

# A Man Named Martin

## Part 1: The Man

### Session Five

#### Edict of Worms (1521)

[Text of the Edict of Worms](#): After a brief introduction, this link presents the full Edict of Charles V.

[History of the Wartburg](#): This page gives a brief history of the Wartburg Castle, from its foundation in 1067 to its placement on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage list.

[How We Got the Bible](#): Dr. Paul Maier hosts this **Men's NetWork** Bible study, which investigates the writing of the Bible. The final session discusses the sacrifices people made to translate the Bible into English.

#### Extreme Reformers

[Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt](#): This Wittenberg pastor pushed the Reformation to such extremes it finally drew Luther out of the safety of the Wartburg.

[Luther's Reaction to the Changes in Wittenberg](#): This video from DELTO (Distance Education Leading to Ordination) by Dr. Paul Robinson discusses Luther's reaction to the overreaching changes of Karlstadt in Wittenberg.

[Knights' Revolt and Great Peasants' War](#): The Reformation drew out two great revolts—first the knights, then the peasants.

[Thomas Muentzer](#): This *Frontline* article describes how Thomas Muentzer went from Luther's protégé to leader of the Peasant War.

[Attitudes Toward the Use of Force and Violence](#): Dr. Ralph L. Moellering explores these attitudes in Thomas Muentzer, Menno Simons, and Martin Luther.

[Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants](#): Martin Luther is often criticized for having written this letter supporting governmental action against the peasants.

#### The German Mass

[The German Mass and Order of Divine Service](#): In January 1526, Luther wrote about the German Mass.

[Luther and Music](#): In this *Concordia Theological Quarterly* article (January 1984), Daniel Reuning describes Luther's contributions to Lutheran worship and his thoughts on the relation between music and God's Word.

[Luther and the Church's Song](#): In this *For the Life of the World* article (January 2004), Rev. Dr. Paul J. Grime puts Luther's hymn-writing in context.

[Christmas in the Land of Luther](#): Dr. Oswald Hoffmann preaches a special Christmas message from Germany on December 19, 1982, sharing the way Luther taught and preached about the significance of Christ's coming at Christmas.

## Parish Visitations

[Visitations begin in Saxony](#): This article describes the parish visitations that led to Luther writing his *Large-* and *Small Catechisms*.

[The Saxon Visitations \(1528\): Insights for Contemporary Lutheran Church Life](#): Dr. John Pless examines the reasons for Luther's visitation of the Saxon congregations, including quotations from Luther and John the Steadfast.

[Martin Luther's Small Catechism](#)

[Martin Luther's Large Catechism](#)

## Presentation of the Augsburg Confession

[Historical Context of the Augsburg Confession](#): Dr. Klaus Detlev Schulz explains how the *Augsburg Confession* came about.

[Philip Melanchthon: Confessor of the Faith](#): This *Lutheran Witness* article (February 2, 2010) by Dr. Robert Kolb examines the tension-filled situation when the German Empire assembled in Augsburg and Philip Melanchthon presented the confession of the Lutheran princes.

[Luther's Contribution to the Augsburg Confession](#): This article by Dr. Eugene F. Klug examines Luther's writings, which guided Philip Melanchthon's writing of the *Augsburg Confession*.

## The Lutheran Princes

[Germany During the Reformation](#): Beginning in the third section of this article ("The Protestants"), the author discusses the conflict between Emperor Charles V and the Lutheran princes.

[The Protest of the Princes](#): This article gives a brief history; it then includes the text of the Lutheran princes' protest, from which the term "Protestant" came.

## Marburg Colloquy

[Ulrich Zwingli](#): This article gives a history of Ulrich Zwingli.

[The Evangelical Debate Over the Person of Christ in the 16th Century: Luther and Zwingli at Marburg \(1529\)](#): In this article, Dr. Cameron A. MacKenzie discusses the debate between Luther and Zwingli at Marburg.

[The Presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar According to Luther](#): In this *Concordia Theological Monthly* article, Norman Nagel discusses Luther's side of the debate with Zwingli.

[Luther and the War Against the Turks](#): As Suleiman II and his Turkish armies threatened Vienna in Austria as well as the Holy Roman Empire, Luther was asked to respond to the threat. This *Concordia Theological Monthly* article (September 1946) by George W. Forell discusses Luther's written responses.

## The Augsburg Confession

[The Diet of Augsburg](#): This article has a variety of documents related to the Reformation, including a description of the events leading up to the Diet of Augsburg.

## The Schmalkaldic League

[The Schmalkaldic League](#): This article discusses the creation, rise and fall of the League the Lutheran Princes put together to defend themselves from Emperor Charles V.

[The Smalcald Articles of Martin Luther](#): Luther subtitled these “Articles of Christian Doctrine which were to have been presented on our part to the Council, if any had been assembled at Mantua or elsewhere, indicating what we could accept or yield, and what we could not.”

[Politics and Religion in the Smalcald League](#): How did it happen that secular authorities such as a political alliance of princes and cities (the Smalcald League) took up the theological questions of what to say at a church council?

## Luther’s Decline and Death

**A History of the Life and Actions of the very Reverend Dr. Martin Luther:** In 1549 Philip Melanchthon wrote a biography of Luther’s life. [Part 1](#) includes information he learned from Martin’s mother and brother, his education, and interesting details of his life. [Part 2](#) includes a description of Luther’s death, an elegy, and a funeral oration.

[Luther's Last Battles](#): In this *Concordia Theological Quarterly* article (April-July 1984), Mark U. Edwards, Jr. discusses Luther’s life after 1530, including the effect his declining health and frequent illnesses had on his work.

[Martin Luther's Last Days and Final Thoughts](#): This article describes the final days and hours of Luther’s life.

[Luther's Last Written Words](#): These include his statement that “We are all beggars.”

[How Dr. Martin Luther Died](#) In the video, Dr. Maier mentioned it was a good thing a Catholic pharmacist, John Landau, was present at Luther’s death. This *Concordia Theological Monthly* article (February 1946) shares the fictions that Luther’s enemies spread about him, concerning events of his death, and relates the true details of his death—verified by the Catholic pharmacist.

**Three Funeral Sermons:** When Luther died, three sermons were preached. The first in Eisleben (the city of Luther’s birth and death) by Justas Jonas D. D.; the second at his funeral in Wittenberg by Pastor Johann Bugenhagen; the third by Philip Melanchthon representing the faculty at the University of Wittenberg.

[Funeral Sermon by Justas Jonas](#)

[Funeral Sermon by Wittenberg Pastor Johann Bugenhagen](#)

[Funeral Sermon by Philip Melanchthon](#)

[What Would Luther Say](#): Convinced that certain people would cite Luther’s words to support their errors, he left a “Spiritual Last Will and Testament” to show he had considered things so thoroughly he wouldn’t change his mind, even if he was still around to reconsider.

## Text of the Edict of Worms

<http://www.crivoice.org/creededictworms.html>

# The Edict of Worms (1521)

Dennis Bratcher, ed.

The Edict of Worms was a decree issued by The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V banning the writings of Martin Luther and labeling him a heretic and enemy of the state (see **The 95 Theses of Martin Luther**). The Edict, issued on May 25, 1521, in the city of Worms in southwest Germany, was the culmination of an ongoing struggle between Martin Luther and the Roman Catholic Church over reform, especially in the sale of indulgences. However, there were other deeper issues that revolved around both political and theological concerns. On a political level, Luther had challenged the absolute authority of the pope over the Church by maintaining that the sale of indulgences, authorized and promoted by the pope, was wrong. On a theological level, Luther maintained that salvation was by faith alone (*sola fide*) not through the legal mechanisms of the church or by what people did to earn it. He had also challenged the authority of the Church by maintaining that all doctrines and dogmas of the church should be accountable to the teachings of Scripture (*sola scriptura*).

To protect the authority of the pope and the Church, as well as to maintain the profitable sale of indulgences, church officials convinced Charles V that Luther was a threat and persuaded him to authorize his condemnation by the Empire. Luther escaped arrest and remained in seclusion at Wartburg castle for several years where he continued to write and translate the Bible into German.

While the Edict was harsh, Charles was so preoccupied with political and military concerns elsewhere that it was never enforced. Eventually Luther was allowed to return to public life and became instrumental in laying the groundwork for the Protestant Reformation. -Dennis Bratcher

## The Edict of Worms (1521)

Edict and mandate of Charles, Fifth of this name, Emperor Elect of the Romans, ordered and written on the imperial day celebrated in the city of Worms. In the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred twenty-one.

Against brother Martin Luther of the order of the Saint Augustinian Eremites, reviver of the old and condemned heresies and inventor of new ones.

By permission.

Against each and every one of the books and writings under the name of the said Luther already published or to be published, and also against those who henceforth will print, buy, or sell those books and writings.

Item. Against accomplices receiving or favoring Luther and his works in any way.

Item. Against all insulting and libelous books, and other such writings and illustrations, and also against writers, printers, buyers, or sellers, whoever they are or whatever social status or condition they have.

Law for printers to defend against the evils which come from the abuse of the praiseworthy craft of printing.

### Punishments

For the crime of *lèse majesté* [high treason] and for very serious offense and indignation against the prince.

Item. Confiscation and loss of body and belongings and all goods, fixed and movable, half of which will go to the Lord, and the other half to the accusers and denouncers. With other punishments as given more fully in the present edict and mandate.

Charles, by divine grace emperor of the Romans, king of Castile and archduke of Austria, to our governors of kingdoms, lands, domains, and

members of the council of our empire and to all the subjects of our lands, from whatever state, dignity, or condition they may be, and to which our present edict, decree, and ordinance will be shown, greetings.

To the honor and praise of God, our creator, through whose mercy we have been given kingdoms, lands, and domains hereabove mentioned, it is our duty to help subdue the enemies of our faith and bring them to the obedience of the divine majesty, magnifying the glory of the cross and the passion of our Lord (insofar as we are able), and to keep the Christian religion pure from all heresy or suspicion of heresy, according to and following the ordinance and custom observed by the Holy Roman Church. We are rooted in that faith with a true heart, like our predecessors and progenitors, who by the grace of God also persecuted the enemies of our faith and banished them from their lands. Through their labors, expenditures, and indescribable perils, they have augmented and preserved the faith of our Savior Jesus Christ. They were unceasingly concerned that no appearance or suspicion of heresy or unfaithfulness appear in their kingdoms and domains.

For this reason-after having learned of the mistakes and heresies of a certain Martin Luther, of the order of the Eremites of Saint Augustine, who teaches iniquity, preaches false doctrines, and writes, in both Latin and German, evil things against our Catholic faith and the Holy Roman and Universal Church, things which have already been spread throughout almost all of Christendom, and abusively into some of our lands and domains, greatly diminishing the honor of God and the Catholic faith, imperiling and endangering Christian souls, and bringing future confusion to all the public affairs of our Holy Mother Church-if we do not put an end to this contagious confusion, it could lead to the corrupting of all faithful nations and to their falling into abominable schisms.

Furthermore, after having been informed of these things, our Holy Father, Pope Leo X, general pastor of the Universal Church (to whom belongs the right to bring order into all matters pertaining to our faith and to the church sacraments), kindly admonished the said Martin Luther to rid himself of these errors and false doctrines, and, as is appropriate, asked him to

renounce these doctrines over all the country (wherever he could). Our Holy Father was diligent to find cures for such pestilences and very often has assembled the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, as well as several other ecclesiastical prelates (*i.e.*, archbishops, bishops, generals of various orders, and prelates of different areas), several well-known doctors of theology and of canon and civil law, and other men renowned for their common sense, their learning, and their knowledge of languages. After canonically and juridically citing Martin Luther, offering him every assurance and expecting him to come back to a better judgment, but seeing that Luther remained obstinate, our Holy Father, with the cardinals' consent, after deliberation by the prelates and doctors and by the apostolic authority which he holds, condemned the said Luther's books and judged them to be pernicious and against our faith and the union and charity of our Holy Mother Church. He declared that those books, in whatever language they are written, would have to be burned and taken out of the people's memory forever.

As far as the said Martin is concerned, if he would not admit that he was wrong and repent, recognizing his mistakes in a given period of time, he would be declared disobedient, child of iniquity, and heretic. As such, he would have to be arrested, and, consistent with the ordinance and the rights, he would have to be punished according to the contents of the apostolic bulls. The honorable master Hieronymus Aleander, provost of Saint John of Liège, protonotary and librarian in several sciences and languages, nuncio and orator of the apostolic see, was sent especially for this matter, and, acting as a lawyer for our Holy Mother Church, he asked us to help in the execution of all the things contained in the letters and bulls of the apostolic see, as mentioned above.

After the fatherly admonitions and exhortations made to the said Martin by our Holy Father the pope; after the vocation, citation, obligation, and condemnation of Luther and his works; after the presentation of the bulls to us and their disclosure throughout almost all of Germany, and by our order executed in our Netherlands, our city of Louvain, and the imperial cities of Cologne, Mainz, Trier, and Liège, the said Martin Luther has not only refused to repent, return to the obedience of our Holy Church and renounce his errors, but this man of wickedness and furor against our faith and against

our Mother Church wants to continue spreading the detestable and perverse doctrines of his wicked and pernicious spirit. He has written, in Latin and German, several books full of heresy and blasphemy which have been condemned by the sacred councils of the Catholic Church. Day after day he continues to write and spread new errors and false doctrines, to the great scandal of the people. In his books he confuses and destroys the order of the seven sacraments of the church, which for a long time have been invariably and devoutly observed.

Item. He changes and dishonestly infects the inviolable laws of the sacred sacrament of marriage.

Item. Regarding the manner of receiving the holy sacrament of the altar, which is observed by all churches: he wants to perform it as do the damned heretics of Bohemia.

Item. As for the sacramental confession, which is beneficial to all poor sinning souls: he has made confusion of this confession, and afterwards he has turned it to his personal gain. What is even worse is that the said Martin threatens in his books to say many other things about this confession, so that some people already start to doubt. Many are confessed in the wrong manner; and even worse, some are allowed to confess everything about themselves while others are publicly advised that confession is not necessary at all.

Item. As for the holy order of the priesthood (through which the precious body and blood of our Lord is consecrated) and the power and authority of the keys of our Holy Mother Church: not only does Luther despise them by saying that they are common to all men, children, and women, but in addition, he provokes the seculars to wash their hands in the blood of the priests.

Item. The vicar of God here upon the earth, our Holy Father the pope, the true successor of Saint Peter, is called several infamous names by Luther. The pope is also blasphemed and persecuted.

Item. He says that there is no such thing as freedom of the will, but says, as does the poet, that all things are predetermined.

Item. He says that the sacred mass does not benefit anybody except the one who says it, and in this way he stops the young people from the practice of praying to God, which the church has until now kept and observed.

Item. Regarding purgatory and the masses and prayers said for the souls of our dead, and also the suffrages and forgivings of our Holy Mother Church: he agrees, not with our church opinion, but with that of the Waldensian and Wycliffite heresies.

Item. As for the Catholic Church: he heeds the words of the Pelagians and the heretical Wycliffites mentioned above.

Item. He despises and condemns the doctrines and authorities which the holy doctors preceding us have left for our instructions, and he degrades with all his might the devotion that we have for our saints.

Item. He says that there are no such things as superiority and obedience. He destroys all civil police and hierarchical and ecclesiastical order, so that people are led to rebel against their superiors, spiritual and temporal, and to start killing, stealing, and burning, to the great loss and ruin of public and Christian good. Furthermore, he institutes a way of life by which people do whatever they please, like beasts. They behave like men living without any law, condemning and despising all civil and canon laws to the extent that Luther, by excessive presumption, has publicly burned the decretals and (as we might expect) would have burned the imperial civil law had he not had more fear of the imperial and royal swords than he had of apostolic excommunication.

Furthermore, he is not ashamed to detract from and speak evil of the sacred and holy general councils. Among these he has primarily destroyed (as much as he was able to) the holy Council of Constance, which was convened for the glory and the memory of the German nation to put an end to the schism and to bring back peace to our Holy Mother Church. The said Luther's polluted mouth, despising and demolishing these, has scandalized the

Universal Church. He wants to bring dishonor upon all of Christendom by calling this council "Satan's Synagogue" and by insulting all those who attended it, namely, "Sigismund of curious memory, emperor; and the princes of the Holy Empire, antichrists and apostles of the antichrist, murderers and pharisees," because, following an order from that council, they burned the heretic John Hus. Luther also added that all John Hus's articles, condemned during the council as wrong and heretical, were evangelical and Christian, and he wanted to defend him and approve of what he did. But he rejects and refuses whatever articles were approved by the council, protesting like a madman that if John Hus was once heretic, he [Luther] is proud to be ten times more heretic. And he seeks so much after new things, to the perdition of mankind, that he has not written anything (however truthful it may appear) that does not contain pestilences or the sting of death. This without mentioning the other books full of blasphemies, errors, and heresies not even worthy of mention by the mouth of a good Christian. These books contain as much poison as they have words.

To put an end to the numberless and endless errors of the said Martin, let us say that it seems that this man, Martin, is not a man but a demon in the appearance of a man, clothed in religious habit to be better able to deceive mankind, and wanting to gather the heresies of several heretics who have already been condemned, excommunicated, and buried in hell for a long time. Let us add to this all the heresies recently brought in by him to be the source of all iniquity and rubbish and to destroy the Catholic faith. As an evangelical preacher he labors to trouble and demolish all religious peace and charity and all order and direction in the things of this world. And finally, he brings dishonor upon all the beauty of our Holy Mother Church.

After having mentioned all these things before the council of the nations and our Holy Father the pope, we are endowed with all power to assist and give orders to put an end to and exterminate forever this dangerous and mortal heresy. To proceed better in this matter we appealed to learned people, both ecclesiastical and secular, and to all the general estates assembled in great number during the day designated by our ordinance, in this city of Worms. Upon the advice of our council, several other princes and prelates from our

lands and domains and other good people of our company are also in attendance. We have finally arrived at the following conclusion.

Namely, that a man like the said Luther, already condemned and still persisting in his obstinate perversity, separated from the way of life of Christians, and a notorious heretic, should not be listened to nor questioned, according to the law, in order to prevent every opportunity for those who favor the said Luther and his errors to do evil. Because among the many titles bearing the name of Martin Luther some of the books may not have been composed or written by him and because several people said that proceedings should not be taken against him without first having heard what he knew, or what he would tell, we asked by letter patent that the said Luther come before us, giving him safe-conduct and having him escorted by one of our kings-of-arms from Germany, who was sent by us. We asked him to come here, not to judge him or to praise his merits, nor to desire that the things concerning the holy Catholic faith, which for so long, because of new disputations, have brought great scandal and peril to Christians and have brought laughs from the unfaithful enemies of our holy faith-be further discussed, but to see if through good admonitions the said Luther could not be converted.

For this reason the said Luther appeared here in Worms before us and before the princes, prelates, and other people from the several estates. Following our order, we had him questioned, asking him first if, yes or no, he had written the books which were then named and shown to him and [secondly] if he wanted to revoke the contents of these books concerning things against the Catholic faith, the sacred general councils, the apostolic decrees, and the church rites and customs observed and kept by our predecessors and by us down to the present day. We requested of the said Luther, both in our name and in that of all our assistants, that he be willing to return humbly to the unity and communion of our Mother Church. And even then it would have been easy to convert him and soften his heart if the said Luther had not been as obstinate as a rock.

Luther admitted before us and before the princes and the people of the diet that the books named were his and that he could not and would not ever

deny them. Furthermore, he said that he has written others that were not shown here because they were not yet in our possession. As far as the revocation of the contents of his books was concerned, he asked that a delay be given him to think about it. This delay should have been refused: things that are against the faith do not deserve postponement. Moreover, because we mentioned in our letter to Luther the reason for his coming here, he should have had time enough to think about the answer he would give us. However, we were willing to give him a delay of twenty-four hours. After that time he was to be brought again before us and before the princes and the people of the diet. We also promised him that if he would revoke the evil mentioned above, we would arrange for him to have an interview with our Holy Father the pope. And also, after just and diligent deliberation, [we agreed that] if there was any good in the contents of his books we would keep it and expurgate only the things contrary to our doctrines. Whatever was good would be confirmed and authorized by apostolic authority.

