

CHAPTER VII.

CHARLES V. AND THE REFORMATION.

FROM 1519 TO 1531.

CHARLES V. OF SPAIN.—HIS ELECTION AS EMPEROR OF GERMANY.—HIS CORONATION.—THE FIRST CONSTITUTION.—PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION.—THE POPE'S BULL AGAINST LUTHER.—HIS CONTEMPT FOR HIS HOLINESS.—THE DIET AT WORMS.—FREDERIC'S OBJECTION TO THE CONDEMNATION OF LUTHER BY THE DIET.—HE OBTAINS FOR LUTHER THE RIGHT OF DEFENSE.—LUTHER'S TRIUMPHAL MARCH TO THE TRIBUNAL.—CHARLES URGED TO VIOLATE HIS SAFE CONDUCT.—LUTHER'S PATMOS.—MARRIAGE OF SISTER CATHARINE BORA TO LUTHER.—TERRIBLE INSURRECTION.—THE HOLY LEAGUE.—THE PROTEST OF SPIRES.—CONFESSION OF AUGSBURG.—THE TWO CONFESSIONS.—COMPULSORY MEASURES.

CHARLES V. of Spain, as the nearest male heir, inherited from Maximilian the Austrian States. He was the grandson of the late emperor, son of Philip and of Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, and was born on the 24th of February, 1500. He had been carefully educated in the learning and accomplishments of the age, and particularly in the arts of war. At the death of his grandfather, Ferdinand, Charles, though but sixteen years of age, assumed the title of King of Spain, and though strongly opposed for a time, he grasped firmly and held securely the reins of government.

Joanna, his mother, was legally the sovereign, both by the laws of united Castile and Arragon, and by the testaments of Isabella and Ferdinand. But she was insane, and was sunk in such depths of melancholy as to be almost unconscious of the scenes which were transpiring around her. Two years had elapsed between the accession of Charles V. to the throne of Spain and the death of his grandfather, Maximilian. The young king, with wonderful energy of character, had, during

that time, established himself very firmly on the throne. Upon the death of Maximilian many claimants rose for the imperial throne. Henry VIII. of England and Francis of France, were prominent among the competitors. For six months all the arts of diplomacy were exhausted by the various candidates, and Charles of Spain won the prize. On the 28th of June, 1519, he was unanimously elected Emperor of Germany. The youthful sovereign, who was but nineteen years of age, was at Barcelona when he received the first intelligence of his election. He had sufficient strength of character to avoid the slightest appearance of exultation, but received the announcement with dignity and gravity far above his years.

The Spaniards were exceedingly excited and alarmed by the news. They feared that their young sovereign, of whom they had already begun to be proud, would leave Spain to establish his court in the German empire, and they should thus be left, as a distant province, to the government of a viceroy. The king was consequently flooded with petitions, from all parts of his dominions, not to accept the imperial crown. But Charles was as ambitious as his grandfather, Maximilian, whose foresight and maneuvering had set in train those influences which had elevated him to the imperial dignity.

Soon a solemn embassy arrived, and, with the customary pomp, proffered to Charles the crown which so many had coveted. Charles accepted the office, and made immediate preparations, notwithstanding the increasing clamor of his subjects, to go to Germany for his coronation. Intrusting the government of Spain during his absence to officers in whom he reposed confidence, he embarked on shipboard, and landing first at Dover in England, made a visit of four days to Henry VIII. He then continued his voyage to the Netherlands; proceeding thence to Aix-la-Chapelle, he was crowned on the 20th of October, 1520, with magnificence far surpassing that of any of his predecessors. Thus Charles V., when but twenty years of age, was the King of Spain and the crowned

Emperor of Germany. It is a great mistake to suppose that youthful precocity is one of the innovations of modern times.

In the changes of the political kaleidoscope, Austria had now become a part of Spain, or rather a prince of Austrian descent, a lineal heir of the house of Hapsburg, had inherited the dominion of Spain, the most extensive monarchy, in its continental domains and its colonial possessions, then upon the globe. The Germanic confederation at this time made a decided step in advance. Hitherto the emperors, when crowned, had made a sort of verbal promise to administer the government in accordance with the laws and customs of the several states. They were, however, apprehensive that the new emperor, availing himself of the vast power which he possessed independently of the imperial crown, might, by gradual encroachments, defraud them of their rights. A sort of constitution was accordingly drawn up, consisting of thirty-six articles, defining quite minutely the laws, customs and privileges of the empire, which constitution Charles was required to sign before his coronation.

