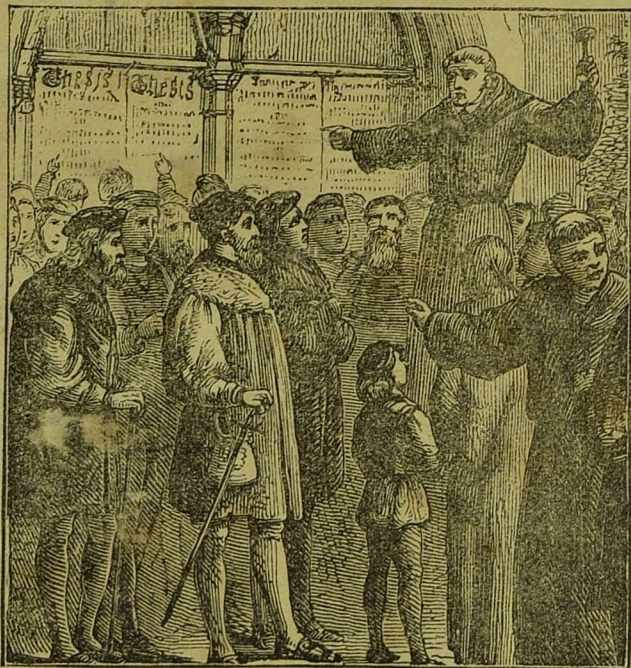


THE
LIFE OF LUTHER
BY A. L. O. E.
With Preface by the
EARL OF SHAFTESBURY, K.G.



THE BOOK SOCIETY, 28, PATERNOSTER ROW,
AND BAZAAR, SOHO SQUARE.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

BH

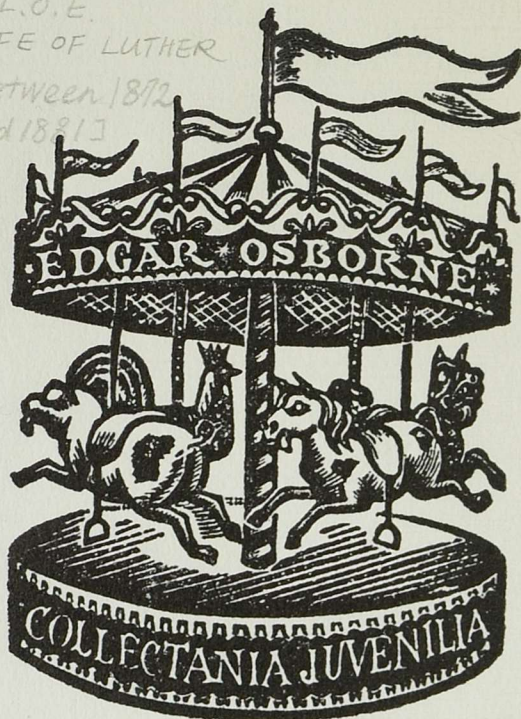
A.L.O.E.

LIFE OF LUTHER

[between 1872

and 1881]

dr

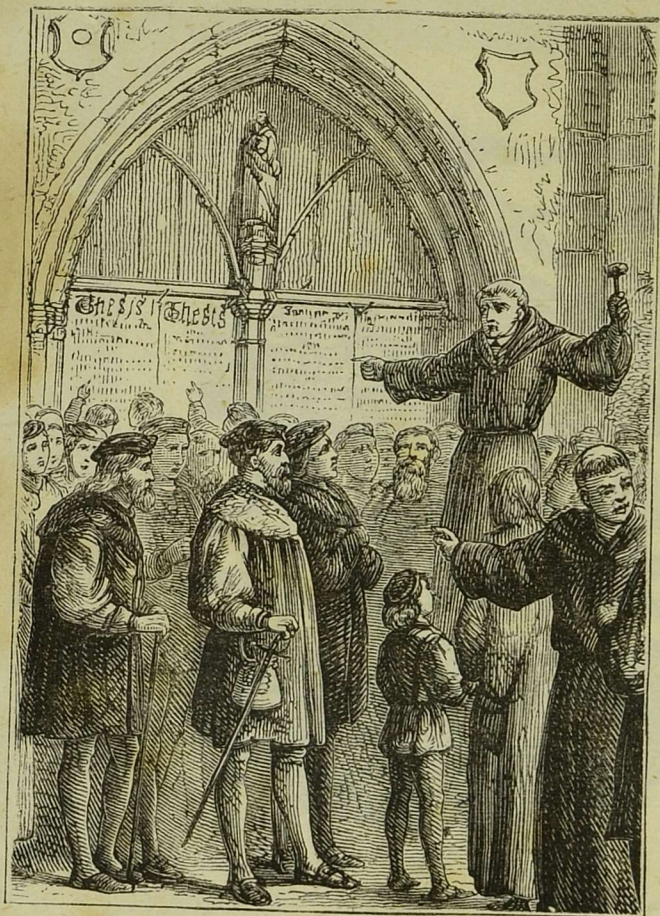


37131 009 560 582

II, 795



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
[Illegible text]



LUTHER NAILING HIS THESES TO THE CHURCH DOOR AT
WITTEMBERG.

[See page 47.]

THE
LIFE OF LUTHER.

By A. L. O. E.

With Preface by the Right Honourable the
Earl of Shaftesbury, K G.

London :
THE BOOK SOCIETY, 28, PATERNOSTER ROW,
AND BAZAAR, SOHO SQUARE

LONDON

PRINTED BY HENRY BLACKLOCK AND CO., ALLEN STREET
GOSWELL ROAD, E.C.

PREFACE.

THE first question that Luther would ask, were he to reappear in these days, would be, "Where are the Protestants?" He might ransack England and Europe, and he would find, no doubt, very many who denounced the Infallibility of the Pope, the sacerdotalism of the priesthood, and the principles and practices of secret and open Romanism; but of men and women, who, akin to those who started and maintained the Reformation, now entertain the belief that their predecessors entertained, who see what they saw, and feel what they felt, he would discover very few. Protestantism, in his time, affected the very springs of spiritual life. It is now, in the

main, political. It was opposed by him and his fellow-confessors to what they considered a soul-destroying heresy. It is asserted, in the day in which we live, simply as the source of freedom ; the basis of civil and religious liberty.

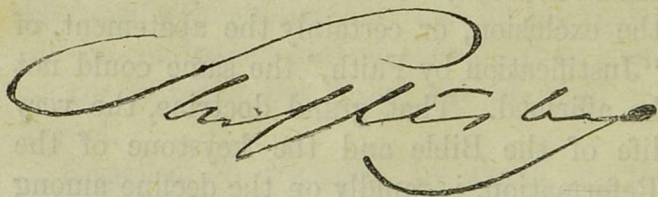
And so it is ; but it is also a great deal more. True Protestantism, the Protestantism of Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and the like of them, is as much antagonistic to Infidelity as it is to Romanism. It asserts the right of private judgment ; but it asserts, at the same time, the inspiration of the Scriptures. It asserts the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures for man's salvation ; asserting, along with it, that, except in the belief of those Scriptures, there is no salvation at all ; and it labours to effect the unity of the Churches by an unity in Christ, far more than by assailing or defending establishments (mistaking externals for internals), all the combatants getting thereby, their share of the nutshell, but losing the whole of the kernel.

Ritualism is regarded by many as the

dominant evil and the chief danger of the Church at the present time. A danger it is, no doubt, in many respects, and a sad evil. But its influence is confined more to the clergy than the laity, to the higher than to the middle classes, to the wealthy than to the mass of the people. The mass of the people, were it presented to them, would, after the first gratification of curiosity, regard it as tedious and offensive. They have given, it is true, every now and then, indications of an iconoclast spirit, which might break out again and very seriously affect the position of the Establishment. Ornate worship indeed, and long processions and costly robes and sacerdotal assumptions will never be in general favour. But of the doctrine asserted under these practices, and by them, that is to say, the doctrine of "Justification by Works," to the exclusion, or certainly the abatement, of "Justification by Faith," the same could not be affirmed. That grand doctrine, the very life of the Bible and the keystone of the Reformation, is rapidly on the decline among

all classes and degrees of religionists. The prominence almost universally given to works apart from doctrine, to deeds of charity and benevolence, to a good life, to philanthropy so called, to splendour and liberality in sacred things, to "love of the brethren," to labours for others, to every thing where the notion of merit of one form or another, consciously or unconsciously, can enter in—marks the spirit of the day—and we shall relapse into the civilization of Athens and Rome with much brilliancy and softness of exterior, worshipping Heroism, Science, Commerce, Wealth, Art, and every thing, human, and superhuman, but The One True God.

If this be so, the study of the thoughts, the sayings, and the writings, of such a man as Luther must be both profitable and necessary in the present day.



SKETCHES OF THE LIFE OF LUTHER.

CHAPTER I.

IN the little town of Eisleben, in Saxony, lived a poor woodcutter and his wife, honest people, who feared God. It is true that they were probably quite ignorant of many great truths. I dare say that the man, whose name was John Luther, had never opened a Bible, and that his wife often knelt down to an image of the Virgin Mary, or said prayers to St. Peter or St. John. That was a sad time of ignorance. Then people would go to church to worship old bones that the priests told them had been parts of the bodies of holy men, or little bits of wood that they thought had belonged to Noah's ark or the cross of our blessed Lord. In one church there were nineteen thousand of these relics, as they were

called, and the poor ignorant people really thought them very holy !

But this was only one evil of the Popish religion, which then prevailed. The very prayers which men were taught to say were in Latin, that they might not understand them ! Even many of the priests knew nothing of the Bible ! One very learned one, called Thomas Linacer, had never read the New Testament. When he was getting old he called for a copy, but quickly threw it away from him, because, on opening it, his eye had caught the words, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all"; for Linacer was fond of swearing !