Nevertheless, through evil words and gestures towards our priests, he publicly pronounced that he would not change one word of the contents of his books, declaring in our presence and in that of the diet that the apostolic decrees and the holy general councils contradicted each other more than once. As far as he was concerned, he did not hold these decrees and councils to be true, and he would not revoke one thing of what he had written until he was convinced otherwise by the Holy Scriptures or by divine authority. He repeated many times, to cover up his false doctrines, that he could not save his soul if he were to change one of God's words-as if we had asked him to change God's words! On the contrary, he had rebelled against our Holy Mother Church.

Finally, the said Luther ended the day in an even worse manner than he had started it. He could not hide his pernicious audacity. He was rejoicing about the destruction of the Christians who, because of his doctrines and his perversity, were living in discord, trouble, and division. Luther also wanted, like the heretics, to pervert and interpret in an evil manner the authority of the holy gospel and to use it maliciously. (For example, where our Redeemer says, "I have not come to bring peace, but the sword," Martin says that there is no greater joy in the world for him than to see contention and

factions because of the word of God.) In this manner does he cover up his new opinions concerning the word of God. He wanted to raise factionalism, dissension, discord, crimes, wars, and evil things among Christians, as we can readily see from the effects and the great damage to the common good of the Christian religion.

Thus enlightened by the wicked and unfaithful response of the said Luther, we decided to send him away without arresting him, in accord with the terms of his safe-conduct and the judicial procedures required in such cases, especially since they were written by us. The next day all of the princes and representatives of the various estates were informed of this decision. This was done at the request of the princes and the diet, according to our Creator's words when He said that He does not want the sinner's death but wants him to be converted and live. We gave Luther a three-day delay for him to repent. During that time, two electors, two bishops, two princes, and two deputies of our cities gathered here in the name of all the estates and had Luther present himself to be informed of our remedies and of the manner and type of punishment with which we would proceed against him if he did not repent. All of them did their duty without letting anyone do any harm to the said Luther.

One of the electors made remonstrances to Luther to such an extent that Luther could not utter a word. This elector even admonished Luther to stop being stubborn and to go back to the ecclesiastical obedience and customs that we, our Holy Father the pope, the Holy Apostolic See, all the diet, and all faithful nations have kept until now. He was promised that if he wanted to abandon this erroneous opinion and return to obeying his superiors again, his honor and his salvation would be preserved, as had been done in the past for some of the holy fathers who had also been led astray.

The said Luther gave no better response than he had previously given (according to the report of the deputies). He said that not only was he suspicious of each one of us, but that even if a general council were assembled, he still would not submit to it. And, if we were informed correctly, he even dared say with his polluted mouth that the things of the gospel and the Catholic faith have never been treated well by the general

councils. Luther has appealed from the sentence of our Holy Father the pope to the general council as his last resort, even though he has said so many wicked and insulting things and has written such evil things about the general councils. With all his strength and ingenuity he has diverted and confused the people in the manner of the heretics who say there is nothing on earth they fear so much as the general councils. That is because the one thing done there, and that by divine providence, is to contradict the actions and writings of the heretics, enemies of truth, in order to destroy and annihilate their rash inventions. This [attitude towards the councils], more than any other heretical event, has been verified and manifested in Luther and his works.

The things mentioned above have been studied by us carefully and at length. Since the said Luther was so stubborn and obstinate in his opinions, errors, and heresies, the wise people who had seen and heard him said that he was mad and possessed by some evil spirit. We had him sent back, accompanied by our king-of-arms for his safety, according to the contents of his safe-conduct. We gave him a period of twenty days, beginning on the twenty-fifth of April of the present year, which was the day he left this city of Worms. And now it is only just and necessary to find remedies pertaining to such a case, which we have done and executed as follows.

First of all, to the honor of Almighty God, in reverence both to his vicar here on earth, our Holy Father the pope, and to the Holy Apostolic See, moved by zeal, affection, and our natural inclination, and in imitation of our predecessors, we appeal to the defense of the Catholic faith and to the protection of the Holy Roman Church. We desire to defend our goods, to use our power, our domains, our friends and subjects, and if necessary, to risk our own life and blood and whatever it pleases God to give us in this world. By the authority vested in us, and upon the advice of the princes, prelates, knights of our orders, and gentlemen of our council gathered here in great numbers, we have ordered that mandates be sent to every one of our chancelleries and domains in their own language by which the sentence is to be executed against Martin Luther and his false doctrine (already condemned by our Holy Father the pope, the true and legitimate judge in these matters), as contained in the above-mentioned bulls presented to us.

We have declared and hereby forever declare by this edict that the said Martin Luther is to be considered an estranged member, rotten and cut off from the body of our Holy Mother Church. He is an obstinate, schismatic heretic, and we want him to be considered as such by all of you.

For this reason we forbid anyone from this time forward to dare, either by words or by deeds, to receive, defend, sustain, or favor the said Martin Luther. On the contrary, we want him to be apprehended and punished as a notorious heretic, as he deserves, to be brought personally before us, or to be securely guarded until those who have captured him inform us, whereupon we will order the appropriate manner of proceeding against the said Luther. Those who will help in his capture will be rewarded generously for their good work.

As for his accomplices, those who help or favor the said Martin in whatever manner or who show obstinacy in their perversity, not receiving absolution from the pope for the evils they have committed, we will also proceed against them and will take all of their goods and belongings, movable and fixed, with the help either of the judges in the area in which they reside or of our parliaments and councils at Malines or in other cities in which these events are made known. Action will be taken according to the desire of the accusers or of our fiscal procurators, but always according to the constitution and the laws, whether canon, civil, or divine, written against those who commit heresy or the crime of *lèse majesté*. These laws will be applied regardless of person, degree, or privilege if anyone does not obey our edict in every manner.

Item. We desire that the goods of delinquents that might be confiscated according to this edict be divided, one half going to us and the other half to the accusers and denouncers.

We also desire that where there are no accusers our fiscal procurators proceed against the delinquents through inquisition in our name. And if there are accusers, we want them to join you, in the name of our fiscals, for our right and interest, without any opposition given to them.

Item. We ask you and command that "with the sounding of the trumpet" you call the people from the four corners of the villages and cities where this edict will be published and gather them where it is customary to publish our edicts and mandates. You will then read this edict word for word and with a loud voice. We order, upon the penalties contained herein, that the contents of this edict be kept and observed in their entirety; and we forbid anyone, regardless of his authority or privilege, to dare to buy, sell, keep, read, write, or have somebody write, print or have printed, or affirm or defend the books, writings, or opinions of the said Martin Luther, or anything contained in these books and writings, whether in German, Latin, Flemish, or any other language. This applies also to all those writings condemned by our Holy Father the pope and to any other book written by Luther or any of his disciples, in whatever manner, even if there is Catholic doctrine mixed in to deceive the common people.

For this reason we want all of Luther's books to be universally prohibited and forbidden, and we also want them to be burned. We execute the sentence of the Holy Apostolic See, and we follow the very praiseworthy ordinance and custom of the good Christians of old who had the books of heretics like the Arians, Priscillians, Nestorians, Eutychians, and others burned and annihilated, even everything that was contained in these books, whether good or bad. This is well done, since if we are not allowed to eat meat containing just one drop of poison because of the danger of bodily infection, then we surely should leave out every doctrine (even if it is good) which has in it the poison of heresy and error, which infects and corrupts and destroys under the cover of charity everything that is good, to the great peril of the soul.

Therefore, we ask you who are in charge of judicial administration to have all of Luther's books and writings burned and destroyed in public, whether these writings are in German, Flemish, Latin, or in any other written language and whether they are written by himself, his disciples, or the imitators of his false and heretical doctrines, which are the source of all perversity and iniquity. Moreover, we ask you to help and assist the messengers of our Holy Pope. In their absence you will have all those books publicly burned and execute all the things mentioned above.

To that effect, we ask and require all our subjects of your jurisdiction to consider the penalties herein mentioned, and we also ask them to assist and obey you as they would obey us.

We also have to be careful that the books or the doctrines of the said Martin Luther not be written and published under other authors' names. Daily, several books full of evil doctrine and bad examples are being written and published. There are also many pictures and illustrations circulated so that the enemy of human nature, through various tricks, might capture the souls of Christians. Because of these books and unreasonable pictures, Christians fall into transgression and start doubting their own faith and customs, thus causing scandals and hatreds. From day to day, and more and more, rebellions, divisions, and dissensions are taking place in this kingdom and in all the provinces and cities of Christendom. This is much to be feared.

For this reason, and to kill this mortal pestilence, we ask and require that no one dare to compose, write, print, paint, sell, buy, or have printed, written, sold, or painted, from now on in whatever manner such pernicious articles so much against the holy orthodox faith and against that which the Catholic Apostolic Church has kept and observed to this day. We likewise condemn anything that speaks against the Holy Father, against the prelates of the church, and against the secular princes, the general schools and their faculties, and all other honest people, whether in positions of authority or not. And in the same manner we condemn everything that is contrary to the good moral character of the people, to the Holy Roman Church, and to the Christian public good.

And finally, after this edict has been published, we want all the books, writings, and pictures mentioned above to be publicly burned, including those under the name of any author that might be printed, written, or compiled in any language, wherever they may be found in our countries.

We ask you to be diligent in apprehending and confiscating all the belongings of those who seem rebellious to the ordinances herein mentioned and to punish them according to the penalties set out by law-Divine, canon, and civil.

And so as to prevent poisonous false doctrines and bad examples from being spread all over Christendom, and so that the art of printing books might be used only toward good ends, we, after mature and long deliberation, order and command you by this edict that henceforth, under penalty of confiscation of goods and property, no book dealer, printer, or anybody else mention the Holy Scriptures or their interpretation without having first received the consent of the clerk of the city and the advice and consent of the faculty of theology of the university, which will approve those books and writings with their seal. As for books that do not even mention faith or the Holy Scriptures, we also want this decree applied to them, except that our consent or that of our lieutenants will be sufficient. All this will apply for the first printing of the books hereabove mentioned.

Item. Furthermore, we declare in this ordinance that if anyone, whatever his social status may be, dares directly or indirectly to oppose this decree--whether concerning Luther's matter, his defamatory books or their printings, or whatever has been ordered by us--these transgressors in so doing will be guilty of the crime of *lèse majesté* and will incur our grave indignation as well as each of the punishments mentioned above.

We desire that evidence be added to the copy of this decree, signed by one of our secretaries or by an apostolic notary as would be done for this original.

As a witness to this, and for all these things to be firm and forever established, we have put our seal on this document and have signed by our hand.

Given in our city of Worms on the eighth day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred twenty-one.

Signed Charles of Germany

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## History of the Wartburg

<http://www.wartburg-eisenach.de/english/geschich/framedef.htm>

### History of the Wartburg

#### 1067 - The foundation of the Wartburg

According to legend, the Wartburg was founded in 1067 by Ludwig der Springer (Ludwig the Jumper). With him began the unprecedented development of the "Ludovinger" family, who ruled for more than 200 years as the most influential princes in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.



The foundation of the Wartburg painting in the Landgrave' room



Ludwig der Springer  
1st half 14th century

#### 1080 - The first documentation

The Wartburg was first documented in 1080. Bruno, the bishop of Merseburg, described in his book of the Saxon War "De Bello Saxonico," the temporary military camp of King Heinrich IV by a castle called Wartberg.

#### 1130 - The time of the "Landgraves"

Due to smart political moves, extensive forest clearances, acquisition of new land and a wise marriage policy, the influence of the family of the Thuringian counts grew quickly in central Germany. They were appointed as landgraves, and this promotion emphasized the Ludovingians' importance as powerful, territorial rulers.

## 1155 - The construction of the Palas (Great Hall)



The construction of the main building, the **Palas**, began around 1155. It was the first of its kind, and it is currently considered to be the best preserved Romanesque secular building north of the Alps.

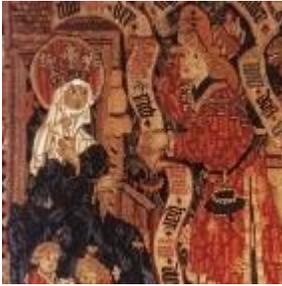
## 1206 - The Minnesingers' Contest at the Wartburg



The legendary Minnesingers' Contest or "Singers' War" dates back to 1206. Although it was only a legend, this courtly and knightly epic vividly depicts the rule of landgrave Hermann I and the Thuringian court as its centre.

## 1211-1228 - Saint Elizabeth

During this time St. Elizabeth lived in the court of the Thuringian landgraves. In 1221 the Hungarian princess married the landgrave Ludwig IV. Her ascetic way of life was based on the principals of St. Francis of Assisi, and she was viewed by the court with suspicion. After the death of her husband in 1227, Elizabeth followed her father confessor to Marburg in order to live her life in poverty, chastity and humility. She was canonized by Pope Gregor IX only four years after her early death in 1231.



Scenes of the life of Saint Elisabeth  
ca. 1480



Elisabeth and her children  
leaving the Wartburg  
glass mosaic in the Elisabeth  
Bower  
1902-1906

### 1247 - Death of the last landgrave



Heinrich Raspe, the last landgrave of Thuringia and a German king, died at the Wartburg.

### 1317 - Reconstruction plans

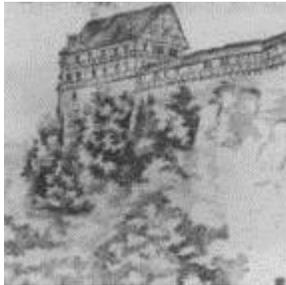
A disastrous fire struck the Wartburg in 1317. After the fire, the south tower was constructed and the new **chapel** was built into the Palas. For more information about the architecture of the Wartburg Castle, please click [here](#).

### 1521 - Martin Luther at the Wartburg



Martin Luther, who was excommunicated by the pope and outlawed by the emperor, sought refuge in the **bailiff's lodge** at the Wartburg. During the months of his protective custody, he lived and worked in a sparsely furnished room, today known as the **Luther Room**. In only 10 weeks he translated the New Testament from the original Greek texts into German.

### 1777 - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe visits the Wartburg



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe stayed at the Wartburg Castle for five weeks in 1777. His visit there is characterized by his enthusiasm for nature. Today the visual knowledge of the decayed buildings that Goethe preserved in his drawings is invaluable.

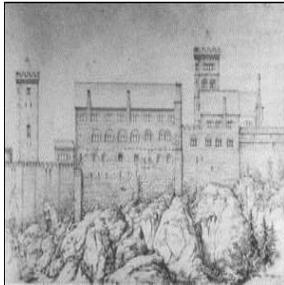
### 1817 - The Wartburgfest of the Students' Association



On October 18, 1817, 500 students gathered for the Wartburgfest, the first middle-class democratic public meeting in Germany. They met at the Wartburg for the 300th anniversary of the Reformation and the fourth anniversary of the Battle of Nations at Leipzig against Napoleon's rule. The students fought for a unified Germany under the motto, "Honour - Freedom - Fatherland."

### 1838-1890 - The reconstruction of the Wartburg

The house of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach recalled the "golden age" of classical Weimar and decided to revive and continue it in the Wartburg Castle. After 1838 the artistically inclined Grand Duke Carl Alexander ordered the reconstruction of his ancestral castle in Thuringia. Hugo von Ritgen, the professor of architecture at the Giessen University, took on this task and it became his life's work. This work was accompanied by extensive artistic creativity, which was to culminate in Moritz von Schwind's fresco series in the first story of the Palas building and in the furnishing of the Festival Hall.



Reconstruction concept of the Wartburg



Hugo von Ritgen  
architect of the Wartburg  
reconstruction  
Philipp Uhl, lithograph  
ca. 1870

## 1922 - The Wartburg Foundation

The 1918 revolution and the proclamation of the Republic forced the German ruling houses to abdicate. In 1922 the Wartburg Foundation was created to take over the responsibility for the upkeep of the castle from then on. The Wartburg Foundation still exists, mostly uncontested.

## 1952-1954 - Extensive reconstruction plans

In the 50s extensive reconstruction took place inside the castle. The main building was partially "re-restored," back to the Romanesque style.

## 1967 - The year of "National Jubilees"

In 1967, the "National Jubilees" of the German Democratic Republic were celebrated in conjunction with the 900th anniversary of the Wartburg Castle, the 450th anniversary of the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation and the 150th anniversary of the Wartburgfest (the meeting of the German student association).

### **1999 - Wartburg as part of the World's Heritage**

In December of 1999, the Wartburg was placed on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage list.

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## How We Got the Bible

<http://www.lhm.org/men/studydetail.asp?id=12754>

### How We Got The Bible

*By: Dr. Paul L. Maier*

*(Includes subtitles in English & Spanish)* - As God's written Word, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are the source of His revelation to man.

Learn about the production, collection, transmission, and preservation of these marvelous works in How We Got The Bible, featuring Dr. Paul L. Maier, the latest Men's NetWork five-part Bible study. Listen as Dr. Maier shares his expertise and enthusiasm on the preservation and transmission of God's Word through the centuries.

This Bible study will survey the historical development, textual transmission, and publication history of the Bible as it has come down to us through the centuries. With special emphasis on God's divine activity through the Spirit-inspired authors of the Old and New Testaments, this study will show how the Bible is His book, His Word-revealed to man that they might know the way of salvation as revealed by the prophets and made real in the flesh through the life, death, and resurrection of God's son, Jesus Christ.

Joining Dr. Maier in this discussion is Joel Lampe, manager of The Bible Museum in Goodyear, Arizona. Together they examine a number of printed texts, ancient manuscripts, and rare Bibles from the museum's collection. Whether it's a 1560 first-edition Geneva Bible, oft cited by William Shakespeare in his literary works, a centuries-old Syriac New Testament written in Arabic, or a sheepskin sliver from the book of Daniel found among the Dead Sea scrolls in Qumran, Israel—each document is part of the fascinating history of God's written Word preserved and transmitted through the centuries.

This Bible study begins with a discussion on the spiritual significance of the Bible and what it means to claim that Scripture is the Word of God. Lessons to follow consider the function of divine inspiration against contemporary attacks claiming the Bible to be a product of man or later ecumenical councils. Throughout Maier emphasizes the extreme care and attention to detail early scribes displayed when it came to copying and preserving the Scriptures. He also looks into Jesus' own claims to divinity and considers them against assertions He was essentially deemed "divine" by the decree of church councils in the centuries following His appearance. The Bible study closes with a look at the development of the English Bible and some of the heroic pains required of men and women who gave everything to get God's message into print. Throughout each chapter, Web links offer interesting jumping-off points for users to glean more information.



The Bible is a source of faith and inspiration for tens of millions the world over. As a collection of rich and varied texts, its narratives, psalms, laments, proverbs, prophecies, epistles, gospels, and wisdom literature-to name some of its most prominent genres-form a fascinating array of documents. As an expert on this subject, Dr. Paul Maier, who is the Russell H. Seibert professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University, has profound insights regarding the production, canonization, and inspiration behind the texts that comprise the Scriptures.

*Includes subtitles in English & Spanish*

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## Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt

<http://reformation500.csl.edu/bio/andreas-bodenstein-von-karlstadt/>

### Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt



Andreas Bodenstein, most commonly known as Karlstadt for the town of his birth, embodied the tumultuous early years of the Reformation and the difficulty of categorizing many reformers according to theological allegiances. At first opposed to Luther's theological opinions, Karlstadt soon came to embrace them and the Augustinian theology that influenced them, only to go well beyond what Luther had intended with vigorous practical reforms and a rejection of Protestant sacramental teachings.

Despite his agreement with the Swiss and South Germans on the Eucharist and with Anabaptists on baptism, he never accepted their willingness to use force, and his social views share little in common with the Radical Reformation. While he was not influential on subsequent reformers or theological traditions, he nonetheless represented many of the early contentions that divided the Protestant movement.

Born in Karlstadt in Franconia, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt studied at Erfurt from 1499 to 1502, before receiving his bachelor of arts, then went on to study at Cologne until 1505. In 1505, he left for Wittenberg, where he was conferred the master of arts later that year and proceeded to teach in the arts faculty. He received his doctor of theology at Wittenberg in 1510 and was ordained as priest the same year. In 1511, he was named archdeacon of the collegiate church of All Saints in Wittenberg, which was connected to the castle of Prince Frederick the Wise and his family, and professor of theology at the university. A year later, he became dean of the theology faculty. From November 1515 to May 1516, Karlstadt pursued and was granted a doctorate in canon

and civil law from the Sapienza University in Rome. In order to do so, he abdicated his responsibilities at Wittenberg without finding a suitable replacement, forcing the authorities to threaten him with the loss of his stipend should he not return.