Charles presided in person over his first diét which he had convened at Worms on the 6th of January, 1521. The theological and political war of the Reformation was now agitating all Germany, and raging with the utmost violence. Luther had torn the veil from the corruptions of papacy, and was exhibiting to astonished Europe the enormous aggression and the unbridled licentiousness of pontifical power. Letter succeeded letter, and pamphlet pamphlet, and they fell upon the decaying hierarchy like shot and shell upon the walls of a fortress already crumbling and tottering through age.

On the 15th of July, 1520, three months before the coronation of Charles V., the pope issued his world-renowned bull against the intrepid monk. He condemned Luther as a heretic, forbade the reading of his writings, excommunicated him if he did not retract within sixty days, and all princes and states were commanded, under pain of incurring the same censure,

to seize his person and punish him and his adherents. Many were overawed by these menaces of the holy father, who held the keys of heaven and of hell. The fate of Luther was considered sealed. His works were publicly burned in several cities.

Luther, undaunted, replied with blow for blow. He declared the pope to be antichrist, renounced all obedience to him, detailed with scathing severity the conduct of corrupt pontiffs, and called upon the whole nation to renounce all allegiance to the scandalous court of Rome. To cap the climax of his contempt and defiance, he, on the 10th of December, 1520, not two months after the crowning of Charles V., led his admiring followers, the professors and students of the university of Wittemberg, in procession to the eastern gate of the city, where, in the presence of a vast concourse, he committed the papal bull to the flames, exclaiming, in the words of Ezekiel, "Because thou hast troubled the Holy One of God, let eternal fire consume thee." This dauntless spirit of the reformer inspired his disciples throughout Germany with new courage, and in many other cities the pope's bull of excommunication was burned with expressions of indignation and contempt.

Such was the state of this great religious controversy when Charles V. held his first diet at Worms. The pope, wielding all the energies of religious fanaticism, and with immense temporal revenues at his disposal, with ecclesiastics, officers of his spiritual court, scattered all over Europe, who exercised almost a supernatural power over the minds of the benighted masses, was still perhaps the most formidable power in Europe. The new emperor, with immense schemes of ambition opening before his youthful and ardent mind, and with no principles of heartfelt piety to incline him to seek and love the truth, as a matter of course sought the favor of the imperial pontiff, and was not at all disposed to espouse the cause of the obscure monk.

Charles, therefore, received courteously the legates of the pontiff at the diet, gave them a friendly hearing as they inveighed against the heresy of Luther, and proposed that the diet should also condemn the reformer. Fortunately for Luther he was a subject of the electorate of Saxony, and neither pope nor emperor could touch him but through the elector. Frederic, the Duke of Saxony, one of the electors of the empire, governed a territory of nearly fifteen thousand square miles, more than twice as large as the State of Massachusetts, and containing nearly three millions of inhabitants. The duchy has since passed through many changes and dismemberments, but in the early part of the sixteenth century the Elector of Saxony was one of the most powerful princes of the German empire. Frederic was not disposed to surrender his subject untried and uncondemned to the discipline of the Roman pontiff. He accordingly objected to this summary condemnation of Luther, and declared that before judgment was pronounced, the accused should be heard in his own defense. Charles, who was by no means aware how extensively the opinions of Luther had been circulated and received, was surprised to find many nobles, each emboldened by the rest, rise in the diet and denounce, in terms of ever-increasing severity, the exactions and the arrogance of the court of Rome.

Notwithstanding the remonstrances of the pope's legates, the emperor found it necessary to yield to the demands of the diet, and to allow Luther the privilege of being heard, though he avowed to the friends of the pope that Luther should not be permitted to make any defense, but should only have an opportunity to confess his heresy and implore forgiveness. Worms, where the diet was in session, on the west banks of the Rhine, was not within the territories of the Elector of Saxony, and consequently the emperor, in sending a summons to Luther to present himself before the diet, sent, also, a safe conduct. With alacrity the bold reformer obeyed the summons. From Wittemberg, where Luther was both professor in the univer-

sity and also pastor of a church, to Worms, was a distance of nearly three hundred miles. But the journey of the reformer through all of this long road was almost like a triumphal procession. Crowds gathered everywhere to behold the man who had dared to bid defiance to the terrors of that spiritual power before which the haughtiest monarchs had trembled. The people had read the writings of Luther, and justly regarded him as the advocate of civil and religious liberty. The nobles, who had often been humiliated by the arrogance of the pontiff, admired a man who was bringing a new power into the field for their disenthralment.