If a man robbed or murdered another, or did anything wrong, he thought that he must confess everything to a priest, and that he could forgive his sin. Instead of saying to the man, "Repent of your wickedness ; pray to God to forgive you for His Son's sake, and to give you His Holy Spirit to help you to amend your life," the priest would say such things as these : "Go on a long pilgrimage to the tomb of some saint, or crawl up some mountain on your knees, or say a Latin prayer fifty times over, or give twenty candles to be lighted before the image of the Virgin." Perhaps the sinner was rich and lazy, and did not like

climbing up a mountain on his knees, then he might pay a poor man to do it for him ; and if he paid plenty of money to the priests, they would say as many Latin prayers as he wished ; so the rich might get off their penance very easily. But could they think that God would really forgive them their sins for this ?

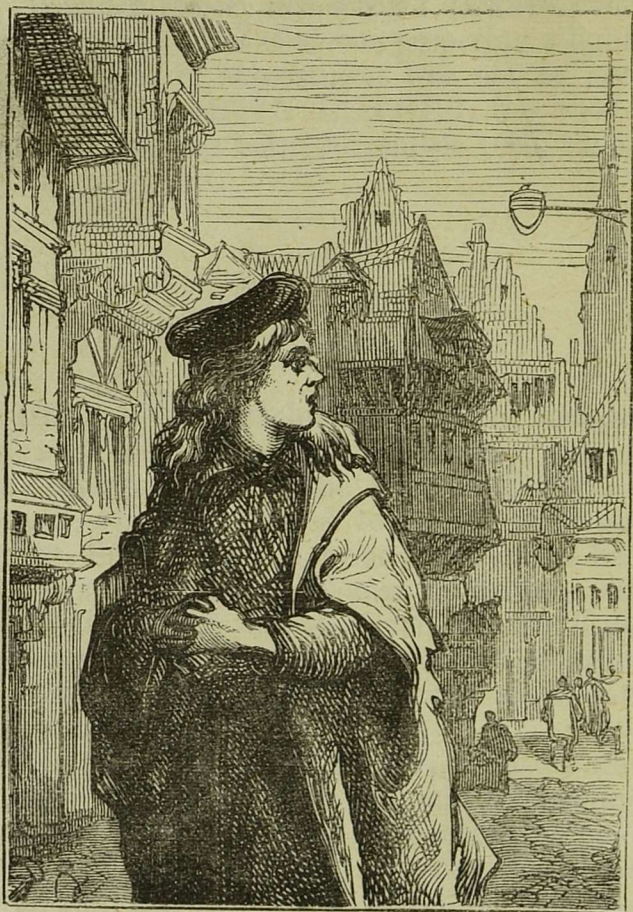
Men believed that there was a dreadful place called Purgatory, to which they must go when they died, to be tortured until they had been punished enough for their faults, and that then they would be let out. The Bible tells us that “ the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin ” ; but if the people never read the Bible, how could they know of this free, full pardon, offered to all who repent and believe ? The priests gained a good deal of money by this story about Purgatory, for they said that if men gave gold to them, the poor tortured souls would be set free sooner ; so that, as you may suppose, dying people, frightened to think of the terrible place they were going to, were glad to give away to the Church the money which they could not carry with them to the grave ; and affectionate children would half-starve themselves that they might buy their dear parents’ souls out of Purgatory.

Was not Popery like a thick darkness over the nations? But God was preparing a light—the night of superstition was not to last for ever.—MARTIN LUTHER, the woodcutter's son, was born, November 10th, 1483.

CHAPTER II.

I COULD tell you much more about the strange ideas of religion in the 15th century, and of the reverence paid to the Pope, or Bishop of Rome, who was believed to be the successor of St. Peter, and who, even in this time, has his foot kissed by the Roman Catholics; but I would rather now tell you of the little Martin Luther, who was to become the great foe of the Papacy, and to hazard his life in the cause of truth.

His good father would often kneel by the bedside of his child, praying aloud, begging the Lord that his little boy might become holy and good, and help one day to spread the knowledge of the truth. Little did the good woodcutter know how fully his prayer



LUTHER SINGING AND BEGGING.

[See page 20.]

was to be granted ; and when Martin was old enough to run by his mother's side, how little did she imagine that the boy who followed her footsteps when she returned from the wood, with her fagots on her back, would be a greater blessing to the world than the greatest Emperor that ever lived !

But do not think that, because Martin was to become so good and glorious, he had not his trials like other children. On the contrary, he had an impetuous temper, which often tempted him to commit faults. His parents were not like Eli : they punished their dear son very severely indeed ; his mother one day chastised him about a nut till the blood came.

Martin was sent to school when so young that his father often carried him there in his arms. His treatment at school was very harsh ; he was one morning flogged fifteen times.

Martin was an attentive and serious child, but he did not yet love the Saviour ; he had only been taught to fear Him. It was not till long afterwards that he could rejoice in the knowledge of the mercy of Jesus.

His father had become richer, and was now a kind of miner, having two furnaces of his

own. When his boy was fourteen he determined to send him to school in the town of Magdeburg.

Here young Luther had to undergo many hardships. When his hours of study were over, he used to beg his bread with children poorer than himself, for he had scarcely enough to live upon. Once at Christmas time he was wandering about with his companions, singing hymns to attract charity. They stopped before a peasant's door, and the farmer, hearing their voices, came out with some food which he intended to give them, but called out in such a harsh tone, "Boys, where are you?" that the poor little fellows, frightened by his manner, ran off as fast as they could. At last, however, as the farmer continued calling to them, they came back, and received from him the food intended for them.

In about a year Martin was sent to another school at Eisenach, where he again suffered from want, for his parents, having other children, could not afford to give comforts to him. Here also, pinched by hunger, he sang in the streets to gain a little bread: often, instead of bread, the poor and modest Martin received nothing but harsh words, and bitter tears did he shed in secret over his sad trials.

One day, in particular, the poor boy had been repulsed from three houses, and was just going to return hungry to his lodgings, thinking that perhaps after all he should be obliged to give up his studies, and return to labour for his bread in the mines, when suddenly a door opened, and a woman appeared, like an angel, to comfort the afflicted. Ursula Cotta—for that was her name—had more than once observed young Luther in church, and been struck by his sweet voice and devotion; seeing him stand thus sadly before her door, she called him in, and gave him food; and her generous husband, pleased with his wife's conduct, a few days afterwards took Martin to live entirely with them.

So did our heavenly Father raise up kind friends for His suffering child. Now the heart of Luther began to exult with life, joy, and happiness. He learned to play on the flute and the lute, and by his sweet music delighted the kind Ursula, who was to him like a mother. When he thought of her goodness to him, he exclaimed long afterwards, "There is nothing sweeter on earth than the heart of a woman in which piety dwells."

CHAPTER III.

IN his 18th year Luther went to study at the university of Erfurth. His father required him to study the law, and was full of hope in the talents of his son. The whole university admired his genius ; but what was far better, Luther had serious thoughts of heaven, and a heart full of dependence upon God. Every day he began with prayer, went to church, and afterwards to his studies.

One day, when he had been two years at Erfurth, and was twenty years old, he went into a library, and opened many books, one after another, to learn their writers' names. At last he came to one which attracted his attention ; he had never seen it before : it was the BIBLE ! With eagerness he turned over the leaves ; in the first page which fixed his attention was the story of Hannah and young Samuel. He read it, and his soul could hardly contain the joy which it felt ; he returned home with a full heart. " O that God would give me such a book for myself ! " thought he. He soon returned to the library to pore over the treasure, and read the Bible again and again.

Twice at this time did he narrowly escape death, and God preserved him to be a blessing to many. He had studied so very hard that he became dangerously ill. A kind old priest came to see him, as he lay stretched upon a bed of sickness. "Soon," said poor Luther to him, "I shall be called away from this world." But the old man kindly replied, "My dear bachelor, take courage; you will not die of this illness. Our God will yet make of you a man who shall console many." He gradually recovered.

He was once going to pass a short time with his family, and put on a sword, according to the custom of that age. He happened to strike against it with his foot, the blade fell out, and cut one of his principal arteries; his blood poured out in torrents, his only companion flew for assistance, and Luther, left alone and bleeding, lay down on his back, and pressed his finger on the wound to try to stop the blood. It continued, however, to gush out, and, expecting to bleed to death, he cried out, "O Mary, help me!" He knew not then that it was a sin to pray to any one but God; but the Almighty had pity on his ignorance, and spared him till he should know the truth, and teach it to others.

A surgeon arrived and bound up the wound ; it opened again in the night, and he fainted from loss of blood ; but yet he again recovered, and set to his studies with fresh diligence.

But a greater sorrow was before poor Luther. He had a dear young friend at Erfurth called Alexis. One day that friend was murdered ! Luther heard with grief of the terrible event. “ What would become of me were I thus called away without warning ? ” thought he.

An idea came into his mind : “ It would be pleasing to God if I were to become a monk. Shall I leave this wicked world, and give myself up to nothing but praying ? Then I should be more likely to go to heaven when I died.”

Monks were men who made a solemn vow to quit the pleasures of life, never to marry, never to have fond wives or smiling children, always to be poor, and attend only to religion. They lived together in large houses called monasteries ; convents were monasteries for women, for many of them took the same kind of vows and became nuns.

Now some of these monks and nuns were very good people, serving God and taking care of the sick and poor, though it was a

great mistake in them to suppose that they could not please God quite as much in their own homes, obeying their parents, making their families happy, and attending to the poor. The Bible says, "Rejoice in the Lord always," but these poor monks and nuns seemed to think that the more miserable they made themselves in this world, the happier they should be in the next.

Many of the monks were very wicked indeed, and while they pretended to be always praying, only thought of feasting and drinking, and all sorts of pleasures; and though they had promised to be poor, became very rich indeed, getting much money and lands from the people who were afraid of Purgatory and who thought that the monks could help their souls out of it.

Did Luther ever become a monk; and, if so, which kind of monks did he resemble—the weeping, praying, fasting monks; or the merry, greedy, selfish, proud men who pretended to have given up the world and sin, but really cared for nothing else? You shall hear.