Throughout these formative years of his academic career, Karlstadt's views were robustly Thomist, with some limited influence from Duns Scotus. He was not trained in nominalist theology, nor was he educated in Augustine or the Augustinian tradition, as Luther was. Karlstadt's first encounter with Luther's theology occurred in a 1516 disputation, when he served as opponent to a student defending Luther's ideas. At the time, he dissented, but over the next year he would come to embrace many of those ideas, chiefly by immersing himself in the thought of Augustine. Over the next two years, he would lecture on Augustine's *On the Spirit and the Letter*, also influential for Luther. By April 1517, he had published a set of Augustinian-influenced theses supporting Luther's early criticisms of scholastic views on grace and merit. In 1518, he drafted a set of theses on justification also drawn from Augustine. Over the course of the next year, Karlstadt began defending Luther in print. He entered into the Indulgence Controversy with a rebuttal of a treatise by John Eck, the Ingolstadt theologian who would be Luther's combatant at the Leipzig Debate a year later. Karlstadt's extensive list of 380 theses defending Luther against Eck precipitated the disputation at Leipzig, for which Karlstadt himself was to be opponent. After an arrangement was made to include Luther in the debate, Eck easily dispatched the less intellectually nimble and persuasive Karlstadt, leading to the fateful conflict with Luther.

From that point, the careers of the two Wittenberg theologians would take entirely different trajectories. While Luther came to spearhead the reform movement associated with his name, Karlstadt found himself repeatedly at odds with Luther over reforms and later theology. Karlstadt would find increasingly less success communicating and implementing his ideas. In 1521, he went to Denmark to aid Christian II in reforming his churches, but the efforts failed and he returned to a Wittenberg without spiritual leadership due to Luther's seclusion at the Wartburg Castle. Karlstadt attempted to fill the void, along with Gabriel Zwilling, Philipp Melancthon, Nicolas von Amsdorf, and Justus Jonas. He urged them to implement Luther's reforms in Wittenberg, specifically reforms of the mass, religious life and social life. On Christmas Day 1521, Karlstadt celebrated the first evangelical mass against the objections of Frederick the Wise. The next month, he chose to be one of the first Wittenberg priests to marry. He also published his reforms as *A New Order for the City of Wittenberg*. When Luther heard of

these measures, especially the stripping of the altar and removing of the images, he quickly returned from the Wartburg and sent a stern rebuke to Karlstadt and those complicit with him, urging reformers to proceed more slowly and not to burden the consciences of the faithful with new laws.

Finding himself out of favor with both Luther and Frederick the Wise, Karlstadt increasingly withdrew from the leadership of the university and town religious life. He put away his academic dress, bought a farm near Wörlitz, and worked among the peasants. He also stopped discharging his responsibilities at the university, leading to greater conflict and ultimately a censure on his views by the authorities. In June 1523, Karlstadt would leave Wittenberg and take over pastoral duties at a small rural church in Orlamünde, in Thuringia, which happened to still be within the same Saxon archdiocese. In the more remote village, he was able to bring about the reforms he had proposed at Wittenberg, including a simplified order of worship, the removal of images, and even the proscription of clerical titles. He continued to write prolifically, however, and between the years of 1519 and 1525 published 47 pamphlets in 125 editions. Many of these were directed at Luther and provoked further disagreement with him, leading to a tense conflict between the two in Jena. Due to his opposition to Luther and suspicions that he was in league with the political insurrection of Thomas Müntzer, Karlstadt was expelled from Saxony by Duke John in September 1524.

Karlstadt's expulsion from Wittenberg preceded him being run out of other regions repeatedly over the next year until Luther appealed to Duke John to permit his return on the condition that he not attempt to spread his views. Between 1525 and 1529, Karlstadt stayed with a Wittenberg family and worked as a farmer and merchant, but undertook no pastoral or academic tasks. Presumably growing restless with this inactivity and marginalization, he fled Saxony in 1529 to aid the radical Melchior Hoffman in debates over the Eucharist with other northern German evangelical theologians, then later that year carried the favor of Luther's prime Protestant opponent, the Swiss theologian Ulrich Zwingli. Through Zwingli's influence, Karlstadt earned a position as vicar of Alstatt in Zurich, where would serve as pastor until 1534. Then, well after Zwingli's death, Karlstadt resumed academic duties for the first time since 1523. He began teaching at Basel as chair of Old Testament, while also serving as parish priest of St. Peter's in Zurich. He would remain there until his death from the plague in December 24, 1541.

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## Luther's Reaction to the Changes in Wittenberg

<http://media.ctsfw.edu/Video/ViewDetails/706>

**Student:** I'll bet that Luther was not happy to learn of these changes. What did Luther do about these reform efforts when he returned to Wittenberg?

**Professor Paul Robinson:** When Luther returned, he began preaching a series of sermons in the church in Wittenberg in which he directly addressed what had been going on in his absence. And his main point was this: It was not acceptable to force people to change when they hadn't been properly instructed, when they hadn't had time to embrace the preaching of the Gospel and come to see that these changes were good and necessary. In fact, Luther told the Wittenbergers that they were acting the same way the Pope had previously, simply telling people "this is the way you have to do it" and forcing them to comply. He said "we can't operate that way. We have to be concerned about people's consciences. If you force people to change, if you tell them 'this is the way you have to do it now', you simply force them to be hypocrites, forcing them to do something that they don't believe." The time would come, of course, when Luther would simply make changes. But, again, the issue was the rate of change. Luther was very willing to be patient in this. He approached this really as a pastor, saying that it's a matter of teaching, it's a matter of talking to people and helping them to see what should be done and then doing it. Carlstadt tended to approach this as an apocalyptic, as a revolutionary, saying that we need to change, to usher in the kingdom of God; and if people don't like it, they just aren't ready, they won't be with us. Luther had a much longer term view of this. And that's reflected very much in this series of sermons he preached. Now, what he actually did was to quietly change the communion service to get rid of the most obvious mentions of sacrifice because, remember, the sacrifice of the Mass still was a problem. What Carlstadt and others had been doing hadn't been entirely removed from what Luther himself had suggested. So when he returned, he asked that preachers simply take out some parts of the service and otherwise continue as they had been. But above all, he said, they had to preach. They had to preach about the Lord's Supper. They had to preach about the meaning of the words of institution. And then people would understand what the supper really was. And then they would realize that the service needed to be changed to take that into account. In subsequent years, Luther did issue different orders of service to be used in Wittenberg and ultimately throughout electoral Saxony. The first was a revised Latin order of service, the *formula missi*. And if you look at that service in Luther's works, you'll see that it's actually very similar to the service that we have in both the Lutheran hymnal and Lutheran worship as sort of the standard communion service. There were people, though, who continued to ask Luther to write a German order of service. Luther was initially reluctant to do that, largely because he was afraid that if he were to write an order of service, it would become "the standard service", and everybody else would be afraid to come up with their own church order in different cities, in different territories. Finally, he agreed, though, and he wrote the German mass. You can find the German Mass as Divine Service 3 in Lutheran worship if you want to see what that looked like. But the point of it was simply to instruct people in the faith. As Luther wrote about what he intended in the German Mass, it's very clear that his goal was teaching. And every element of the service is meant to teach the people in German, in the language they understood, about the Gospel and about what God is doing for us when we gather for worship and hear His word and receive the Lord's Supper.

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## Knights' Revolt and Great Peasants' War

<http://onui.ru/20.shtml>

# KNIGHTS REVOLT AND GREAT PEASANTS' WAR

The consequences of the Reformation went far beyond the religious sphere. Social, economic, and political unrest coalesced with religious protest, sparking the first revolutionary movement in German history. The imperial knights were the first to organize. In August 1522 the imperial knight Franz von Sickingen presided over a meeting of 600 knights at Landau on Lake Constance. They formed an association to defend their rights and the Lutheran faith. Their role in warfare had changed. Gunpowder had practically made their former role obsolete, so many became mercenary officers in new armies and others became robber barons or served the interests of princes. Most of the imperial knights lived in run-down castles. The knights revolted, and the upheaval ended when Franz von Sickingen was killed, many castles destroyed, and their lands confiscated.

Later, the emperor enlisted the knights in his service against the princes who had been victorious in the struggle and had profited the most from the Reformation.

In June 1524 a rebellion of peasants (The Peasants' War) occurred after they had taken Luther too seriously on the issue of social reform. It was not the poorest of the peasants but the middle and upper peasantry who demanded the right to elect their own pastor and desired that their tithes remain in the village. As important were their economic demands. They had been losing in the struggle against the powerful who were impoverishing them. They wanted to reverse their loss of access to communal lands and forest, and desired that their relationships with their lords not be based on monetary interests but on Christian principles. They hoped that Luther would support their rebellion against their secular rulers. On the other hand, Luther thought that their rebellion was inspired by Satan and condemned it in his pamphlet *Against the Thieving and Murderous Hordes of Peasants*, in which he encouraged the princes to kill some 75,000. He truly believed as did Catholics that God had ordained rulers to keep law, order, and peace. His condemnation of the rebellious peasants reflected his own personal struggles, on the one hand to rebel and on the other the need to submit to authority. After defying the spiritual authority of the church, he also emphasized the need of all Germans to submit to temporal authority. The peasants established the "Christian Association." Most of the fighting took place in Swabia, but it also spread to Franconia and Thuringia.

At one point the former mayor of Würzburg and famous sculptor Tilman Riemenschneider (1460–1561) supported their efforts. The princes brutally suppressed the rebellion, and the peasants slipped back into their despair. A consequence of the revolt was that Lutheranism became increasingly dependent for its success and protection on the princes. In reality the desire of the peasants for fundamental social reform was too utopian and could not have been realized. As a result of the rebellion the princes became reactionary and opposed to any meaningful reforms.

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## Thomas Muentzer

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse/explanation/muentzer.html>

### **Tell us about Thomas Muentzer and how he comes from being a protégé of Luther to something altogether different.**

Thomas Muentzer is an example of what can happen when apocalyptic scriptures become widely accessible. Muentzer took the images of the apocalypse, the images of a desperate struggle between the forces of righteousness and the forces of evil, and applied it to the peasantry of Europe in his own day. And he preached to the peasants that the wealthy people of the day are in fact the evil ones whose destruction is foretold in the Book of Revelation. And thousands of peasants followed him, and in fact there was a tremendous slaughter ... . Thomas Muentzer had assured his followers that their struggle against the landowners, against the rulers and the leaders of the day, was a divinely ordained struggle, and that in the war that would follow, they would be spared, that God would intervene. ...



thomas muentzer

When the final showdown comes in 1525, the peasants are arrayed against the German princes and their army, and Thomas Muentzer continues to assure them, even at the last moment, that Christ will intervene on their side. This is the apocalyptic moment foretold in the Revelation. They're singing hymns. They literally are awaiting a glorious triumph. Muentzer assures them that he will catch the cannonballs in his shirt sleeves. Of course, it turned into a slaughter. Five thousand ill-equipped peasants were slaughtered. The Peasants' Revolt was utterly destroyed. It was one of those incredible explosions of apocalypticism that arise in history.

### **Who was Thomas Muentzer?**

Thomas Muentzer started as a follower of Martin Luther's. He may have even heard some of Luther's lectures. He certainly read Luther. The message he got from Luther, above all, was "scripture alone". And when he read scripture alone, he went his own way. For Luther, Thomas Muentzer was the epitome of someone who misunderstood the message. Luther saw this as a spiritual battle. Thomas Muentzer

was not willing to make the distinction between spiritual and worldly that Luther was. So Thomas Muentzer, in reading the Bible and especially the Old Testament, felt that to be a good Christian you had to change society in various ways, and that just like the prophets had used force to convert the infidels in the Old Testament, that Muentzer and his followers had the right to use force to deal with those people who opposed the gospel. Luther did not believe in that. For Luther, that was Satan at work. And he called Thomas Muentzer the Satan at Allstadt (that's where Muentzer was preaching).

### **Tell me about Muentzer's role in the Peasants' War.**

Thomas Muentzer had a role in part of the Peasants' War. The Peasants' War occurred over large parts of the empire. But in one part in the north-central area, Thomas Muentzer was the leader of a band of peasants. And for those peasants, he was taking the Old Testament images and bringing them to life, and telling them that just as all Christians were supposed to be free spiritually, they also were all to be equal and free economically and politically. This was the rallying cry that galvanized his supporters. This was the rallying cry that brought the princes together to oppose it. ...

One of the most famous battles in the Peasants' War occurred at Frankenhausen, where the armies of the princes in the cities met the peasants' bands led by Thomas Muentzer. The princes, by one report, attempted to find an end to the fight. The peasants, however, saw a rainbow in the sky, and Muentzer's flag had a rainbow on it, harkening back to the rainbow that Noah was given, the covenant with God. And so as the princes load their cannons and the cavalry gets ready to charge, the peasants are singing, "Come, Holy Spirit," believing that this battle is the final battle of Armageddon, and that God was going to break in and stop it right there. But instead, the cannons fired. The knights charged. Of about 8,000 peasants, about 5,000 lost their lives. And Muentzer himself was captured, cowering under a bed; tortured, executed. That was the end of Muentzer's apocalyptic vision.



## What has Muentzer's legacy become?

Muentzer is important largely because the East German state in the 20th century, borrowing from Engels and Marx in the 19th century, needed their own hero. They needed their own usable history for their own apocalyptic vision of how history was going to go. And so Thomas Muentzer became for Marxist history the Martin Luther. And that's why he's important. If it had not been for Marxism, we would hardly talk about Thomas Muentzer. But because of the Marxist view of how histories work, they needed someone who stood for the proletariat, and that was Thomas Muentzer.

Marxists have their own view of history, which is apocalyptic in a secular sense. And in that history there are developments that go along. And you can read history in the same way you do with religious apocalypse. And in reading history, they needed a figure early on who stood for the common people. And in the Reformation, since Martin Luther was seen as the person who led the bourgeoisie, Thomas Muentzer was seen as the person led the proletariat. And so for Marxists, in their reading of history, Thomas Muentzer is central as part of this longer move towards the eventual proletarian state.

When Marxists speak of "Workers of the world, unite," they're talking about that final end, of the apocalypse, the end where history reaches its end in the proletarian state, where the workers own everything and they run everything. That is the goal, the apocalyptic goal. It's seen as foreshadowed ... in the abortive attempt of Muentzer to unite the peasants together. But Muentzer was too early, in terms of the way history works, and so he had to fail. ...

When East Germany was still Communist, they told a story which was to encompass everyone and make sense of their history, and through that history to say that East German state was inevitable. And one of the great heroes in that was Thomas Muentzer. He was a tragic hero because he died. But he was part of history's inevitable, inexorable move towards the East German state.

Thomas Muentzer started out as a follower of Martin Luther. In the early stages, he takes up Luther's call for the Church to be reformed. Over time, however, Muentzer takes a different interpretation of the prophecies of the Bible, and carries the call for reform on to a new level of polemic, not only against the Catholic Church but

eventually against Luther himself. Whereas Luther saw the battle of the end times as being primarily a spiritual and theological battle, for Muentzer it's a real political and military revolution. ... In his interpretation of the Book of Revelation, and more generally his apocalyptic framework, Thomas Muentzer is clearly borrowing the tradition of Joachim of Fiore. He talks explicitly about the three ages and the transformations of the last age. The end time, the one he is expecting right around the corner, is to be a revolutionary change. That's very important for Muentzer. ...

Muentzer has a very specific interpretation of the end time expectations that he draws from scripture. He combines the passage from Matthew 24, where you have the harvest at the end of the age, with the passage from Revelation 14, the "grapes of wrath" passage where the angels swing the sickle and gather in the harvest. He really understands now that this is the time when only the elect will be left behind. Everyone else will be taken away to torment. And then he adds another element. He sees himself as the divinely appointed, divinely inspired agent of God. He even says, "Now is the time of harvest. God has appointed me for this task. I've sharpened my sickle."

### **Why are peasants in particular drawn to Muentzer's apocalyptic vision?**

In a way very different from others of the time, Thomas Muentzer sees the revolution at the end of the age to have a very particular social and economic impact. It's not a moral reform. It's not a spiritual form. It's economic. He's worried about the poor. And the working classes, especially in the growing cities of that time, were particularly drawn to his message. This was going to be a class revolution. ...

Despite [the] horrible defeat that [Muentzer and his followers] faced, Muentzer's legacy is not one that disappears so easily. Later generations, particularly in Germany, would look at him .. as a hero, as a proletarian rebel. Marxism would come along later and think of him as a saint, as a martyr to the cause. The very fact that the state, the symbol of oppression, are the ones who had killed him, only proves the fact that he's a prophet, that he's the one really calling for the people to rise up against big government.

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## Attitudes toward the Use of Force and Violence

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# Attitudes Toward the Use of Force and Violence in Thomas Muentzer, Menno Simons, and Martin Luther

A Comparative Study with Reference to  
Prevalent Contemporary Positions

By RALPH L. MOELLERING

### PREFACE

THE treatise offered here seeks to ex-tract and delineate, from three leading figures of the Reformation period, three basic attitudes toward the use of force and violence which have been, and continue to be, assumed by the followers of Jesus Christ. When Constantine first raised the Christian banner in front of his armies he was already tending in the direction of the first position exemplified most clearly in the career and theology of Thomas Muentzer. The Crusades, organized for the avowed purpose of wresting the Holy Land from the infidel Mohammedans, are the clearest medieval prototype of this "theology of

Ages. To a certain extent, at least, he was standing in the tradition of early church fathers, like Tertullian and Cyprian, who repudiated war with outspoken disapprobation. His emphasis on peaceful living and the relief of suffering has been inherited by the Mennonites, who bear his name, and by much of the thinking which is characteristic of present-day Christian pacifism.

Martin Luther's views on war and peace are those which predominated in the medieval church and were shared, with some minor variations, by Zwingli and Calvin. The classical church tradition inherited by some of the major American denomina-

violence," while the attitude of some American clergy during World War I is the most striking reverberation of this outlook in modern history. Those who would undertake a "holy war" to destroy atheistic Communism are the latest representatives of this school of thought.

When Menno Simons renounced the use of force under any circumstances he was reaffirming the minority opinion of scattered sects that persisted during the Middle

tions, along with most Lutherans, Reformed, and Anglicans in Europe, has included willingness to fight in "just wars" while recognizing them as punishments for human sin. The interpretation of Luther on this point, as in so many areas, has been far from unanimous and unambiguous. Bishop Berggrav of Norway could quote Luther as favorable to his policy of resistance against tyrants. Dean Inge could argue that Luther's subservience to the state

paved the way for the deification of the state and the usurpation of power by Fascist-minded scoundrels. This seemingly interminable debate over the intent and implication of Luther's doctrine of church and state cannot be adequately treated within the compass of this paper. It must suffice to indicate that Luther represents a third and clearly distinguishable view on the use of force and violence which is significant for past, present, and future.

#### I. THOMAS MUENTZER, REVOLUTIONARY SPIRITUALIST OR SOCIALIST AGITATOR?

One of the most versatile and controversial figures to appear during the period of the German Reformation, Thomas Muentzer has been anathematized and praised, interpreted, and reinterpreted. His fiery and restless mind was embroiled with radical conceptions of the nature of Christianity. While Karl Holl has defended the thesis that he can be viewed as "the originator of Anabaptism" latter-day Marxists claim him as a precursor of modern socialism.<sup>1</sup> Robert Friedman, a Mennonite scholar, finds him so vulgar and fanciful that he doubts whether he can rightfully be classified as a Christian.<sup>2</sup>

Few have doubted the intellectual competence of Thomas Muentzer. Born in Stolberg in Thuringia, about five or six

years younger than Luther, he was equipped with a university education and familiarized with the Biblical languages, read patristic and scholastic theology, and was immersed in the writings of the German mystics. His voracious reading seems to have been stimulated by a desperate internal struggle. As a troubled soul in search of certainty he shifted from one position to another in an effort to resolve his personal conflicts.<sup>3</sup>

In 1513 he became a Roman Catholic priest and was soon promoted to be the provost of a monastery. In 1519 he became father-confessor of a nunnery. Momentarily he became an exuberant follower of Luther and joined the Wittenberger in helping to demolish the massive structure of the medieval church. Yet he began to move away from Luther almost as soon as he had found him. In 1520 he was a priest in Zwickau, where he was exposed to a revival of Taborite doctrines in the "prophecies" of Nicolaus Storch, who claimed to be the recipient of direct revelation and apocalyptic visions. Muentzer was attracted by the thought that God was communicating directly with His elect.<sup>4</sup> Soon

<sup>3</sup> Annemarie Lohmann, *Zur geistlichen Entwicklung Thomas Muentzers* (Leipzig und Berlin: Teubner, 1931), who characterizes the different stages in his spiritual pilgrimage until he emerges as an independent reformer: (1) Muentzer under spiritualist direction until 1521; (2) The formation of the new religious principle in the Prague Manifesto of November 1521; (3) Peaceful expansion and elaboration of his teaching, 1522 until July 1524; (4) Violent progression (September 1523, according to plan after July 1524) and the reaction to his teaching. All translations from the German are my responsibility.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16: "The Spirit is not revealed only in the written Word of the Bible, but it is poured out immediately into the soul of man."

