The pope, hitherto mild, persuasive, and undecided, now arose in the majesty of his mighty name, and, as the successor of St. Peter, hurled those weapons which had been thunderbolts in the hands of the Gregories and the Innocents. From his papal throne, and with all the solemnity of God's appointed vicegerent, he denounced the daring monk of Wittemberg, and sentenced him to the wrath of God, and to the penalty of eternal fire. Luther was excommunicated by a papal bull, and his writings were condemned as heretical and damnable.

This was a dreadful sentence. Few had ever resisted it successfully, even monarchs themselves. Excommunication was still a fearful weapon, and used only in desperate circumstances It was used only as the last resort; for frequency would destroy its power. In the middle ages, this weapon was omnipotent; and the middle ages had but just passed away. No one could stand before that awful anathema which consigned him to the wrath of incensed and implacable Deity. Much as some professed to despise the sentence, still, when inflicted, it could not be borne, especially if accompanied with an interdict. Children were left unburied. The churches were closed. The rites of religion were suspended. A funereal shade was spread over society. The fears of hell haunted every imagination. No reason was strong enough to resist the sentence. No arm was sufficiently powerful to remove the curse. It hung over a guilty land. It doomed the unhappy offender, who was cursed, wherever he went, and in whatever work he was engaged.

But Luther was strong enough to resist it, and to despise it. He saw it was an imposition, which only barbarous and ignorant ages had permitted. Moreover, he perceived that there was now no alternative but victory or death; that, in the great contest in which he was engaged, retreat was infamy. Nor did he wish to retreat. He was fighting for oppressed humanity, and death even, in such a cause, was glory. He understood fully the nature and the consequence of the struggle. He perceived the greatness of the odds against him, in a worldly point of view. No man but a Luther would have been equal to it; no man, before him, ever had successfully rebelled against the pope. It is only in view of this circumstance, that his intrepidity can be appreciated.

What did the Saxon monk do, when the papal bull was published? He assembled the professors and students of the university, declared his solemn protest against the pope as Antichrist, and marched in procession to the gates of the Castle of Wittemberg, and there made a bonfire, and cast into it the bull which condemned him, the canon law, and some writings of the schoolmen, and then reëntered the city, breathing defiance against the whole power of the pope, glowing in the consciousness that the battle had commenced, to last as long as life, and perfectly secure that the victory would finally be on the side of truth. This was in 1520, on the 10th of December.

The attention of the whole nation was necessarily drawn to this open resistance; and the sympathy of the free thinking, the earnest, and the religious, was expressed for him. Never was popular interest more absorbing, in respect to his opinions, his fortunes, and his fate. The spirit of innovation became contagious, and pervaded the German mind. It demanded the serious attention of the emperor himself.

A great Diet of the empire was convened at Worms, and thither Luther was summoned by the temporal power. He had a safe-conduct, which even so powerful a prince as Charles V. durst not violate. In April, 1521, the reformer appeared before the collected dignitaries of the German empire, both spiritual and temporal, and was called upon to recant his opinions as heretical in the eyes of the church, and dangerous to the peace of the empire. Before the most august assembly in the world, without a trace of embarrassment, he made his defence, and refused to recant. "Unless," said he, "my errors can be demonstrated by texts from Scripture, I will not and cannot recant; for it is not safe for a man to go against his conscience. Here I am. I can do no otherwise. God help me! Amen."

This declaration satisfied his friends, though it did not satisfy the members of the diet. Luther was permitted to retire. He had gained the confidence of the nation. From that time, he was its idol, and the acknowledged leader of the greatest insurrection of human intelligence which modern times have seen. The great principles of the reformation were declared. The great hero of the Reformation had planted his cause upon a rock. And yet his

labors had but just commenced. Henceforth, his life was toil and vexation. New difficulties continually arose. New questions had to be continually settled. Luther, by his letters, was everywhere. He commenced the translation of the Scriptures; he wrote endless controversial tracts; his correspondence was unparalleled; his efforts as a preacher were prodigious. But he was equal to it all; was wonderfully adapted to his age and circumstances.

About this time commenced his voluntary imprisonment at Wartburg, among the Thuringian forests: he being probably conducted thither by the orders of the elector of Saxony. Here he was out of sight, but not out of mind; and his retirement, under the disguise of a knight, gave him leisure for literary labor. In the old Castle of Wartburg, a great part of the Scriptures was translated into that beautiful and simple version, which is still the standard of the German language.