When Luther had arrived within three miles of Worms, accompanied by a few friends and the imperial herald who had summoned him, he was met by a procession of two thousand persons, who had come from the city to form his escort. Some friends in the city sent him a warning that he could not rely upon the protection of his *safe conduct*, that he would probably be perfidiously arrested, and they intreated him to retire immediately again to Saxony. Luther made the memorable reply,

"I will go to Worms, if as many devils meet me there as there are tiles upon the roofs of the houses."

The emperor was astonished to find that greater crowds were assembled, and greater enthusiasm was displayed in witnessing the entrance of the monk of Wittemberg, than had greeted the imperial entrance to the city.

It was indeed an august assemblage before which Luther was arrayed. The emperor himself presided, sustained by his brother, the Archduke Ferdinand. Six electors, twenty-four dukes, seven margraves, thirty bishops and prelates, and an uncounted number of princes, counts, lords and ambassadors filled the spacious hall. It was the 18th of April, 1521. His speech, fearless, dignified, eloquent, unanswerable, occupied two hours. He closed with the noble words,

"Let me be refuted and convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by the clearest arguments; otherwise I can not

and will not recant; for it is neither safe nor expedient to act against conscience. Here I take my stand. I can do no otherwise, so help me God, Amen."

In this sublime moral conflict Luther came off the undisputed conqueror. The legates of the pope, exasperated at his triumph, intreated the emperor to arrest him, in defiance of his word of honor pledged for his safety. Charles rejected the infamous proposal with disdain. Still he was greatly annoyed at so serious a schism in the Church, which threatened to alienate from him the patronage of the pope. It was evident that Luther was too strongly entrenched in the hearts of the Germans, for the youthful emperor, whose crown was not yet warm upon his brow, and who was almost a stranger in Germany, to undertake to crush him. To appease the pope he drew up an apologetic declaration, in which he said, in terms which do not honor his memory,

"Descended as I am from the Christian emperors of Germany, the Catholic kings of Spain, and from the archdukes of Austria and the Dukes of Burgundy, all of whom have preserved, to the last moment of their lives, their fidelity to the Church, and have always been the defenders and protectors of the Catholic faith, its decrees, ceremonies and usages, I have been, am still, and will ever be devoted to those Christian doctrines, and the constitution of the Church which they have left to me as a sacred inheritance. And as it is evident that a simple monk has advanced opinions contrary to the sentiments of all Christians, past and present, I am firmly determined to wipe away the reproach which a toleration of such errors would cast on Germany, and to employ all my powers and resources, my body, my blood, my life, and even my soul, in checking the progress of this sacrilegious doctrine. I will not, therefore, permit Luther to enter into any further explanation, and will instantly dismiss and afterward treat him as a heretic. But I can not violate my safe conduct, but will cause him to be conducted safely back to Wittemberg."

The emperor now attempted to accomplish by intrigue that which he could not attain by authority of force. He held a private interview with the reformer, and endeavored, by all those arts at the disposal of an emperor, to influence Luther to a recantation. Failing utterly in this, he delayed further operations for a month, until many of the diet, including the Elector of Saxony and other powerful friends of Luther, had retired. He then, having carefully retained those who would be obsequious to his will, caused a decree to be enacted, as if it were the unanimous sentiment of the diet, that Luther was a heretic; confirmed the sentence of the pope, and pronounced the ban of the empire against all who should countenance or protect him.

But Luther, on the 26th of May, had left Worms on his return to Wittemberg. When he had passed over about half the distance, his friend and admirer, Frederic of Saxony, conscious of the imminent peril which hung over the intrepid monk, sent a troop of masked horsemen who seized him and conveyed him to the castle of Wartburg, where Frederic kept him safely concealed for nine months, not allowing even his friends to know the place of his concealment. Luther, acquiescing in the prudence of this measure, called this retreat his *Patmos*, and devoted himself most assiduously to the study of the Scriptures, and commenced his most admirable translation of the Bible into the German language, a work which has contributed vastly more than all others to disseminate the principles of the Reformation throughout Germany.

It will be remembered that Maximilian's son Ferdinand, who was brother to Charles V., had married Anne, daughter of Ladislaus, King of Hungary and Bohemia. Disturbances in Spain rendered it necessary for the emperor to leave Germany, and for eight years his attention was almost constantly occupied by wars and intrigues in southern Europe. Ferdinand was invested with the government of the Austrian States. In the year 1521, Leo X. died, and Adrian, who seems to have

been truly a conscientious Christian man, assumed the tiara. He saw the deep corruptions of the Church, confessed them openly, mourned over them and declared that the Church needed a thorough reformation.

