

## CHAPTER XV

### SESSION OF THE SCHMALKALDIC LEAGUE, 1537. LITERARY BATTLES. LUTHER'S CO-WORKERS

#### I. THE SCHMALKALDIC ARTICLES. REPUDIATION OF THE PROPOSED GENERAL COUNCIL BY THE SCHMALKALDIANS

In view of the prevailing conditions, in particular the attitude of France, the prospects of summoning an ecumenical council, which had been the object of Vergerio's negotiations with Luther, were rather unfavorable. Nevertheless, Paul III, who was intent upon reform and the defense of Catholicism, adhered to the project and fixed the date of the council for May 23, 1537. Mantua was designated as the city where the council was to assemble. For the purpose of definitively winning over the Protestants to the idea of an ecumenical council, the Pope ordered Van der Vorst to visit Germany as his legate. The Emperor, who had intended to convoke a national council, for a while contemplated making concessions to and peaceful covenants with the estates who adhered to the new religion, in order to gain their assistance in his campaign against the Turks. But when it had been announced that the great convention of the Schmalkaldic League was to be held on February 9, 1537, Charles V sent his counselor Held to persuade the Protestants to participate in the council which they had so often demanded. Vergerio, the papal nuncio, also hastened to Schmalkalden.

Meanwhile the strength of the League had increased. The agreement was renewed for a period of ten years. Accompanied by a large retinue, the Protestant princes and the representatives of the cities entered the small town of Schmalkalden. They were accompanied by a large number of theologians—larger than any that had yet appeared at a similar assembly. It was intended that the convention should be not only extraordinarily solemn, but also decisive. Elector John Frederick of Saxony, an enthusiastic follower of Luther, would have preferred if the latter had issued a summons for a council of his own,

which, in his opinion, was to be a "general and free Christian council," to which Catholic representatives were to be invited. But Luther and the theologians, as well as the jurists, persuaded him to abandon this all too daring plan. They pointed out the great discord which would probably manifest itself among the Protestants and might result in profound schisms in their own ranks. Only Bucer and a few others still adhered to the proposal of convoking a general Protestant synod.

Within a few days after assembling, the Schmalkaldic League formulated a declaration in which they decisively declined the invitation to attend the council called by Paul III. They declared that the Pope and his party did not intend to renounce their errors, that papists were not competent to pass judgment on the new religion, and that the selection of an Italian city as the seat of the council was objectionable. They contended moreover that the political situation rendered a general council impossible, and that the religious peace of Nuremberg must be preserved and extended to all members who had recently joined the League. The papal nuncio was treated with provocative disrespect by John Frederick. The delegates commissioned Melanchthon to prepare severe declarations against the papacy for adoption by the assembly and its theologians. Luther, on his part, was prepared to favor the acceptance of the papal invitation, but only under conditions to which the papacy could not agree. He desired to preserve the appearance of being conciliatory on account of the advantage which would accrue to his party from this attitude.

Luther was still at Wittenberg when, in anticipation of the approaching assembly of the League, he was compelled by an order of the Elector to draft the so-called Schmalkaldic Articles.

The Elector desired, on the one hand, a clear and definite compilation of the doctrines and practical requirements which were to be adhered to under all circumstances in opposition to the Roman Church and, on the other, a list of articles which were debatable. The summary was to be submitted to the Saxon theologians for their signature, and then proposed at Schmalkalden. At the head of the agenda, as outlined by Luther, were the sublime articles on the Divine Majesty which the partisans of the papacy did not dispute. These were followed by the articles which were rejected by the Catholics as absolutely unacceptable. The first of these was the article which set forth the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone (*sola fide*). "It is not allowed either to deviate from, or to surrender this article," wrote

Luther, "even though heaven and earth should fall. Everything is founded upon this article, which we teach and by which we live in defiance of the pope, the devil, and the world."

The second article was a condemnation of the Sacrifice of the Mass, which was denounced as a "dragon's tail" that has produced much filth and vermin," namely, Purgatory, pilgrimages, confraternities, relics, indulgences, and invocation of the saints. These points are instanced without methodical order and set forth with a torrent of invectives. A third article, in similar language, demands the disestablishment of pious foundations and monasteries and the repudiation of the divine prerogatives of the papacy. The last section mentions the debatable points concerning sin, the law, penance, the Sacraments, and the marriage of priests. On these points there was to be no surrender, but it was expected that the opponents might be forced to make concessions concerning them.<sup>1</sup>

Luther took these articles with him when, accompanied by Melanchthon and Bugenhagen, he started out for Schmalkalden on January 31. The document was the cause of much dissension among the theologians. They quarreled particularly about the severity with which Luther expressed his belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Ambrose Blaurer in particular declared, in opposition to Amsdorf and Osiander who defended Luther, that the conciliatory formula of the Wittenberg Concord had been violated in these articles. Melanchthon, cautiously and with reserve as was his wont, agreed with Blaurer. As other points also threatened to bring about a rupture, and Luther himself was taken ill, Melanchthon succeeded, through the mediation of the Landgrave of Hesse, in having Luther's Schmalkaldic Articles entirely withdrawn. No doubt the confused document with its exaggerations and disputable points was repugnant to the taste of this fastidious scholar, who insisted that the Augsburg Confession and the Concord of 1536 constituted an adequate profession of faith for the assembly of Schmalkalden. Melanchthon was now summoned by the estates to come forward with a declaration against the pope and the primacy of the Apostolic See. It was to be the final

<sup>1</sup> Weimar ed., Vol. L, pp. 192 sqq.; Erl. ed., Vol. XXV, 2 ed., pp. 163 sqq. Cfr. Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, p. 430; Vol. IV, pp. 525 sq.; Vol. VI, p. 310. Of the Sacrament of the Altar it is asserted: "We hold that bread and wine in the Last Supper are the true body and blood of Christ, and that they are communicated to and received not only by pious, but also by wicked Christians,"

breach of the German Protestants with the Church of Rome. Under pressure of the highly exasperated delegates, and during the excitement caused by the illness of Luther, Melanchthon's fickle pen imparted a very odious form to his tracts "On the Power and Primacy of the Pope" and "On the Power and Jurisdiction of the Bishops."<sup>2</sup> There is no longer any recognition of episcopal jurisdiction, even of the purely "human" jurisdiction which he had formerly proposed.

Thenceforth Luther's spirit asserted itself more and more in Melanchthon and produced a notable change of attitude in him toward the Catholic Church. Thus when, prior to the Schmalkadic War, he issued a new edition of Luther's "Warning to his Dear Germans" against the "papistical blood-hounds," as they are styled in this work, he accompanied it by a preface which contained unheard-of attacks upon everything Catholic.

At Schmalkalden, his writings against the pope and the bishops were subscribed to by thirty-two of the theologians and preachers there present and accepted by the convention. When, at a later date, the formulas of Concord were drawn up (in 1580) Melanchthon's above-mentioned tracts were incorporated among the "Symbolical Books" of Lutheranism.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. LUTHER'S ILLNESS AT SCHMALKALDEN. NEW POLEMICS

The illness with which Luther was seized at Schmalkalden was a violent attack of gallstone, an old trouble which had become greatly aggravated. He was no longer able to participate in the conferences of the convention. In fact, people began to fear for his life. Although he was suffering intense pains and thinking of death, he would not allow even a thought of reconciliation to arise in his soul. On the contrary, he prayed as follows: "O God, Thou knowest that I have taught Thy Word faithfully and zealously. . . . I die in hatred of the pope."<sup>4</sup> Once, when racked with pains, he said to a chamberlain of his Elector that his death would be a source of joy to the pope, but the latter's elation would not be of long duration; for the truth of the epitaph which he (Luther) had prepared, would remain. The tenor of this epitaph was that his death would be the death of the

<sup>2</sup> Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, pp. 438 sq.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 440 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Tischbreden, Weimar ed., Vol. VI, n. 6974; Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, p. 435.

pope: "*Pestis eram vivus, moriens ero mors tua, papa.*" This horrible hexameter, it is true, is not inscribed on his tomb at Wittenberg, but since about 1572, it appears upon a huge memorial tablet with his effigy which had originally been destined for Wittenberg, but was transferred to Jena.<sup>5</sup>

He did not want to die at Schmalkalden, but in the company of his friends at Wittenberg; for he did not wish the papal nuncio, the "legate of the devil," to enjoy the satisfaction of seeing him die in his immediate vicinity. Accordingly, on February 26, he was conveyed to a coach that was to carry him home. A multitude surrounded him as he was about to depart. He made the sign of the cross over them and said: "May the Lord fill you with His blessing and with hatred of the pope." Such was "his last will and testament," according to an expression of Mathesius in his eleventh sermon on Luther,<sup>6</sup> who adds: "He [Luther] bequeathed to his friends, the preachers, *odium in papam.*"<sup>6</sup>

On the very next day after his departure Luther experienced an improvement in his health. Having arrived at Gotha, after an exhausting journey, he made a will in writing—his so-called First Testament—in which he expressed the wish that he might live until Pentecost, in order to attack the Roman beast with even greater vigor than he had done before. In this testament he assures the princes that they need not worry over the spoliation of church property. "They do not rob like some others do; indeed, I see how, with these goods, they provide for the welfare of religion."<sup>7</sup> It was more of an attempted easing of his own conscience than a statement in conformity with the truth. According to the reports of his friends, he went to confession at Gotha, as was his wont, and received absolution from Bugenhagen.