CHAPTER IV.

LUTHER thought that his father would not like him to become a monk, which was indeed the case. John Luther wished his good and talented son to continue to study the law, and be a comfort to him in his old age. It was some time before Martin could decide what he ought to do—whether to please his father, or to please God, as he thought, by becoming a monk ; not remembering those words in the holy Bible, “ Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.”

Once he was returning to Erfurth, after having paid a visit to his home, when he was overtaken by a violent storm. The lightning flashed, and a thunderbolt fell at his feet. Luther threw himself on his knees. Was his last hour now indeed come ? In his terror and anguish he made a vow that, if the Lord would deliver him from this danger, he would quit the world, and devote himself to religion.

The storm passed away, again the bright sun shone, and the thunder was still : Luther entered Erfurth, determined to keep his vow, and take the office of a monk.

He told his intention to no one, but invited his friends at Erfurth to supper. He looked round on their kind and cheerful faces ; he listened to their happy voices, as they talked and sang around him. Must he leave all to go to a dismal cell ? Luther thought that he did right in sacrificing everything. When his friends were the merriest, he told them of his resolution. Then came grave looks on the once joyous faces, and entreaties from the lips that had been singing so cheerfully. All was of no avail ; all that his friends could say moved him not ; that very night he quitted his lodgings ; in the darkness he went alone to the convent of St. Augustine, and prayed the monks to take him in. The gate opened and he entered ! Alas ! alas ! only twenty years old, and separated already from his parents, his friends, and all that he loved on earth !

He took no Bible with him, for he had none. He was seeking God, but knew not the way to find Him. He was like a wanderer on a stormy sea with no compass to guide him.

The friends of the young monk were grieved and astonished. For two days they assembled round the convent, hoping to see him come

out. But the gates remained closed and barred. A month passed before their dear young friend once saw or spoke to them.

But picture the misery in Luther's once happy home—his mother weeping, his father indignant ! It was not until two of his other sons died of the plague, and poor John Luther heard a report that Martin was dead also, that he would forgive him and bless him.

When Martin Luther entered the convent he took the name of Augustine.

CHAPTER V.

How does the young monk go on in his new situation ? Let us fancy that we can peep through the iron bars into his little cell and see.

Poor Luther ! he looks weary, and no wonder. The monks have made him watch at the gate as porter. Not contented with that, they have ordered him to sweep the church and clean out the cells ! He who is so learned, so talented, who was so much

loved and admired ! He has just come from winding up the clock, " And now," thinks he, " that I have done all that I have been ordered to do, I may sit down to rest myself a little and enjoy my books."

See, some one enters the little cell. It is a stout monk. How roughly he says, " Come, come ! it is not by studying, but by begging bread, corn, eggs, fish, meat, and money, that a monk makes himself useful to a cloister " ! Luther submits, lays aside his dear books, and wanders out in his monk's dress, to beg for the convent !

Look again into his dreary cell. It is night, but Luther is not sleeping. For seven weeks he has hardly closed his eyes. He is repeating his Latin prayers over and over, but they bring him no comfort. He had thought that, in quitting the world, he was quitting sin ; that, when he was a monk, he should become holy ; but alas ! he finds that he has carried his own sinful heart with him to the cell ; he can shut out his friends, but not his wicked thoughts. He had hoped to merit heaven, but that is impossible ; he knew not God's free mercy ; he only looked on the Almighty as a just and terrible judge.

One comfort remains to poor Luther : he

has found a Bible in the convent, fastened by a chain ; to that chained book he is constantly returning ; but as yet he understands not all God's precious promises contained in those blessed pages.

He is almost starving himself to death to satisfy God. He seems to think that the Good Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep, instead of leading them to green pastures and still waters, could delight in seeing them perish in the wilderness.

For four days and nights Luther has eaten nothing ! He creeps about like a shadow. He is bowed down by sorrow ; he says to himself, "Look, thou art still envious, impatient, passionate. It profiteth thee nothing ! Oh ! wretched man ! to have entered this sacred order !"

Now Luther has shut himself up in his cell. For several days he has suffered no one to enter. A friend of his, called Lucas Edemburger, has grown anxious about him, and, taking with him some of the boys who were accustomed to sing in church, knocks at the door of the cell. No one opens—no one answers. Good Edemburger, still more alarmed, breaks open the door ! What does he behold ? The unhappy Luther

stretched on the floor, giving no signs of life ! In vain his friend strives to recall him to his senses ! Then the boys begin to sing a hymn ; their sweet voices reach the ears of the poor young monk, who ever delighted in music ; gradually he revives ; but, oh ! he needs something more to bring real peace to his conscience, and to enable him to say with his whole heart, "*My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*"

A good man of the name of Staupitz was appointed Vicar-General of all the Augustine convents in Germany. Though a Roman Catholic, he knew much of the love and mercy of Jesus, and had a kind, tender heart. It was his business to visit the different convents, to see that they were well conducted, and Providence led him at this time to Erfurth, where poor Luther was living.

The attention of Staupitz was soon attracted to the young monk, who was so wasted away by study, fasting, and watching, that all his bones might be counted. His eyes, which were in after years compared to a falcon's, were hollow and sunken, his manner sad, his countenance expressing sorrow mixed

with firmness and resolution. Staupitz pitied Luther, and was very kind to him ; so the unhappy man was encouraged, by his gentle, winning manner, to open his whole heart to him, and tell him the cause of his misery.

“It is in vain,” said Luther, in despair, “that I make promises to God ; sin is ever the strongest.”

“Ah ! my friend,” said Staupitz, “if God will not be merciful to me for the love of Christ, I shall never, with the aid of all my vows and good works, stand before Him. I must perish ! Look at the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood that He has shed for you ; it is *there* that the grace of God will appear to you. Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, throw yourself into the Redeemer’s arms ! Trust in Him—in the righteousness of His life—the atonement of His death—*love Him who first loved you.*”

Oh ! what a message of peace to the broken heart of Luther ! He could not save himself, but Jesus had died to save him. *The Son of Man had indeed come to seek and save that which was lost !* Religion, which had been a terror to Luther, became his joy and his great consolation.

“Let the study of the Scriptures be your chief occupation,” said the wise and good Staupitz. Luther obeyed, and was happy.

CHAPTER VI.

BUT fears and gloom would yet sometimes return. Staupitz quitted Erfurth; not, however, until he had presented his young friend with the treasure of a Bible. But Luther was yet only as a child in the knowledge of that truth which he was afterwards so bravely to defend. He was yet like a prisoner bound in the fetters of Popery, though, one by one, the links of his chain were giving way.

Luther was at this time again attacked by a dangerous illness, which brought him to the brink of the grave. All his fears were aroused at the approach of death. “How,” thought he, “can I, a sinful man, appear before a just God?” A kind old monk visited the sufferer, and Luther told him of the fear and misery which he felt. The old man was not so wise and learned as Staupitz,

but he knew his belief, and found it bring comfort to his own heart. Simply he repeated to the unhappy Luther the words, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," adding, "It is God's command that we believe our own sins are forgiven us." These words were like water to the thirsty soul; from them peace and comfort flowed to the heart of Luther.

Luther had now been a monk for two years, and was to be ordained a priest. He thought that this would be a good time to become quite reconciled with his father. He invited his parent to be present at the ceremony, and asked him to fix the day. John Luther accepted the invitation of his son. He was not only present at the ordination, but showed his affection and generosity by a gift to the young priest of twenty florins.

The father afterwards dined at the convent with his son and the other Augustine monks. The conversation fell upon the subject of Luther's entering this monastery. The monks, of course, praised him greatly for doing so; but John Luther, turning to his son, said, "Have you not read in Scripture, that you should obey your father and

mother?" These words sank deep into Luther's heart.

The young priest was not to remain hidden in a convent. The kind Staupitz had not forgotten his friend, but spoke of him to Frederic, the good Elector of Saxony, who invited Luther to become professor at Wittenberg in 1508. With what feelings must he have quitted Erfurth, where he had done and suffered so much, where he had passed three years in a gloomy convent, where he had first known Staupitz, and where he had first seen the Bible!

At Wittenberg Luther lived at another Augustine convent, but he did not now give himself up to nothing but sorrow and gloom. No; he began to serve the cause of truth in real earnest, and every afternoon explained the Bible to attentive pupils.

Staupitz rejoiced in the talents of his friend, and, wishing him to be still more useful, asked him to preach in the church of the Augustines. "No, no," replied Luther, fearful of undertaking such a solemn office. Staupitz persisted in urging the professor to become preacher also, and at last overcame the fears which his humility raised.

In the middle of the square at Wittenberg

stood an old wooden chapel, not larger than a good-sized room, propped up on all sides, and falling into ruins. . An old pulpit, made of planks, three feet high, received the preacher. It was in this humble place that the great Reformer preached his first sermon.

But Luther spoke so earnestly and so well that the people thronged to hear him, till the little chapel could not hold the multitudes, and he was asked to preach in the city church. The Elector himself once came to listen to him. Luther was busy, useful, and happy, but he was a Papist still. Light was yet only like the dim twilight before the sun begins to rise.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE was some difference of opinion between Staupitz and the Augustine convents. The Pope must decide who is right. Who shall be sent to Rome to consult the head of the Papacy? God directs the choice — Luther is to go.

I dare say that the professor of Wittem-

berg was delighted at the thought of seeing a place that he considered so very holy. He set out on his journey and crossed the Alps. He was received on his way to Rome into an Italian convent of the Benedictines, but how much was he astonished by what he saw there ! Such feasting, such drinking, such splendour, marble, silk, and everything grand and luxurious ! Roman Catholics think it wrong to eat meat on a Friday ; but, when Friday came, Luther was shocked to see the table covered with such food ! He could not help speaking to reprove the gluttonous monks. "The church and the Pope forbid these things," said he ; but he only made the Benedictines very angry, so angry that the porter warned him that it would be dangerous for him to stay longer with them ; so he quitted this luxurious convent, and reached Bologna, where he fell dangerously ill.

