

## Church History.

(From the Advent Herald, 1846.)

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION.  
ABRIDGED FROM D'AUBIGNE.

(Continued.)

The interest that Charles the Fifth showed in listening to the Confession seems doubtful. According to some, he endeavoured to understand that foreign language; according to others, he fell asleep. It is easy to reconcile these contradictory testimonies.

When the reading was finished, Chancellor Bruck, with the two copies in his hand, advanced towards the Emperor's secretary and presented them to him. Charles the Fifth, who was wide awake at this moment, himself took the two Confessions, handed the German copy, considered as official, to the Elector of Mentz, and kept the Latin one for himself. He then made reply to the Elector of Saxony and to his allies that he had graciously heard their confession; but as this affair was one of extreme importance, he required time to deliberate upon it.

The joy with which the Protestants were filled shone in their eyes. God had been with them; and they saw that the striking act which had so recently been accomplished, imposed on the obligation of confession the truth with unmovable perseverance. "I thrill with joy," wrote Luther, "that my life was cast in an epoch in which Christ is publicly exalted by such illustrious confessors, and in so glorious an assembly." The whole Evangelical Church, excited and renovated by this public confession of its representatives, was then more intimately united to its divine Chief, and baptised with a new baptism. "Since the apostolic age," said they (these are the words of a contemporary), "there has never been a greater work, or a more magnificent confession."

The Emperor, having descended from his throne, approached the Protestant princes, and begged them in a low tone not to publish the Confession; they acceded to his request, and every one withdrew.

The Romanists had expected nothing like this. Instead of a hateful controversy, they had heard a striking confession of Jesus Christ; the most hostile minds were consequently disarmed. "We would not for a great deal," was the remark on every side, "have missed being present at this reading." The effect was so prompt, that for an instant the cause was thought to be definitely gained. The bishops themselves imposed silence on the sophisms and clamors of the Fabers and the Ecks. "All that the Lutherans have said is true," exclaimed the Bishop of Augsburg; "we cannot deny it."—"Well doctor," said the Duke of Bavaria to Eck, in a reproachful tone, "you had given me a very different idea of this doctrine and of this affair." This was the general cry according to the sophists, as they called them, were embarrassed. "But, after all," said the Duke of Bavaria to them, "can you refute by sound reasons the Confession made by the Elector and his allies?"—"With the writings of the Apostles and Prophets—no!" replied Eck; "but with those of the Fathers and of the Councils—yes!" "I understand," quickly replied the Duke; "I understand. The Lutherans, according to you, are in scripture; and we are outside."

The impression produced in other countries by the Confession was perhaps still greater. Charles sent copies to all the courts; it was translated into French, Italian, and even into Spanish and Portuguese; it circulated through all Europe, and thus accomplish what Luther had said: "Our Confession will penetrate into every court, and the sound thereof will go through the whole earth." It destroyed the prejudices that had been entertained, gave Europe a sounder idea of the Reformation, and produced the most distant countries to receive the seeds of the Gospel.

Rome, bewildered for a moment by the blow that had struck her, rose up again with energy. "I stay with the mother," exclaimed the Bishop of Wurtzburg, meaning by it the Church of Rome; "the mother, the mother!" "My lord," wittily replied Brenz, "pray, do not, for the mother, forget either the Father or the Son!"—"Well! I grant it," replied the Archbishop of Salzburg to one of his friends, "I also should desire the communion in both kinds, the marriage of priests, the reformation of the Mass, liberty as regards food, and other traditions. . . . But that it should be a monk, a

poor monk, who presumes to reform us all, is what we cannot tolerate." "I should have no objection," said another bishop, "for Divine worship to be celebrated every where as it is at Wittenberg; but we can never consent that this new doctrine should issue from such a corner." And Melancthon insisting with the Archbishop of Salzburg on the necessity of a reform of the clergy: "Well! and how can you wish to reform us?" said the latter abruptly: "we priests have always been good for nothing." This is one of the most ingenuous confessions that the Reformation has torn from the priests. Every day fanatical monks and doctors, brimful of sophisms, were seen arriving at Augsburg, who endeavored to inflame the hatred of the Emperor and of the princes.

What reply shall be made to the confession? was the question put by Charles V. to the Papal senators. "Let us beware," said the Papists, "of discussing our adversaries' reasons, and let us be content with executing the edict of Worms against the Lutherans, and with constraining them by arms." Others said, "Let us submit the confession to the examination of impartial judges;" and others were desirous that certain doctors should compose a refutation. Says D'Aubigne:—