He arrived safely at Wittenberg on March 14, his health having greatly improved.

When, during the ensuing period, his strength and ambition flagged, he stimulated himself by resorting to a remedy which always proved effective. He filled himself with hatred of the pope. "Then my mind is completely refreshed," he says in his Table Talks; "the

<sup>5</sup> Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, p. 436; Vol. V, p. 102; Vol. VI, pp. 370, 377, 389, 394, 395 sq.

<sup>6</sup> Mathesius, *Historien* (1566), p. 130; Köstlin-Kawerau, *M. Luther*, Vol. II, p. 389; Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, p. 435.

<sup>7</sup> Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 437.

spirit is quickened and all temptations flee."<sup>8</sup> Certain phenomena of his inner life can hardly be judged by ordinary standards. The idea of the devil being at work in the papacy distorts all his thoughts. In the case of abnormal phenomena, among which we must reckon his imprecatory prayer, puzzling psychological problems constantly recur. He is not the victim of fixed ideas; for free-will and accountability are clearly operative in his case; but his guilt is diminished when the psychopathic condition which oppressed him since his youth and the monastic period is taken into consideration.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, many pages of the works and letters which he composed at Wittenberg betray this nervous condition, which was accompanied by heart disease and precordial dread.

In 1538 he published his Schmalkaldic Articles, which the convention of 1537 had suppressed, intensifying many of their polemical acerbities.<sup>10</sup> He represented these articles in this work as a document which had been approved by the convention, saying they were "adopted unanimously acknowledged by our party," in order that they might be "publicly submitted and introduced as our profession of faith" before a truly free council of the church. This assertion was false and it cannot be established how Luther came to make it. Can it be assumed that he had no reliable information with respect to the actual proceedings of the convention of Schmalkalden?<sup>11</sup>

In the same year (1538) Luther published a revision of his "Instruction of the Visitators to the Parsons," in which, besides some good exhortations, he directed the parsons to "condemn vehemently the papacy and its adherents."<sup>12</sup>

The larger work of the succeeding year, "On the Councils and the Churches,"<sup>13</sup> was the execution of a proposal made by Amsdorf, who had suggested that he once and for all thoroughly repulse the Erasmians and all papists who appealed to the Church and proclaimed her right of rendering final decisions. Luther said that people constantly clamored for "the Church, the Church, the Church," in order

<sup>8</sup> *Tischreden*, Weimar ed., Vol. II, no. 2410.

<sup>9</sup> See the chapter: "The Darker Sides of Luther's Inner Life," Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. VI, pp. 99-186.

<sup>10</sup> See *supra*, n. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, p. 440, note 2.

<sup>12</sup> Weimar ed., Vol. XXVI, pp. 195 sqq.; Erl. ed., Vol. XXIII, p. 57. Cfr. Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, p. 438.

<sup>13</sup> Weimar ed., Vol. L, pp. 509 sqq.; Erl. ed., Vol. XXV, 2 ed., pp. 278 sqq. Cfr. Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. V, pp. 377 sqq.; 106 sq.

to destroy his gospel. With an impetuous diligence he read the history of ancient councils and other ecclesiastical documents in order to find material to deny the authority of the Church. The tone of this work, which is written in a self-conscious, provocative, and abusive style, constitutes a psychological problem, despite its somewhat scholarly form. "Whoever teaches differently [than we], though he be an angel from heaven," he says, "let him be anathema" (Gal. I, 8). "We desire to be the pope's masters and to trample him under foot," etc. The pope must "side with us" in the proposed council. "Emperors and kings ought to co-operate in this matter and coerce the pope into compliance." Such statements were apt to enlighten certain blind men in Germany who still good-naturedly believed that peace could be brought about by way of negotiations and religious colloquies. These so-called expectants believed that they could keep the Lutheran question in abeyance by means of a few concessions, until the ecumenical council convened.

Cardinal Albrecht of Mayence seems to have held this opinion. His immoral private life blinded his intellect and rendered his character weak. Luther was enraged at him because he had thus far declined to join the reformers. He employed the affair of a certain Anton Schönitz to vent his resentment against Albrecht in a violent pamphlet, entitled: "Against Cardinal Albrecht, Archbishop at Magdeburg,"<sup>14</sup> which he caused to be printed against the express wish of his Elector, who did not desire to see his colleague insulted. After the book appeared, Luther had to promise the Elector not to publish anything of a personal matter without the previous censorship of the electoral curia. The incident furnished the weak Cardinal Albrecht with an opportunity of seeing how little hope there was of effecting a conciliation with the innovators. We may add that a few years later a change came over the Cardinal. A new spirit animated Mayence and its archiepiscopal court, stimulated by the activity of Giovanni Morone, the papal legate, and of Bl. Peter Faber, a companion of St. Ignatius, who came to that city in 1541. The spiritual exercises conducted by Faber influenced the worldly-minded Cardinal and induced him to become a defender of the Church and to lead a better life until his death, which occurred in 1545.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Weimar ed., Vol. L, pp. 395 sqq.; Erl. ed., Vol. XXXII, pp. 14 sqq. Cfr. Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. V, pp. 106 sq.

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. Grisar, *Luther* (German original), Vol. III, pp. 1025 sq. (omitted in the English translation by E. M. Lamond).

Duke Henry of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel was one of the bitterest opponents of the religious revolt. He was a personal enemy of John Frederick of Saxony and Landgrave Philip of Hesse. He was accused of many deeds of violence and led an immoral life. He was also an author and wrote a vigorous attack upon the Protestant princes and the new Church at New Year's, 1541. With impetuous haste, Luther, though afflicted with violent ear-ache, replied to him in a pamphlet entitled, "Against the Clown" (*Wider Hans Worst*).<sup>16</sup> The contents of this work are in accord with its contemptuous title. This uncouth lout, Luther says, is at the same time a disgraceful liar in his attacks upon the alleged evangelical heretics. In this work as well as in the one "On the Councils" Luther proposed to show where the true Church was. It is not with the papists, who lack twelve essential parts; the true and ancient Christian Church is rather on his (Luther's) side. The devil's harlot is an epithet which he applies to the papal Church, while Duke Henry, the loutish clown, is characterized as an incendiary and a dastard, who is forced to hear evil reports because of his immoral conduct.<sup>17</sup> Luther wrote to Melanchthon that he marveled at himself because he had observed such moderation in the composition of this book.<sup>18</sup>

In 1537, Luther became involved in an exciting feud with antinomianism. John Agricola of Eisleben, afterwards of Wittenberg, a former friend of Luther and one of his most renowned theologians, passionately declaimed against the law of Christian morality. He contended that the law did not effect true penance, but death and damnation. He wanted conversion and penance to be the product of love. For a considerable number of years, Luther had been wont to concede greater effectiveness to the law and the fear of punishment than he had granted in the early part of his career. Now the unsparing attacks of Agricola violently aroused him, especially since that writer quoted former statements of his own. He condemned the doctrine of Agricola as antinomianism, *i. e.*, perversion of the law.<sup>19</sup> On December 18, he delivered a discourse against the antinomian theses, which, however, Agricola refused to acknowledge as his own. The controversy aroused wide-spread attention. Luther's friends, among them

<sup>16</sup> Weimar ed., Vol. LI, pp. 469 sqq.; Erl. ed., Vol. XXVI, 2 ed., pp. 19 sqq.

<sup>17</sup> Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. IV, p. 64.

<sup>18</sup> April 12, 1541; see *Briefwechsel*, XIII, p. 300, on his book *Contra istum diabolum Mezentium*. Mezentius was a notorious tyrant.

<sup>19</sup> Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. V, pp. 15-25.