This admission, of course, wonderfully strengthened the Lutheran party. The diet, meeting soon after, drew up a list of a hundred grievances, which they intreated the pope to reform, declaring that Germany could no longer endure them. They declared that Luther had opened the eyes of the people to these corruptions, and that they would not suffer the edicts of the diet of Worms to be enforced. Ferdinand of Austria, entering into the views of his brother, was anxious to arrest the progress of the new ideas, now spreading with great rapidity, and he entered—instructed by a legate, Campegio, from the pope—into an engagement with the Duke of Bavaria, and most of the German bishops, to carry the edict of Worms into effect.

Frederic, the Elector of Saxony, died in 1525, but he was succeeded by his brother John the Constant, who cordially embraced and publicly avowed the doctrines of the Reformation; and Luther, in July of this year, gave the last signal proof of his entire emancipation from the superstitions of the papacy by marrying Catharine Bora, a noble lady who, having espoused his views, had left the nunnery where she had been an inmate. It is impossible for one now to conceive the impression which was produced in Catholic Europe by the marriage of a priest and a nun.

Many of the German princes now followed the example of John of Saxony, and openly avowed their faith in the Lutheran doctrines. In the Austrian States, notwithstanding all Ferdinand's efforts to the contrary, the new faith steadily spread, commanding the assent of the most virtuous and the most intelligent. Many of the nobles avowed themselves Lutherans, as did even some of the professors in the university at Vienna. The vital questions at issue, taking hold, as they

did, of the deepest emotions of the soul and the daily habits of life, roused the general mind to the most intense activity. The bitterest hostility sprung up between the two parties, and many persons, without piety and without judgment, threw off the superstitions of the papacy, only to adopt other superstitions equally revolting. The sect of Anabaptists rose, abjuring all civil as well as all religious authority, claiming to be the elect of God, advocating a community of goods and of wives, and discarding all restraint. They roused the ignorant peasantry, and easily showed them that they were suffering as much injustice from feudal lords as from papal bishops. It was the breaking out of the French Revolution on a small scale. Germany was desolated by infuriate bands, demolishing alike the castles of the nobles and the palaces of the bishops, and sparing neither age nor sex in their indiscriminate slaughter.

The insurrection was so terrible, that both Lutherans and papists united to quell it; and so fierce were these fanatics, that a hundred thousand perished on fields of blood before the rebellion was quelled. These outrages were, of course, by the Catholics regarded as the legitimate results of the new doctrines, and it surely can not be denied that they sprung from them. The fire which glows on the hearth may consume the dwelling. But Luther and his friends assailed the Anabaptists with every weapon they could wield. The Catholics formed powerful combinations to arrest the spread of evangelical views. The reformers organized combinations equally powerful to diffuse those opinions, which they were sure involved the welfare of the world.

Charles V., having somewhat allayed the troubles which harassed him in southern Europe, now turned his attention to Germany, and resolved, with a strong hand, to suppress the religious agitation. In a letter to the German States he very peremptorily announced his determination, declaring that he would exterminate the errors of Luther, exhorting them to

resist all attacks against the ancient usages of the Church, and expressing to each of the Catholic princes his earnest approval of their conduct.

Germany was now threatened with civil war. The Catholics demanded the enforcement of the edict of Worms. The reformers demanded perfect toleration—that every man should enjoy freedom of opinion and of worship. A new war in Italy perhaps prevented this appeal to arms, as Charles V. found himself involved in new difficulties which engrossed all his energies. Ferdinand found the Austrian States so divided by this controversy, that it became necessary for him to assume some degree of impartiality, and to submit to something like toleration. A new pope, Clement VII., succeeded the short reign of Adrian, and all the ambition, intrigue and corruption which had hitherto marked the course of the court of Rome, resumed their sway. The pope formed the celebrated Holy League to arrest the progress of the new opinions; and this led all the princes of the empire, who had espoused the Lutheran doctrines, more openly and cordially to combine in self-defense. In every country in Europe the doctrines of the reformer spread rapidly, and the papal throne was shaken to its base.

Charles V., whose arms were successful in southern Europe, and whose power was daily increasing, was still very desirous of restoring quiet to Europe by reëstablishing the supremacy of the papal Church, and crushing out dissent. He accordingly convened another diet at Spire, the capital of Rhenish Bavaria, on the 15th of March, 1529. As the emperor was detained in Italy, his brother Ferdinand presided. The diet was of course divided, but the majority passed very stringent resolutions against the Reformation. It was enacted that the edict of Worms should be enforced; that the mass should be reëstablished wherever it had been abolished; and that preachers should promulgate no new doctrines. The minority entered their protest. They urged that the mass had

been clearly proved to be contrary to the Word of God; that the Scriptures were the only certain rule of life; and declared their resolution to maintain the truths of the Old and New Testaments, regardless of traditions. This *Protest* was sustained by powerful names—John, Elector of Saxony; George, Margrave of Brandenburg; two Dukes of Brunswick; the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel; the Prince of Anhalt, and fourteen imperial cities, to which were soon added ten more. Nothing can more decisively show than this the wonderful progress which the Reformation in so short a time had made. From this Protest the reformers received the name of Protestants, which they have since retained.