Poor Luther ! He felt it a sad thing to die far away from his native land, with no friend near him. His feeling of his own sinfulness also made him afraid to appear before God, till, in the midst of his terror, the words "*The just shall live by faith*," which had before greatly struck him at Wittemberg,

cheered him here in Italy, like a ray from heaven.

When he was well enough to proceed on his journey, he again set off for Rome. Hot and tired, for the burning sun of Italy had been beating on his head, Luther one summer's day arrived within sight of the famous city. He fell on his knees, crying out, "Holy Rome, I salute thee."

But when he entered the city, and saw the great wickedness in it, he began to think that Rome was anything but holy. He found that the priests there only laughed at him for being religious. They hurried over the prayers which they had to say so extremely fast, that one day they had repeated seven masses (the service in Latin) before Luther had finished one. "Make haste, make haste, have done with it quickly!" a priest once cried out to him, when he was performing the service!

There was a proverb which said, "He who goes to Rome for the first time, looks out for a rogue; the second time he finds him, the third time he brings him away with him"; "but now," said poor Luther, "people make three journeys in one!" He meant that one visit to so very wicked a place was enough to make a man a rogue.

At first Luther gave himself up to all the vain observances which the Church of Rome ordered. He even said to himself, "How I regret that my father and mother are yet alive! What pleasure should I have in delivering them from Purgatory by my masses, my prayers, and my good works!" One day, the Pope having promised an indulgence, or forgiveness of sins, to any person who should crawl on his knees up some steps called Pilate's Staircase, Luther began to creep up them. Suddenly he thought that he heard a voice like thunder calling out from the bottom of his heart, "*The just shall live by faith!*" Struck for the third time by these words of God, he rose from his crawling position, ashamed of his own foolish superstition, and left the spot a wiser man.

It was a happy thing that Luther visited Rome. He came to it full of respect and admiration; he returned to Wittemberg convinced that there was much sin and folly even in the very city of the Pope.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE good Elector of Saxony, and also Staupitz, wished to raise to higher honours the poor Augustine monk whom they had made professor at Wittemberg. They desired that Luther should become doctor of divinity, which is a higher kind of clergyman. Luther, shrinking from the honour, made great opposition to accepting it; but again Staupitz argued with him until he overcame all his difficulties, and, when Luther mentioned his own poverty as an objection, assured him that the generous Elector had agreed to pay all expenses.

In 1512 Luther took the vows of a doctor of divinity, solemnly promising to teach the Scriptures faithfully, and to defend them from all false teachers. Earnestly did he try to keep his vow.

At one time he was sent to visit the convents in the place of Staupitz. Amongst others he came to the monastery at Erfurth, where he had first become a monk. How strange it must have seemed to him to visit again, in a situation of power and dignity, the place where he had once wound up the

clock, opened the gates, and swept out the church !

Much good was done by Luther's visits to the convents, for he taught God's truth to the monks ; and many, especially of his own order, the Augustines, became faithful preachers of the Gospel. After six weeks' absence he returned to Wittenberg.

About this time the plague broke out in this place. Many fled from the city. Luther remained at his post. He wrote thus to a friend : " You advise me to flee : if the pestilence spreads I shall disperse the brothers in every direction ; but as for me, my place is here : duty does not permit me to desert my post, until He who has called me shall summon me away. Not that I have no fear of death, but I hope that the Lord will deliver me from fear."

Such was the brave and faithful man who was to attack the giant power of Rome with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God ! But as yet he was full of respect for the Pope, and even the Romish religion ; he thus afterwards described his state at this time of his life : " I was a monk, a most furious Papist ; I would have willingly aided, if I could, in killing any one who should

have had the audacity to refuse the slightest obedience to the Pope !”

But the day was now beginning to dawn — the glorious day of the Reformation.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT is this grand procession ? Amidst the clouds of dust, see a handsome carriage with outriders, and look how the people pour out at the city gates to meet it ; clergy, monks, and nuns bear lighted tapers in their hands ; tradesmen carry banners, while all the air is filled with the sound of bells and music

Behold the man whom all rush forth to welcome ! He is a Dominican monk, rather elderly, with an arrogant air, and he bears a large red cross in his hand. His name is Tetzel, and he is a man so wicked that the Emperor once ordered that he should be put in a sack and thrown into the river on account of his crimes ! How is it that the people throng around him with such

joy ? Why do they so eagerly listen to him ?

Tetzel comes to sell indulgences ; *to sell God's pardon for sin !* Oh ! foolish, superstitious people ! He is full of sin himself ; can he forgive yours ? Can money buy what the precious blood of Jesus was shed to purchase ?

Tetzel stands beside his red cross ; he raises his arms, he shouts to the people around him, " There is no sin so great that an indulgence cannot remit ! Pay, pay well, and all will be forgiven ! Indulgences avail not only for the living, but also for the dead. Even repentance is not necessary. Priest, noble, merchant, wife, maiden, do not you hear your parents, and other friends who are dead, crying out to you, ' We are suffering horrible torments, and a little money will deliver us ! ' will you not give it ? "

There was a money-box near, and as this wicked monk spoke, the ignorant listeners dropped in their gold, silver, and copper. When his speech was ended, Tetzel ran to the money-box, and himself flung in a piece of money, taking care that every one should see him do so, and that the coin should rattle as much as possible.

These things seem almost too shocking to repeat, and yet it is right that they should be known. Could you believe that Tetzels offered to forgive even *murder* on the sinner paying eight ducats—that is to say, if the murderer were a poor man, for he took care to squeeze a great deal more money out of the rich.

One day he offered to pardon the poor gratuitously, which means without paying at all. A poor student, named Myconius, came and begged for free pardon. “Give at least a groat,” said one of Tetzels people. “I have not one,” answered Myconius, adding indignantly, “I will have no bought indulgences. I desire a gratuitous pardon, for the love of God alone.” Myconius had to *go away without it*, and felt at first very sad; he burst into tears, and thus prayed to the God who alone has power to forgive sins: “O God, since these men have refused to remit my sins, because I had not money to pay them, do Thou, Lord, have pity on me, and pardon them of Thy pure grace.” This Myconius was afterwards one of the greatest of the Reformers.

Once a nobleman came to Tetzels, and asked him if he had power to forgive the sins

which men *intended* to commit. The audacious monk said that he had. "Well, then," said the nobleman, "I am desirous of taking a slight revenge on one of my enemies, without putting his life in danger; I will give you ten crowns for a letter of indulgence that shall fully justify me!"

Tetzel was not shocked at the idea of an innocent man being hurt, and perhaps tortured by this nobleman; his thought was, "Cannot I get more than ten crowns for this indulgence?" So he bargained with the nobleman, and actually gave him a letter pretending to bestow pardon on him for thirty crowns.

And who, do you think, was the man whom the nobleman thus obtained Tetzel's leave to injure? The wicked monk soon found this out to his cost. As he was travelling through a wood with his ill-gotten treasures, this very nobleman, with some attendants, lay in wait for him, attacked him, and gave him a slight beating, and took away all his money! Tetzel was in a furious rage, and wished the nobleman to be punished; but this could not be, as he showed the letter of indulgence which the monk had himself given him beforehand!

Tetzel had laid a snare and fallen into it himself.

At last Tetzel came to a town only four miles from Wittemberg. The people flocked from all parts to him. One day Luther was seated in the confessional, or place where the Romish priests listen to those who wish to confess their sins, and he heard men confess themselves guilty of all sorts of wickedness. He reproved them, and endeavoured to make them amend their lives ; but how shocked was he when the people told him that they would not forsake their sins, and *need not*, for that they had bought indulgences of Tetzel ! The indignant Luther replied, in the words of our Lord, "*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish !*" and warned the people of Wittemberg against the wicked arts of the Dominican monk.

When Tetzel heard of this he bellowed with rage, and had a fire lighted in the market-place, declaring that he had received an order from the Pope to burn all heretics who refused to receive his indulgences. This was false, but what did Tetzel care for the truth ? His whole trade was deceiving !

CHAPTER X.

LUTHER did not think that he had yet warned the ignorant people as much as he ought to do. He wrote ninety-five sentences which he called Theses, and stuck them up upon the door of the church at Wittemberg, that every one might see and read them. These were two of these theses :

“They preach mere human follies who maintain that, as soon as the money rattles in the box, the soul flies out of Purgatory.”

“They are the enemies of the Pope and of Jesus Christ, who, by reason of the preaching of indulgences, forbid the preaching of the Word of God.”

Luther sent a copy of his theses to the Archbishop of Mentz, with a very humble letter ; the Archbishop did not condescend to answer it.

But the theses were read by hundreds and thousands of people, and copies were distributed in every direction. In a month they had reached Rome. Some were delighted with them ; peasants in their cottages, monks in their cells, rejoiced and thanked God that they had heard the voice of truth. Others

were frightened, and amongst these were the principal men of Luther's own Augustine convent at Wittemberg. They went trembling and alarmed to his cell, and begged him not to bring disgrace on their order.

Others were very angry with him for attacking indulgences and various Romish errors in his theses. The furious Tetzels, not content with writing other theses in reply to them, had a scaffold and a pulpit erected in the town of Frankfort. He preached a violent sermon from the pulpit, loudly crying out that the heretic Luther deserved to suffer death at the stake ; and then, placing Luther's theses on the scaffold, as he could not destroy the doctor himself, he burnt his writings instead.

This made the people of Wittemberg so angry that they took a great many copies of Tetzels theses and burnt them in the market-place of their town.

Luther was vexed at this sort of revenge having been taken. He wished for peace and order, and even wrote an exceedingly respectful letter to the Pope, Leo X., full of submission and humility.

One of Luther's fierce enemies was the Bishop of Brandenburg. One wintry day,

as this bishop was seated before the fire, he said to those around him, "I will not lay my head down in peace until I have thrown Martin into the fire like this brand," and he flung a piece of wood into the flames.