Amsdorf, bitterly complained that the pupils pretended to be wiser than their master. Luther arranged a second disputation for January 12, 1538, to justify his former position. This was followed by a third, on September 13, which proved to be an extraordinarily lengthy argument against the new "spiritual blusterers" and "conscious hypocrites."<sup>20</sup> Luther's work, "Against the Antinomians," published in the beginning of 1539, sealed the embittered conflict with Agricola and the numerous adherents whom the latter had attracted.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile the founder of antinomianism had timidly retreated from the field of battle. Luther nevertheless printed things about him which must have hurt him keenly. In March, 1540, Agricola brought suit against Luther before the Saxon Elector, to whom he wrote that he had been trodden under foot for well-nigh three years and had slunk along at Luther's heels like a wretched cur.<sup>22</sup>

As a final solution, Agricola left Wittenberg about the middle of August, 1540, and betook himself to Berlin, where a position as court-preacher was offered to him by the Elector Joachim II of Brandenburg, who had been converted to the new evangel.

### 3. FURTHER VIOLENT MEASURES

In 1535, Joachim II succeeded his father, Joachim I, who had faithfully adhered to the ancient Church, as Elector of Brandenburg. Like his mother, Elizabeth, a friend of Luther, Joachim II had favored the new religion before his accession to the throne, but only in secret, because he had solemnly sworn to his father that he would remain true to the Catholic faith. In 1540 Joachim was persuaded by the Landgrave of Hesse to issue a ritual in his own competency as territorial bishop, in which he effected a forceful reorganization of the electorate in conformity with the new religion. The clergymen who resisted were exiled, the monasteries were suppressed, the property of the Church as well as the metallic treasures of art which adorned the churches were confiscated to the crown, whence they passed into the hands of the "silver squires" and found their way into the insatiable mint of the country.<sup>23</sup> The prodigality of the Elector, his buildings and mistresses, caused him immeasurable expenses. According to the

<sup>20</sup> *Disputationes*, ed. Drews, Disp. I, pp. 246 sqq.; II, pp. 334 sqq.; III, pp. 419 sqq.

<sup>21</sup> Weimar ed., Vol. L, pp. 468 sqq.; Erl. ed., Vol. XXXII, pp. 1 sqq.

<sup>22</sup> Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. V, p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Janssen-Pastor, III, pp. 479 sqq.

testimony of contemporaries, the country was ruined in consequence of his misgovernment. Relative to divine service, Joachim II avoided all striking changes so carefully "that the bulk of the nation, the poor people of the countryside, did not realize what had actually happened."<sup>24</sup> The Elector deceptively declared that he had not introduced any new doctrine, but had merely abolished prevailing abuses. Agricola, the pliant court-preacher, faithfully assisted him. The Latin "Mass" was celebrated with churchly vestments; the host and the chalice were elevated; many feast-days were retained; meat was prohibited during the forty days of Lent; solemn processions were held as of old; and the clergy, vested in white gowns, carried the viaticum to the sick. Joachim declared that he did not wish to be bound by the ordinances of the Church of Wittenberg in these matters.

Luther, who regarded the activities of Agricola with distrust, was in the habit of characterizing him as a comedian. He approved of the new ritual only in part, and demanded that the people should comply with it only on condition that the pure gospel be preached. To Buchholzer, a preacher who felt uneasy about the retention of the clerical vestments, he wrote: "In God's name, walk about [in the procession] with a silver or golden cross and a cape or robe of velvet, silk or linen." If the Elector were not satisfied with the clergy's wearing one robe, let them put on three; if one procession did not suffice, let them hold seven, like Josue at Jericho, and let His Electoral Highness leap and dance like David before the ark of the Lord.<sup>25</sup> As time went on, it was but natural that these temperamental differences produced a certain opposition between Wittenberg and Berlin.

Joachim II was encouraged in his opposition to the faith of his forbears by the almost simultaneous and sudden turn in the religious situation which took place within the duchy of Saxony. Duke George, the noble, valiant and faithful defender of the ancient Church and of the Emperor, passed away on April 17, 1539, without a surviving son. His brother Henry, who succeeded him, precipitously destroyed the Catholic status of the duchy which George had sedulously nurtured since Luther commenced his public career. Luther had always hoped for the death of Duke George. The judgment of God, so he said in 1522, would inevitably overtake him.<sup>26</sup> After the Duke had

<sup>24</sup> J. G. Droysen, quoted *ibid.*, p. 481.

<sup>25</sup> December 4, 1539; *Briefwechsel*, XII, p. 317; Janssen-Pastor, *l. c.*, p. 482; Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. V, p. 313.

<sup>26</sup> Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 190.

died a Christian death, Luther predicted that his race would perish.<sup>27</sup>

Like Joachim II, the new duke had favored Lutheranism before he succeeded to the throne. As the arbitrary ruler of the Church in his duchy, he commenced his reign by ruthless measures against the Catholics. Luther came temporarily from Wittenberg in order to aid him by his sermons and counsel. Melanchthon, Jonas, and Cruciger associated themselves with him for the purpose. In July, 1539, scarcely four months after the demise of his predecessor, Duke Henry, following the example of the Elector of Saxony, decreed a so-called evangelical visitation, as the most practical method of Protestantizing his people. The decree was executed by Luther's preachers.

The Catholic clergy were forcibly removed and replaced by apostate priests and monks, nay, sometimes even by ordinary laborers, who, though devoid of all education, pushed themselves to the fore by their fluency of speech and a hastily acquired stock of Biblical quotations.

Luther was not pleased with the conditions which speedily developed at court and among the nobility and the people. His letters reveal a gloomy picture. At the court of the aged and feeble prince he sees nothing but "arrogance and the desire of amassing wealth," coupled with an "inordinate repugnance to promoting the cause of God."<sup>28</sup> In his depressed mood he believes that the scandals of the court are "ten times worse" than the scandal caused by the bigamous union of the Landgrave of Hesse, styles the courtiers and nobles "the harpies of the land," and says that they will end by "eating themselves up by their own avarice." Despite their continuous appropriation of the property of the Church, he charges them with allowing the preachers to starve. He advises a pastor, who was to have been chosen visitator, as follows: "Even should you get nothing for the visitation, still you must hold it as well as you can, comfort souls to the best of your power, and, in any case, expel the poisonous papists."<sup>29</sup> Thus, Luther's idea of advancing the kingdom of God is bound up with the harshest and most unfair methods and he extols the introduction of the new religion into the duchy of Saxony as a wonderful work of God for the salvation of souls.

The religious apostasy made progress also in the North German jurisdiction of Albrecht of Mayence, namely, in the archbishopric of Magdeburg and the bishopric of Halberstadt. In 1541, Justus Jonas introduced the new religion into his native city of Halle.

<sup>27</sup> *Tischreden*, Weimar ed., Vol. IV, n. 4623; Grisar, *l. c.*

<sup>28</sup> Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 194.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

As early as 1533, Protestantism made great gains in the duchy of Jülich-Cleve, in Anhalt-Köthen, and in Mecklenburg. In March, 1534, Anhalt was completely Protestantized, on which occasion Luther sent congratulations and best wishes to the ruler of that city. In July of the same year, the city and district of Augsburg adopted the new religion. In 1539, the archbishopric of Riga in Livonia was brought under Protestant control.

In 1534, dukes Barnim and Philip of Pomerania forced their subjects to embrace the new evangel, despite the resistance offered by the nobility and the prelates. Bugenhagen, who was a Pomeranian, aided the rulers by his unflinching energy and talent for organization. In order to strengthen the new religion, Duke Philip married a sister of the Saxon Elector. During the marriage ceremony, which Luther solemnized according to his new rite, the wedding ring happened to fall to the floor. For a moment Luther was nonplussed, but then exclaimed: "Do you hear, devil, this wedding does not concern you; you will labor in vain."<sup>30</sup>

Bugenhagen was actively engaged in the promotion of Lutheranism, not only in Pomerania, but also in Braunschweig, Hamburg, and Lübeck. From 1537 to 1539 he labored in the service of King Christian III, who introduced the new religion with extremely violent measures in Denmark.

On February 4, 1538, Bugenhagen joyfully reported to Luther from Copenhagen that "the Mass was now prohibited throughout the entire country;" that the mendicant friars had been exiled as "sedition-mongers" and "blasphemers" because they refused to accept the offers of the king; that all the canons had been ordered to attend the Lutheran communion on festivals, and that every effort would be put forth to subject the four thousand parishes to the new evangel.<sup>31</sup> The tyrannical ruler caused all the bishops within his territory to be incarcerated. According to an account of the superintendent of Zealand, who had come to Denmark from Wittenberg in the company of Bugenhagen, some of the monks were hanged.