<sup>1</sup> Two important Marxist studies in East Germany have been concerned with his role in the Peasant's Revolt as an anticipation of proletarian revolutions under capitalism: M. M. Simirin, *Die Volksreformation des Thomas Muentzer und der grosse Bauernkrieg* (a translation from the Russian, Berlin, 1952), and Alfred Meusel, *Thomas Muentzer und seine Zeit mit einer Auswahl der Dokumente des grossen deutschen Bauernkrieges* (Berlin, 1952).

<sup>2</sup> "Muentzer, Thomas," *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, III (Scottsdale, Pa.: The Mennonite Publishing House, 1957), 785—789.

he was induced to share the conviction that the final Judgment was imminent.

Already during his "Zwickau period" some of the main outlines of Thomas Muentzer's attitude toward the use of force and violence began to take shape. He adopted and expanded Storch's expectation that the people chosen by God, the true Christians, would rise up and exterminate all the godless. These ruthless and destructive actions were necessary preliminaries to the second advent of Christ and the inauguration of the millennium. Contemporaries observed and lamented the change that had come over Muentzer. They detected a lust for blood which sometimes gave vent to sheer raving. The imagery of violence in the Book of Revelation took on a special significance for him, and he began to show a marked preference for dwelling on such incidents in the Old Testament as Elijah's slaughter of the priests of Baal, Jehu's slaying of the sons of Ahab, and Jael's assassination of the unsuspecting Sisera.<sup>5</sup>

Renouncing the pursuit of learning, the highly educated Muentzer now repudiated the ideals of the humanists and incessantly propagated his eschatological-centered faith among the impoverished miners and disgruntled weavers of Zwickau. Using the pulpit to utter fierce denunciations of the local Franciscans and opposing the preacher favored by the well-to-do burghers, he earned the enmity of the town council and was peremptorily dismissed. A popular uprising in his behalf was promptly subdued, and the turbulent rebel was compelled to take refuge in Prague.

<sup>5</sup> Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1957), pp. 252, 253.

At this new location Thomas Muentzer issued a manifesto announcing the formation of a new church in Bohemia which was to consist solely of the elect and which would depend for its guidance upon direct inspiration from God.<sup>6</sup> His own role is now defined in terms of the parable of the wheat and the tares: "Harvesttime is here, so God Himself has hired me for His harvest. I have sharpened my scythe. . . ."<sup>7</sup>

Muentzer found Bohemia uncongenial to his bold declaration, and he was soon expelled. During Luther's absence at the Wartburg he lodged in Wittenberg with Carlstadt, who was in agreement with him in many respects but unwilling to follow him in his most extreme views. As a restless wanderer Muentzer moved from place to place in central Germany, sustained by a now unshakable confidence in his prophetic mission. Renouncing his academic degrees he signed his papers only as "Christ's messenger." His deprivations and sufferings he understood as strenuous training for his messianic task: "The living God is sharpening His scythe in me, so that later I can cut down the red poppies and the blue cornflowers."<sup>8</sup>

From Easter of 1523 until August 1524 Muentzer was a priest in Allstedt, a small town in the Harz mountains, where his preaching attracted large throngs from the neighboring mining districts. Here he manifested some of his diversified interest and ability by writing a number of liturgical tracts on Baptism and the German

<sup>6</sup> Otto G. Brandt, *Thomas Muentzer: Sein Leben und seine Schriften* (Jena and Leipzig, 1933), p. 60: "Den wer den Geist Christi nit in sich spueret, ja der ihn nit gewiszlich hat, der ist nit ein Glied Christi, er ist des Teufels. . . ."

<sup>7</sup> Cohn, p. 255.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

Mass. Like Luther, he married a former nun and reared children. Temporarily he appeared to be content to assume a more moderate position. As late as July 9, 1523, he sent a rather conciliatory letter to Luther. In the same year he wrote in an evangelical spirit to his brethren in Stolberg.<sup>9</sup>

This comparatively peaceful interlude was soon terminated. In the winter of 1523—24 Muentzer founded a strange conspiratorial society called the League of the Elect, designed to execute the program he had formulated at Prague—if necessary by force of arms. From this time on Muentzer seems to have lost touch with reality and embarked on a road of fanciful apocalypticism and uncompromising fanaticism which could only lead to ruination. Luther recognized this trend and began to refer to him as a *Schwaermer*.<sup>10</sup>

With a mixture of curiosity and alarm Duke John of Saxony came to Allstedt in July 1524 and asked Muentzer to preach a sermon. Taking his text from the second chapter of Daniel, Muentzer complied and took full advantage of the opportunity to expound his characteristic ideas and develop more fully what has been called his "theology of violence."

The princes are warned that they must choose between obedience to God or submission to the devil. The last of the world empires foreseen by Daniel is approaching its doom. The Satanic usurpers of God's domain must be overthrown and extinguished. Those serpents, the clergy, and those eels, the secular rulers and lords, contaminate one another in a squirming heap of corruption. That fainthearted and half-

way reformer in Wittenberg<sup>11</sup> lacks confidence in the living Spirit and is unwilling to carry through to its logical completion the movement which he has inaugurated. Luther has devised a comfortable reformation in which the stress is laid on individual salvation. A "honey sweet Christ" is made available through the simple process of personal faith in contradiction of the fact that the real Christ is the "bitter Christ," who can only be received as we become identified with Him in His sufferings. Those who would be saints of God must not shrink away from the dire prospect of bearing the cross. For the princes this means the unpleasant but unavoidable commission from God to purge the ranks of Christendom of its pretenders and impostors:

. . . Drive His enemies from the elect. . . .  
Don't give us any old jokes about how the power of God should do it without your application of the sword, otherwise may it rust away from you in its scabbard! . . .  
God is your protection and will teach you to fight against His foes. . . . The godless have no right to live except as the elect wish to grant it to them. . . .<sup>12</sup>

Indirect evidence related to Muentzer's position on the use of force is found in the letters addressed to him by Conrad Grebel and his friends from Zurich in September 1524. Addressing him as a beloved brother in Christ and commending him for

<sup>11</sup> Explicitly called Brother Fattened Swine and Brother Soft Life in the "Sermon Before the Princes," in George H. Williams, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, The Library of Christian Classics, XXV (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), 61.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66—69; cf. Carl Hinrichs, *Thomas Muentzer: Politische Schriften* (Halle, 1950), pp. 3—28, where detailed commentary is included.

<sup>9</sup> Brandt, p. 62.

<sup>10</sup> *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, III, 785.

his writings against "fictitious faith" and the ritualistic customs of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, these pacifist-minded Anabaptists nevertheless feel constrained to admonish him regarding some dangerous policies which they have detected and which they wish he would disavow. They cannot understand why he continues to tolerate chanting and the Mass. Moreover, they have been disturbed by reports that he advocates the use of the sword to protect the adherents of the Gospel. True believers are sheep likely to be slaughtered at any moment. "They must be baptized in anguish and affliction." Even under the Old Testament dispensation war was a misfortune. Now it is to be categorically renounced.<sup>13</sup>

The final objective of Muentzer, the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, which he had first announced in the Prague Manifesto, now became a burning passion for him. Having spurned the "spiritless flesh at Wittenberg," and having abandoned any hope of converting the rulers to his views, he turned to the peasant population as the only redemptive means available. A violent upheaval spearheaded by the common people would be necessary to dislodge the heathen princes and inaugurate the reign of God's saints.<sup>14</sup>

In the free imperial city of Muehlhausen

<sup>13</sup> Williams, p. 80. The postscript or second letter to "Brother Thomas" was written after the Swiss evangelicals had heard about the bellicose sermon which Muentzer had delivered before the princes of Saxony. If the report is true they want him to know that they are offended, and they plead with him to abstain from any further utterances which would defend war.

<sup>14</sup> Muentzer's attack on Luther, "Schutzrede wider das geistlose Fleisch zuo Wittenberg," Hinrichs, pp. 72—101; cf. Lohmann, pp. 65 to 68.

Muentzer found a large proportion of paupers who were susceptible to his tempestuous rabble rousing. Obsessed by his conviction that the destruction of the ungodly was impending, he patrolled the streets at the head of an armed band with a red crucifix and a naked sword carried in front of him.

On the title page of an incendiary pamphlet published at Muehlhausen Muentzer wrote:

Beware, I have put my words into thy mouth; I have lifted thee above the people and above the empires that thou mayest build and plant. A wall of iron against the kings, princes, priests, and for the people hath been erected. Let them fight, for victory is wondrous, and the strong and godless tyrants will perish.<sup>15</sup>

With the outbreak of the Peasants' War Muentzer proved himself a revolutionary in action, although he does not seem to have had a voice in the main uprisings in the south and west of Germany. His influence was limited to the Thuringian sector, where the peasants scoured the countryside, looting and burning monasteries and convents. In a letter sent to his followers at Allstedt he issued a call to arms:

I tell you, if you will not suffer for God's sake, then you must be the devil's martyrs. So watch out! Don't be so discouraged, indolent, do not show adulation for the perverse visionaries, the godless scoundrels. Start and fight the Lord's conflict. It is already overdue. . . . If there are but three of you who, confiding in God, seek only His name and honor, you will not need to

<sup>15</sup> Quoted by Friedrich Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany* (New York: International Publishers, 1926), p. 69.

fear a hundred thousand. . . . Now go at them, go ahead, go ahead! The rascals are as dispirited as dogs. . . . Pay no attention to the lamentations of the godless! They will beg you in such a cordial way, and whine and cry like children. Don't show any pity. . . . Strike, go ahead, while the iron is hot! Don't let your sword get cold! Don't allow it to become feeble! . . . Throw their tower to the ground! As long as they are alive you will never get rid of your fear of men. One can't speak to you about God as long as they are reigning over you. Push ahead, attack, while you have daylight. God goes ahead of you, so follow, follow. . . .<sup>16</sup>

About 8,000 peasants finally grouped themselves into an ill-equipped army and appealed to Muentzer to provide them leadership. Comparing himself to Gideon, the ill-fated prophet left Muehlhausen with some 300 of his most devoted and rabid followers and joined the peasant camp at Frankhausen. Peasants from neighboring villages were threatened by force if they did not join the "army of the Lord." An urgent appeal was sent to the town of Erfurt for reinforcements, and defiant letters were sent to the enemy. To Count Ernest of Mansfeld Muentzer wrote:

Say, you wretched, shabby bag of worms, who made you a prince over the people whom God has purchased with His precious blood? . . . By God's mighty power you are delivered up to destruction. . . . The eternal, living God has commanded that you be removed from the throne of power which has been given to us. For you are useless to the Christian cause, you

<sup>16</sup> Brandt, pp. 74, 75. Luther's much-quoted (often out of context) ferocious pamphlet *Against the Thievish, Murderous Hordes of the Peasants* can be better understood as a fearful reaction to Muentzer's threats.

are a harmful *Staubbesen* (birch rod) to the friends of God. . . .<sup>17</sup>

Philip of Hesse, strengthened by recruits from other princes, and with ample artillery, could afford to treat the unfortunate peasants with contempt. Nevertheless, terms for submission were offered; the chief demand being the surrender of Thomas Muentzer and his closest associates. In all probability the offer would have been accepted, but the self-acclaimed prophet made an impassioned plea in which he declared that God had spoken to him and had promised to catch the cannon balls of the enemy in his cloak sleeves. The effectiveness of the speech was enhanced by the appearance of a rainbow which, as the symbol on Muentzer's banner, was readily interpreted as a signal of divine approval.<sup>18</sup> Confident that some stupendous miracle would occur to transform apparent defeat into sudden victory the peasants were singing "Come, Holy Spirit," when the impatient princes fired a salvo. The results were immediate and catastrophic: the disorganized peasants fled in panic, while the cavalry hunted them down and slaughtered them by the hundreds. Muentzer escaped, but his hiding place was soon uncovered. After being tortured he was beheaded in the camp of the princes on May 27, 1525.<sup>19</sup>

The memory of Thomas Muentzer has been preserved by friends and critics alike. Even though he never designated himself

<sup>17</sup> "Muentzers Brief an Graf Ernst von Mansfeld," May 12, 1525, *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 78.

<sup>18</sup> According to the *Histori Thomas Muentzers*, a work which was written while the story was still fresh in people's memory and which evinces a rather high standard of factual accuracy.

<sup>19</sup> Cohn, pp. 269—271.

as an Anabaptist, he was regarded as the "evil genius" of the movement by Luther, Zwingli, and Bullinger. The debate is still raging as to what affinities of belief, and what historical contacts, can be demonstrated between the champion of the peasants, the Swiss evangelicals, and the Mennonites.

More astounding is the apotheosis which he has received at the hand of Russian and German Communists, from Engels through Kautsky to the present day.

Marxist apologists who have been engrossed in a search for historical precedents to modern Communism have been much attracted to a study and interpretation of Thomas Muentzer. His bristling defiance of the political and ecclesiastical order of his time has merited their applause. In his dependence on force and violence they see one who was a 16th-century revolutionary with tactics and objectives akin to their own. No less than the Swiss evangelicals, who were his contemporaries, they are eager to proffer him the hand of fellowship and call him comrade. The question continues to be debated: Was Muentzer a revolutionary spiritualist or a socialist agitator?

Writing in 1850 Friedrich Engels professed to find many parallels between the situation in Germany during the Peasants' War and the revolutionary movements which erupted in Europe in 1848. The numerous apocalyptic references in Muentzer's writings are dismissed as concessions made to the mentality of the people he was dealing with in a day when religious superstitions abounded and retained a tremendous hold on the imagination of the common people. "Under the cloak of Christian forms," opines Engels, "he preached a kind of pantheism . . . and at times even taught

open atheism." The Spirit, which is the only reliable interpreter of the Bible for Muentzer, is identified by Engels as human reason. The heresies concealed under Christian phraseology, according to this Marxist evaluation, include a denial of heaven and hell and a political program designed to implement an equalitarian commonwealth on earth. By the kingdom of God Muentzer understood a new ordering of society in which class differences would be dissolved and private property confiscated. All existing authorities who did not support the revolution were to be overthrown by force. Princes and nobles who did not surrender to the revolutionary regime were to be liquidated without mercy.<sup>20</sup>

While admitting that Muentzer as a child of his age could not have a full insight into theoretical Marxism, Engels claims that he often "went far beyond the immediate ideas and demands of the plebeians and peasants." Just as farsighted Communists have always been in the vanguard of the trend toward socialism, so Muentzer molded a party out of the revolutionary elements that "still represented only a small minority of the insurgent masses."<sup>21</sup>

Echoes of Thomas Muentzer's attitude toward the use of force and violence are also found at times among professing Christians. Among the more weird and unusual sects one often finds apocalyptic imagery reminiscent of Storch and Muentzer. Rarely do they express a desire to take up arms themselves to usher in the kingdom of God, but the way they denounce existing authorities in state and church is similar to the verbal abuse which

<sup>20</sup> Friedrich Engels, pp. 65—68.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Muentzer heaped upon Luther and the princes. Although the theological views of Charles Russell and Judge Rutherford would depart in many respects from those of the most notorious radical reformer of the 16th century, there is much in the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses that may cause us to exclaim, "Shades of Thomas Muentzer!" Just as the false reformers and godless rulers had once combined ecclesiastical and political power to prevent the inauguration of the reign of God's saints and to enforce the oppression of the peasants, so in the 20th century we see the churches, commercial enterprises, and world empires allied to frustrate God's purposes and persecute Jehovah's Witnesses. Babylon, the mother of harlots (symbolic of religious power), is married to Satan. Rutherford wrote:

In these latter times the three elements, under the supervision of the devil, have united in forming the most subtle and wicked world power of all time. They operate under the title of Christendom, which is a fraudulent and blasphemous assumption that they constitute Christ's kingdom on earth.<sup>22</sup>

The refusal of the Witnesses to bear arms and salute the flag is not due to any pacifist views but to their contention that the prevailing political powers are demonic. On the basis of an allegorical, and often fantastically farfetched, interpretation of prophecies (again akin to Muentzer) they foresee the final battle of Armageddon, in which Satan will marshal all his visible forces against Jehovah. In their vivid portrayal of this decisive clash between good and evil they picture the priests, politicians,

and capitalists from all the nations marshaling all their tanks, planes, and weapons of war and entering into the "Valley of Threshing." In Muentzer's vision the saints were required to bear the brunt of the battle. In Rutherford's scheme the faithful witnesses will occupy the mountainsides in the role of spectators, while Christ, the invisible field general of Jehovah, strikes down Satan's armies with the flail of destruction. The honor of Jehovah will be vindicated, the obstacles to the establishment of a theocracy will have been removed, and the cherished dreams of the Witnesses will be fulfilled.<sup>23</sup>

The spirit of Thomas Muentzer and his "theology of violence," supposedly anchored to a more sane and solid tradition of faith and teaching, have at times found their way into "respectable" Protestantism. This has been especially true during periods of chaotic confusion and devastating wars, when emotions are likely to be charged with hatred and otherwise reasonable men lose their stability and restraint.

A particularly strong case could be presented for a resurgence of Muentzer's millennial and bellicose views as being widely exhibited in the United States during World War I. The parallel becomes most striking when we remember that both share a vision of a better world emerging from the use of force in God's name. Just as Thomas Muentzer could call upon the princes to use their power to uproot the godless and later mobilize the peasantry to wage war against their tyrannical oppressors, so American churchmen in 1917 and 1918 could call upon our citizenry to fight a "holy war" against the pagan Huns and

<sup>22</sup> *Deliverance* (Brooklyn: The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society), p. 53.

<sup>23</sup> Rutherford, *Religion* (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society), pp. 337—357.

the nefarious Kaiser. Just as the fiery preacher of Allstedt could dream of the rule of God's saints on earth, so the optimistic clergy during the first few decades of the 20th century could visualize God's will being "done on earth as it is in heaven" because the world would become "safe for democracy" and permanent peace would be assured. Somehow the contradiction between idealism and violence is passed over. Oddly enough even the ethics of Jesus are strained to conform to this position. That Jesus was a pacifist was categorically denied. J. Wesley Johnston of the John Street Methodist Episcopal Church in New York City affirmed: "Christ was the greatest fighter the world has ever seen." He was "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah," and "surely every believer in Christ . . . will unsheathe his sword and gladly give his life . . . to help win the fight against the forces of cruelty, abomination and hell."<sup>24</sup>

The editor of the *Christian Register* (Unitarian) was sure that Jesus not only would endorse Christian participation in the war but also would eagerly join in the killing:

As Christians, of course, we say Christ approves (of the war). But would he fight and kill? . . . There is not an opportunity to deal death to the enemy that he would shirk from or delay in seizing! He would take bayonet and grenade and bomb and rifle and do the work of deadliness against that which is the most deadly enemy of his Father's kingdom in a thousand years. . . . That is the inexorable truth about Jesus Christ and this war; and we rejoice to say it.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Quoted by Ray H. Abrams, *Preachers Present Arms* (New York: Round Table Press, 1933), p. 63.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

Just as Muentzer had used preaching as the means for arousing the populace and bolstering their morale, so the crusading ministers in the United States used their pulpits to inflame passions and converted their churches into recruiting stations. The shameful behavior of much of the American clergy during our first intervention in a world conflict demonstrates that Christian leaders today are not immune to the ever-recurring temptation to achieve their goals by forsaking the sword of the Spirit and resorting to the tactics employed by men like Thomas Muentzer.

For the most part ecclesiastical leaders learned their painful lesson through the disillusionment following World War I. Yet there was a tendency in some quarters to again view our entrance into World War II as a righteous cause meriting divine approval. Militant Dean Beekman, an Episcopal prelate, made 509 speeches in churches, colleges, and civic clubs around the country depicting the horrors of Nazism. After we became embroiled in the conflict his injunction was: "Don't pray for peace; pray for triumph."<sup>26</sup> Some Bible Fundamentalists, displaying an unmistakable Calvinistic strain commingled with certain Anabaptist traits, became so vociferous in their patriotism as to be on the verge of resurrecting the spirit of Thomas Muentzer. Apocalyptic references scattered throughout their publications made Hitler and Mussolini personifications of evils prophesied in Ezekiel and Revelation, or sometimes Stalin was announced as the Antichrist.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Ralph Luther Moellering, *Modern War and the American Churches* (New York: The American Press, 1956), p. 60.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 67.