Luther was more grieved by the conduct of Doctor Eck, a learned man who had been his friend, but who now wrote against him, calling him a heretic and a venomous man. But Luther was ready to give up even dear friends for Christ's sake, and God raised up others for him. Luther tried to soften Eck, and wrote him a letter full of affection; no answer came, not even a message. Eck wrote indeed a great deal, but it was *against* him whom he had once called his friend.

CHAPTER XI.

A WORSE storm was about to break upon Luther. The Emperor Maximilian had written to the Pope concerning him, and the Pope, Leo X., began to think it high

time to crush the poor Augustine monk, who had dared to preach against indulgences.

As Luther was quietly waiting at Wittemberg for an answer to his humble letter to the Pope, he received a summons to appear at Rome, to answer charges against him. His friends were filled with terror. If he went to that wicked city, would he be allowed to leave it alive? Luther felt that only the Elector could save him, but he could not bear to bring his kind Prince into trouble.

The University of Wittemberg wrote a letter of entreaty to the Pope. "The weakness of Luther's frame," said they, "and the dangers of the journey, render it difficult and even impossible for him to obey the order of your holiness." The Pope gave commands that Luther should appear in Augsburg, which is a German city, instead of in Rome, and ordered his legate, Cajetan, to try the matter there.

Cruel was the letter of Pope Leo X. He desired that Luther should be prosecuted without delay, and that all clergymen, monks, dukes, or even princes (except the Emperor), who would not aid in seizing him should be excommunicated.

At the same time the Pope wrote a very

flattering letter to the good Elector of Saxony, trying to win him over, that he might not protect his poor persecuted subject. But the Elector did not yield to the Pope's flattery ; he sent Luther letters of recommendation to different people at Augsburg, and supplied him with money for his journey.

But the friends of Luther implored him not to set out. They feared that, even through the journey, snares might be laid for his life. The gentle Staupitz was miserable, for he felt that he had been the means of bringing his friend into this danger by persuading him to come to Wittemberg and preach. He wrote to Luther begging him to fly to him, "and then," said the affectionate Staupitz, "we shall live and die together !"

A nobleman warned Luther not to go to Augsburg, telling him that several powerful lords had sworn to seize him and strangle or drown him ! But no fears could keep Luther from the path of duty : he set off for Augsburg on foot.

On his way he arrived at Weimar, where the good Elector was. He was invited by this noble prince to preach in the palace chapel.

Luther then passed on to Nuremberg. He was so poor that he had to borrow a monk's

dress from a friend, his own being too old and shabby.

He was so ill before he arrived at Augsburg that he thought he should die. He reached that place at last in a waggon, for he could not walk. He was received into the convent of the Augustines, where he soon recovered.

CHAPTER XII.

A CUNNING Roman Catholic, called Serra Longa, thought that he might persuade Luther to retract, which means to *unsay* what he had so wisely said against indulgences. Serra Longa knew how the people of Augsburg crowded round Luther, and how all Germany read his theses, and wished to make him disgrace himself and deny the truth.

“Why do you not wait upon the Cardinal Cajetan?” said the artful Serra Longa, in a kind manner; “the whole matter lies in six letters—*revoka*, retract. Come, you have nothing to fear!”

Luther thought those six letters very

important ; but he told him that he was only waiting for a safe-conduct ; he intended to appear before Cajetan.

SERRA LONGA.—When all forsake you, where will you take refuge ?

LUTHER (*looking up*).—Under Heaven !

SERRA LONGA.—What would you do if you had the Pope, legate, and cardinals in your hands, as you are in theirs ?

LUTHER.—I would show them all possible honour and respect ; but with me, the Word of God is before everything !

Serra Longa could not conquer the firmness of Luther. The safe-conduct arrived, and three times did the Reformer appear before Cajetan. At first the legate was very kind in his manner, calling Luther “dear son,” and trying to persuade him to retract. But Luther was not to be moved by this. “The Pope has power and authority over all things,” said Cajetan. Luther quickly replied, “Except Scripture.”

Cajetan grew angry, and began to threaten the Reformer. Luther was firm as a rock. “I have no will but the Lord’s,” said he. “If I had four hundred heads I would rather lose them all than retract.” “I did not come here to dispute with you,” cried the displeased

legate ; “retract, or suffer the penalty you have deserved.”

The friendly Staupitz himself came to Augsburg. How delighted must Luther have been to have met this kind friend ! But neither Staupitz nor any one else could make things smooth between the cardinal and the Reformer. Luther would rather die than retract, and Cajetan would be satisfied with nothing but his retracting. At last it was feared that the Cardinal had laid a plot to seize both Luther and his friends, notwithstanding the safe-conduct. Staupitz quitted Augsburg, full of anxiety as to the fate of his friend. Luther waited some days longer, and wrote a respectful letter to the legate, to which he received no answer ; then, thinking it foolish to expose his life further, as his stay at Augsburg was of no more use, he quitted it one morning before daybreak, that his departure might not be observed. Mounted on a pony which Staupitz had left for him, the Reformer set forth unarmed, without bridle or spurs. A guide conducted him in the dark, through the silent streets of Augsburg. They arrived at a little gate in the wall of the city. Would it not be closed at such an hour ? No ; secret orders had been given—the gate

opens—Luther passes through—he puts his pony to a gallop—he is safe, he is free !

Would not Cajetan have started from his early sleep could he have known that his victim was thus escaping from his power ? He was thunderstruck—frightened—he had done nothing ; he had neither convinced Luther nor punished him !

CHAPTER XIII.

THUS wrote Luther to a friend : “I returned to Wittemberg safe and sound, by the grace of God ; how long I shall stay here I do not know. I am filled with joy and peace.”

But, if Luther's heart was filled with joy and peace, anger and vexation were in that of Cajetan. He wrote an indignant letter to the Elector, entreating him either to send Luther to Rome, or at least to banish him from Saxony, and exhorted him not to tarnish his honour “for the sake of a miserable little friar.” Had this prince consented, what would have become of Luther ? But God

put firmness into the heart of the Elector ; he refused either to banish the Reformer or to send him to Rome. Thus was the truth sheltered in Saxony. Luther's friends still felt great fear on his account, and he himself felt that it was very probable he should be obliged to seek refuge somewhere else. He preached a farewell sermon to his flock at Wittemberg, thinking that he perhaps might never address them again, bidding the people not to blame the Pope, nor any other man, but trust in God.

The moment seemed to have come at last. The Elector became perplexed, and very unwilling to draw upon himself the anger of Rome. He informed Luther that he wished him to leave Wittemberg. The Reformer instantly made preparations to obey his prince, and asked his friends to come and partake of a farewell repast with him. Seated amongst those whom he loved, he is enjoying their sweet conversation, when a letter is brought—it comes from the Court ; he opens it and reads, his heart sinks ; it contains a new order for his departure ! His soul is full of sadness ; yet he recovers himself, and raising his head, says, firmly and joyfully, “ Father and mother abandon me, but the Lord takes me up ! ”

Tears roll down the cheeks of his friends ; they can say little ; their hearts are too full. Hark ! there is a sound at the door ! another messenger arrives ; another letter ! Everything is changed : “Remain for the present,” says the Elector. Did not God watch over His servant ?

In 1519 an event happened which partly diverted from Luther the attention of his foes. The Emperor of Germany died, and, until a new one could be elected, Luther’s protector, the Elector, had greater power. Charles V., King of Spain, was afterwards made Emperor ; whether he was a friend or an enemy to the Reformation you shall hear.

I will now tell you something more about Tetzl, who had not only burnt Luther’s works, but wished that he could burn Luther himself. This man had fallen into disgrace with Rome, which almost broke his heart. He became ill ; death was before him : what comfort could his wicked indulgences bring him then ? What did Luther do when he heard of the illness of the enemy who had been the means of bringing him into so much trouble ? He sent him a letter, full, not of reproaches, but of consolation. The miserable Tetzl died soon after.

Luther's maxim was "*to love all men, but to fear none.*" His courage was sometimes severely tried. One day, it is said, as Luther was in front of the convent, a stranger, with a pistol concealed under his cloak, thus addressed him, "Why do you go thus alone?" "I am in God's hands," replied Luther. "He is my strength and shield! What can man do unto me?" Upon this the stranger turned pale, and fled away trembling!

There was great fury in Rome against Luther. The Pope proceeded to excommunicate him. He ordered him at once to leave off preaching, teaching, and writing, and to burn his books, and gave him sixty days to recant; if he would not recant in that time, he was to be proceeded against as an obstinate heretic, to be seized and sent to Rome, where doubtless a stake would have been prepared for him. The Pope had the will to destroy Luther, but God did not give him the power.

When Luther heard of the Pope's bull (or letter) against him, he solemnly appealed from him to the Emperor, the electors, nobles, and cities of Germany. He appealed against the Pope as an unjust and tyrannical judge, who dared to set his own words in opposition to



LUTHER BURNING THE POPE'S BULL.

[See page 61.]

the Word of God, and said that he had no right to slaughter the flock of Christ.

Not content with this bold step, Luther determined publicly to burn the Pope's bull, actually did so, going at the head of a procession of doctors and students, who delighted to see the Pope's own bull blazing, instead of the books of Luther, which he had been commanded to burn! This was indeed boldly defying the power of Rome. I know not whether in this Luther acted wisely or not. He was of a bold and ardent temper, which made him sometimes do and say things for which he was sorry afterwards. No man is perfect—Luther was not. But he may have felt that thus insulting the Pope was the best way to show all the world that he would never retract nor draw back from the struggle to raise the Word of God above the inventions of man.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT a splendid assembly is here! When did the sun shine on a meeting more numerous

and grand than that now held in the old city of Worms? This meeting is called the Diet of Worms. Remember the name, for this Diet is a famous one, and the date of it is the year 1521. The Emperor himself is here, the pale, melancholy Charles, the youthful sovereign of mighty States. Princes and nobles, electors and knights, bishops and archbishops, all are here; some one else is expected too, who excites as much interest as the young Emperor himself! Luther has been summoned to appear at the *Diet of Worms*! Luther's friends were alarmed, but he did not tremble. He was in very weak health at the time, but he determined not to let that hinder him. "If I cannot go to Worms in good health," he replied, to a message from the Elector, "I will be carried there, sick as I am. If they desire to use violence against me—and that is very probable—I place the matter in the Lord's hands. He still lives and reigns who preserved the three young men in the burning fiery furnace. If He will not save me, my life is of little consequence. You may expect everything from me except flight and recantation. Fly I cannot, and still less retract."