The King was solemnly crowned by Bugenhagen on August 12, 1537. "Everything proceeds favorably," Luther wrote to Bucer in Denmark. "God is working through Pomeranus. He crowned the king and queen like a true bishop."<sup>32</sup>

In few countries were the external ritualistic forms so little disturbed as

<sup>30</sup> Köstlin-Kawerau, *M. Luther*, Vol. II, pp. 290 sq.

<sup>31</sup> Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, p. 413.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

in Denmark under the calculating influence of Bugenhagen. Even at the present time, the number of Catholic practices, commencing with the celebration of high Mass to the ringing of the angelus bells, is amazingly great in Denmark, Norway, and the duchies formerly united to the Danish crown. The Protestant ministers, when celebrating "Mass," still frequently vest themselves in a chasuble made of red silken velvet, which is worn over an alb of white linen. They also perform the elevation of bread and wine after the so-called consecration, which is pronounced in the middle of the altar.

In Sweden also Catholic ritualistic solemnities were retained for a long time. In his career of royal hierarch Gustavus Wasa, who had Protestantized that country as early as 1527, continued to rule in disregard of all the liberties of the people. He maintained friendly relations with Luther, from whom he procured a tutor for his son Eric in the person of George Normann, a native of Pomerania, who came to Sweden fully empowered to supervise the bishops and the clergy. The impetuous spokesmen of the new religion in Denmark spread rumors to the effect that King Gustavus was not sufficiently in earnest about the new gospel. Gustavus pleaded with Luther to protect him from such reports. In 1539, Luther wrote a testimonial certifying that "his piety was marvelously extolled above that of other princes," that he was imbued by God with a loftier spirit not only for the cause of religion, but also for the cultivation of the sciences. He exhorted the King to establish schools throughout his kingdom, particularly in connection with the cathedral churches; for this was the principal obligation of a pious prince.<sup>33</sup> He had in mind schools that were founded upon his gospel and labored efficaciously to promote the same—such as he himself advocated for Germany.

#### 4. BELLIGERENT AND PACIFIC MOVEMENTS IN THE EMPIRE

In 1537, a more intimate union of the Catholic princes against the Schmalkaldic League, which was threatening war, became a necessity. After many efforts on his part, the imperial ambassador, Held, succeeded in March, 1538, in drafting a plan for a "defensive league" at Spires. It was adopted at Nuremberg on the tenth of June. Emperor Charles and King Ferdinand headed the League, whose other members were: Bavaria, Duke George of Saxony, Dukes Henry and Eric of Braunschweig, and the Elector Albrecht of Mayence (for

<sup>33</sup> *Briefwechsel*, XII, p. 132; April 18, 1539.

Magdeburg and Halberstadt). Owing to the fact that other Catholic princes kept aloof, this so-called Holy League did not attain to the importance which might have been expected.

The Schmalkaldic League soon afterwards sustained a disadvantage, due to the armistice signed at Nizza (June 17, 1538) between the Emperor and France, in consequence of which the League lost all hope of obtaining the aid of France, which it had sought. Emperor Charles, on his part, needed all his forces against the Turks. This confirmed him in his project of friendly negotiations with the Protestants. But the Schmalkaldic League prepared for war. Landgrave Philip labored unceasingly to bring it about.

Luther effectually supported the political programme of the Schmalkaldians in a memorandum which decisively advocated armed resistance, though he regretted the war and would have preferred to see Germany invaded by "a pestilence" rather than ravaged by bloody strife. In conjunction with Jonas, Bucer, and Melanchthon, at the end of January, 1539, he drew up a formal opinion, wherein he indicated to his Elector that the imperial constitution as well as the natural law permitted princes to engage in aggressive war in defense of the menaced gospel and the ecclesiastical possessions which it had acquired. In the event that the Emperor would have recourse to arms, he said, his status would have to be regarded as that of a mercenary in the service of the pope, or as that of a highway robber, for there was no difference between a common assassin and the Emperor, especially since he tried to force his subjects to commit blasphemy and idolatry.<sup>34</sup>

In February, 1539, the leaders of the Schmalkaldic League, whilst in a similar frame of mind, convoked an assembly which was to meet in Frankfort on the Main.<sup>35</sup> It was attended by delegates of the Emperor and of King Ferdinand. At this convention, Saxony and Hesse declared themselves in favor of aggressive war, "in order to get the better of the enemy." However, they were confronted with opposition in the assembly. It was asserted that the programme adopted by the Catholic League at Nuremberg expressly declared that peace must be preserved. Although France promised to aid the Protestants, the war, which was expected to break out at any moment, was avoided for the present. The so-called peace of Frankfort was brought about,

<sup>34</sup> Köstlin-Kawerau, *M. Luther*, Vol. II, pp. 401 sqq.

<sup>35</sup> Janssen-Pastor, *Gesch. d. deutschen Volkes*, Vol. III, pp. 460 sqq.

chiefly because it appeared that there was no leader competent to conduct the war, Philip of Hesse being severely ill. As frequently in the past, so now, Philip was stricken with an attack of syphilis, which he had contracted by his dissolute life. He left Frankfort on April 17, and hastened to Giessen for medical treatment.

The Frankfort peace provided an arrangement which redounded to the advantage of the new religion. The peace was to endure fifteen months, with temporary suspension of all lawsuits pending in the "Kammergericht" (the supreme court of judicature). At the same time it obliged the signers to participate in a religious conference soon to be held for the sake of effecting a "Christian and laudable union." These proposals were combated by the Catholics. Conrad Braun, a jurist of the imperial supreme court of Spires, maintained in his writings that the reference to a religious conference was a violation of the rights of the proposed Church council. He held that the use of force against sedition-mongers and despoilers of the Church was perfectly proper.<sup>38</sup> These views were favorably received by many ecclesiastical authorities. But where was there any prospect of the successful application of violent measures under the then prevailing circumstances? The strength of the Schmalkaldic League was increased by the very fact that it gained time through the constant extension of the tolerance which was granted to it.

The ecumenical council convoked by Paul III could not take place at Mantua, as planned. It was at first deferred and then summoned to convene at Vicenza, on May 1, 1538. On account of untoward circumstances, it had again to be postponed, until it was finally opened at Trent, November, 1542, at the urging of the Emperor. On July 6, 1543, it had to be adjourned because the war between the Emperor and France prevented many bishops from attending.

An unlucky star also governed the contemplated religious conference. The Emperor ordered it to be held at Hagenau, in June, 1540, but it miscarried, because most of the Protestant theologians departed in consequence of a dissension that had arisen among them relative to certain preliminary questions. The conference was resumed at Worms in the fall. Its deliberations were presided over by the imperial chancellor Granvella. Each side had appointed eleven delegates as spokesmen, among the Catholics so appointed being Eck, Coch-

<sup>38</sup> G. Kawerau, *Reformation und Gegenreformation*, p. 135; cfr. Janssen-Pastor, *op. cit.*, III, p. 447.

laeus, and John Gropper, whilst the Protestants selected Melanchthon, Bucer, and Calvin. The Augsburg Confession was presented by Melanchthon as one of the bases for discussion. It was not the original text, however, but the so-called *Confessio Variata*, which had been altered and published by Melanchthon in 1540. The alterations were important. In treating the doctrine of the Eucharist, Melanchthon had met the wishes of the Swiss theologians. In respect of justification, he had attenuated the Lutheran position, eliminated the doctrine of strict imputation and assumed a certain righteousness in man which was imputed to him by God. As regards good works and the observance of the law, "actual changes, or at least attenuations of a dogmatic nature" had likewise been made.<sup>37</sup> To all these changes Luther raised no objections, whereas Dr. Eck during the conference at once charged his opponent, Melanchthon, with arbitrarily changing the basic document; he did not, however, terminate the negotiations, which were soon after transferred by the Emperor to Ratisbon, where the diet was then in session.

Eck was convinced that the conference was bound to prove futile because the question at issue was loyalty to the Catholic Church or positive rejection of her teaching authority. For this reason, he also found fault with the attenuation of Catholic dogmas, especially that of justification, attempted by Gropper. Gropper and Julius Pflugk, being the most moderate representatives of the older religion, differed from the other Catholic theologians in some respects. Gropper participated with Bucer in drawing up certain compromise articles which were proposed for discussion. The whole movement was finally frustrated by the justified objection of Rome to the proposed formula on justification, in which human co-operation and merit were omitted; and, on the other hand, by Luther's declaration that the articles of compromise were "impossible proposals" which neither party could accept.<sup>38</sup>

Although an agreement was reached as to some other non-essential points, the plans for reunion were regarded as shattered on May 22. Cardinal Gasparo Contarini had vainly tried to help matters by his personal participation at the conference as papal legate. Under the influence of the Emperor and of his own fond expectations, he went rather far in accepting the Lutheran idea of justification, at least in

<sup>37</sup> The phrase in quotes is Theodore Kolde's. Cfr. Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, pp. 440 sq.