Wherever the churches or American religiosity tends to identify the United States with God's people, and its foreign policy with God's objectives in history, there is danger of reverting to a Muentzerlike theology of violence. Whenever Christians depict Soviet Russia as the center of all godlessness, and begin to talk about "preventive warfare," we may be sure that the spirit of Thomas Muentzer is again rising to haunt and disturb us. Deplorable as it may be, the position he assumed on the use of force by Christians has not yet been obliterated.

## II. MENNO SIMONS, ADVOCATE OF CHRISTIAN PACIFISM OR POLITICAL IRRESPONSIBILITY?

The most outstanding Anabaptist leader of the Low Countries during the 16th century, and the progenitor of a movement which has persisted to this day in America and Europe, was Menno Simons, born 13 years after Luther and about 7 years younger than Muentzer. At the age of 28 he was ordained as a priest at Utrecht. Doubts regarding transubstantiation were early planted in his mind by the Sacramentists, clergy in the Netherlands under the influence of Cornelius Hoen.<sup>28</sup> To resolve his inner conflicts Menno turned to a diligent study of the Scriptures. He acknowledges that he found enlightenment in the writings of Martin Luther which came to his attention. His estrangement from the Roman Church was a gradual development. Disturbed by the execution of an itinerant tailor in a neighboring city for the offense of being rebaptized, he began to examine

<sup>28</sup> Hoen's views regarding the Lord's Supper were published in Switzerland by Zwingli at the very time that Menno was tormented by doubt. They were publicly repudiated by Luther at the Marburg Colloquy.

the Bible on this point, and soon found himself questioning the validity of infant Baptism. Unsatisfied by the explanation of the reformers, he found himself out of harmony with Lutherans and Zwinglians as well as with the Romanists. About 1531 he reached "the momentous decision" that Baptism on confession of faith alone was Scriptural, but it was five more years before he was willing to risk an open break with the church which had nurtured him.<sup>29</sup>

His willingness to assume an independent status was accelerated by his revulsion to the violent spirit displayed by the "perverted sect of Muenster." Menno was deeply shaken by the debacle of the radical followers of Melchior Hoffmann. Some of the more zealous and pious members of his own parish were swept away by the fanaticism of the Muensterite delusion. His own brother seems to have been among those who supported a teaching of vengeance and liquidation of the ungodly. Deeply distressed by these abominable doctrines, he tried desperately to counteract their pernicious influence with public denunciation from the pulpit and pastoral visits on the members of his flock.<sup>30</sup>

A sharp polemic written at this time and directed against "the blasphemy of Jan van Leiden" begins to delineate his position against war and violence as instruments to which Christians may resort for the righting of wrongs or for the establishment of a theocracy on earth. There is only one true King and Lord, Jesus Christ, who possesses all authority in heaven and on

<sup>29</sup> Biography of Menno Simons by Cornelius Krahn, *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, III, 577—583.

<sup>30</sup> John Horsch, "Menno Simons' Attitude Toward the Anabaptists of Muenster," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, X (1936), 55 ff.

earth.<sup>31</sup> The church is His spiritual kingdom, within which love and peace prevail. Those who advocate the use of force to consummate the rule of God have broken their covenant relation with the Lord.

Referring to the armor of the Christian according to Ephesians 6 Menno reminds his readers that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." The only security guaranteed the follower of Christ is to be armed with the sword of the Spirit against the wiles of the devil. The person who wants to abide in Christ must take up his cross and follow after Him. All the injunctions of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount implying nonresistance (turn the other cheek, love your enemies, be perfect) must be taken seriously. This is the true voice of Christ, which must be heeded.

Quoting St. Paul, Menno affirms that the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. It is always wrong to return evil for evil. The ideal is to live peaceably with all men. Give place to wrath and leave vengeance to the Lord. Overcome evil with good. We should pattern our mind after that of Jesus Christ, and we observe that He "was minded to suffer." If we are to be patient "until the coming of the Lord, then surely it is forbidden to fight, inasmuch as the Lord is not yet come."<sup>32</sup>

In flat contradiction to the views of Thomas Muentzer, Menno insists that we cannot arrogate to ourselves the authority

to be God's angels who root up the tares. Some say that the Lord wants to punish Babylon and Christians are to be His instruments, but Christ must return for the final Judgment before His enemies are castigated.<sup>33</sup>

At first thought it may seem inconsistent in Menno's writings to discover that such an uncompromising advocate of passive resistance does not shrink from dwelling on the torments of the eternally damned. Even though men should not lift a finger to resist the encroachments of evil it is fully within the province of God to mete out an unmitigated punishment of the fiercest type imaginable. Unless people are born again in this life they will be hurled into the bottomless lake of fire and brimstone in the next life.<sup>34</sup>

We are likely to wonder whether Menno and his followers were not unconsciously tempted to find a sinful compensation, if not secret delight, in the thought that their enemies who abuse them now find the tables turned in the hereafter as they squirm in the miseries of eternal hellfire.

The climax in Menno's spiritual conflict came with the tragedy at the Old Cloister,

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 46, 47.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. his vivid description of the horrible punishments meted out by God's vengeance on the evil and impenitent, in the *Complete Works of Menno Simons*, pp. 202, 203, 205: "In the 'terrible, unbearable judgment' the persecutors of the Anabaptists will be told, 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'

"Then shall your laughter be changed into weeping, your joy into sorrow, your abundant earthly life into everlasting death, your luxury into eternal woe, your pride into dust and worms, your violence into suffering, your beauty into ugliness, and your cruel and unmerciful tyranny be rewarded with unquenchable hellfire." Cf. "Defense to All Theologians," *ibid.*, p. 538.

<sup>31</sup> Jesus is identified with Melchisedek, king of Salem (peace). He is the Second David and the fulfillment of many prophecies from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah which speak of the peaceful rule of King Messiah. Cf. "The Blasphemy of John of Leiden" in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* (Scottsdale, 1956), pp. 38 ff.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

near Bolsward, when some 300 misguided zealots imbued with the revolutionary fervor of the Muensterites lost their lives. "The blood of these people," he said, "became such a burden to me that I could not endure it nor find rest in my soul."<sup>35</sup> No longer could he evade his responsibility of helping the erring sheep. Turning to God with sighs and tears, pleading for forgiveness and courage, he had his conversion experience.

From this time on he openly attacked the evils of Romanism. His complete secession from the church followed after about nine months. Exactly when he was rebaptized is not clear. During the next year he retired from active life to contemplate the implications of his decision. Then he accepted ordination as an elder in the Anabaptist brotherhood of northern Holland, where he labored from 1536 to 1543. His writings were not learned treatises but simple books which represented sincere efforts to meet the immediate needs of the common man. The remaining 18 years of his life were devoted to building up the church in northwest Germany, where persecution was not so severe.<sup>36</sup>

Present-day Mennonites claim to find their origin in the movement initiated by Conrad Grebel and his colleagues in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1525, and they recognize Obbe Philips as the earliest organizer of the Anabaptists in Friesland, but they are proud to be named after Menno Simons, for they esteem him as "the heaven-sent leader who rallied the scattered

brethren and gave them the leadership in faith and spirit and doctrine which they needed." Scorning "dungeon, fire, and sword," he brought them through their great tribulation.<sup>37</sup>

Not a systematic theologian of great merit, Menno merely projected his vision of two fundamental Biblical ideals, a concept of practical holiness and an emphasis on the church as a voluntary association kept under constant surveillance by the leaders and preserved under discipline by rigid application of the ban. Christianity related to everyday life meant for him the resolute abandonment by Christ's followers of all carnal strife and violence, indeed the use of force in any manner. For him the church was the representative and agent of Christ on earth, and as such it must preserve itself unstained by the contaminating and degrading influences of the political order. A thoroughgoing separation from the sin of the world necessitated a repudiation of armed conflict.

In his treatise on "The New Birth" Menno Simons indulges in a typical stern denunciation of sin and demands a heartfelt religion rather than one which becomes absorbed in the attraction of external ceremonies. Those who have received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit are inwardly purified and will accede without qualification or compromise to the absolute ethic of nonresistance. The life of love does not allow for retaliatory acts. The children of peace are concerned with eliminating human suffering, not with adding to the brutalities of the world. They should be eager to give food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty. The regenerated people of God "have beaten their swords into plowshares

<sup>35</sup> Harold Bender, "A Brief Biography of Menno Simons" in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> To find the peace he desired, however, he was compelled to flee from place to place. From 1546 to 1561 he was in the territory of Holstein.

<sup>37</sup> Bender, p. 28.

and their spears into pruning hooks and know war no more."<sup>38</sup>

In the "Foundation of Christian Doctrine" Menno warns, "Let everyone be careful lest he transgress in the matter of the sword, lest he perish with the sword."<sup>39</sup> The weapons of Christians are not instruments for breaking down the walls and gates of cities and causing human blood to be "shed in torrents like water." Christian reliance should be placed solely on the inward Baptism with Spirit and fire, which alone can overthrow the citadels of Satan. Physical force must be repudiated "even if we should be torn into a thousand pieces, and if as many false witnesses rose up against us as there are spears of grass in the field and grains of sand upon the seashore." The use of iron and metal implements of warfare are left in the hands of the ungodly, "who, alas, regard human blood and swine's blood about alike." Patience is the best weapon of defense, Christ is an impregnable Fortress, the Word of God is a sword, and victory is assured by "a courageous, firm, unfeigned faith in Jesus Christ."<sup>40</sup>

In commenting on Abraham's admirable faith Menno Simons might be expected to be embarrassed by the narrative in which the patriarch resorted to armed intervention and killed four marauding kings in order to rescue his nephew Lot. But Abraham is lauded for his implicit trust in the living God and for daring to risk his life. "This is an example to all the spiritual children of Abraham that they should so

love their brethren." In no way does this imply, however, that Christians are permitted to use force even if they found their fellow believers in such dire straits as Lot. Our ethical imperative is to "suffer patiently and not fight and do battle with swords and muskets." The only positive action which we can take is to open our doors to war refugees and heal the wounds of the victims of violence. Here the pattern is set for the contemporary leadership of peace churches in alleviating the sufferings of war refugees. "We should risk our lives for the brethren" even if we know in advance that we are endangering ourselves.<sup>41</sup> Evidently Menno would have found it possible to give physical sustenance to someone taking part in an underground resistance movement to political tyranny or to offer aid to escapees from East Berlin.

Some observers may wonder whether there is not an inconsistency between the peace ethic and the Mennonite insistence on the vigorous use of the ban. While rejecting any use of physical force, apparently even to prevent the worst crime, the Anabaptists are willing to impose the most severe kind of church discipline. This may raise the question in some minds whether the worst anguish that can be inflicted upon a fellow human being is always physical pain. What about the mental torture accompanying social ostracism? Would a whipping or a gun wound be worse than to be treated with disdain by the members of your own family?<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *The Complete Works of Menno Simons*, p. 94.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>41</sup> "True Christian Faith," *ibid.*, p. 347.

<sup>42</sup> "Admonition on Church Discipline," *ibid.*, p. 412: "Do not have anything to do . . . with people who . . . reject and separate themselves from the body of fellowship of Christ, no matter

The Anabaptists believed that there were significant distinctions to be observed between the old and new covenants. The original agreement which God decreed involved a theocracy. In the days of ancient Israel the covenant people were justified in using force. The body of believers and the body politic were identical. The sword of Israel, however, was not bequeathed to the church of Christ but to worldly governments.

Thus Menno and his Anabaptist followers do not think it is incongruous to require unexcepting nonresistance to evil on the part of believers while granting the state the right to use "police power" to preserve law and order. The Mennonites are far from being anarchists. In accord with Romans 13 they agree that the Christian should render honor and obedience to the government. But this does not make it obligatory that Christians fight in Caesar's armies. When faced with induction into the armed forces there is a higher law at stake. Obedience to God takes precedence over compliance with man-made laws. The Christian cannot administer justice in the state; that is not his calling. The real foundation for Christian ethics is found in Romans 12, where retribution is left in God's hands. Let the Christian limit himself to a program of charitable activity; let him overcome evil only by doing good.

whether it be father or mother, sister or brother, man or wife, son or daughter. . . ."

It should be noted that Menno uses a distinctly evangelical approach toward the use of the ban, emphasizing that it is intended to save and not destroy the offender. Late in his life he was drawn into a controversy on the subject of church discipline which embittered his last years. In the heat of polemical debate he felt compelled to adopt a more stringent position than he had originally held.

Whoever has the inward peace of Christ will banish all thought of violent action.<sup>43</sup>

Is Menno promoting the most desirable form of pacifism? Will adherence to his principles be an effective witness that tends to curb evil, or will it lead to political irresponsibility? What if all Christians refused to participate in the affairs of government? Are they not then surrendering by default to demonic powers? These are some of the ever-recurring criticisms that dispute the soundness of this position. Is it possible to withdraw from a corrupt world in such a way that the "pure Christian" is not tainted by it? As thoughtful modern pacifists have been compelled to admit—nonparticipation in military combat does not exempt the pacifist Christian from all guilt in what is transpiring.

Menno is eager to be exonerated from all charges of complicity with dangerous radicals like the Muensterites. Doctrines which stir up sedition and polygamy are abominations and patent heresies. "We hate and reprove (in evangelical fashion, that is) those that fight with the sword, steal, rob, or in any manner wrong anyone on earth. . . ." <sup>44</sup> His repeated complaint is that those who would judge his followers as tumultuous are the very ones who give unqualified endorsement to the bloody wars of their emperors, kings, and princes. Some of his antagonists he accuses of courting the favor of the powers that be even to

<sup>43</sup> "Brief and Clear Confession," *ibid.*, p. 423. Cf. "Reply to False Accusations," *ibid.*, pp. 548—550: "The office of the magistrate is ordained by God, but Love compels us respectfully and humbly to show all high officials . . . how they should rightfully execute their office." Authorities are reprimanded for trying to adjudicate that which 'belongs exclusively to the eternal judgment of the Most High God.'

<sup>44</sup> "Reply to Gellius Faber," *ibid.*, p. 715.

the extent of betraying innocent Anabaptists "who would rather die than willfully transgress the Word of the Lord. . . . By so doing you open the doors wide to the rapacious rulers to rob such pious souls and to the bloodthirsty to murder them."<sup>45</sup>

At least in his verbal assaults on his opponents Menno Simons was not always meek and mild. In an outburst of inflamed passion he writes: "Shame yourselves, O callous, perverted men. . . ." <sup>46</sup> The magisterial reformers have churches filled with:

The immoral, the impenitent, the sensual, the perverts, yes, of the bloodthirsty wolves, lions, bears, basilisks, serpents, and fiery flying dragons. . . . In truth, I know not how the Behemoth of hell could rant in a more devilish and cruel fashion than you or your members who pose as the Church of Christ.<sup>47</sup>

The disciples of Menno Simons are not encouraged to go out of their way to seek martyrdom. Where they know that secrecy is necessary to preserve their lives they

<sup>45</sup> "Epistle to Micron," *ibid.*, p. 924. To Martin Micron he addresses the lament: "[I am] hated of the world because of this defaming, false, bloodthirsty writing and shouting of the learned ones, who for the sake of their poor bellies teach the broad, easy way with all the false prophets. . . . But what will help? The innocent, defenseless Lamb must be hated and murdered in His members," p. 926. Cf. "Reply to False Accusations," *ibid.*, pp. 556, 557: He complains that established churches and their antecedents have given a Christian sanction to plunder, bloodshed, and violence of all kinds. They have induced rulers to take up arms against one another until they "have shed human blood like water, torn the hearts from each other's bodies, and have made countless harlots, rogues, widows, and orphans." He finds their crimes depicted in Rev. 17:6 and 18:20.

<sup>46</sup> "The New Birth," *ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

are not urged to "come out in the open" with their teachings. Moses, Jeremiah, Elijah, and St. Paul are cited as Biblical examples of men who fled from certain death at the hands of their enemies. To be sure, God rescued some of His saints with extraordinary miracles, but these instances of supernatural intervention cannot always be anticipated even by the most faithful men. In keeping with the spirit of *Gelassenheit* which characterizes this group they will not venture a daring, aggressive proclamation of their tenets. They are willing to endure suffering if it comes their way, but they have a natural human eagerness to avoid persecution if possible.<sup>48</sup>

Mennonites always find the classic example for nonresistance in Jesus, who told Peter to return his sword to his sheath. They are chagrined by the vehemence with which he cleansed the temple. Even the crucifixion of Jesus sometimes seems to be interpreted as the tragic martyrdom of the foremost pacifist of all time. We should seek to emulate Jesus, who "willingly yielded His life."<sup>49</sup> In what the translator considers a corrupt text some allowance would seem to be made for the defensive use of weapons:

Touching weapons, the elders are unable to consider it impure when a believer traveling on the roads, according to the conditions of the land, carries an honest staff or a rapier on his shoulder, according to the custom and the manner of the land. But to carry weapons of defense and to present them according to the command of the magistracy, this the elders

<sup>48</sup> "Reply to False Accusations," *ibid.*, p. 573.

<sup>49</sup> "Exhortation to a Church in Prussia," *ibid.*, p. 1031.

do not consider permissible—unless it be in case of soldiers on guard.<sup>50</sup>

The position set forth by Menno Simons in rejecting all forms of force and violence has been preserved for 400 years and is still maintained by those present-day Christians who bear his name as well as by other so-called "peace churches." A conference of Mennonites held at Ermden in East Friesland passed the following resolution in determining how to treat those members who had given offense by taking part in drilling for military service:

If a brother has taken part in this, he shall desist from it, confess to sorrow for the offense and ask the forgiveness of God and the church before he may be recognized as in peace with the church.<sup>51</sup>

The short Mennonite Confession of 1591, called the Concept of Cologne, contains the statement: "No vengeance is permitted; nay, it is forbidden, not only with outward weapons but also to give railing for railing."<sup>52</sup> With slight exceptions these principles were firmly upheld by all Mennonites who survived persecution during the 17th and 18th centuries. In the 19th century, however, the refusal to bear arms was modified among European Mennonites everywhere except in Russia. In America the immigrant groups from the "peace churches" succeeded, for the most part, in not deviating from their original ideal. Both world wars resulted in defections among the members, and those who remained unmoved by the call to arms were

<sup>50</sup> Article VIII, "The Wismar Articles of 1554," *ibid.*, p. 1042.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted by John Horsch in "A Historical Survey of the Position of the Mennonite Church on Nonresistance," in *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, I (July 1927), p. 19.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

harassed and subjected to abuse of all kinds. Meanwhile Mennonite theologians continue to argue in defense of their historical position.<sup>53</sup>

The Church of the Brethren, the Quakers, and pacifist-minded Christians within all the major denominations stand in the tradition of Menno Simons in their renunciation of armed intervention as a legitimate Christian approach to the security and welfare of nations. This absolute ethic of nonresistance has taken on new cogency with the threat of a nuclear holocaust. Pacifism once again appeals to many as a valid Christian alternative to mutual obliteration, in which resistance and massive retaliation may seem utterly gruesome and futile.

### III. MARTIN LUTHER, THEOLOGICAL GIANT OR FORERUNNER OF NAZISM?

Martin Luther, who outlived Thomas Muentzer by 21 years and passed away 15 years before Menno Simons, was, despite his break with Rome, an advocate of gradual and peaceful change. Conservative in his theological reformation, he was even more cautious in his attitude toward the political realm. Living in semifudal Germany he accepted the established order as ordained by God and was reluctant to advocate any drastic innovations.

As an avid reader of Augustine, Luther was impressed by his elaboration of Ambrose's theory of a *iustum bellum*. Defense against barbarians and brigands sounded like a commendable Christian undertaking. In Luther's day the infidel Turks were menacing the Christian civilization of western

<sup>53</sup> One of the standard works used in Mennonite colleges and seminaries today is Guy Hershberger's *War, Peace, and Nonresistance* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1955).