Luther received a promise that he should be heard before the great Diet; but the

young Emperor, Charles V., did not choose to give him a safe-conduct, and, without such a promise of protection, Luther knew that he would be going to almost certain death. But here again the good Elector of Saxony shielded the brave Reformer from danger. A passport, or safe-conduct, was procured from the Emperor, so that no injury could be done to Luther at Worms without tarnishing the honour of Charles.

On the 2nd April Luther took leave of his friends. Turning to one, he said, "My dear brother, if I do not return, and should my enemies put me to death, continue to teach, and stand fast in the truth." Then committing himself to the God who was able to defend him, Luther got into a car provided for him, and quitted Wittemberg, leaving his friends weeping and praying behind him.

As he journeyed towards Worms the people crowded to see this daring man, who, like the Apostles, was to appear before rulers for the Lord's sake, and who was ready, like them, to lay down his life for the truth. "Ah!" cried some, "there are so many bishops and cardinals at Worms, they will burn you and reduce your body to ashes!" "Though they should kindle a fire," he

exclaimed, "all the way from Worms to Wittemberg, the flames of which reached unto heaven, I would walk through it in the name of the Lord, and would appear before them!"

One of Luther's friends, Spalatin, who had arrived at Worms before him, heard it said that the safe-conduct of a heretic ought not to be respected—that is to say, that there would be nothing wrong in Charles V. breaking his promise to protect Luther, because the latter was an enemy to the Papacy. Doubtless the Pope would have gladly given an indulgence to the Emperor if he had broken his word on such an occasion as this. I dare say that Spalatin thought of the martyr Huss, who, about a hundred years before, had been seized and given to the flames, *notwithstanding a safe-conduct*. He sent a messenger to meet Luther as he approached the city, with these words, "Do not enter Worms!" But Luther, undismayed, turned his eyes upon the messenger, and said, "Go and tell your master that even should there be as many devils in Worms as there are tiles upon the house-tops, still I would enter it;" and so the brave Reformer passed into the city.

When his arrival was known, Charles V. immediately summoned his council. It was then that the Bishop of Palermo is said to have thus advised the young Emperor: "We have long consulted on this matter; let your imperial majesty get rid of this man at once. Did not Sigismund cause John Huss to be burnt? We are not bound either to give or to observe the safe-conduct of a heretic." "No," said Charles, "we must keep our promise."

Luther was cited to appear before his majesty and the States of the Empire. He has to stand before the greatest assembly in the world!

CHAPTER XV.

THE hour arrived—the Marshal of the Empire appeared—Luther set out with him. He was agitated at the thought of the solemn congress before which he was to appear. Thousands of people thronged around him on his way to the town-hall. It was impossible to advance on account of the immense

crowd, so that the Marshal was obliged to cause some private houses to be opened, and to lead Luther through their gardens and passages to the place where the Diet was sitting. When they reached the town-hall, the soldiers had to make way for them to enter by main force, and to keep the crowds back by their halberds!

And now Luther stands before the meeting. What a meeting! The mighty Emperor; six electors; twenty-four dukes; thirty archbishops, bishops, abbots; the Papal Nuncio, and many others: no wonder that the poor Augustine monk was for a moment dazzled and alarmed—the eyes of all were upon him!

Some of the princes, when they saw poor Luther's emotion on entering the hall, kindly tried to encourage him. "*Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul,*" said one; and another added, "*When ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, the Spirit of your Father shall speak in you.*"

After a moment of solemn silence, the Chancellor of the Archbishop of Treves rose, and said, in a loud voice, "Martin Luther! his sacred majesty has cited you before his

throne, to require you to answer two questions. Firstly," he continued, pointing to about twenty volumes placed on a table, "Do you acknowledge those books to have been written by you? and secondly, Are you prepared to retract those books, or do you persist in the opinions you have advanced in them?"

Luther replied, first in Latin, then in German: "Most gracious Emperor, gracious princes and lords, I acknowledge as mine the books; I cannot deny them." He then entreated time to answer the second question, seeing that it concerned "faith, and the salvation of souls, and the Word of God, the greatest and most precious treasure."

Because Luther had spoken in a respectful manner, and in a low tone of voice, many thought that he hesitated, and even that he was dismayed. Charles V., who had never taken his eyes off him, now turned to one of his courtiers, and said with disdain, "Certainly this man will never make a heretic of me."

Martin Luther was granted one day to make his reply, and was conducted by the Imperial herald back to his hotel. His enemies exulted: "He has asked time," said they; "he will retract!" But the Reformer wrote

that very evening to the imperial counsellor, "With Christ's help I will never retract one tittle of my works !"

The morning came—the important morning. Brave as the champion is, he feels his danger ; nature shrinks from the struggle. Luther falls on his knees, and asks for strength and comfort from his Heavenly Father. "O Almighty and Everlasting God, how terrible is this world ! The cause is Thine, and it is a righteous and eternal cause. O Lord, help me ! In no man do I put my trust. Stand by my side for the sake of Thy well-beloved Jesus Christ, who is my defence, my shield, and my strong tower !"

After he had prayed the heart of the Reformer was at peace. When the hour approached that he must again appear before the Diet he drew near a table upon which the Scriptures were placed, and laying his left hand upon them, and raising his right towards heaven, he solemnly vowed to remain faithful to the Gospel, and freely to confess his faith, even should he have to seal his testimony with his blood.

At four o'clock the herald appeared to conduct Luther to the Diet. For two hours he had to wait in the court, in the midst of an

immense crowd, which rocked backwards and forwards like a sea of human beings. Evening was now closing in ; torches were lighted in the hall of assembly, and cast their yellow light on the eager faces of the members of the Diet. Luther was at last admitted—calm, free, and confident. His words were firm, but modest and respectful. He entreated the princes to convince him *from the Bible* if he had erred ; if they could do that, he declared himself ready to retract every error, and to be the first to throw his books into the fire ; but he solemnly warned the Diet not to persecute the holy Word of God.

When Luther had finished his speech he was ordered to repeat it in Latin, for the Emperor of Germany did not like German. Luther was hot and tired, and one of the attendants of the Elector of Saxony, seeing his condition, kindly whispered to the poor monk, “If you cannot repeat what you have said, that will do, Doctor.” But Luther, after a short pause, began again, and repeated his speech in Latin.

When he had ceased speaking, the Chancellor of Treves said indignantly, “You have not answered the question put to you. Will

you or will you not retract?" Luther replied, "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by the clearest reasoning, and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the Word of God, *I cannot, and I will not retract*; for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand; I can do no other! May God help me. Amen!"

"If you do not retract," said the Chancellor, "the Emperor and the States will consult what course to adopt against an incorrigible heretic!" To these alarming words the Reformer simply replied, "May God be my helper, for I can retract nothing."

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN Luther returned wearied to his hotel, Spalatin and his other friends gathered round him to return thanks to God for supporting him through that trying day. As they were conversing together a servant came with a silver flagon full of beer. "My master," said

he, as he offered it to Luther, "invites you to refresh yourself with this draught." "Who is the prince who so graciously remembers me?" inquired the weary monk. It was Eric, the aged Duke of Brunswick, one of the Pope's party. "His highness," said the servant, "has condescended to taste it before sending it to you."

Luther was touched by this kindness, shown at such a time; thirsty and tired he poured out some of the duke's beer, and after drinking it, uttered this prayer—"As this day Duke Eric remembered me, so may our Lord Jesus Christ remember him in the hour of his last struggle!"

In aftertime, when Duke Eric lay on his death-bed, he remembered these words of Luther, and, calling to a young page who was near, the dying prince said, "Take the Bible, and read to me"; and what sentence did he hear to comfort his departing soul?—"Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, He shall not lose his reward."

On the day following Luther's appearance at the Diet of Worms the Emperor caused a message to be read to the meeting, which he

had written in French with his own hand. "A single monk," thus wrote Charles V., "misled by his own folly, has risen against the faith of Christendom. To stay such impiety, I will sacrifice my kingdoms, my treasures, my friends, my body, my blood, my soul, and my life ! I am about to dismiss the Augustine Luther, forbidding him to cause the least disorder among the people ; I shall then proceed against him and his adherents as contumacious heretics, by excommunication, by interdict, and by every means calculated to destroy them."

Thus, though the young Emperor spared Luther this time, on account of the safe-conduct which he had given him, he declared his determination to persecute both him and his friends in future with all his mighty power.

On the 26th April, 1521, Luther quitted Worms, after praying with his friends and blessing them. He had been preserved through danger, anxiety, and fear, and enabled to confess his faith before princes ! But his trials were not over. Yet greater dangers appeared before him. Charles V. wrote another message to the Diet, wherein he affirmed that the

Reformer had "rushed like a madman on the Church," that he "urged the people to war, murder, and robbery," and forbade any one, on pain of death, after the appointed time mentioned in the safe-conduct should be over, to conceal him, to give him food and drink, or succour him by word or deed. Any one who should find him was commanded to seize him without delay, and deliver him up to punishment!

CHAPTER XVII.