<sup>38</sup> *Briefwechsel*, XIII, p. 341; cfr., pp. 267 sq.

certain expressions. After the close of the conference he expounded his views in a much discussed "Letter on Justification" (*Epistola de Iustificatione*). Despite the many attacks directed against this letter, Pope Paul III continued favorably disposed towards the Cardinal.<sup>39</sup>

At the close of the diet of Ratisbon, during which the opposition between the two parties became constantly more acute, the Nuremberg peace pact of 1532, but also the strict decrees of Augsburg were renewed, subject, however, to a declaration (which was not accepted by the Catholic estates) that the ecclesiastical property usurped by the Protestants be protected and that the application of the Augsburg decree be restricted to religious matters. All this was to be in force up to the assembly of the proposed ecumenical council or a new diet.

The Catholic cause unexpectedly profited by the weakening of the League. Philip of Hesse, its mainstay, began to vacillate in consequence of an event that was creditable neither to himself nor to the Protestant party. The consequences of the bigamous marriage which he contracted (to be discussed later) affected the political affairs of the Empire. When the matter became known publicly, he was threatened with severe penalties under the laws of the Empire. In order to evade them, he resolved, in 1541, to make terms with the Emperor. His abandonment of the military League of Schmalkalden was an irretrievable loss to that organization, which now began to decline.

#### 5. LITERARY DEFENDERS OF THE CATHOLIC CAUSE AFTER 1530

The literary defense of the Catholic cause proceeded with unabated vigor, in spite of the great difficulties which the Catholic writers encountered.

It was not encouraging for authors who wrote in defense of the Church or of the outraged rights of Catholics, to realize that they were exposed to the vulgar invectives to which Luther and his disciples resorted in their replies, or that the products of their industry could be published only amid the greatest difficulties and at the cost of severe sacrifices, because there was no adequate Catholic press. The bishops continued to withhold their support. Papal subsidies were shared only by a few, who succeeded in presenting their petitions to Rome through powerful intercessors. Many talented apologists were

<sup>39</sup> The *Epistola*, newly edited, with a critical introduction, in *Corpus Catholicorum*, Vol. VII (1923) by F. Hünermann (G. Contarini, *Gegenreformatorische Schriften*).

driven from the monasteries or ecclesiastical positions in the course of the religious upheaval and, deprived of material support, endeavored in vain to wield their pen in the service of the faith. Had there been a number of periodicals at the disposal of talented Catholic writers, as is the case to-day; had there been available an organized Catholic daily press as a means of reaching the masses, the position of the Church would have been quite different.

The necessity of moral reform, among Protestants as well as Catholics, was greater, however, than the need of scientific or popular instruction; for the new freedom promoted moral decadence in a very high degree. Catholic writers complained that their efforts were largely offset by the rejection of the precepts of the Church and by the unheard-of compulsion exercised by the courts and magistrates of many cities, and against which no remedy could be found. As a result, some ecclesiastics, who might have been able to wield a mighty influence in the literary sphere, dedicated themselves to preaching and practical action. Others were deterred from literary work by the inconsistency and fatuousness of the claims made by the Protestants, who asserted one thing to-day and denied it to-morrow and demanded recognition in one place for what they rejected in another.

Among the books which exercised a powerful influence before and after 1530 were the earlier and later literary productions of Eck, Cochlaeus, and Faber.

Dr. John Eck, of the University of Ingolstadt, was called "the Achilles of the Catholic party" by Cardinal Pole.<sup>40</sup> His practically arranged "Manual against the Lutherans" (*Enchiridion*) was in general use among Catholics and, up to 1600, went through some fifty editions. In addition to his sermons on the Sacraments, his principal achievement consisted in his commentaries on the Gospels for Sundays and feast-days. Intended for the clergy, they evidenced their author's intimate acquaintance with the errors of the day. No less than seventeen editions of the Latin version of these sermons, which comprised several volumes, appeared up to the year 1579. In 1530, Eck began to reissue at Augsburg his writings against Luther, the first installment being entitled *Prima Pars Operum contra Ludderum*.<sup>41</sup> They were followed by a long series of new works, among which were treatises on Purgatory and the Mass, dissertations against Zwinglian-

<sup>40</sup> Janssen-Pastor, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 593.

<sup>41</sup> Wiedmann, *Johann Eck*, Ratisbon, 1865, p. 586.

ism and against the errors of the Jews, memoranda composed for princes and religious conferences, and commentaries on various books of the Bible. Eck displayed incredible energy up to the time of his death, in 1543. This humble priest never coveted ecclesiastical dignities. When offered honorary canonries, as was frequently the case, he invariably declined them, saying: "I desire to remain a schoolmaster as long as I live."<sup>42</sup> Courageously he bore the slanders which were heaped upon him by the Lutheran party as well as the derision to which he was subjected.

He felt more keenly the studied silence with which his enemies met his arguments. In his *Apology* of 1542, he addresses his opponent Bucer thus: "Listen, you apostate; does not Eck quote the words of Sacred Scripture and the Fathers? Why do you not reply to his writings on the primacy of Peter, on penance, the Mass, Purgatory, or to his many homilies and other writings? . . . Do you believe you were right," he asks, "when you said at the beginning of the controversy that Eck would be unable to advance any other authorities than his Scotus, Ockham, Thomas, etc.?"<sup>43</sup> As a matter of fact, Eck's scholarly use of Sacred Scripture and the Church Fathers constituted one of the principal merits of his controversial method. Consistency and fortitude were characteristic of the activity of this man, who also made a striking impression by his athletic appearance. "At the religious conference in Ratisbon, in 1541, the superficiality of the friends of the Interim gave way to the lucidity of his principles and his solidity."<sup>44</sup> His vivacious temperament and blunt honesty, coupled with a fine sense of humor, doubtless inspired many a harsh passage in his writings which it would have been better to omit. But it was a boisterous and turbulent arena to which he was summoned by his vocation.<sup>45</sup>

John Cochlaeus in his literary activity revealed not so much a profound theologian as an ever ready and eloquent controversialist. Hardly a year passed but that this man, who was small of stature, participated in the controversies of the day, which he conducted with great versatility. Descriptions of the age in which he lived, exhortations, admonitions, and at times violent personal attacks fill the books of this active controversialist after 1530 as well as before that time.

<sup>42</sup> Janssen-Pastor, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 592.

<sup>43</sup> From Eck's *Apologia*; cfr. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

<sup>44</sup> Thus Janssen-Pastor, VII, p. 587.

<sup>45</sup> On certain blemishes in his private life cf. Janssen-Pastor, VII, p. 592, n. 4.

When Eck died, Cochlaeus took over and vigorously prosecuted the work of the latter. The high-minded Duke George of Saxony, in whose service he labored, supported him in every possible way. When, in 1539, George was succeeded by his brother Henry, who favored Lutheranism, Cochlaeus saw his labors suddenly interrupted; his publisher, Nicholas Wolrab, of Dresden, was thrown into prison; books in defense of the Church by Witzel and Nausea, which Wolrab had in press at the time, were cast into the water. Only with difficulty Cochlaeus succeeded in inducing a relative of his to open a print-shop for Catholic books in Mayence. The printer, Francis Behan, succeeded in establishing the foremost printing establishment for Catholic works in Germany, which flourished at Mayence together with that of Cologne, the second most important center for Catholic publications.

"For twenty years," Cochlaeus wrote in 1540, "there was nothing more disadvantageous for us Catholic authors, in contrast with the heretics, than the great unreliability of our publishers. . . . The publishers were almost all Lutherans, and we were able to obtain their services only at a great outlay of money."

He instances the sad experiences of Eck, Nausea, Mensing, and others, with whom he had attended the religious conference at Worms.<sup>46</sup> His own material condition was improved by a canonicate at Breslau. In 1548 and 1549 he lived at Mayence. He died at Breslau in 1552, exhausted by his labors. The works which he wrote after the diet of Augsburg (1530) embrace an excellent treatise on the saints, various publications on the question of holding an ecumenical council, an effective and thorough reply to Bullinger, "On the Authority of the Canonical Books and the Church," which is ranked among the best of his books, and his pointed "Philippica" against Philip Melanchthon, in which he attacks, among other things, the "serpentine artifice and hypocrisy" of that innovator.<sup>47</sup> Cochlaeus deserves special credit for his Latin "History of the Acts and Writings of Luther" (*Commentaria*, etc.), which first appeared at Mayence in 1549, and was frequently reprinted. It embraces the entire controversial period and depicts the course of the great religious upheaval as his keen eye observed it. The story is copiously supported by

<sup>46</sup> Janssen-Pastor, *l. c.*, p. 566.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* The treatise in Cochlaeus' works on the veneration of the saints (1534) is actually the product of Arnoldus Vesaliensis.

citations from his own works and those of the unfortunate author of the schism. The work proved to be a mine of information for later Catholic writers.