While Luther was translating the Scriptures, in his retreat, Wittemberg was the scene of new commotions, pregnant with great results. There were many of the more zealous converts to the reformed doctrines, headed by Carlstadt, dean of the faculty of theology, who were not content with the progress which had been made, and who desired more sweeping and radical changes. Such a party ever exists in all reforms; for there are some persons who are always inclined to ultra and extravagant courses. Carlstadt was a type of such men. He was learned, sincere, and amiable, but did not know where to stop; and the experiment was now to be tried, whether it was possible to introduce a necessary reform, without annihilating also all the results of the labors of preceding generations. Carlstadt's mind was not well balanced, and to him the reformation was only a half measure, and a useless movement, unless all the external observances of religion and the whole economy of the church were destroyed. He abolished or desired to abolish, all priestly garments, all fasts and holydays, all pictures in the churches, and all emblematical ceremonies of every kind. He insisted upon closing all places of public amusement, the abolition of all religious communities, and the division of their possessions among the poor. He maintained that there was no need of learning, or of academic studies, and even went into the houses of the peasantry to seek explanation of difficult passages

of Scripture. For such innovations, the age was certainly not prepared, even had they been founded on reason; and the conservative mind of Luther was shocked at extravagances which served to disgust the whole Christian world, and jeopardize the cause in which he had embarked. So, against the entreaties of the elector, and in spite of the ban of the empire, he returned to Wittemberg, a small city, it was true, but a place to which had congregated the flower of the German youth. He resolved to oppose the movements of Carlstadt, even though opposition should destroy his influence. Especially did he declare against all violent measures to which the ultra reformers were inclined, knowing full well, that, if his cause were sullied with violence or fanaticism, all Christendom would unite to suppress it. His sermons are, at this time, (1522,) pervaded with a profound and conservative spirit, and also a spirit of conciliation and love, calculated to calm passions, and carry conviction to excited minds. His moderate counsels prevailed, the tumults were hushed, and order was restored. Carlstadt was silenced for a time; but a mind like his could not rest, especially on points where he had truth on his side. One of these was, in reference to the presence of Christ's body in the Eucharist, which Carlstadt totally denied. He taught "that the Lord's supper was purely symbolic, and was simply a pledge to believers of their redemption." But Luther saw, in every attempt to exhibit the symbolical import of the supper, only the danger of weakening the authority of Scripture, which was his stronghold, and became exceedingly tenacious on that point; carried *his* views to the extreme of literal interpretation, and never could emancipate himself from the doctrines of Rome respecting the eucharist. Carlstadt, finding himself persecuted at Wittemberg left the city, and, as soon as he was released from the presence of Luther, began to revive his former zeal against images also, and was the promoter of great disturbances. He at last sought refuge in Strasburg, and sacrificed fame, and friends, and bread to his honest convictions.

But, nevertheless, the views of Carlstadt found advocates, and his extravagances were copied with still greater zeal. Many pretended to special divine illumination — the great central principle of all fanaticism. Among these was Thomas Münzer, of Zwick-

au, mystical, ignorant, and conceited, but sincere and simple hearted. "Luther," said he, "has liberated men's consciences from the papal yoke, but has not led them in spirit towards God." Considering himself as called upon by a special revelation to bring men into greater spiritual liberty, he went about inflaming the popular mind, and raising discontents, and even inciting to a revolt. Religion now became mingled with politics, and social and political evils were violently resisted, under the garb of religion. An insurrection at last arose in the districts of the Black Forest, (1524,) near the sources of the Danube, and spread from Suabia to the Rhine provinces, until it became exceedingly formidable. Then commenced what is called the "peasants' war," which was only ended by the slaughter of fifty thousand people. As the causes of this war, after all, were chiefly political, the details belong to our chapter on political history. For this insurrection of the peasantry, however, Luther expressed great detestation; although he availed himself of it to lecture the princes of Germany on their duties as civil rulers.

The peasant war was scarcely ended, when Luther married Catharine Bora; and, as she was a nun, and he was a monk, the marriage gave universal scandal. But this marriage, which proved happy, was the signal of new reforms. Luther now emancipated himself from his monastic fetters, and lifted up his voice against the whole monastic system. Eight years had elapsed since he preached against indulgences. During these eight years, reform had been gradual, and had now advanced to the extreme limit it ever reached during the life of the reformer.

But, in another quarter, it sprang up with new force, and was carried to an extent not favored in Germany. It was in Switzerland that the greatest approximation was made to the forms, if not to the spirit, of primitive Christianity.