Europe. Force and violence were unavoidable in a sinful world where external invasion had to be repelled and internal insurrection suppressed. Unlike either Thomas Muentzer or Menno Simons Luther did not deviate from the traditional concept of a just war. Throughout his career he consistently held that it is permissible for a Christian to bear arms if the cause for which he fights is righteous before God. Luther was as much opposed to Muentzer's fanaticism, which would wield the sword to expedite the advent of God's kingdom on earth, as he was to Anabaptist nonresistance, which would stand by and permit the enemy to plunder and kill without reprisals.

When Luther was asked to tender advice on a new city constitution for Erfurt he made three distinctions. First of all, there are certain aspects of political life in which Christians have a right and a responsibility to make definite demands. If these are not met satisfactorily Christians are in good conscience obligated to resist. There is a second sphere within which Christians may make recommendations according to what they deem desirable, but they do not insist on compliance with these requests. Thirdly, there is a neutral area in which one course of action cannot be advocated as indubitably preferable to another. These issues may be safely relegated to lawyers and princes to be decided by sound reason.<sup>54</sup>

Unlike many of his latter-day "descendants" who have assumed his name, Luther did not draw a rigid line of separation between church and state. Secular authority

is one of the natural divinely instituted orders. It stands under the judgment of God no less than does the ecclesiastical realm.<sup>55</sup> Luther never said that the church should have no interest in political matters. On the contrary, the Christian must be free to resist breaches of the Decalog as they occur in the social structures around him. In his books, letters, and sermons Luther frequently dealt with public morals. Everything from drinking to foreign policy, and including riots, welfare of the poor, banking, rents, and imports, came under his surveillance and elicited opinions from his pen. Economic practices which he regarded as unchristian, such as usury and various forms of exploitation, he opposed.

Luther was conservative in his outlook on government because of his great appreciation for stability and good order. Almost any kind of oppression, it seemed to him, was preferable to outright anarchy and civil war. Nothing did he dread more than revolution and internal strife, which helps to explain why he was so alarmed by the peasant uprising. An imperfect state was always better than no state at all.

Unlike Muentzer Luther was a realist who had a much more profound understanding of the evil propensities inherent in all humanity, whether they be princes, burghers, or peasants. He had no illusions about the perfectibility of man under any kind of temporal rule. Yet he was not a gloomy pessimist. With a deep eschatological consciousness he was convinced (as was Muentzer) that the end of the world was imminent.<sup>56</sup> But his low estimate of

<sup>54</sup> H. H. Kramm, "Luther's Teaching on Christian Responsibility in Politics and Public Life," *Lutheran Quarterly*, III (1951), 308, 309, 309.

<sup>55</sup> George W. Forell, *Faith Active in Love: An Investigation of the Principles Underlying Luther's Social Ethics* (New York: The American Press, 1954), pp. 120—141.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156—185.

the potential goodness of human institutions did not drive him into the fatal error of the *Schwaermer* who wanted to renounce them and become God's instruments for eradicating them. Even if the state cannot bring paradise on earth, it can prevent earth from becoming hell. And as long as this present world stands it will be the Christian's responsibility (in contradistinction to Menno Simons) to assist the prevailing regimes in maintaining the best possible ordering of society by discharging their civic obligations; by performing their God-given duties in the station where they find themselves, as parent, ruler, preacher, or servant. Until or unless the government demands something clearly contrary to the will of God it is to be obeyed.

The weakness in Luther's presentation is that he seems to provide no guidance for the Christian who is tyrannized by a secular authority which is no longer performing the functions delegated to governments by God. When temporal rulers pass laws or issue edicts which are in conflict with our duty to God the Christian must refuse to obey. Even then, Luther warns, we are not to make matters worse by committing sabotage, murdering tyrants, or staging revolutions. What if the corruption and abuse of political power become intolerable and only drastic, violent intervention would appear able to remedy the situation? Disciples and interpreters of Luther can only conjecture as to what he might say and do. Some indicate that his response would be passivity and nonresistance — leave it in the hands of God and pray for an alleviation of the distress. Others, like Bishop Berggrav of Norway, would retort:

It is a positively frightful misrepresentation of Lutheran doctrine to assert that "wild conquerors" or "despotic revolution-

ists" should come into the possession of power. It is high time that such views be plainly labeled as heretical. . . . When a government becomes lawless and acts with arbitrary despotism, the result is a demonic condition, that is to say, the government is godless. To obey such a satanic government would be nothing short of sinful. . . .<sup>57</sup>

The disagreement between Luther and Menno Simons becomes abundantly clear when we examine his oft-quoted treatise *Whether Soldiers Too Can be Saved*. Unlike Menno the Wittenberg Reformer does not disparage the occupation of the soldier as such. To bear arms can be a God-approved calling if the person is godly and performs his duties in the right way. Like any other calling it can be abused if it is held by a non-Christian.<sup>58</sup> Even slaying and robbing, however, can be a work of love. Just as a physician has to cut off a diseased limb in order to save the body, so the soldier may be compelled to punish the wicked in order to restore peace for law-abiding citizens. If all people were devoted to the preservation of peace, war would be the worst plague conceivable on earth, but what are Christians to do if others begin to steal, outrage women, and commit murder?

Biblical narratives are related to justify war. Many of the stories in the Old Testament, such as the warrior David repelling

<sup>57</sup> Quoted from an address delivered before the Lutheran World Federation Assembly in 1952, *Proceedings*, pp. 76—85.

<sup>58</sup> *Works of Martin Luther*, Philadelphia ed., 34 ff. [It can be a Christian work of grim and unpleasant necessity to abide by military law and serve as a soldier who slays or harms others.] [Of course] "if the person engaged in it is wrong and bad" [it is bound to be sinful].

the Philistines, illustrate divine approval of war under certain circumstances. When John the Baptist called upon the soldiers to repent, he did not compel them to abandon their profession. When Christ was on trial before Pilate He mentioned that if He were exerting temporal power His servants could rightfully fight for His release.<sup>59</sup>

According to Luther, there are lawless men who must be restrained by force "like wild horses and dogs, and where this does not help they must be put to death by the worldly sword."<sup>60</sup> In keeping with Saint Peter's admonition we are obligated to submit to the ordinances of kings and princes.<sup>61</sup> Even if the government perpetrates an injustice, "as the king of Babylon did to the people of Israel, yet God would have it obeyed, without treachery and deception." The commandment "Thou shalt honor thy father and mother" by analogy can be extended to all authorities that God places over us, including ecclesiastical and secular powers. Luther could not imagine a Christian evading all authority; and as a result of his bitter experiences with the papal regime, he was convinced that spiritual power was more subject to abuse and corruption than temporal power. Secular authority cannot rob people of their faith; therefore it need not be resisted even when it does wrong. But spiritual authority must be vigorously opposed when it contradicts God's Word and misleads people into false doctrine.<sup>62</sup> Under Luther's dom-

ination his Reformation carefully abided by this distinction.

Yet the German Reformer does not hesitate to give counsel to the princes and admonish them. The same general rule which he has laid down for their subjects also applies to them. They should be more willing to endure evil than turn to violence even if it means loss of temporal advantage and property. War should be only a last resort after every possible means of arbitration has failed. Caesar Augustus, Luther agrees, spoke prudently when he said: "War is like fishing with a golden net; the loss risked is always greater than the catch can be." A prince who rules according to his own mad will is like a driver who will lead everyone into a smashup.<sup>63</sup>

Contrary to the opinion of some of his detractors Luther never conceded unlimited authority to the princes and never demanded blind and unquestioning obedience from the common people. When a ruler is in the wrong, Luther clearly asserts, civic disobedience is the Christian duty. We cannot violate our conscience and offend God by upholding a sinful decree. The crucial and difficult question to be decided, however, is how does a person know whether the government's action is right or wrong? "I answer, As long as they cannot know, nor find out by any possible

should remember that the power of the government, 'whether it do right or wrong,' cannot harm the soul, but only the body and property; unless indeed it should try openly to compel us to do wrong against God or men, as in former days when the magistrates were not yet Christians. . . . For to suffer wrong destroys no one's soul. . . ." P. 264: "[Christians should not endure it and keep silent if spiritual power so much as] departs a hair's breadth from its own duty."

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 36, 37.

<sup>60</sup> *Treatise on Good Works*, I, 200.

<sup>61</sup> 1 Peter 2:13, 14: "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right."

<sup>62</sup> *Treatise on Good Works*, p. 263: "We

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 265.

means, they may obey without peril to their souls."<sup>64</sup>

Luther severely criticized the Council of Nicaea because of its opposition to war. The decree forbidding Christians to perform military service on pain of seven years' penance proved to him the fallibility of church councils:

If a king or prince has to fight and defend himself in a just war, he has to take what soldiers he can get. But if these volunteers are condemned, what will become of emperors, kings and princes, now that there are no soldiers to be had except volunteers? Tell me, are the lords to fight singlehanded or weave strawmen to oppose their enemies?<sup>65</sup>

When the Holy League of Nuremberg appeared to threaten the Lutherans with war, Luther was of the cautiously conceived judgment that the Protestants could rightfully resist this alliance of princes. However, he warned the Smalcaldic League against waging a preventive war, which would make them morally culpable. They must await some overt act of aggression by the Roman Catholic princes before striking back. After consulting with the jurists of Wittenberg, and being assured that they were on safe ground according to the laws of the empire, Luther and his fellow theologians, Jonas, Bugenhagen, Amsdorf, and Melancthon, agreed that a war of self-defense was permissible.<sup>66</sup>

Luther did not object to a war of defense

<sup>64</sup> "Secular Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed," *Works of Martin Luther*, Philadelphia ed., III, 270.

<sup>65</sup> "On the Councils and the Church," op. cit., V, 156—158.

<sup>66</sup> H. Richard Klann, "Luther on War and Revolution," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY* (May 1954), 353—366.

against the Turks, but it should not be undertaken as a Christian crusade under the direction of the papacy. Christians should fight "in humility and obedience to God's command", with their minds centered on protecting people rather than seeking honor or booty.<sup>67</sup> One of Luther's chief criticisms of the Koran was that it sanctions the use of the sword to spread its tenets.<sup>68</sup>

Luther refuses to permit the temporal powers to intrude in the spiritual domain with the exercise of force. Those who have fallen under the ban are not to be coerced with weapons of war. To wield the sword is the right of the emperor, kings, and princes. The spiritual estate is forbidden to employ it.<sup>69</sup>

Occasionally Luther inculcates the virtue of cross-bearing in a way which would appeal to Menno Simons, while it would most assuredly arouse the ire of Thomas Muentzer. Even if the ban is unjustly imposed it should be endured. Christ teaches us "to love chastisement, pain, and even death, and not to fear them." People should be reminded that the power of the ban, if wrongly used, cannot harm them, but must always be beneficial to the soul. If the burden becomes too heavy, "then try to escape from it with meekness, not with revenge and retaliation by word or deed." Whether pious or wicked rulers use the rod of chastisement, God will give it a salutary effect. We should not be incited to rebellion against authority because it is abused by some. We should

<sup>67</sup> "On War Against the Turk," op. cit., V, 110.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96 ff.

<sup>69</sup> "Treatise Concerning the Ban," op. cit., Vol. II, p. 38.

yield to God's will "and leave the mighty to His sword and judgment." As we humbly acquiesce in an illness God sends us, so we must submit to an evil government.<sup>70</sup>

In any critical appraisal of Luther's attitude toward the use of force and violence we may be inclined to wonder whether he was not unconsciously tempted to write so much in favor of temporal government, and to endorse its use of war, because he felt the urgent need to protect the gains which had been registered by his reformatory efforts. By providing a rationale for the political *status quo* he was helping to silence his papal foes who would have jumped at an opportunity to discredit him as a dangerous and seditious agitator. Could Luther have afforded to alienate the power structure of his time? If he had advocated pacifism, he could not have used the protection of the princes, he might have been eliminated from the scene along with Muentzer and the Anabaptists, and the entire Reformation might have been forcibly suppressed.<sup>71</sup> What is most unfortunate is the way succeeding generations of Lutherans have pounced upon statements (often out of context) which were addressed to the particular situation Luther found himself in and have made them normative for all conditions and all places.

Another criticism which may possibly

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 45—50. Cf. p. 51: "The world is far too wicked to be worthy of good and pious lords, it must have princes who go to war, levy taxes, and shed blood, and it must have spiritual tyrants who impoverish and burden it with bulls and letters and laws. . . . To resist them is nothing else than to resist God's chastisement."

<sup>71</sup> "That Soldiers Too Can Be Saved," op. cit., p. 38 "[If we admitted that war was wrong] we should have to give way on all other points and admit that the use of the sword is entirely

be leveled against Luther is that his sanction of a just war was an oversimplified solution for his own day, and it is even less relevant to recent modern wars or future atomic warfare. He presses his point in this way:

For what is just war except the punishment of evildoers and the maintenance of peace? . . . In a just war one punishes at one time a whole great crowd of evildoers who are doing harm in proportion to the size of the crowd.<sup>72</sup>

If one criminal can be punished by execution, so the argument runs, an aggregation of evildoers can be killed in warfare. But who represents the righteous side of a war evoked by a complexity of causes and wreaking havoc for all the participants? Were the victims of the atomic bomb really receiving their proper punishment in a just war?

Luther was averse to the use of conspiracies and plots to undermine a rival regime. It strains our imagination to see him encouraging a plot against Hitler's life or offering support for De Gaulle's French resistance movement. Conversely, it is a foul calumny to denominate him as the "forerunner of Nazism."<sup>73</sup> His vitriolic attacks on the Jews which provided verbal ammunition for German anti-Semites are inexcusable tirades and uninhibited outbursts of anger, but they must be examined in the light of his personal experiences, the theological polemic in which they are imbedded, and the total attitude of his entire lifetime toward the Jews, which included

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Peter F. Weiner, *Martin Luther: Hitler's Spiritual Ancestor*. Weiner's denunciation of Luther is upheld by Liam Brophy in "Luther, Hitler, and Chaos," *Hibernia* (Dublin: March



remarkable pleas for tolerance and sincere prayers for their conversion.<sup>74</sup>

Luther wisely resisted the temptation to degrade the Gospel into a handbook of social politics. His insight excelled that of both Thomas Muentzer and Menno Simons in perceiving that no social structure or church constitution as such is unqualifiedly Christian and prescribed by the Bible. For this reason too he had to oppose the *Schwaermererei* of Muentzer. As long as the peasants presented their grievances in a peaceful petition he could sympathize with their plight and remonstrate with the princes. As soon as they resorted to war and crime, burned whole cities, and tortured innocent citizens to death, he felt that it was the duty of the established powers to restore law and order, and to do it by every means possible, although it was unavoidably cruel and severe.

Luther's attitude toward the use of force in combating heresy is a complicated issue which cannot be adequately summarized in a few sentences. At times, especially during his earlier life, he maintained that the peaceful persuasion of the Gospel is all that can be used. Except in the case of criminals and anarchists who may be prosecuted under state laws, he would not use physical punishment to eradicate false doctrine. "To burn heretics is against the will of the Holy Spirit." People who hold erroneous opinions and lead ungodly lives may be excommunicated from the church, but this expulsion should not be accompanied by any civil disadvantage. Those who have been excommunicated may be

<sup>74</sup> Ralph Luther Moellering, "Luther's Attitude Toward the Jews," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY* (December 1948; January and March, 1949).

allowed to hear sermons so they can be reconverted, but they should be excluded from the Lord's Table.<sup>75</sup>

One of the gigantic "ifs" of history might be a conjecture as to what would have happened if Martin Luther had become acquainted with the peaceful Anabaptists by personal association instead of mistakenly categorizing them by rumor and reputation among the fanatics like Thomas Muentzer and the leaders of the Muenster debacle. That he would have disapproved of their sacramental views can be assumed without fear of contradiction, but that he would have clamored for their execution, if he had fully understood their position, is doubtful, to say the least.

Luther's outlook on the use of force and violence is a third alternative, clearly distinguishable from that of Thomas Muentzer and Menno Simons. It would be hard to exaggerate the tremendous influence it has had in forming the convictions of countless Christians on this crucial ethical issue. Broadly speaking, though there are points of disagreement and deviation, his stand is comparable to that of Calvin and most Anglican divines. Thus, if we are reducing Christian attitudes toward war and pacifism to three major divisions, the one represented by Luther has always commanded the majority opinion in Christendom. Most consistently, and even more rigorously than the Reformers ever intended, it has been adopted and codified by theologians of the Lutheran communion. Typical is a tract entitled *War and Christianity* and written by Theodore Graebner. After quoting the pertinent paragraphs

<sup>75</sup> Luther is not as lax in church discipline as men like Menno Simons were induced to believe. Cf. Kramm, pp. 312, 313.

from the Lutheran Confessions, he defends the distinction between a just and an unjust war and insists that Lutherans should render loyal and patriotic service in accord with Romans 13.<sup>76</sup> This is the underlying attitude which, though it is being questioned in some quarters, still predominates among Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians, and is held by numerous other Christians in the United States and throughout the world.

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<sup>76</sup> Moellering, *Modern War and the American Churches*, pp. 35, 36.

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## Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants

<http://www.scrollpublishing.com/store/Luther-Peasants.html>

# Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants



### Introduction

The exact date when *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants* was written cannot be fixed with any degree of certainty. Because of the similarity of ideas and language in a letter written to Ruehel<sup>8</sup> on May 4, 1525, it is assumed that Luther wrote this strongly worded treatise at or about the same time as the letter. There is a similar difficulty with the date of publication. It was certainly before the middle of May, but a more exact date of publication cannot be given.

In the treatise Luther arraigned the peasants on three charges: (1) they had violated their oaths of loyalty to their rulers and were therefore subject to temporal punishment; (2) they had robbed, plundered, and murdered, and were subject to death in body and soul; and (3) they had committed their crimes under the cover of Christ's name, thereby shamefully blaspheming God. The peasants were like a mad dog which had to be destroyed. The government, he argued, must use its God-given office to subdue the rebels with force, the only language they understood. Whoever lost his life in suppressing this rebellion, Luther argues, would be a martyr to the gospel.

The translation by Charles M. Jacobs was based on *CL* 3, 69-74. The revision presented here is based on the German text, *Wider die räuberischen. und mürderischen Rotten der Bauern*, in *WA* 18, (344) 357-361.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times*, p. 562.

<sup>2</sup> Geyer (ca. 1490-1525), a Franconian noble, had been a professional soldier in the service of Albert of Prussia. An early convert to Protestantism, he commanded an army of peasants to which Würzburg, Rothenburg, and Margrave Casimir of Brandenburg submitted. It was his aim to establish a kingdom based on the gospel. He was murdered after the battle of Ingolstadt.

<sup>3</sup> A Swabian of noble background, von Berlichingen (1480-1582) wore an iron hand to replace one lost in battle. Against his will he commanded the Odenwald peasants. He was released from prison in 1530 and returned to professional soldiering.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *WA* 18, 344-345 and *PE* 4, 247.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *BG* 7, 342.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *MA*<sup>3</sup> 4, 387-388.

<sup>7</sup> cf. *WA* 17<sup>1</sup>, 195-196.

<sup>8</sup> *WA*, Br 3, 480-482.

Against the rioting peasants, Martin Luther.

In my earlier book on this matter,<sup>1</sup> I did not venture to judge the peasants, since they had offered to be corrected and to be instructed;<sup>2</sup> and Christ in Matthew 7 [:1] commands us not to judge. But before I could even inspect the situation,<sup>3</sup> they forgot their promise and violently took matters into their own hands and are robbing and raging like mad dogs. All this now makes it clear that they were trying to deceive us and that the assertions they made in their *Twelve Articles*<sup>4</sup> were nothing but lies presented under the name of the gospel. To put it briefly, they are doing the devil's work. This is particularly the work of that archdevil who rules at Mühlhausen,<sup>5</sup> and does nothing except stir up robbery, murder, and bloodshed; as Christ describes him in John 8 [:44], "He was a murderer from the beginning." Since these peasants and wretched people have now let themselves be misled and are acting differently than they promised, I, too, must write differently of them than I have written, and begin by setting their sin before them, as God commands Isaiah [58:1] and Ezekiel [2:7], on the chance that some of them may see themselves for what they are. Then I must instruct the rulers how they are to conduct themselves in these circumstances.

The peasants have taken upon themselves the burden of three terrible sins against God and man; by this they have abundantly merited death in body and soul. In the first place, they have sworn<sup>6</sup> to be true and faithful, submissive and obedient, to their rulers, as Christ commands when he says, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" [Luke 20:25]. And Romans 13 [:1] says, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities." Since they are now deliberately and violently breaking this oath of obedience and setting themselves in opposition to their masters, they have forfeited body and soul, as faithless, perjured, lying, disobedient rascals and scoundrels usually do. St. Paul passed this judgment on them in Romans 13 [:2] when he said that those who resist the authorities will bring a judgment upon themselves. This saying will smite the peasants sooner or later, for God wants people to be loyal and to do their duty.