John Faber, formerly vicar-general of Constance, became bishop of Vienna in 1530, through the influence of Ferdinand, and as such continued his very successful activity against Lutheranism by means of the spoken and written word, especially by advising the princes. In 1535 he wrote in defense of the Mass and the priesthood against Luther. In the following year he wrote on faith and good works. There is extant an instructive memorandum intended for the religious conferences, addressed by him to the Catholic leaders. He was esteemed by his fellow-Catholics for his learning and wisdom, and for the purity of his morals—which fact did not prevent Justus Jonas, in a pamphlet composed at the instigation of Luther, to characterize Faber as a “patron of harlots,” because he combated the marriage of priests. He could afford to ignore all such insults. He died at Vienna in 1541.<sup>48</sup>

Faber was succeeded in the episcopal see of Vienna by his friend Frederick Grau, called Nausea, another energetic and gifted apologist who opposed the heretical deluge. Grau was a man of excellent culture and thoroughly trained in the sciences of language and jurisprudence, no less than in theology. Originally employed as secretary by the papal legate Campeggio, he afterwards functioned as a preacher and writer in Mayence. His sermons are noted for their correct interpretation of Sacred Scripture. Owing in part to his lack of means, he was unable to publish his excellent catechism before 1543. In his work on the council, he favored the granting of communion under both forms, thinking that the Protestants could be won over by this concession. He likewise urged the pope to abolish the law of sacerdotal celibacy for the sake of removing scandal. He participated in the Council of Trent, and died in that city in 1552.<sup>49</sup>

Of the large number of other defenders of the Catholic Church and her doctrines we will mention only a few of the more prominent. A man of very striking characteristics was George Witzel (Wicel), a priest who travelled much and was extremely active. He died at Mayence in 1573. Influenced by the writings of Erasmus, he embraced Lutheranism and married, but after having acquired a more intimate

<sup>48</sup> Janssen-Pastor, *op. cit.*, VII, pp. 580 sqq.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 582 sqq.

knowledge of the true aims of Luther and seeing the moral decline which followed the new religion, he returned to the Catholic Church and at once, in 1532, published an excellent treatise on good works, followed by a book on justification, another on the Church, and an apologia of himself. During his varied career he composed nearly a hundred works, all characterized by combativeness and learning. No one scourged the conditions within the bosom of the Lutheran Church so effectively as Wicel; few experienced such adversities on this account as he, so that—as he himself laments—"I am scarcely safe anywhere, even in my own home, and I cannot travel without exposing myself to the greatest danger."<sup>50</sup> From 1533 to 1538 he was pastor of the few Catholics remaining in the town of Eisleben. During this period, he was compelled, as he himself says, "to live in the midst of wolves." As protégé of Duke George of Saxony, he lived in better circumstances for a short time at Dresden. At Fulda, where he stayed with Abbot John, life was made intolerable for him by persecutions. In Mayence he was assailed by the Lutherans because he defended the imperial interim of 1548, which was repugnant to them. This conciliatory interim, which was designed to end the schism and hence made undue concessions to the Protestants, was in harmony with Wicel's ideal to win over the opposition by means of conciliatory measures. He wished to stand above the disputants of both parties. Without abandoning Catholic dogma, as he understood it, he wished to prepare the way for a reconciliation, which, however, proved ineffectual and was, in part, impossible. In this respect his Erasmian training was a hindrance to him. He even censured the theologians at Trent because they refused to adopt his peculiar methods for the re-establishment of peace.

The lively discussions which this obstinate man had to carry on with his fellow-Catholics were evidence of the fact that the latter carefully weighed the idea of religious peace. If the idea itself was regarded as impracticable, this was not due to a blind refusal of conciliation. Wicel himself was forced to realize the extent of the injury from which the Church was likely to suffer in consequence of such ill-advised concessions, when, imbued with the best of intentions, he enthusiastically participated in the new ecclesiastical régime introduced by Joachim II of Brandenburg, which in the end Protestantized that country.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 570.

Another Catholic spokesman who deserves to be mentioned is the Augustinian eremite, John Hoffmeister. He began to unfold a splendid literary activity, commencing with 1538, when he wrote his "Dialogues" and a refutation of the Schmalkaldic Articles. He continued his efforts even after he had been made vicar-general of his Order for all Germany. He, too, was animated by the delusive hope of conciliating the Protestants.

The Franciscans furnished many renowned and learned defenders of the ancient faith, e. g., Augustine von Alfeld (died about 1533), Nicholas Herborn (died 1535), Conrad Kling (died 1556), and the excellent pulpit orator John Wild of Mayence (died 1554).<sup>51</sup> Caspar Schatzgeyer, a Minorite, was the model of them all in gentleness and the noble style of his popular writings. Henry Helmesius, John Heller, John of Deventer, Francis Polygranus were other Franciscans who defended the Catholic cause.

The most celebrated Dominican authors were: Michael Vehe (died 1539), who produced one of the first German hymnals; Bartholomew Kleindienst (died 1560), who, among other literary compositions, addressed a "Right Catholic Admonition" to "his dear Germans," in imitation of the title of one of Luther's books; John Dietenberger (died 1537), the author of a number of small popular pamphlets, a refutation of the Augsburg Confession, and an excellent catechism; and John Mensing, who actively opposed Protestantism until his death (about 1541), unhindered by the high offices which he held, among which was that of auxiliary bishop of Halberstadt.<sup>52</sup> The University of Frankfort on the Oder honored the memory of his temporary professorship there. Conrad Wimpina, a theologian of that university, did not long continue his labors in refutation of the Augsburg Confession which he had commenced in Augsburg, but died in 1531, and left behind him, among other works, a brief but excellent history of the religious sects in the *Anacephalaesis Sectarum*.

As in former times, so also now, prominent men outside of Germany opposed the prevalent heresy. A splendid figure was the learned Stanislaus Hosius, leader of the Polish episcopate. He became bishop of Ermland in 1551, and later on a cardinal. To the select circle of his friends belonged Frederick Staphylus, who had studied at Witten-

<sup>51</sup> On Wild see Janssen-Pastor, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, pp. 546-550.

<sup>52</sup> On Mensing see Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. I, p. 79; Vol. III, p. 195; Vol. IV, pp. 121, 160, 303, 385; Vol. VI, pp. 276, 391, 409 sq., 482 sq.

berg as a Protestant, became a convert to Catholicism in 1552, and composed an "Epitome of the Doctrine of Luther" which became famous. Italy and other countries, especially the Netherlands and France, likewise produced eminent antagonists of Lutheranism before as well as after 1530. Ambrosius Catharinus, a native of Siena, continued his literary activity for ten years in France. On account of his criticism of Cardinal Cajetan, he was out of harmony with his Italian confrères. In Italy, not only courageous members of the monastic Orders, such as the Franciscan Giovanni Delfino, but also men who had been elevated to the cardinalate, like Jacopo Sadoletto, Marino Grimani, and Gasparo Contarini, contributed by their writings to the defense of the Catholic religion.

#### 6. LUTHER'S FELLOW-COMBATANTS

After 1530, the friends of Luther, particularly at Wittenberg, made every effort to promote his cause.

Philip Melanchthon, while devoting his energies mainly to his humanistic studies, at the same time actively intervened in the theological controversies up to the time of his death. Because of the success of his labors in behalf of the new creed, it can truthfully be said that he "created Evangelical theology" and "established the Protestant ecclesiastical system."<sup>53</sup> But it is equally true that in course of time he changed his teaching in many points and deviated widely from Luther. His *Confessio Variata* shows a different complexion from the original Augsburg Confession. Commencing with the edition of 1535, his *Loci Communes*, or "Outlines," differ considerably from the earlier editions. As early as 1532, his Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans contained a different theology. "He was no longer the interpreter of Luther's ideas," says Frederick Loofs, one of the most respected Protestant historians of dogma.<sup>54</sup> How different is the attitude of the Catholic apologists with their uniformly consistent doctrine! Even though liberty of action prevails among them, and they differ amongst each other in making unessential concessions, they occupy firm common ground in all dogmatic questions.

Melanchthon at first disapproved of Luther's denial of free-will

<sup>53</sup> Thus Gustav Krüger; see Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III. pp. 349 sq.