The emperor, flushed with success, now resolved, with new energy, to assail the principles of the Reformation. Leaving Spain he went to Italy, and met the pope, Clement VII., at Bologna, in February, 1530. The pope and the emperor held many long and private interviews. What they said no one knows. But Charles V., who was eminently a sagacious man, became convinced that the difficulty had become far too serious to be easily healed, that men of such power had embraced the Lutheran doctrines that it was expedient to change the tone of menace into one of respect and conciliation. He accordingly issued a call for another diet to meet in April, 1530, at the city of Augsburg in Bavaria.

“I have convened,” he wrote, “this assembly to consider the difference of opinion on the subject of religion. It is my intention to hear both parties with candor and charity, to examine their respective arguments, to correct and reform what requires to be corrected and reformed, that the truth being known, and harmony established, there may, in future, be only one pure and simple faith, and, as all are disciples of the same Jesus, all may form one and the same Church.”

These fair words, however, only excited the suspicions of the Protestants, which suspicions subsequent events proved to be well founded. The emperor entered Augsburg in great

state, and immediately assumed a dictatorial air, requiring the diet to attend high mass with him, and to take part in the procession of the host.

"I will rather," said the Marquis of Brandenburg to the emperor; "instantly offer my head to the executioner, than renounce the gospel and approve idolatry, Christ did not institute the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be carried in pomp through the streets, nor to be adored by the people. He said, 'Take, eat;' but never said, 'Put this sacrament into a vase, carry it publicly in triumph, and let the people prostrate themselves before it.'"

The Protestants, availing themselves of the emperor's declaration that it was his intention to hear the sentiments of all, drew up a confession of their faith, which they presented to the emperor in German and in Latin. This celebrated creed is known in history as the *Confession of Augsburg*. The emperor was quite embarrassed by this document, as he was well aware of the argumentative powers of the reformers, and feared that the document, attaining celebrity, and being read eagerly all over the empire, would only multiply converts to their views. At first he refused to allow it to be read. But finding that this only created commotion which would add celebrity to the confession, he adjourned the diet to a small chapel where but two hundred could be convened. When the Chancellor of Saxony rose to read the confession, the emperor commanded that he should read the Latin copy, a language which but few of the Germans understood.

"Sire," said the chancellor, "we are now on German ground. I trust that your majesty will not order the apology of our faith, which ought to be made as public as possible, to be read in a language not understood by the Germans."

The emperor was compelled to yield to so reasonable a request. The adjacent apartments, and the court-yard of the palace, were all filled with an eager crowd. The chancellor read the creed in a voice so clear and loud that the whole

multitude could hear. The emperor was very uneasy, and at the close of the reading, which occupied two hours, took both the Latin and the German copies, and requested that the confession should not be published without his consent. Luther and Melancthon drew up this celebrated document. Melancthon was an exceedingly mild and amiable man, and such a lover of peace that he would perhaps do a little violence to his own conscience in the attempt to conciliate those from whom he was constrained to differ. Luther, on the contrary, was a man of great force, decision and fearlessness, who would speak the truth in the plainest terms, without softening a phrase to conciliate either friend or foe. The Confession of Augsburg being the joint production of both Melancthon and Luther, did not *exactly* suit either. It was a little too uncompromising for Melancthon, a little too pliant and yielding for Luther. Melancthon soon after took the confession and changed it to bring it into more entire accordance with his spirit. Hence a division which, in oblivion of its origin, has continued to the present day. Those who adhered to the original document which was presented to the emperor, were called Lutherans; those who adopted the confession as softened by Melancthon, were called German Reformed.

The emperor now threw off the mask, and carrying with him the majority of the diet, issued a decree of intolerance and menace, in which he declared that all the ceremonies, doctrines and usages of the papal church, without exception, were to be reëstablished, married priests deposed, suppressed convents restored, and every innovation, of whatever kind, to be revoked. All who opposed this decree were to be exposed to the ban of the empire, with all its pains and penalties.

This was indeed an appalling measure. Recantation or war was the only alternative. Charles, being still much occupied by the affairs of his vast kingdom of Spain, with all its ambitions and wars, needed a coadjutor in the government of Germany, as serious trouble was evidently near at hand. He