The great hero of this Swiss movement was Ulric Zwingle, the most interesting of all the reformers. He was born in 1484, and educated amid the mountains of his picturesque country, and, like Erasmus, Reuchlin, Luther, and Melancthon, had no aristocratic claims, except to the nobility of nature. But, though poor, he was well educated, and was a master of the scholastic philosophy and of all the learning of his age. Like Luther, he was passionately fond of music, and played the lute, the harp, the violin, the flute and the dulcimer. There was no more joyous spirit in all Switzerland than his. Every one loved his society, and honored his attainments, and admired his genius. Like Luther and Erasmus, he was disgusted with scholasticism, and regretted the time he had devoted to its study. He was ordained in 1506, by the bishop of Constance, and was settled in Zurich in 1518. At first, his life did not differ from that which the clergy generally led, being one of dissipation and pleasure. But he was studious, and became well acquainted with the fathers, and with the original Greek. Only gradually did light dawn upon him, and this in consequence of his study of the Scriptures, not in consequence of Luther's preaching. He had no tempests to withstand, such as shook the soul of the Saxon monk. Nor had he ever devoted himself with the same ardor to the established church. Nor was he so much interested on doctrinal points of faith. But he saw with equal clearness the corruptions of the church, and preached with equal zeal against indulgences and the usurpations of the popes. The reformation of morals was the great aim of his life. His preaching was practical and simple, and his doctrine was, that "religion consisted in trust in God, loving God, and innocence of life." Moreover, he took a deep interest in the political relations of his country, and was an enthusiast in liberty as well as in religion. To him the town of Zurich was indebted for its emancipation from the episcopal government of Constance, and also for a reformation in all the externals of the church. He inspired the citizens with that positive spirit of Protestantism, which afterwards characterized Calvin and the Puritans. He was too radical a reformer to suit Luther, although he sympathized with most of his theological opinions.

On one point, however, they differed; and this difference led to an acrimonious contest, quite disgraceful to Luther, and the greatest blot on his character, inasmuch as it developed, to an extraordinary degree, both obstinacy and dogmatism, and showed that he could not bear contradiction or opposition. The quarrel arose from a difference of views respecting the Lord's supper, Luther maintaining not exactly the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, but something approximating to it — even the omnipresence of

Christ's body in the sacred elements. He relinquished the doctrine of the continually repeated miracle, but substituted a universal miracle, wrought once for all. In his tenacity to the opinions of the schoolmen on this point, we see his conservative spirit; for he did not deny tradition, unless it was expressly contradicted by Scripture. He would have maintained the whole structure of the Latin church, had it not been disfigured by modern additions, plainly at variance with the Scriptures; and so profoundly was he attached to the traditions of the church, and to the whole church establishment, that he only emancipated himself by violent inward storms. But Zwingle had not this lively conception of the universal church, and was more radical in his sympathies. He took Carlstadt's view of the supper, that it was merely symbolic. Still he shrunk from a rupture with Luther, which, however, was unavoidable, considering Luther's views of the subject and his cast of mind. Luther rejected all offers of conciliation, and, as he considered it essential to salvation to believe in the real presence of Christ in the sacrament, he refused to acknowledge Zwingle as a brother.

Zwingle, nevertheless, continued his reforms, and sought to restore, what he conceived to be, the earliest forms in which Christianity had manifested itself. He designed to restore a worship purely spiritual. He rejected all rites and ceremonies, not expressly enjoined in the Bible. Luther insisted in retaining all that was not expressly forbidden. And this was the main point of distinction between them and their adherents.

But Zwingle contemplated political, as well as religious, changes, and, as early as 1527, two years before his conference with Luther at Marburg, had projected a league of all the reformers against the political authorities which opposed their progress. He combated the abuses of the state, as well as of the church. This opposition created great enemies against him among the cantons, with their different governments and alliances. He also secured enthusiastic friends, and, in all the cantons, there was a strong democratic party opposed to the existing oligarchies, which party, in Berne and Basle, St. Gall, Zurich, Appenzell, Schaffhausen, and Glarus, obtained the ascendency. This led to tumults and violence, and finally to civil war between the different cantons, those which

adhered to the old faith being assisted by Austria. Lucerne Uri Schwytz, Zug, Unterwalden took the lead against the reformed cantons, the foremost of which was Zurich, where Zwingle lived. Zurich was attacked. Zwingle, from impulses of patriotism and courage, issued forth from his house, and joined the standard of his countrymen, not as a chaplain, but as an armed warrior. This was his mistake. "They who take the sword shall perish with the sword." The intrepid and enlightened reformer was slain in 1531, and, with his death, expired the hopes of his party. The restoration of the Roman Catholic religion immediately commenced in Switzerland.