<sup>54</sup> Grisar, *ibid.*

and abandoned the doctrine of unconditional predestination. Subsequently, he also opposed Luther's exaggerated estimate of the doctrine of justification by faith alone and his low valuation of good works. He gave a more tolerable form to his master's views on penance and fear as a motive of contrition. In later years he even applied the epithet "blasphemous" to the principal thesis of Luther's chief work on the "Enslaved Will." Relative to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, a deep chasm separated Melanchthon from Luther, who was always more inclined to favor Zwinglianism.<sup>55</sup> Luther was aware of these differences of opinion in matters of doctrine, but nevertheless adhered to Melanchthon; for he could and would not dispense with his talents and reputation. Melanchthon on his part carefully avoided whatever might have led to an open rupture.

No matter how far he was prepared to go in his attempts at reconciliation, Melanchthon never denied his Protestant sympathies. Because of his fundamental deviations from Lutheranism, however, he was violently assailed by his Wittenburg colleagues. Thus Conrad Cordatus, Luther's table companion, passionately attacked him in 1536. Luther found an excuse for Melanchthon, but, displeased with his philosophical ideas, said: "I shall have to chop off the head of philosophy, and may God help me do it; for so it must be."<sup>56</sup> Jacob Schenk, an eloquent and aggressive Lutheran pastor, in 1537, accused Melanchthon of making treasonable concessions to the Catholics. The Elector was drawn into the controversy and privately consulted Luther with reference to it. Luther again expressed his regard for Melanchthon and deprecated his "being driven from the University" of Wittenberg.<sup>57</sup> But events soon conspired to induce Melanchthon, under pressure of his adversaries and broken down by his silent conflict with Luther, seriously to contemplate abandoning Wittenberg.<sup>58</sup> He remained, however, for he was unable to form any firm resolutions. "Let us cover our wounds," he afterwards wrote to Bucer, "and exhort others to do the same."<sup>59</sup> The Catholic spokesmen increasingly revealed his inconstancy and weakness of character, which was the

<sup>55</sup> On Melanchthon's doctrinal deviations from Luther see Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, pp. 346 sqq.; Vol. V, pp. 252 sqq.

<sup>56</sup> Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 371.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 370.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377.

cause of his suffering. Mercilessly they censured his pliancy, which approached perfidy. Cochlaeus warned the humanist Andrew Cricius, bishop of Plozk, against the connection which Melanchthon endeavored to form with him. His admonition was based on the opinion which he had formed of Melanchthon from personal observation at Augsburg, in 1530. "Take care lest he cheat you with his deceitful cunning, for, like the Sirens, he gains a hearing by sweet and honeyed words. . . . He seduces [men's hearts] with dishonest words."<sup>60</sup>

Luther on one occasion aptly styled his friend "the Erasmian intermediary."<sup>61</sup>

Melanchthon was so deeply immersed in his humanistic views, which he shared with the much admired Erasmus, that his theology, which he had studied only *en passant*, was affected by his rationalistic and immature philosophy. Although far removed from the Catholic truth, he nevertheless contended that he fundamentally agreed with the religious position of Erasmus.<sup>62</sup> His concepts of faith, its foundation and postulates, were rather shallow. It was deplorable that this philologist, who lacked profound theological learning, was able to wield so much influence in the sphere of theology. "When barely eighteen years of age," says John Faber, bishop of Vienna, "he began to teach the simple and by his soft speeches has disturbed the whole Church beyond measure."<sup>63</sup> The Catholic apologists soon discovered the shallowness of his theology and philosophy. He delights in speaking of the "celestial academy," where men sit in the *schola* of the apostles, prophets, etc. He bedecks revelation in a vesture of classicism. But, not content with style, he alters the content of religion for the sake of sophistry or expediency or to promote his irenic endeavors. In brief, he is dominated by a desire to reduce all things to a humanistic level.

It was his supreme desire to pursue his humanistic studies in peace and tranquillity. The princes, as "theocrats," he held, should establish such a state for himself and the faithful. He placed all religious authority in their hands. In this he was aided by his ideas of classical antiquity. He was of the opinion that the growing corruption could be overcome only by the civil authority in religious matters.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 267.

<sup>61</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 343 sqq.

<sup>62</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 268.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>64</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 584; Vol. VI, p. 673.

His ability to describe the decadence of the age approached that of the convert Wicel.<sup>65</sup>

Did Melanchthon counsel his mother to remain a Catholic? A report which made its first appearance in 1605, has him say to her: "The new religion seems more acceptable, but the old one is safer" (*Haec plausibilior, illa securior*). According to this account he did not desire to see his mother disturbed in her faith—an attitude quite conformable with his character. One may say with the author of the article "Melanchthon" in the Protestant "Encyclopädie für Theologie": "The story is at least not improbable, even if it cannot be demonstrated as true."<sup>66</sup>

An entirely different type was the ex-priest John Bugenhagen, a Pomeranian, pastor of Wittenberg, and Luther's right bower in the propagation of Protestantism in northern Germany. Köstlin characterizes him as a man "endowed with great and sturdy natural powers of mind and body."<sup>67</sup> Indefatigable self-sacrifice and tireless industry were characteristics of this robust and stern man. While not a great theologian, he was gifted with an unusual talent for organizing, as his ecclesiastical ordinances show. In the preface to Bugenhagen's published Commentary on the Psalms, Luther says: "I venture to assert that Pomeranus is the first person on earth to give an explanation of the book of Psalms." This eulogy, however, appears "strange" to Albrecht, the Protestant editor of the preface, who observes: "Luther had no clear perception of the defects of Bugenhagen's exegetical method."<sup>68</sup> Luther freely unbosomed himself to Bugenhagen and acknowledged that he often derived great consolation from a single word that came out of his mouth. When his friend labored in distant parts, Luther felt his absence keenly. He classified Bugenhagen with those who were able to offer "strong limbs" to the temptations of the devil; of such, he said, "there must be some *in ecclesia* who are well able to bear the brunt of the devil's blows."<sup>69</sup> He rejoiced that his associate heartily despised the ring of the Catholic apologist. One of Bugenhagen's statements against the apologists of the ancient Church ran as follows: "Dear Lord Jesus Christ, arise with Thy holy

<sup>65</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 178 sq. On Melanchthon's demand for a council composed of followers of the new religion, *ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 169 sqq.

<sup>66</sup> Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. V, pp. 270 sqq.

<sup>67</sup> Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 404 sqq.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Tischreden*, Weimar ed., Vol. II, n. 1307.

angels and thrust down into the abyss of hell the diabolical murder and blasphemy of Antichrist!"<sup>70</sup> Luther's opponents in his own camp were likewise an abomination to Bugenhagen, and once when Luther complained of Karlstadt, Grickel, and Jeckel (*i.e.*, Agricola and Schenk), Bugenhagen interrupted him and proposed this radical remedy: "Doctor, we should do what is commanded in Deuteronomy (XIII, 5 sqq.), where Moses says they should be put to death." And Luther acquiesced.<sup>71</sup> Pomeranus was blunt and superstitious. When, on one occasion, the devil crawled into his churn and spoilt the butter, he proceeded to insult his satanic majesty by easing himself in the churn. Luther praised this act as most effectual.<sup>72</sup>

Nicholas von Amsdorf, superintendent of Magdeburg, proved to be a second Luther. Because of his fidelity to the new evangel, based upon a certain mystic disposition, he impressed many favorably. After Luther's death he published a book entitled, "That the Proposition 'Good Works' are harmful to Salvation is a Sound Christian One."<sup>73</sup> Luther styled him "a born theologian."

Other less famous friends of Luther were: John Brenz, co-founder of Protestantism in Swabia; George Burkhardt, surnamed Spalatin, promoter of Lutheranism at the court of the Elector Frederick, and, after the latter's demise, Lutheran pastor at Altenburg; Nicholas Hausmann, pastor at Zwickau; Wenceslaus Link of Nuremberg; John Lang of Erfurt, etc. Because of their activity in distant parts of the country, Luther often revealed his inmost soul to them in his epistolary correspondence. Of Brenz he says: "Amongst all the theologians of our day there is not one who knows how to interpret and handle Holy Scripture like Brenz."<sup>74</sup>

The second of the above-mentioned associates of Luther, Spalatin, was actively engaged in historical research. In practice he was a model of intolerance, particularly in the Protestantizing of Meissen. Nevertheless, when, on one occasion, he visited his native Catholic city of Spalt, he delivered himself of this advice: "Stick to your own form of divine service."<sup>75</sup> He presented the congregation of Spalt with a picture of Our Lady, which had once belonged

<sup>70</sup> Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, p. 412.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 409.

<sup>72</sup> *Tischreden*, Weimar ed., Vol. III, n. 349*i*; Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 230.

