne Reformation," whereby he gained over many Catholics. The Catholic leaders on their part addressed urgent representations against Herman von Wied to the Holy See, and also endeavored to procure the intervention of the Emperor. Herman von Wied, however, issued a summons for a provincial diet to be held at Bonn on January 6, 1546, for the purpose of definitely introducing a new form of religion, which, to the great chagrin of Luther, but conformably with the designs of Bucer and Melanchthon, was a compound of Lutheranism and Zwinglianism.

¹⁶ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. V, p. 166.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, V, p. 166.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

The youthful Canisius at that time rendered excellent services to the Church of Cologne, a prelude of his future activity as "Apostle of Germany." He sojourned at Cologne with several brethren of his Order, for the sake of study. When Emperor Charles visited Cologne, in August, 1545, Canisius, then a deacon, eloquent of speech, well informed, and courageous, appeared before that monarch at the urgent importunities of Gropper, and warmly requested him to protect the religion of his Rhenish subjects. The ensuing exhortations and admonitions of the Emperor had no influence upon the archbishop. Before the assembly of the dreaded diet of Bonn, Canisius, already highly esteemed by the citizens of Cologne, was asked to make a hurried trip to the Netherlands, to plead with the Emperor for assistance. He succeeded in obtaining an order which inhibited the archbishop from making any decision in religious questions prior to the next diet. Because of the persistent danger, Canisius, in February, 1546, undertook another journey, and visited the Emperor at Nymwegen, the birthplace of Canisius. In the name of Cologne, he requested the removal from the city of certain clamorous adherents of Archbishop Wied, and an imperial letter to the magistrates, encouraging them in their opposition to the religious innovation.¹⁹ The efforts of the Catholic leaders of Cologne resulted in the deposition and excommunication of the Archbishop on April 16, 1546. After this Herman von Wied disappears from history. He was succeeded by a zealous Catholic, Adolf von Schaumburg. Cologne was saved to the faith and continued to be a citadel of the Catholic religion and the heart of the Catholic Rhineland. In the same year, 1546, the year of Luther's death, Canisius, who was afterwards canonized by the Church, was ordained to the priesthood and published a Latin edition of the works of St. Cyril of Alexandria and a revised text of the writings of Pope St. Leo the Great, in order to demonstrate the traditional teaching of the Church.

In Northern Germany, Duke Henry of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel was the militant leader of the Catholic league against the Schmalkaldians. This position made him highly obnoxious to Luther and his friends, but their hatred was augmented by his defense of the Catholic cause in writing. His forceful attacks upon the bigamous mar-

¹⁹ The visits of P. Canisius to the Emperor are mentioned by O. Braunsberger, *Petrus Canisius*, 2nd and 3rd ed., 1921, p. 32. Relative to the last journey, Braunsberger remarks, without indicating his source: "first revealed through the latest researches."

riage of Philip of Hesse provoked Luther to write his pamphlet "Wider Hans Worst," which was directed against Duke Henry. Luther followed this up with a bitter incitement against the "blood-hound and incendiary Heinz," as he styled the militant Duke.

For the rest, his criticism of the private life of Duke Henry was not unfounded. Not only his controversial methods, but also his moral character were quite objectionable. But the charge of arson in the territories of the new religion, which Luther made against him, was the product of a morbid imagination.²⁰ It is rumored, he says, that "Heinz" has dispatched "many hundreds of incendiaries against the Evangelical estates." He maintained in all seriousness "that the Pope is said to have given 80,000 ducats towards it." History is ignorant of any such transaction. Certain alleged confessions extorted on the rack have no significance.

In 1542, when Duke Henry attempted to enforce the ban which the Imperial Supreme Court had declared against the city of Goslar, the war which the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse had long prepared against him, finally broke out. Luther was aware at that time of prophecies which foretold the end of the "son of perdition,"—a "warning example, instituted by God, for the tyrants of our time."²¹ The two allied Protestant princes took possession of the Duke's territory and committed many atrocities. They introduced Protestantism there with the aid of Luther and especially Bugenhagen. Due to Henry's determination to regain his principality, a new war broke out in 1545, which ended in even more striking success for his enemies, who took the Duke captive.

When, in deference to the Emperor, Philip of Hesse and others favored the release of Duke Henry, Luther published an open letter to Philip and the elector,²² in which he characterizes the idea of setting free that "mischievous, wild tool of the Roman idol," as an open attack not merely on the Evangel, but even on the manifest will of God, as clearly displayed in the recent war, which had been waged "by His angels." In this remarkable document Luther rose to the pinnacle of his morbidly mystical conception of life: God Himself has kindled this conflagration against his adversaries, God, who calls Himself a consuming fire. His friends, as well as he, had

²⁰ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. IV, pp. 293 sq.

²¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 236.

²² Erl. ed., Vol. XXVI, ii, pp. 251 sqq.; De Wette, *Briefe*, VI, pp. 385 sqq. Cfr. Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. V, pp. 394 sq.

always prayed and clamored for peace, but "the pope and the papists would gladly see us all dead, body and soul, whereas we for our part would have them all to be body and soul happy, together with us."²³ Luther represents this document as his own exclusive and personal affair. "Nevertheless," says Köstlin-Kawerau, "it is not to be doubted" that Luther "performed a task that had been ordered with the intention of influencing the Landgrave."²⁴ Chancellor Brück had inspired him with the ideas set forth in that document, for it was extremely important to the elector to prevent the release of Duke Henry.

The last armed champion of the Catholic cause in Northern Germany succumbed with Henry of Brunswick. Not until the Schmalkaldic War of 1547, after Luther's death, did a favorable change come, at least temporarily.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

²⁴ Köstlin-Kawerau, *Martin Luther*, Vol. II, p. 612.

CHAPTER XX

LUTHER'S FINAL STRUGGLES AND DEATH

I. THE MILITANT SPIRIT OF LUTHER IN WORD AND PICTURE

During the first half of the forties, the thought of death frequently engaged the mind of Luther. His apprehension was most strongly expressed on November 10, 1545, when he celebrated his sixty-first birthday in the circle of his friends, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, Cruciger, Major, Paul Eber, and some others, who surrounded him at the festive board. He said then that he would not live to see Easter and spoke sorrowfully of the future apostasy of certain brethren, which would inflict a blow upon the Gospel greater than any of which the papists were capable, who, for the most part, were rude, ignorant Epicureans. He spoke of his impending death in a similar vein, though less definitely, in his declining years.

And yet these years furnish an exemplification of the incessant activity of this man, who was afflicted with melancholia. His literary productions, some of which have already been noted above, must be considered first.

With his impetuous pen he commenced a vigorous onslaught on the Jews and the Jewish religion. In the first years of his public career he had spoken of them in a different tone. At that time, as we have seen above, he harbored the seductive idea that they might be converted to the new Evangel. His treatise of 1523 was inspired by this visionary idea.¹ The acceptance of his Gospel on the part of the Jews was to be a divine seal of approval. But his expectations came to naught. As a result, indignation at their infidelity, their blasphemies against Christianity, and their oppression of non-Jews in Germany, took hold of him. With the sanction of Luther, John Frederick expelled the Jews from electoral Saxony in 1536, whilst King Ferdinand granted them an asylum in his territories.

Luther first proceeded against the infidelity and proselytizing zeal

¹ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. V, pp. 411 sq.