In the second place, they are starting a rebellion, and are violently robbing and plundering monasteries and castles which are not theirs; by this they have doubly deserved death in body and soul as highwaymen and murderers. Furthermore, anyone who can be proved to be a seditious person is an outlaw before God and the emperor; and whoever is the first to put him to death does right and well. For if a man is in open rebellion, everyone is both his judge and his executioner; just as when a fire starts, the first man who can put it out is the best man to do the job. For rebellion is not just simple murder; it is like a great fire, which attacks and devastates a whole land. Thus rebellion brings with it a land filled with murder and bloodshed; it makes widows and orphans, and turns everything upside down, like the worst disaster. Therefore let everyone who can, smite; slay, and stab, secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful, or devilish than a rebel. It is just as when one must kill a mad dog; if you do not strike him, he will strike you, and a whole land with you.

In the third place, they cloak this terrible and horrible sin with the gospel, call themselves "Christian brethren,"<sup>7</sup> take oaths and submit to them, and compel people to go along with them in these abominations. Thus they become the worst blasphemers of God and slanderers of his holy name. Under the outward appearance of the gospel, they honor and serve the devil, thus deserving death in body and soul ten times over. I have never heard of a more hideous sin. I suspect that the devil feels that the Last Day is coming, and therefore he undertakes such an unheard-of act, as though saying to himself, "This is the end, therefore it shall be the worst; I will stir up the dregs and knock out the bottom."<sup>8</sup> God will guard us against him! See what a mighty prince the devil is, how he has the world in his hands and can throw everything into confusion, when he can so quickly catch so many thousands of peasants, deceive them, blind them, harden them, and throw them into revolt, and do with them whatever his raging fury undertakes.

It does not help the peasants when they pretend that according to Genesis 1 and 2 all things were created free and common, and that all of us alike have been baptized.<sup>9</sup> For under the New Testament, Moses does not count; for there stands our Master, Christ, and subjects us, along with our bodies and our property, to the emperor and the law of this world, when he says, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" [Luke 20:25]. Paul, too, speaking in Romans 12 [13:1] to all baptized Christians, says, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities." And Peter says, "Be subject to every ordinance of man" [I Pet. 2:13]. We are bound to live according to this teaching of Christ, as the Father commands from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, listen to him" [Matt. 17:5].

For baptism does not make men free in body and property, but in soul; and the gospel does not make goods common, except in the case of those who, of their own free will, do what the apostles and disciples did in Acts 4 [:32-37]. They did not demand, as do our insane peasants in their raging, that the goods of others—of Pilate and Herod—should be common, but only their own goods. Our peasants, however, want to make the goods of other men common, and keep their own for themselves. Fine Christians they are! I think there is not a devil left in hell; they have all gone into the peasants. Their raving has gone beyond all measure. Now

since the peasants have brought [the wrath of] both God and man down upon themselves and are already many times guilty of death in body and soul, and since they submit to no court and wait for no verdict, but only rage on, I must instruct the temporal authorities on how they may act with a clear conscience in this matter.

First, I will not oppose a ruler who, even though he does not tolerate the gospel, will smite and punish these peasants without first offering to submit the case to judgment.<sup>10</sup> He is within his rights, since the peasants are not contending any longer for the gospel, but have become faithless, perjured, disobedient, rebellious murderers, robbers, and blasphemers, whom even a heathen ruler has the right and authority to punish. Indeed, it is his duty to punish such scoundrels, for this is why he bears the sword and is "the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer," Romans 13 [:4].

But if the ruler is a Christian and tolerates the gospel,<sup>11</sup> so that the peasants have no appearance of a case against him, he should proceed with fear. First he must take the matter to God, confessing that we have deserved these things, and remembering that God may, perhaps, have thus aroused the devil as a punishment upon all Germany. Then he should humbly pray for help against the devil, for we are contending not only "against flesh and blood," but "against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the air" [Eph. 6:12; 2:2], which must be attacked with prayer. Then, when our hearts are so turned to God that we are ready to let his divine will be done, whether he will or will not have us to be princes and lords, we must go beyond our duty, and offer the mad peasants an opportunity to come to terms, even though they are not worthy of it. Finally, if that does not help, then swiftly take to the sword.

For in this case a prince and lord must remember that according to Romans 13 [:4] he is God's minister and the servant of his wrath and that the sword has been given him to use against such people. If he does not fulfil the duties of his office by punishing some and protecting others, he commits as great a sin before God as when someone who has not been given the sword commits murder. If he is able to punish and does not do it—even though he would have had to kill someone or shed blood—he becomes guilty of all the murder and evil that these people commit. For by deliberately disregarding God's command he permits such rascals to go about their wicked business, even though he was able to prevent it and it was his duty to do so. This is not a time to sleep. And there is no place for patience or mercy. This is the time of the sword, not the day of grace.

The rulers, then, should press on and take action in this matter with a good conscience as long as their hearts still beat. It is to the rulers' advantage that the peasants have a bad conscience and an unjust cause, and that any peasant who is killed is lost in body and soul and is eternally the devil's. But the rulers have a good conscience and a just cause; they can, therefore, say to God with all confidence of heart, "Behold, my God, you have appointed me prince or lord, of this I can have no doubt; and you have given me the sword to use against evildoers (Romans 13 [:4]). It is your word, and it cannot lie, so I must fulfil the duties of my office, or

forfeit your grace. It is also plain that these peasants have deserved death many times over, in your eyes and in the eyes of the world, and have been committed to me for punishment. If you will me to be slain by them, and let my authority be taken from me and destroyed, so be it: let your will be done. I shall be defeated and die because of your divine command and word and shall die while obeying your command and fulfilling the duties of my office. Therefore I will punish and smite as long as my heart beats. You will be the judge and make things right.”

Thus, anyone who is killed fighting on the side of the rulers may be a true martyr in the eyes of God, if he fights with the kind of conscience I have just described, for he acts in obedience to God’s word. On the other hand, anyone who perishes on the peasants’ side is an eternal firebrand of hell, for he bears the sword against God’s word and is disobedient to him, and is a member of the devil. And even if the peasants happen to gain the upper hand (God forbid!)—for to God all things are possible, and we do not know whether it may be his will, through the devil, to destroy all rule and order and cast the world upon a desolate heap, as a prelude to the Last Day, which cannot be far off<sup>12</sup>—nevertheless, those who are found exercising the duties of their office can die without worry and go to the scaffold with a good conscience; and leave the kingdom of this world to the devil and take in exchange the everlasting kingdom. These are strange times, when a prince can win heaven with bloodshed better than other men with prayer!

Finally, there is another thing that ought to motivate the rulers. The peasants are not content with belonging to the devil themselves; they force and compel many good people to join their devilish league against their wills, and so make them partakers of all of their own wickedness and damnation. Anyone who consorts with them goes to the devil with them and is guilty of all the evil deeds that they commit, even though he has to do this because he is so weak in faith that he could not resist them. A pious Christian ought to suffer a hundred deaths rather than give a hairsbreadth of consent to the peasants’ cause. O how many martyrs could now be made by the bloodthirsty peasants and the prophets of murder!<sup>13</sup> Now the rulers ought to have mercy on these prisoners of the peasants, and if they had no other reason to use the sword with a good conscience against the peasants, and to risk their own lives and property in fighting them, this would be reason enough, and more than enough: they would be rescuing and helping these souls whom the peasants have forced into their devilish league and who, without willing it, are sinning so horribly and must be damned. For truly these souls are in purgatory; indeed, they are in the bonds of hell and the devil.

Therefore, dear lords, here is a place where you can release, rescue, help. Have mercy on these poor people! Let whoever can stab, smite, slay. If you die in doing it, good for you! A more blessed death can never be yours, for you die while obeying the divine word and commandment in Romans 13 [:1, 2], and in loving service of your neighbor, who you are rescuing from the bonds of hell and of the devil. And so I beg everyone who can to flee from the peasants as from the devil himself; those who do not flee, I pray that God will enlighten and convert. As for those who are not to be converted, God grant that they may have neither fortune nor success. To this let every pious Christian say, “Amen!” For this prayer is right

and good, and pleases God; this I know. If anyone thinks this too harsh, let him remember that rebellion is intolerable and that the destruction of the world is to be expected every hour.

<sup>1</sup> *Admonition to Peace*. See pp, 17.43.

<sup>2</sup> Luther refers to the conclusion of *The Twelve Articles*; see pp. 15-18.

<sup>3</sup> Luther became more closely acquainted with the situation during a journey through Thuringia. See p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> For the text of *The Twelve Articles*, see pp. 8-18.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Münzer. Cf. p. 5, n. 3.

<sup>6</sup> All men took this oath under the feudal system.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. p. 7, n. 14

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Thiele, *Luthers Sprichwörtersammlung*, No. 335.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the claim of the peasants in the third of their twelve articles that serfdom is un-Christian, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> In other words, a ruler need not wait for a judicial verdict against the peasants.

<sup>11</sup> I.e., has evangelical sympathies.

<sup>12</sup> Luther anticipated the imminent coming of the Last Day. Cf. p. 18, n. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. p. 20, n. 8.

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## The German Mass and Order of Divine Service

<http://www.projectwittenberg.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/germnmass-order.txt>

### **The German Mass and Order of Divine Service, Jan. 1526**

by Martin Luther, 1483-1546

Documents Illustrative of the Continental Reformation,  
from B.J. Kidd, ed.,  
(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), pp. 193-202.

(i) The Preface of Martin Luther.

Above all things, I most affectionately and for God's sake beseech all, who see or desire to observe this our Order of Divine Service, on no account to make of it a compulsory law, or to ensnare or make captive thereby any man's conscience; but to use it agreeably to Christian liberty at their good pleasure as, where, when and so long as circumstances favour and demand it. Moreover, we would not have our meaning taken to be that we desire to rule, or by law to compel, any one. Meanwhile, there is on every side great pressure towards a German Mass and Order of Divine Service: and there is great complaint and offence about the different kinds of new Masses, that every one makes his own, some with a good intention and others out of conceit to introduce something new themselves and to make a good show among others and not be bad masters. As then always happens with Christian liberty, few use it for anything else than their own pleasure or profit: and not for God's honour and the good of their neighbour. While, however, every man is bound on his conscience, in like manner as he uses such liberty himself, not to hinder nor forbid it to any one else, we must also take care that liberty be servant to love and to our neighbour. Where, then, it happens that men are offended or perplexed at such diversity of use, we are truly bound to put limits to liberty; and, so far as possible, to endeavour that the people are bettered by what we do and not offended. Since, then, in these matters of outward ordinance nothing is laid upon us as matter of conscience before God, and yet such ordinance can be of use to our neighbour, we ought in love, as St. Paul teaches, to endeavour to be of one and the same mind; and, to the best of our power, of like ways and fashion; just as all Christians have one baptism and one sacrament, and no one has a special one given him of God.

Still, I do not wish hereby to demand that those who already have a good Order or, by God's grace, can make a better, should let it go, and yield to us. Nor is it my meaning that the whole of Germany should have to adopt forthwith our Wittenberg Order. It never was the case that the ministers, convents, and parishes were alike in everything. But it would be a grand thing if, in every several lordship, Divine Service were conducted in one fashion; and the neighbouring little townships and villages joined in the cry with one city. Whether in other lordships they should do the same or something different, should be left free and without penalty. In fine, we institute this Order not for the sake of those who are Christians already. For they have need of none of these things (for which things' sake man does not live: but they live for the sake of us who are not yet Christians, that they may make us Christians); they have their Divine Service in their spirits. But it is necessary to have such an Order for the sake of those who are to become Christians, or are to grow stronger; just as a Christian has need of baptism, the word and the sacrament not as a Christian (for, as such, he has them already), but as a sinner. But, above all, the Order is for the simple and for the young folk who must daily be exercised in the Scripture

and God's Word, to the end that they may become conversant with Scripture and expert in its use, ready and skilful in giving an answer for their faith, and able in time to teach others and aid in the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. For the sake of such, we must read, sing, preach, write, and compose; and if it could in any wise help or promote their interests, I would have all the bells pealing, and all the organs playing, and everything making a noise that could. The Popish Divine Services are to be condemned for this reason that they have made of them laws, work, and merit; and so have depressed faith. And they do not direct them towards the young and simple, to practise them thereby in the Scripture and Word of God; but they are themselves stuck fast in them, and hold them as things useful and necessary to salvation: and that is the devil. For in this wise the ancients have neither ordered nor imposed them. Now there are three different kinds of Divine Service.

[1] The first, in Latin; which we published lately, called the Formula Missae. This I do not want to have set aside or changed; but, as we have hitherto kept it, so should we be still free to use it where and when we please, or as occasion requires. I do not want in anywise to let the Latin tongue disappear out of Divine Service; for I am so deeply concerned for the young. If it lay in my power, and the Greek and Hebrew tongues were as familiar to us as the Latin, and possessed as great a store of fine music and song as the Latin does, Mass should be held and there should be singing and reading, on alternate Sundays in all four languages-German, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. I am by no means of one mind with those who set all their store by one language, and despise all others; for I would gladly raise up a generation able to be of use to Christ in foreign lands and to talk with their people, so that we might not be like the Waldenses in Bohemia whose faith is so involved in the toils of their own language that they can talk intelligibly and plainly with no one unless he first learn their language. That was not the way of the Holy Ghost in the beginning. He did not wait till all the world should come to Jerusalem, and learn Hebrew. But He endowed the office of the ministry with all manner of tongues, so that the Apostles could speak to the people wherever they went. I should prefer to follow this example; and it is right also that the youth should be practised in many languages. Who knows how God will make use of them in years to come? It is for this end also that schools are established.

[2] Next, there is the German Mass and Divine Service, of which we are now treating. This ought to be set up for the sake of the simple laymen. Both these kinds of Service then we must have held and publicly celebrated in church for the people in general. They are not yet believers or Christians. But the greater part stand there and gape, simply to see something new: and it is just as if we held Divine Service in an open square or field amongst Turks or heathen. So far it is no question yet of a regularly fixed assembly wherein to train Christians according to the Gospel: but rather of a public allurements to faith and Christianity.

[3] But the third sort [of Divine Service], which the true type of Evangelical Order should embrace, must not be celebrated so publicly in the square amongst all and sundry. Those, however, who are desirous of being Christians in earnest, and are ready to profess the Gospel with hand and mouth, should register their names and assemble by themselves in some house to pray, to read, to baptize and to receive the sacrament and practise other Christian works. In this Order, those whose conduct was not such as befits Christians could be recognized, reprov'd, reformed, rejected, or excommunicated, according to the rule of Christ in Matt. xviii. Here, too, a general giving of alms could be imposed on Christians, to be willingly given and divided among the poor, after the example of St. Paul in 2 Cor. ix. Here there would not be need of much fine singing. Here we could have baptism and the sacrament in short and simple fashion: and direct everything towards the

Word and prayer and love. Here we should have a good short Catechism about the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. In one word, if we only had people who longed to be Christians in earnest, Form and Order would soon shape itself. But I cannot and would not order or arrange such a community or congregation at present. I have not the requisite persons for it, nor do I see many who are urgent for it. But should it come to pass that I must do it, and that such pressure is put upon me as that I find myself unable with a good conscience to leave it undone, then I will gladly do my part to secure it, and will help it on as best I can. In the meantime, I would abide by the two Orders aforesaid; and publicly among the people aid in the promotion of such Divine Service, besides preaching, as shall exercise the youth and call and incite others to faith, until those Christians who are most thoroughly in earnest shall discover each other and cleave together; to the end that there be no faction-forming, such as might ensue if I were to settle everything out of my own head. For we Germans are a wild, rude, tempestuous people; with whom one must not lightly make experiment in anything new, unless there be most urgent need. Well, then: in the name of God. The first requisite in the German system of Divine Worship is a good, plain, simple, and substantial Catechism. A Catechism is a form of instruction by which heathen, desirous of becoming Christians, are taught and shown what they are to believe, to do, to leave undone and to know in Christianity. Hence mere learners who were admitted to such instruction, and were acquiring the rudiments of the Christian faith before their baptism were called catechumens. This instruction or information I know no better way of putting than that in which it has been put from the beginning of Christianity till today: I mean, in those three articles of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. In those three articles is contained, plainly and briefly, all that a Christian needs to know.

(ii) Of Divine Service.

Now since in all Divine Service the chief and foremost part is to preach and teach the Word of God, let us begin with the preaching and teaching.

[1] On Holy Days and Sundays we would have the usual Epistle and Gospel to continue, and have three sermons. About 5 a.m. or 6 a.m., some Psalms should be sung, as for Mattins; then a sermon on the Epistle for the day, chiefly for the sake of servants that they also may be provided for and may hear the Word of God, if they are not able to be present at other sermons. After that, an antiphon with Te Deum or Benedictus alternately, with Our Father, Collect, and Benedicamus Domino. At Mass, about 8 a.m. or 9 a.m., there should be a sermon on the Gospel, as found according to the season. In the afternoon, at Vespers, before Magnificat, sermons in regular course. The reason why we have retained the division of the Epistles and Gospels into portions corresponding with the season of the [Church's] year is that we have nothing particular to find fault with in such arrangement. It has been the case at Wittenberg up till now that there are many there who are to learn to preach in the districts where the old apportionment of Epistle and Gospel still goes on and will probably continue. As, then, we can be of use to such and help them thereby, in our judgement, we suffer the custom to continue; without, however, finding fault with those who adopt the books of the Gospels as a whole. Hereby we provide that the layman has preaching and teaching enough : but, if a man wants more, he may find it on other days.

[2] Thus on Monday and Tuesday mornings there should be a lesson in German on the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, on Baptism and the Sacrament; so that on these two days the Catechism may be kept up and grasped in its proper sense. On Wednesday morning a lesson in German, for which is appointed the Gospel of St. Matthew. The day is to be kept specially for this Gospel : for Matthew is a fine evangelist to teach the people by,

and he relates Christ's good Sermon on the Mount, and makes much of the practice of love and good works. But the evangelist John, who teaches faith with special force, should also have his own day-Saturday afternoon at Vespers. And so we have two Evangelists in daily use. On Thursday and Friday mornings there are the daily lessons week by week of the Apostolic Epistles and the rest of the New Testament. This makes sufficient provision for lessons and preaching, to set the Word of God going, except it be for lectures in the Universities to the learned.

[3] We come now to practising boys at school in the Bible. Every week-day, before the lesson, let them sing some psalms in Latin, as has been customary hitherto at Mattins; for, as we have said, we wish the young to be trained and practised in the Latin tongue, through the Bible. After the psalms, the boys two or three in turn, according to its length, should read a chapter in Latin out of the New Testament. Then let another boy read the same chapter in German for practice, and in case any layman were there to hear. After that, go on, with an antiphon, to the lesson in German of which we have spoken above. Then let the whole lot sing a German hymn, followed by the Lord's Prayer said silently; and let the parson or chaplain say a Collect and conclude with the *Benedicamus Domino*, as usual. In the same way at Vespers, let them sing the Vesper Psalms as sung hitherto, in Latin, with an antiphon; then a hymn, as there is opportunity. Then let them read, two or three, by turn, in Latin, out of the Old Testament, a chapter or half a chapter according to its length. Then let one boy read it in German. Next, *Magnificat* in Latin, with an antiphon or chant. Then Our Father silently and the Collects with the *Benedicamus*. So much for Divine Service daily throughout the week in towns where there are schools.

(iii) On Sundays for the laity.

The Mass vestments, altars, and lights may be retained till such time as they shall all change of themselves, or it shall please us to change them: though, if any will take a different course in this matter, we shall not interfere. But in the true Mass, among sincere Christians, the altar should not be retained, and the priest should always turn himself towards the people as, without doubt, Christ did at the Last Supper. That, however, must bide its time.

[a] At the beginning then we sing a spiritual song or a psalm in German, in primo tono, as follows : Ps. xxxiv.

[b] Then *Kyrie eleison*, to the same tone, but thrice and not nine times. . . .

[c] Then the priest reads a Collect in Effaut in unisono, as follows : 'Almighty God,' &c.

[d] Then the Epistle, in the eighth tone. . . . The Epistle should be sung with the face turned to the people, but the Collect with the face turned to the altar.