<sup>73</sup> Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 409.

<sup>74</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 405.

<sup>75</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 285.

to the castle-church at Wittenberg; this image is venerated at Spalt even at the present day. In the same city he founded a yearly Mass for his deceased parents. In his later days Spalatin was much disquieted by melancholy and temptations to despair. Luther endeavored to comfort him; but he counseled him in vain "to find consolation even against his own conscience."<sup>76</sup>

Of the more intimate friends of Luther, Justus Jonas remained longest with him at Wittenberg.<sup>77</sup> He was a lover and master of sociability, and, when Luther was depressed by melancholy, willingly complied with Kate's summons to the "Black Monastery" to entertain him with his agreeable conversation. He was an able humanist and versed in jurisprudence. His Latin translations of Luther's works were highly praised. His original productions were less numerous, but, being a courageous fighter, he earned the respect of his friends for his various publications on the religious question. He calumniously attacked Catholic apologists, such as Faber and Wicel. Besides Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, and Cruciger, Jonas was one of the most circumspect participants in the transactions and legal opinions that issued from Wittenberg. Luther, who was wont to eulogize the talents of his friends, said that Jonas had all the gifts of a good orator, "save that he cleared his throat too often."<sup>78</sup> As provost of the castle-church of Wittenberg Jonas had an income, though it was never adequate for his needs. He was dean of the theological faculty from 1523 to 1533, and took part in all the important actions of Lutheranism, such as the Marburg Conference, the diet of Augsburg, the visitations in electoral Saxony after 1528, and the introduction of Protestantism into the duchy of Saxony. In 1541 he founded and subsequently directed the affairs of the Lutheran Church in the city of Halle, which up to that time had been the residence of Cardinal Albrecht of Mayence.<sup>79</sup> When qualms of conscience and theological doubts assailed Jonas, Luther had to be at hand to encourage him. On one occasion he sent Jonas the consoling words with which he was wont to find comfort in similar circumstances.<sup>80</sup> On another occasion, Jonas expressed the opinion, approved by Luther, that since a

<sup>76</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 285; Vol. V, p. 330.

<sup>77</sup> Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, pp. 413 sqq.

<sup>78</sup> *Tischreden*, Weimar ed., Vol. II, n. 2580.

<sup>79</sup> Cfr. Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. V, pp. 165 sq.

<sup>80</sup> *Tischreden*, Weimar ed., Vol. IV, n. 4852; Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 414 sq.

man could not comprehend the articles, it was sufficient to begin with a mere assent.<sup>81</sup> "Yes," said Luther, "if a man could but believe it."<sup>82</sup> When Jonas railed at the infidelity of the country people around Wittenberg, Luther admitted that he knew only one peasant in all the villages who seriously instructed his household in the Word of God and the Catechism. "The others," he said, "are all going to the devil."<sup>83</sup> In consequence of "spiritual temptations" (G. Kawerau) which he suffered after the Schmalkaldic Wars, Jonas developed a severe mental disorder similar to the *morbus melancholicus* of Spalatin. It is said that his death (1555) was happier than his life.<sup>84</sup>

It is remarkable with what frequency the contemporary documents mention this disease as occurring within the Protestant fold, especially in the later years of life. Melancholia may almost be considered as the chief malady of the age of the Reformation.<sup>85</sup> Nicholas Paulus has latterly again called attention to this peculiar phenomenon, which had been previously noted by others. He supports his contention with a mass of documentary evidence.<sup>86</sup> Among other things he mentions that Jerome Baumgärtner of Nuremberg, Luke Osiander, and Zachary Rivander speak of healthy people everywhere suffering from fear, lack of consolation, and mental strain; that the number of suicides increased in so frightful a manner as to cause one's hair to stand on end; and that they believed it was a sign forecasting the approach of doomsday. Jerome Weller, whom Luther endeavored to console in various ways, Nicholas Hausmann, his intimate intellectual associate, Simon Musaeus, who wrote two treatises against the "melancholy devil," Nicholas Selnecker, the editor of Luther's Table Talks, Wolfgang Capito, the celebrated spokesman of the new religion at Strasburg, and Joachim Camerarius, an intimate friend of Melanchthon, who in a letter to Luther expresses his despair because of the moral decadence of the age, were all affected by this disease of chronic religious melancholy, not to speak of a number of less famous preachers, scholars, and authors who professed the new religion.

<sup>81</sup> *Tischreden*, Weimar ed., Vol. V, n. 5562.

<sup>82</sup> *Tischreden*, Vol. IV, n. 4864.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, II, n. 2622b; Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 415.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 416.

<sup>85</sup> Concerning the following, see Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. III, p. 416; Vol. IV, pp. 218 sqq.

<sup>86</sup> Cfr. Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 225, n. 3.

When the preacher Nicholas Beyer narrated in the presence of Luther how the devil had tempted him to stab himself, Luther consoled him by confessing that he had been assailed by similar temptations, though we have no evidence that he was ever seriously tempted to commit suicide. Mathesius, Luther's pupil and eulogist, "could not bear the sight of a knife in the last year of his life because it enticed him to commit suicide" (G. Loesche). The Nuremberg preacher George Besler, a victim of melancholy induced by the religious conditions of the time, committed suicide with a "hog-spear" during Luther's lifetime.

Antonius Musa, pastor of Rochlitz, confided to Luther that he was depressed in his mind because he could not believe what he preached to others. Thereupon Luther replied as follows, according to Mathesius: "Praise and thanks be to God that this also happens to others. I fancied it was true only in my case." Mathesius adds: "Musa never forgot this consolation all his life." He says that Musa himself told him this story.<sup>87</sup> The same eulogist of Luther writes: "There are many who lead a languishing existence and despair; there is no longer any joy or courage among men." A peculiar kind of literature became popular at that time, consisting of consolatory exhortations for those afflicted with melancholy. A Hamburg preacher, J. Magdeburgius, wrote: "The need of consolation was never felt more keenly than at present." Amsdorf lamented that many who were afflicted by melancholia returned to Catholicism, because "they were at their wit's end" on account of the doctrinal dissensions of Protestantism.

One of those thus tormented was Luther's table companion, John Schlaginhaufen. His suffering was increased by a profound sense of guilt. The interviews with Luther, which he reports in writing, are a vivid reflection of the prevalent malady of that age. Schlaginhaufen was disinclined to believe Luther when the latter maintained that Satan alone could cause such dread melancholia, but Luther insisted. "The devil," he said, "feels his kingdom is coming to an end, hence the fuss he makes." The troubled man, however, grew more gloomy, because he could "not distinguish between the law and the Gospel." Luther consoled him by saying that he himself and the Apostle Paul

<sup>87</sup> Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 364.

had "never been able to get that far," namely, to make a proper distinction between the law and the Gospel. Finally, Luther resorted to his authority and said: "I have God's authority and commission to speak to you and to comfort you." <sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Grisar, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 226 sq.; *Tischreden*, Weimar ed., Vol. II, n. 1263, 1289, 1492, 1557.

## CHAPTER XVI

### PERSONAL AND DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

#### I. ENGAGING CHARACTERISTICS

In reviewing the life of Luther in the former Black Monastery of Wittenberg, our attention is first attracted to his relations with Catherine. Although there were weighty objections to their marriage from the Catholic point of view, and although it was severely censured by the jurists who upheld the canon law of the Church, it nevertheless presented a favorable exterior appearance. It had to be admitted that peace, harmony, and mutual good will governed the union of the ex-monk and the former nun. So far as known, neither ever violated the pretended marriage. Luther expressed himself in words of gratitude and appreciation for the aid and comfort which he derived from his wife, even though, on occasion, he scourged her willfulness in partly serious and partly facetious language.

Luther's children were compelled to learn and practice their religion. As they grew up, they, on the whole, caused no dishonor to the family. They were not endowed with any special talents, nor did they distinguish themselves in their positions in life.

The home life of the family was subject to considerable unrest, caused by the fact that relatives and students occupied the former monastic cells and ate at Luther's table. In addition, quite a few strangers visited Wittenberg, who wished to see and converse with Luther. Moreover, the agitation caused by Luther's controversies, which so visibly vibrates in his correspondence, quite naturally affected his domestic life, as his Table Talks frequently testify.

On the other hand Luther's family life displayed many attractive traits. Thus, when his daughter Magdalen, a sweet and pious child, died at the age of thirteen, Luther was seized with a sorrow so profound as to move even the modern reader to tears.<sup>1</sup> Thanks to his letters, his admirers are likewise enabled to participate in the happy hours he spent in his family circle. Luther is frequently pictured as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Köstlin-Kawerau, *M. Luther*, Vol. II, p. 596.