LUTHER is quietly travelling on by a road skirting the woods of Thuringia. A waggon is his humble vehicle; his brother James and a friend are by his side. Yesterday he was clasped to the heart of his aged grandmother; with what feelings must she have bidden farewell to her illustrious descendant, scarcely hoping to see him again in this world! Now the waggon is going through a hollow way, near the deserted church of Glisbach. Hark! is there not a sound of horses' feet? It grows louder! five horsemen, armed from

head to foot, their faces concealed by masks, spring upon the travellers. James Luther, as soon as he sees his brother's danger, jumps from the waggon, and flees without uttering a word; the driver tries to resist. "Stop!" cries one of the assailants, with a terrible voice, falling on him, and dashing him to the ground. Another of the assailants laid hold of Luther's friend, and kept him at a distance. The other three seized upon the defenceless Reformer, dragged him from the waggon, threw a soldier's cloak over his shoulder, and placed him on a led horse; all five then leaped to their saddles—one dropped his hat, but did not even wait to pick it up; they dashed off with their prisoner into the gloomy forest. They made many turns and windings in the wood, so that no one might be able to track them. Luther, not much accustomed to riding, was knocked up. The men in masks allowed him to dismount for a few minutes, lie down under the shade of a beech-tree, and drink from a spring.

Night drew on, Luther had to ride on and on, till about an hour before midnight he and his captors reached the foot of a mountain. On the top was an old castle surrounded by

dark forests, called the Wartburg. The mountain was slowly ascended, the castle reached, the bolts were drawn back, the iron bars fell, the gates opened ; the Reformer rode across the threshold, the doors closed behind him, he dismounted in the court. One of the horsemen then led him to a chamber, where he found a knight's uniform and sword. What could all this mean ? Was Luther brought here to die ? Was he in the hands of his enemies ? No ! he was in the hands of his *friends*. They had carried him off to *save* him ; they imprisoned him to *conceal* him ; they would guard him indeed, but only from his *foes* ; they would keep him shut up like a precious jewel in the lonely castle of the Wartburg.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHILE all the world, except the few persons who are in the secret, are wondering what has become of Luther ; while his family are in terror and Wittemberg in mourning, fearing that the Reformer is in the power of his

cruel foes, let us enter into the gloomy castle of Wartburg, and visit the prisoner in his quiet retirement.

Surely this is not the Augustine monk!—this soldier, whose martial dress and beard denote the warrior, not the minister! The sword hangs by his side; but glance over his shoulder as he sits writing, and you will see that the sword which he uses is of a very different kind—“the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God!” The prisoner is not idle. If he may not preach, he will serve the cause another way: *he is translating the Bible!*

Days, weeks, months pass; knight George (for by this name Luther is called here) grows exceedingly weary of his confinement. He had rather be in danger than in captivity. He has been ill, and his mind is full of anxiety about his friends.

His enemies thought, when he disappeared, that, if he were not dead, at least they should not be troubled by him any more; but they soon found out their mistake. Many writings of Luther's appeared; men knew not where they came from, but his friends rejoiced. Once the Reformer even ventured to Wittenberg in his warlike disguise, saw some of his



LUTHER SEEKING ADMISSION TO THE CONVENT.

[See page 25.]

beloved companions, and returned in safety to the Wartburg.

You must not suppose that all those who gave up the errors of Rome were wise or good. Far from it. There were some wild, fierce people, who acted as though they thought that religion consisted in breaking images and attacking priests. One of these men, who was a schoolmaster, called to his neighbours out of the window to come and take away their children, for there was no use in learning. There was sad confusion in Wittemberg, and who was to put an end to it? The Elector? No; he was growing old, and required peace and rest; and then he was so gentle. His delight was to stop amidst the little children whom he saw playing in the streets to give them presents; in short, to make those around him happy. How could he check the disorders of the wild fanatics, and teach them that it is not enough to pull down a false religion without meekly and humbly following the true one?

“Luther! Luther!” was the unanimous cry at Wittemberg. Now that his poor flock was in such trouble, where was the faithful shepherd?

Luther was quite ready to return to his post. In the early spring of 1522, before the trees which surrounded the Wartburg had spread their young leaves to the sun, the Reformer bade a last farewell to the lonely castle which for months had been his place of refuge. He descended the mountain; he returned to a world for him so full of dangers; but he was serving his Lord in the work set before him.

It was at this time that two young Swiss were travelling to Wittemberg, and stopped at an inn called the "Black Bear" to refresh themselves by the way, as they were not only very much tired, but very wet, having been out in a terrible storm. They took their seats near the door of the inn, for they were ashamed to go farther in, their clothes being in such a dripping state. At one of the tables in the public room they noticed a man seated; he wore a knight's dress, with a red cap on his head; his right hand rested on the pommel of his sword, his left grasped the hilt, but his eyes were fixed upon a book which lay open before him. At the noise made by the entrance of the two young men he raised his head, and politely invited them to come and sit at his table; he then presented them with a glass of beer, and entered into conversation

with them. Encouraged by the stranger's kindness, they said, "Sir, could you inform us where Martin Luther is at present?" "I know for certain," replied the knight, "that he is not at Wittemberg, but he will be there shortly." "If God spare our lives," observed one of the Swiss, "we will not return home without having seen and heard Dr. Luther. It is on his account that we have undertaken this journey."

After having continued for some time to converse with the knight, one of the Swiss, whose name was Kessler, was called aside by the landlord of the inn, who whispered to him: "I perceive that you have a great desire to see and hear Luther; well, it is he who is seated beside you." The Swiss could hardly believe these words: "It is he in very truth," repeated the landlord; "but do not let him see that you know him." You may imagine the delight of Kessler!

Before Luther returned to Wittemberg he thought it right to give notice to his own prince, the Elector of Saxony. He entreated him, by letter, to take no care or trouble on his account; he could not bear the thought of being the cause of any war or fighting; on the contrary, he wrote, "You must offer no

resistance if men desire to seize or kill me, for no one should resist dominions except He who has established them."

CHAPTER XIX.

It is rumoured in Wittemberg that Luther has come back again, that he is again to preach, that his flock shall hear him once more proclaim the truths of the Gospel! How the people throng to the church; how anxious they are; how full of expectation!

Luther comes indeed. They see him ascend the pulpit once more. How gently he reproves his wandering flock; how wisely he tells them that the object of Reformers should be "to win men's hearts," and that violence and rebellion can never be the right means to advance the cause of the Gospel! Luther brings his people at Wittemberg a precious gift; he has translated the New Testament into German, and now the printing of it is going on with great rapidity. Poor ignorant workmen in your shops, labourers in the

field, fishermen by the sea, the treasure shall no longer be shut up from you ; in your own language you shall read the blessed Word of God !

On the 21st September, 1522, appeared the first German edition of the New Testament, 3,000 copies. In a short time every copy was sold, and another edition came out in December. In vain might Pope and princes try to stop the sale ; in vain did Henry VIII. of England write a book against the translator, calling Luther a wolf and a viper ; *man* could not stay the work of God ; the New Testament was received among the people with joy and gladness, and Luther undertook to translate the Old Testament also.

But alas ! bitter persecutions began. The Papists tried by blood and fire to stop the course of the Reformation. At a place called Miltenberg, where the people had eagerly welcomed the Gospel, soldiers marched into the town and committed many cruelties, killing some and imprisoning others. The faithful clergyman, a deacon, had taken refuge in the house of a poor widow. A soldier was sent to seize him. The deacon, hearing the hasty steps of the soldier, quietly waited for him, and, as the door of his chamber was

rudely opened, went forward meekly, and embracing his persecutor, said, "I welcome thee, brother ; here I am, plunge thy sword into my bosom !" The astonished soldier let his sword fall ; his evil was overcome by good, and he protected the pious deacon from further harm.

In the Netherlands three young Augustine monks who had become Reformers were seized. Two of them were "*faithful unto death.*" "We will not deny the Word of God," they cried ; "we will rather die for the faith !"

They were led to the stake ; they looked calmly at the dreadful preparations. Their youth, their firmness, their piety, drew tears even from the Romanists. Half an hour was given to them in hope that fear might gain the victory ; but the faithful Esch and Voes sang psalms, stopping from time to time to declare boldly, "We will die for the name of Jesus Christ !"

The fire was lighted ; the flames ascended ; still the voices of the young martyrs were heard. They sang the *Te Deum* (We praise Thee, O God !) until their happy spirits were released from their suffering bodies and only their ashes remained upon earth. "*Blessed*

are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven !”

Their companion, who at first wavered from fear, received strength like them to confess the Gospel, and died as they had died, boldly proclaiming the truth.

This was but the beginning of those cruel persecutions by which the Papists in England, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, destroyed *thousands and tens of thousands* of men, women, and *children*, who dared to read the Word of God, and try to obey its precepts rather than the commands of the Pope! Luther made a beautiful hymn on the death of the martyrs, of which this is a translation.

“No ! no ! their ashes shall not die,
But borne to every land,
Where'er their sainted dust shall fall
Up springs a holy band.
Though Satan by his might may kill,
And stop their pow'rful voice,
They triumph o'er him in their death,
And still in Christ rejoice !”

CHAPTER XX.

IN the year 1525 the aged Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, lay on his deathbed. God took him from the evil to come. His servants stood around him weeping. "My little children," said the dying prince, tenderly, "if I have offended any one of you, forgive me for the love of God; for we princes often give offence to the poor, and that is wrong."

The Elector did not rest his hopes of heaven on the favour of the Virgin Mary, as he had done some years ago, nor on his own virtues and good works; he knew that we are all sinners in the sight of a just and holy God, and declared his firm assurance "that he was redeemed by the precious blood of his beloved Saviour." And so this aged servant of God "*fell asleep*" in Jesus. "Oh! bitter death to all whom he has left behind him," said Luther.

Frederick was succeeded by his brother, John the Good, a firm friend of the Reformation, who was afterwards to prove his love to the good cause by loss of lands, of liberty, and almost of life. From that noble family

was descended the husband of our Queen. The Prince of Saxony lost his electorate in the cause of the Gospel, and, behold, to his remote posterity God gives the promise of the crown of a mighty empire, the greatest *Protestant* empire on the face of the earth. May the children and children's children of our beloved Sovereign show themselves worthy of such an ancestor as the Elector of Saxony!