Luther, more wise than Zwingle, inasmuch as he abstained from politics, continued his labors in Germany. And they were immense. The burdens of his country rested on his shoulders. He was the dictator of the reformed party, and his word was received as law. Moreover, the party continually increased, and, from the support it received from some of the most powerful of the German princes, it became formidable, even in a political point of view. Nearly one half of Germany embraced the reformed faith.

The illustrious Charles V. had now, for some time, been emperor, and, in the prosecution of his conquests, found it necessary to secure the support of united Germany, especially since Germany was now invaded by the Turks. In order to secure this support, he found it necessary to make concessions in religion to his Protestant subjects. At the diet of Augsburg, (1530,) where there was the most brilliant assemblage of princes which had been for a long time seen in Germany, the celebrated confession of the faith of the Protestants was read. It was written by Melancthon, in both Latin and German, on the basis of the articles of Torgau, which Luther had prepared. The style was Melancthon's; the matter was Luther's. It was comprised in twenty-eight articles, of which twenty-one pertained to the faith of the Protestants — the name they assumed at the second diet of Spires, in 1529 — and the remaining seven recounted the errors and abuses of Rome It was subscribed by the Elector of Saxony, the Marquis of Brandenburg, the Duke of Lunenburg, the Landgrave of Hesse, the

Prince of Anhalt, and the deputies of the imperial cities Nuremberg and Reutlingen. But the Catholics had the ascendency in the diet, and the "Confession of Augsburg" was condemned. But the emperor did not venture on any decisive measures for the extirpation of the "heresy." He threatened and published edicts, but his menaces had but little force. Nevertheless, the Protestant princes assembled, first at Smalcalde, and afterwards at Frankfort, for an alliance of mutual defence, — the first effective union of free princes and states against their oppressors in modern Europe, — and laid the foundation of liberty of conscience. Hostilities, however, did not commence, since the emperor was desirous of uniting Germany against the Turks; and he therefore recalled his edicts of Worms and Augsburg against the Protestants, and made important concessions, and promised them undisturbed enjoyment of their religion. This was a great triumph to the Protestants, and as great a shock to the Papal power.

The Confession of Augsburg and the League of Smalcalde form an important era of Protestantism, since, by these, the reformed faith received its definite form, and was moreover guaranteed. The work for which Luther had been raised up was now, in the main, accomplished. His great message had been delivered and heard.

After the confirmation of his cause, his life was perplexed and anxious. He had not anticipated those civil commotions which he now saw, sooner or later, were inevitable. With the increase of his party was the decline of spirituality. Political considerations, also, with many, were more prominent than moral. Religion and politics were mingled together, not soon to be separated in the progress of reform. Moreover, the reformers differed upon many points among themselves. There was a lamentable want of harmony between the Germans and the Swiss. Luther had quarrelled with nearly every prominent person with whom he had been associated, except Melancthon, who yielded to him implicit obedience. But, above all, the Anabaptist disorders, which he detested, and which distracted the whole bishopric of Münster, oppressed and mortified him. Worn out with cares, labors, and vexations, which ever have disturbed the peace and alloyed the happiness of great

heroes, and from which no greatness is exempt, he died at Eisleben, in 1545, while on a visit to his native place in order to reconcile dissensions between the counts of Mansfeldt.

Luther's name is still reverenced in Germany, and, throughout all Protestant countries, he is regarded as the greatest man connected with the history of the church since the apostolic age. Others have been greater geniuses, others more learned, others more devout, and others more amiable and interesting; but none ever evinced greater intrepidity, or combined greater qualities of mind and heart. He had his faults: he was irritable, dogmatic, and abusive in his controversial writings. He had no toleration for those who differed from him — the fault of the age. But he was genial, joyous, friendly, and disinterested. His labors were gigantic; his sincerity unimpeached; his piety enlightened; his zeal unquenchable. Circumstances and the new ideas of his age, favored him, but he made himself master of those circumstances and ideas, and, what is more, worked out ideas of his own, which were in harmony with Christianity. The Reformation would have happened had there been no Luther, though at a less favorable time; but, of all the men of his age that the Reformation could least spare, Martin Luther stands preëminent. As the greatest of reformers, his name will be ever honored.

References. — The attention of the student is directed only to the most prominent and valuable works which treat of Luther and the Protestant reformation. All the works are too nunerous, even to be decimated. Allusion is made to those merely which are accessible and useful. Among them may be mentioned, as most important, Ranke's History of the Reformation; D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation; Michelet's Life of Luther; Audin's Life of Luther, a Catholic work, written with great spirit, but not much liberality; Stebbing's History of the Reformation; a Life of Luther, by Rev. Dr. Sears, a new work, written with great correctness and ability; Guizot's Lectures on Civilization Plank's Essay on the Consequences of the Reformation