The debate was very animated; the mild and the violent, the politic and the fanatical, took a decided course in the assembly. George of Saxony and Joachim of Brandenburg showed themselves the most inveterate, and surpassed in this respect even the ecclesiastical princes. "A certain clown, whom you know well, is pushing them all from behind," wrote Melancthon to Luther; "and certain hypocritical theologians hold the torch and lead the whole band." This clown was doubtless Duke George. Even the Princes of Bavaria, whom the Confession had staggered at first, immediately rallied around the chiefs of the Roman party. "If there is any fighting against the Lutherans," said Count Felix of Werdenburg, "I gratuitously offer my sword, and I swear never to return it to its scabbard until it has overthrown the stronghold of Luther." This nobleman died suddenly a few days after, from the consequences of his intemperance. Then the moderate men again interfered: "The Lutherans attack no one article of the faith," said the Bishop of Augsburg; let us come to an arrangement with them; and to obtain peace, let us concede to them the sacrament in both kinds and the marriage of priests. I would even yield more, if it were necessary." Upon this great cries arose: "He is a Lutheran," they exclaimed, "and you will see that he is fully prepared to sacrifice even the private masses!" "The masses! we must not even think of it," remarked some with an ironical smile; "Rome will never give them up, for it is they which maintain her cardinals and her courtiers, with their luxury and their kitchens." The Archbishop of Salzburg and the Elector of Brandenburg replied with great violence to the motion of the Bishop of Augsburg. "The Lutherans," said they abruptly, "have laid before us a Confession written with black ink on white paper. Well! If I were Emperor, I would answer them with red ink."—"Sirs," quickly replied the Bishop of Augsburg, "take care that the red letters do not fly in your faces!" The Elector of Mentz was compelled to interfere and calm the speakers.

It was finally ordered that a refutation of the evangelical doctrine should be immediately drawn up by Romish theologians; and twenty of the most bitter enemies of the Protestants were commissioned to reply to Melancthon. They set to work, not to refute the Confession, but to brand it. Luther wrote to the Protestants that the answer of the Papists would be: "The Fathers, the Fathers, the Fathers; the Church, the Church, the Church; usage, custom: but of the Scriptures—nothing!" "Then the Emperor, supported by the testimony of these arbiters will pronounce against you; and then you will hear boastings from all sides that will ascend up to heaven, and threats that will descend even to hell."

The commission charged to refute the Confession met twice a day, and each of the theologians who composed it added to it his refutation and his hatred.

On the 13th July the work was finished. "Eck with his band," said Melancthon, "transmitted it to the Emperor. Great was the astonishment of this prince and his ministers at seeing a work of two hundred and eighty pages filled with abuse.

"Bad workmen lose much wood," said Luther, "and impious writers soil much paper." This was not all: to the Refutation were subjoined eight appendices on the heresies that Melancthon had dissembled (as they said), and wherein they exposed the contradictions and "the horrible sects" to which Lutherism had given birth. Lastly, not confining themselves to this official answer, the Romish theologians, who saw the sun of power shining upon them, filled Augsburg with insolent and abusive pamphlets.

There was but one opinion on the Papist Refutation; it was found confused, violent, thirsting for blood. Charles the Fifth had too much good taste not to perceive the difference that existed between the coarse work and the noble dignity of Melancthon's Confession. He rolled, handled, crushed, and so damaged the 280 pages of his doctors, that when he returned them two days after, says Spalatin, there was not more than twelve entire. Charles would have been ashamed to have such a pamphlet read in the diet, and he required, in consequence, that it should be drawn up anew, shorter and more moderate. That was not easy, "for the adversaries, confused and stupified," says Brenz, "by the noble simplicity of the Evangelical Confession, neither knew where to begin nor where to end; they accordingly took nearly three weeks to do the work over again."

The next attempt of the Papists was to take each of the Protestant princes separately, and by smooth words and fair speeches, persuade them to "give up" every thing that was essential in the articles of their faith. To the Margrave of Brandenburg the Papal princes said: "Abandon this new faith, and return to that which existed a century ago. If you do so, there are no favors that you may not expect from the Emperor; if not dread his anger." To the other princes similar propositions were made; but all to no effect. "Return to the Church," was the cry from every side, "which means," interrupted the Strasburgers, "let us put the bit in your mouths, that we may lead you as we please." John, the Elector of Saxony, if he would not submit, was threatened with expulsion from his states. After much mutual anguish he said, "I must either renounce God or the world. Well! my choice is not doubtful. It is God who made me an elector—me who was not worthy of it. I fling myself into his arms and let him do with me what shall seem good to him." When resolved to lose every thing, he became free, happy, and tranquil. The Protestant princes, all remained unshaken. (To be continued.)

## Religious Miscellany.

## THE BIBLE AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST.

What a blessing to be born in a Protestant land, and how thankful should English children be, that they can read their Bibles without the fear of a "priest" taking them away!

I must tell my little readers what a *colporteur* is, as I shall have to mention one several times. The members of the Bible Society in France, pay men to carry cheap Bibles and Testaments about the country to sell, and these men are called *colporteurs*.

Well, not long since, as one of these *colporteurs* was travelling through the town of C—, in the north of France, he stopped at a poor-looking cottage, and showed the woman his books. She was so astonished to see such nicely bound books so cheap, that she was tempted to buy a New Testament for 5d. The *colporteur* told her it was God's own word, begged her to read it every day, and left the cottage, offering up a mental prayer that God would bless his word to the poor woman's soul.—Some weeks passed away, and the *colporteur* again travelled through the same town. He stopped at the poor woman's cottage, and the first words that then greeted his ears were, "May the Lord bless you, dear Sir, for having sold me that precious book: I have indeed found comfort there." The *colporteur* sat down, and after some conversation with the woman, she told him she had always been in the habit of confessing her sins to a priest every fortnight, and the last time she went to the confessional, she told the priest what book she had been reading; whereupon he became very angry, and stamping with great noise, desired her to bring the book to him, or to burn it, for it was a bad book, and would do her harm to read it. Here