In the convent of Nimsch dwelt nine nuns, who were diligent in reading the Word of God, and who now thought they had made a great mistake in trying to serve religion by shutting themselves up from the world. They wrote to their parents, "The salvation of our souls will not permit us to remain any longer in a cloister." But their parents rejected the prayers of the nuns, afraid of the troubles which might arise from their leaving the convent. The nine nuns, in their distress, went to ask for protection from Luther. He could not deny it to them, though he little thought then that he was affording aid to his future wife. Many persons offered to receive these nuns into their houses, and one of them, called Catherine Bora, found a welcome in the family of the burgomaster of Wittemberg.

Luther had laid aside the dress of a monk, and now began to entertain thoughts of marrying. He had, as well as the nuns, taken a vow never to do so, but he now considered that the promise was not a lawful one, but one made in the days of his ignorance. He dwelt much on those words in the Bible, "*It is not good that man should be alone.*" Then his father, who had never liked his being a monk at all, wished him to marry, and the pious, amiable Catherine seemed just suited for a wife for him. I cannot say whether in this step Luther did right ; but, at any rate, he did not act hastily or without thought, and I feel assured that he prayed to God for guidance in this important matter. Luther and Catherine were married in 1525, to the horror of the Papists, who regarded the union of a monk with a nun as one of the most shocking things which could possibly happen.

Luther was very happy in his marriage. In a year Catherine presented him with a dear little son, which was a new source of delight to his affectionate heart. His "dear and amiable Ketha," as Luther called his wife, cheered him when he was sad by repeating to him verses from the Bible, sat near him

during his leisure moments, reminded him of the friends to whom he had forgotten to write, and worked his likeness in embroidery.

CHAPTER XXI.

Do you know why those who are not Roman Catholics are called Protestants? Let me tell you the reason.

You remember the famous Diet of Worms, where Luther confessed the truth so boldly? Another Diet was summoned to meet at the city of Spire, in the year 1529. Eight years had nearly passed since Luther stood before Charles V. The Reformation had then appeared like a spark, which that proud emperor thought perhaps he could easily extinguish. Now it had spread on every side, and not only the Elector of Saxony, but other princes, with thousands of the people, stood up as champions of the truth. True, the Papists were the strongest party in the Diet, and King Ferdinand, who presided over it this time, was brother to the Emperor

Charles V., and, like him, a foe to the Reformation ; but the Reformers were brave and firm, and determined to uphold the Gospel with the help of God.

Soon the Romanists showed their bitter feelings towards those who differed from them. The Elector of Saxony and the noble young Landgrave of Hesse were forbidden to have the Gospel preached in their houses. Nevertheless, the Elector wrote to his son, "About eight thousand persons were present to-day in my chapel, at morning and evening worship."

But the Papists, as I have before mentioned, formed the majority of the Diet of Spire, and they came to a resolution against changes in religion ; in places where the people had ceased to be Romanists, they were not to be allowed to effect any new reform, and no Papist in future was to be suffered to become a Lutheran. This was trying to stop the stream of the Reformation at once.

"Let us reject this decree," said the Lutheran princes ; "in matters of conscience the majority has no power."

On the 18th of April King Ferdinand appeared in the Diet, thanked the Romanists for their fidelity, and told the assembly that

the resolution having been agreed to, it was about to be made an Imperial decree. He then announced to the Elector and his friends that the only thing for them to do was to submit to the majority.

The reforming princes, not prepared for such a positive declaration, were excited by this speech, and went, as the custom was, into an adjoining room to consult together. But Ferdinand was not in a humour to wait. He rose—no one could stop him: “I have received an order from his Imperial Majesty,” cried he. “I have executed it; all is over.”

All was *not* over with the Reformation. As Ferdinand paid no regard to the complaints of the minority, they determined to appeal from the Diet to the Word of God; from the Emperor Charles to Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. The Reformers drew up a *protest* against the proceedings of the Diet of Spires, and from that time to this those who renounce the errors of the Church of Rome, and rest their faith upon the Word of Truth, have been called PROTESTANTS.

The reforming princes had scarcely finished their protest when they declared their intention of quitting Spires the very next day,

CHAPTER XXII.

As I am not writing a history of the Reformation, but only of its champion, Martin Luther, I shall not give a farther description of the acts of the Protestant princes, of the terrible persecutions, or the bloody wars which followed. You will be deeply interested in them when you read "D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation," "The Life of Charles V.," "The History of the Thirty Years' War," and such other books as give an account of the struggle between Protestantism and Popery.

I will give you now an extract from a letter from a Protestant in which Luther is described: "I cannot enough admire the extraordinary cheerfulness, constancy, faith, and hope of this man, in these trying and vexatious times. He constantly feeds these good affections by a very diligent study of the Word of God. Then not a day passes in which he does not employ in prayer at least three of his best hours."

Luther was attacked by a very violent illness, and suspected he was about to die. One evening he was seized with a fainting fit. A friend, in great alarm, snatched up some

cold water and threw it over him. Luther was the picture of death; but presently he began to pray most fervently. "If this be my last hour, O Lord, Thy will be done. Have mercy upon me, O Lord! I would willingly have shed my blood in the cause of Thy Word—but perhaps I was unworthy of that honour. Thy will be done—only may Thy name be glorified, whether by my life or death!"

With deep sighs and many tears the Reformer confessed that he had sometimes been too violent in his language, but his conscience did not reproach him with having indulged ill-will even towards his cruel enemies.

Luther then began to inquire after his child. "Where is my dearest little John?" The child was brought smiling to his suffering father, who immediately commended his "good little boy," and his wife, his "dearest Kate," to a kind and gracious God. "You have no worldly property," said he; "but God, who is the Father of the orphan, and judges the cause of the widow, will defend and keep you. I give thanks to Thee, O Lord God, that Thy providence hath made me poor in this world. I have neither house, nor land, nor possession to leave. Thou hast blessed

me with a wife and children, and these I return back unto Thee. O feed them, teach them, preserve them !”

To his wife he said, “My dearest Kate, if it is God’s will, I request thee to submit to it. Thou art my wedded wife, this thou wilt never forget ; and let God’s Word be thy constant guide.”

In this sad moment of trial Catherine showed that she was worthy to be the wife of Luther ; though almost heart-broken, she yet preserved a good hope in her countenance, and entreated her husband not to be uneasy on her account.

God granted a respite to his faithful servant ; Luther did not die until the year 1547, and his memory still lives in the grateful remembrance of those who love the principles of the Reformation.

Luther’s body rests at Wittemberg ; in that town where he may be said to have lighted the torch of Protestantism. A bronze slab marks the spot where the dust of this holy man is laid, and on the door of the church still hang the *ninety-five theses* by which he bade defiance to Popish errors and drew upon himself the fury of Rome.

But Luther needs no monument to keep

him in the minds of Protestants ; the Bible which he loved, preached, translated, gave to the people, this is his noblest remembrancer !

What should be our feelings on reading the life of Martin Luther ? Gratitude to God, who, when His people were enslaved by superstition, sent them a deliverer.

Increased love for the Word of God, the free perusal of which was bought for us by the trials, tortures, deaths, of so many glorious martyrs !

Pity for the nations yet in Popish darkness. Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, and parts of Germany and Switzerland are yet in the chains of superstition. Men still pray to the Virgin and saints, bow down to images, dread Purgatory, rely on their own works instead of the Saviour, and reverence the power of the Pope. Oh ! let us pray that God will send to them *other Luthers*, that they too may rejoice in the light of the Gospel ! Nor must we be idle. We may not be called upon, like Luther, to confess our faith before kings and rulers : we may not have to brave death and tortures, and yield up our lives at the stake for the sake of the Gospel, but we too must be its firm defenders. We must not fear the laugh or scorn of men ; we must

show our religion *in our lives*, and endeavour to win others to God by our gentleness, meekness, and charity. We must endeavour to spread the Word of God. The Bible Society has already distributed *millions* of copies over the world, in more than one hundred and fifty languages and dialects. Can *we* not assist in this blessed work? Oh! what joy it would be to have been the means of leading *one* sinner to the Saviour! what unutterable delight to meet before the throne of the Almighty *one* rejoicing spirit who could welcome us with the words—"You first placed the Word of God in my hands; *you* first led me to the feet of Jesus, and now I will be your joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of God for ever and for ever!"

THE END.

37131 009 560 582

A Large Type Edition of
A CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED.

By RICHARD BAXTER. With Preface by Rev. J. C. RYLE, B.A.

Price Twopence.

Limp Cloth, 4d. ; Cloth Boards, 6d.

FOXES BOOK OF MARTYRS, for Twopence.

It contains 192 pages and Four Wood Engravings, and comprises the substance of Foxe's great work in a form suited for the Young.

Limp Cloth, 4d. ; Cloth Boards, 6d.

THE ANNALS OF THE POOR, for Twopence.

It includes "The Dairyman's Daughter," "The Young Cottager," "The Negro Servant," "The Cottage Conversation," and "A Visit to the Infirmary." By the Rev. LEIGH RICHMOND, M.A.

Limp Cloth, 4d. ; Cloth Boards, 6d.

THE HOLY WAR, for Twopence.

By JOHN BUNYAN. Similar in size and style to the above. Macaulay says that, "If the 'Pilgrim's Progress' did not exist, the 'Holy War' would be best allegory that ever was written."

Limp Cloth, 4d. ; Cloth Boards, 6d.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST, for Twopence.

Containing 192 pages, Five Woodcuts, Good Type. Written in a style suited for the Young.

Limp Cloth, 4d. ; Cloth Boards, 6d.

THE BOOK SOCIETY'S
**TWOPENNY EDITION OF BUNYAN'S
PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.**

Containing 256 pages, complete. Illustrated.

LONDON :
THE BOOK SOCIETY, 28, PATERNOSTER ROW.