[e] After the Epistle is sung a German hymn, 'Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist,' or some other, by the whole choir.

[f] Then is read the Gospel in the fifth tone, also with the face turned towards the people.

[g] After the Gospel the whole congregation sings the Creed in German, 'Wir glauben all' an einen Gott,' &c.

[h] Then follows the sermon, on the Gospel of the Sunday or Holyday: and I think that, where the German Postills are in use throughout the year, it were best to order the Postill of the day, either whole or part, to be read out of the book to the people; not merely for the preacher's sake who can do no better, but as a safeguard against fanatics and sectaries,--a custom of which one may see traces in the Homilies at Mattins. Otherwise, where there is no spiritual understanding, and the Spirit himself speaks not through the preacher (though I set no limits to the preacher; for the Spirit

can teach better than any Postills or Homilies) the end of it will be that every man will preach what he likes; and, instead of the Gospel and its exposition, they will be preaching once more about blue ducks! There are further reasons why we keep the Epistles and Gospels as they are arranged in the Postills, because there are but few inspired preachers who can handle a whole Gospel or other book with force and profit.

[i] After the sermon shall follow a public paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, with an exhortation to those who are minded to come to the Sacrament, in this, or some other better, fashion, as follows: 'Dear friends in Christ, as we are here gathered together, in the name of the Lord, to receive His holy Testament, I exhort you, first, to lift your hearts to God and to say with me 'Our Father' according as Christ our Lord hath taught us, faithfully promising that we shall be heard: ['Our Father,' &c., in paraphrase]. Next, I exhort you in Christ that with right faith ye take heed to the Testament of Christ: and specially that ye hold fast in your hearts the Word whereby Christ gives us His body and blood for remission of sins; that ye bethink you of, and thank Him for, the infinite love which He has shown us in that through His blood He has redeemed us from God's wrath, from sin, death, and hell: and then take to yourselves outwardly the bread and wine, which is His body and blood, for an assurance and pledge thereof. In such wise will we, in His name and as He commanded in His own Word, handle and use His Testament.' Whether this paraphrase and exhortation should take place in the pulpit, immediately after the sermon, or at the altar, I leave free to every man's discretion. . . .

[k] Then the Office and Consecration proceeds, as follows : 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the same night' (i Cor. xi. 23 ff). I think that it would be in accordance with the Last Supper if the sacrament were distributed immediately after the consecration of the bread before the blessing of the cup. So say, both Luke and Paul: 'Likewise also the cup after supper. Meanwhile, there might be sung the Sanctus in German or the hymn 'Gott sei gelobet', or the hymn of John Huss, 'Jesus Christus unser Heiland.' And after this should come the consecration of the chalice and its delivery, with the singing of whatever remains of the above-mentioned hymns, or of the Agnus Dei in German.

And for the sake of good order and discipline in going up, not men and women together but the women after the men, men and women should have separate places in different parts of the church. As to private confession, I have already written enough about that: and my opinion may be found in the little prayer-book.

[l] The elevation we desire not to abolish but to retain, for it fits in well with the Sanctus in German, and means that Christ has bidden us to think of Him. Just as the sacrament is bodily elevated and yet Christ's body and blood therein are invisible, so through the word of the preacher He is commemorated and uplifted, and in the reception of the sacrament recognized and worshipped: and yet it is all a matter of faith and not of sight, how Christ gave His body and blood for us and still daily intercedes with God to bestow His grace upon us.

[m] The Sanctus in German, 'Jesaia dem Propheten das geschach,' &c.

[n] Then follows the Collect : 'We thank thee, Almighty Lord God,' &c.

[o] With the Blessing : 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee,' &c. So much for daily Divine Service and for teaching the Word of God, specially with a view to influencing the young and alluring the simple. Those who come out of curiosity and the desire to gape at something new will soon be sick and tired of the whole thing, as they were before of Divine Service in Latin. For that was sung and read in church daily, and yet the churches are deserted and empty: and already they are prepared to do the same with the German Service. So it is best that such Divine Service should be arranged with an

eye to the young and to those simple folk that may perhaps come to it. As for the rest, no law nor order, exhortation nor driving, that one can devise, is of any good to induce them to go willingly and of their own accord to Divine Service, so unwilling and reluctant are they to do so (though God takes no pleasure in forced service), so idle and good-for-nothing.

As for feast-days, such as Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, Michaelmas, Purification and the like, we must go on, as hitherto, with Latin till we have hymns enough in German for the purpose. The work is but beginning, and all that belongs to it is not yet ready. Only, as one knows, make a start one way and several ways and means will be discovered.

Fast-days, Palm Sunday, and Holy Week may be retained. Not that we would compel any one to fast; but that the reading of the Passion and the Gospels appointed for these times should be observed. But we would not keep the Lenten veil, strewing of palms, covering up of pictures, and all the other mummery, nor sing the four Passions, nor preach on the Passion for eight hours on Good Friday. Holy week must be like other weeks, except that there should be sermons on the Passion for an hour daily throughout the week, or on as many days as is convenient, with reception of the Sacrament by all who desire it. For with Christians everything should be kept in God's service that has to do with the Word and the Sacrament.

To sum up, this and every other order is so to be used that should any misuse arise in connexion therewith, it should be immediately done away with and another made: just as King Hezekiah broke up and did away with the brazen serpent, which God Himself had commanded to be made, because the children of Israel misused it. Forms and Orders should be for the promotion of faith and the service of love, and not to injury of faith. When they have no more to do, they are forthwith dead and of no more worth; just as, if good coin is counterfeit, for fear of misuse it is abolished and destroyed; or as, when new shoes have become old and dry, we wear them no longer but throw them away and buy new ones. Order is an outward thing. Be it as good as it may, it can fall into misuse. Then it is no longer order but disorder. So no Order has any intrinsic worth of its own, as hitherto the Popish Order has been thought to have. But all Order has its life, worth, strength, and virtue in right use; else it is worthless and fit for nothing. God's Spirit and grace be with us all. Amen.

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Luther and Music

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Volume 48, Number 1

JANUARY 1984

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# Luther and Music

Daniel Reuning

Celebration of the five hundredth anniversary of Luther's birth provides the church with a splendid opportunity to review the vast number of his contributions, and hopefully to be refreshed with a renewed understanding of his great work. In the area of worship his legacy also was both profound and large. He edited and composed more than thirty hymn tunes and texts and seven liturgical pieces, a Latin and vernacular litany and a vernacular Gloria in Excelsis, Agnus Dei, Communio (Ps. 111), Te Deum, and Magnificat. Luther provided the model (*Formula Missae*) for the preservation of the Latin Mass, Matins, Vespers and Compline. He also provided a vernacular alternative (*Deutsche Messe*) with hymn paraphrases of the ordinaries, such as his classic Credo ("We All Believe in One True God"), and his stirring Sanctus ("Isaiah, Mighty Seer in Days of Old"), and with his vernacular "Explanation of the Lord's Prayer" and "Exhortation to Communicants" (his substitutions for the medieval Eucharistic Prayer). He authored six occasional services — two orders of Baptism and orders of marriage, ordination, private confession, and self-examination. He translated the collects for the Sundays and feast days of the church year. He involved himself with editing and writing prefaces for all the major hymnals of his days, the three most important of which were Walther's *Geistliches Gesangbuechlein* of 1524, Joseph Klug's "Wittenberg Hymnal" of 1529, and Valentin Babst's hymnal of 1545. Luther was responsible for the production of Duke Henry's 1540 Agenda, editions of which were published into the nineteenth century. He edited a major choral collection, George Rhau's *Symphoniae lucundae* of 1538, which contained fifty-two motets and a repertory of Latin and German propers and ordinaries for the Sundays of the church year, the composers of which represented the finest available, such as Josquin Despres and Orlandus Lassus. In addition to making numerous comments in sermons and letters, Luther summarized his theology of music in a short poem entitled "A Preface for All Good Hymnals." In 1538 Johann Walther, Luther's friend and musical advisor, and Kantor of the Saxon court chapel, expanded the poem to 335 verses, as a way to organize all of Luther's scattered comments. Luther's productivity is truly staggering and demonstrated his intense concern over what happens in public worship, especially the choice of music. It

is most helpful that he left us not only a written theology of worship, but also compositions that demonstrated what he meant. Volume 53 of the "American Edition" of his works includes most of this legacy.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most frequent themes in Luther's writings was that music, independent of any text or other influence, is a unique dynamic that either reinforces or undermines the meaning of the words. Since Luther's time the composers of our Lutheran musical heritage have followed his direction by composing works that reinforce confessional theology, but it has been only recently that Luther's position could be scientifically documented. Through precise methods and measurements, a new academic discipline called "sentic" proves that Luther was correct in his assessment of the effects of music and used the old words "Dionysian" and "Apollonian" to help us understand the phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> Sentic's major premise is that music is a communicator of independent forces, namely, two kinds of emotions, that illicit from us two very different reactions, Dionysian and Apollonian.

Music that communicates emotions with a Dionysian force is that kind which excites us to enjoy our emotions by being thoroughly involved or engrossed in them with our entire person. Our enjoyment of the emotion then becomes ego-directed, driven by the desire for self-gratification. This direction often shows itself in keen physical involvement; people become emotionally involved through stomping of the feet, swaying of the body, clapping of the hands, and waving of the arms. Music that solicits from us this kind of emotional response allows us to enjoy our emotions from the inside and very experientially. This kind of music is clearly anthropocentric in nature, because it turns man to himself, rather than away from himself, with the result that *he* becomes the appreciating center of his own emotions and experiences. Herein lies the goal of all entertainment and popular music, which must please or gratify the self if it is going to sell. Luther used the word "carnal" to describe this approach and produced his hymnbooks and choirbook, so as to wean people away from it.

His music and that of the Lutheran heritage communicates a message with an Apollonian force, which allows our emotions to be enjoyed, while at the same time retaining control and mental freedom. We are relieved of the urgent requirements of our inner drives. Under Apollonian influence our emotions are viewed

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empathically or contemplatively in a more detached fashion, so that they might always be subject to our discretion and judgment. Since the major point of the Reformation, as of Scripture itself, was to turn man away from everything within himself as the source of hope and assurance of salvation — to the grace of God alone, earned for us by Christ Himself — it was logical for Lutherans to use Apollonian music. Man-directed Dionysian music would only confuse or contradict the message through its anthropocentric emotional forces. Just as hymns and spiritual songs with words full of Dionysian content, doting upon human experience and feelings, are incongruent with the biblical proclamation of the Gospel, so also is music that revels in Dionysian emotionalism. Thus, because music has so much influence on one's understanding of the Gospel, Apollonian reinforcement was the obvious choice. Furthermore, this choice is just as relevant to us today, since the emotional forces in music keep on conveying their unique messages, remaining unaffected by changes in time or environment — a truly universal expression!

Before the documentation of sentics, it was quite easy to disagree with Luther's assessment of music on the grounds that his view was merely his pious opinion — well-intended, of course, but incapable of being scientifically validated. It was also easy to quote as truth the old wives' tale that Luther used bar-songs for his hymn tunes. This myth would have Luther adopting Dionysian music for use in the church, thus making him into some sort of existentialist, claiming that music is an indifferent, neutral vehicle of words that will carry whatever load of meaning one chooses to give by means of the words assigned to it. Now, however, we know that Luther used not bar-songs, but the Apollonian resources of Gregorian chant and ancient Latin hymnody. We also have the documentation from sentics that proves untenable the false assumption that we read meaning out of music simply because we first read meaning into it, that beauty is only in the eye of the beholder, that we are all just accidents of our environment, social class, up-bringing, education, and traditional bias — in short, that music has no independent effect whatsoever on the proper understanding of the Gospel. If Luther cannot convince people of this false assessment, perhaps they will listen to sentics, which proves that sociological and environmental factors do not determine the message and emotional forces in music, the power of which is totally independent of background and culture. In and of itself, music has its very own unique

emotional message which is unaltered by words, the passing of time, and the changing of environments. Thus, Luther insisted that, just as the content of a hymn's text matters, so too, if people are going to sing it, does the independent emotional force of the music; both influence the understanding of the Gospel.

Too often the church has judged music solely on the basis of personal taste, esthetic considerations, or crowd appeal without any concern for the emotional effects which influence meaning. So much contemporary music being introduced in some of our churches promotes Dionysian forces intimately related to the superficiality of television religion with its primary interest in an anthropocentric response rather than the mind-expanding, emotionally controlled Apollonian response necessary for growth in the understanding and application of God's Word. Too many still hold the false notion that, if the text is orthodox, Dionysian music is harmless. With so much use being made of music that conveys the emotional atmosphere of Pentecostalism, it is no wonder that the charismatic movement continues to infiltrate numerous parishes. The church must take Luther to heart and believe that music's dynamic can either poison or support the church's theology.

Many Lutherans today, of course, like and want Dionysian popular music even in the church. After all, it is what they hear constantly in the electronic church. This music, however, helps people become thoroughly engrossed in their own feelings and emotions. Many tell us that this music makes them feel more involved and helps them "feel so close to God," that "He is really alive, here and now, right here in my heart." This reaction of total subjectivity surely encourages a false sense of spiritual reality. In fact, it is totally experiential, an emotional high, not spiritual edification in the biblical and confessional sense. We must patiently lead such people in a more Lutheran direction, showing them that Luther's music enables us (while enjoying our emotions) to be sufficiently detached to view our emotions in the context of our relationship with our Lord, who alone remains the center of our proclamation. We must explain that the merits of Jesus Christ much more easily dominate the message of the church when Dionysian competition is absent. Our confidence in the presence of God will be strengthened not by our feelings, but by the grace conveyed by His holy Word and blessed Sacraments, no matter how we feel! When people begin to realize that music is not simply a matter of esthetics, but a form of communication that shares with words the responsibility of preaching — by either

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reinforcing them or sabotaging them — then people will begin to understand Luther and will begin to view Apollonian music as a necessity for edification, evangelism, and mission.

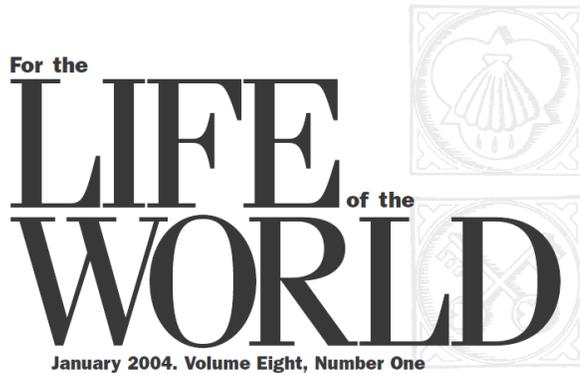
In conclusion, it is important to the true proclamation of God's Word that we convey God's gift of grace, not do our own Dionysian thing. The Gospel, of course, grants us pardon for having done our own thing. Faithful proclamation of the Gospel, however, tells us of God's feelings for us, rather than getting us engrossed in our own feelings. God's Word calls for the surrender of the self with all its feelings at His feet, rather than encouraging us to seek refuge in them. The musical expression that assists these goals in the Apollonian. Thus, for the sake of the Gospel Luther used the Apollonian mode, and for the sake of the same Gospel we pray that his disciples will do so today.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Martin Luther, *Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965; *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, 53).
2. Manfred Clynes, *Sentics: Biocybernetics of Emotion Communication* (New York: The Academy of Sciences, 1973); *Sentics: The Touch of Emotions* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1977); cf. M.J. Grieger, "Musical Communication of the Churches," *The Christian News*, July 19, 1982, pp. 14ff.

## Luther and the Church's Song

<http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/LutherandtheChurchsSongGrime.pdf>



“Here I stand.  
I can do no other.”

Martin Luther, 1521

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**Luther Traveling Exhibit at CTS - March 7-28, 2004**

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**For the LIFE of the WORLD**

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JANUARY 2004

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# Luther and the Church's Song

By the Rev. Dr. Paul J. Grime

**True or False:  
Martin Luther invented the practice  
of congregational singing.**

**Answer:  
False.**



One often hears statements to the effect that Luther was the first to write hymns or that he is the father of Christian hymnody. It is certainly understandable how such common understandings have come about. For example, Luther's own efforts at hymn writing were a tremendous impetus for Christian poets that continues to this day. One need only look at the thousands of hymns that are written each year to see that the Reformer began a powerful revolution of putting the Word of God into song.

But is it accurate to describe Luther's own efforts at hymn writing as being revolutionary? Hardly. The truth is that Luther's hymns, while being a bold effort that certainly encouraged others to take up the pen, were far more conservative in nature than most realize.

Before we look specifically at his hymns, however, let's first consider the context in which Luther wrote his hymns.

## A Cautious Reformer

Following his courageous stand before the emperor, Charles V, in 1521, Luther was whisked away for his own safety to the Wartburg Castle. During his absence, reforms in Wittenberg began to accelerate rapidly. Much to Luther's disappointment, several of his colleagues chose to change the religious practices far quicker than Luther thought advisable. As a result, the laity—still trying to come to a fuller understanding of the Reformation teaching—were confused and even scandalized. Unrest broke out, churches were vandalized, and religious artwork was intentionally destroyed. Very quickly, the Reformation was developing into a revolution that would surely invite the wrath of the emperor.

Though Luther's prince, Frederick the Wise, still considered the political situation too volatile and preferred that Luther stay put, Luther insisted on returning to Wittenberg. After a nine month absence, that's precisely what Luther did during the first week in Lent in 1522. Upon his return, he immediately entered the pulpit and on eight successive days preached a series of sermons that called for calm and patience, emphasizing as always the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

If it is accurate to summarize Luther's activity prior to his stay at the Wartburg Castle as the development of his Reformation theology, then

the period following his stay can be described as a working out of the implications of that teaching. If the people were going to accept these new insights into God's Word, then they needed to be taught.

## The Word for the People

If the people were to know the truths of God's Word, then they needed the Word. It was that need that led Luther to begin his translation of the Bible into German. During his stay at the Wartburg Castle, Luther translated the entire New Testament in just 11 weeks—a rate of 1,500 words per day! And he didn't stop there. After returning to Wittenberg, Luther took up the Old Testament, completing the first five books (the Pentateuch) in a little over six months. As his teaching duties increased, his translation work slowed. Nevertheless, he eventually completed the entire Bible, as well as the Apocrypha, and continued to revise his translation until his final days. Such was his love for the people that he labored endlessly to give them God's Word in their own tongue.

There were, however, other ways to bring the Word of God to the people. Toward the end of 1523 Luther wrote a letter to Georg Spalatin, court chaplain and secretary to Frederick the Wise. In this letter Luther challenged Spalatin and others to write hymns in German: "Our plan is to follow the example of the prophets and the ancient fathers of the church, and to compose psalms for the people in the vernacular, that is, spiritual songs, so that the Word of God may be among the people also in the form of music." Not surprisingly, Luther had already taken his own advice and was busy setting the Word of God to song.

**Is it accurate to describe Luther's own efforts at hymn writing as being revolutionary? Hardly. The truth is that Luther's hymns, while being a bold effort that certainly encouraged others to take up the pen, were far more conservative in nature than most realize.**

## Building on the Past

Within the period of one year, beginning in late 1523, Luther wrote approximately two dozen hymns. This initial flurry of activity suggests that he may have suddenly discovered a gift for hymn writing. Of course, it didn't hurt that he was also a trained musician. This burst of creative activity, however, also parallels Luther's initial work of translating the Bible. Realizing the opportunity and potential, it were as though he

couldn't help but engage the task at hand.

So where did Luther begin? Not surprisingly, this cautious reformer built on that which came before him. This included the Word of God itself, as well as hymns that already existed. One can divide Luther's total hymn corpus of approximately three dozen hymns into five fairly even categories.

*Psalm Hymns.* Luther's initial foray into hymn writing consisted of writing paraphrases on six psalms (12, 14, 67, 124, 128, 130). Of these, probably the best known is his hymn based on Psalm 130, "From Depths of Woe I Cry to You" (*LW* 230, *TLH* 329). In each of these hymns Luther followed his own advice that "the sense should be clear and as close as possible to the psalm." Yet, he recognized that the text had to flow naturally with the music; hence, his further advice: "Maintain the sense, but don't cling to the words; rather translate them with other appropriate words." Luther's translation criteria did not prevent him, however, from the interpretive task. Particularly in these Psalm hymns Luther revealed his christological interpretation as he pointedly included references to Christ in his paraphrases.



**After his initial burst of hymn writing, Luther only wrote another dozen hymns during the remaining 21 years of his life. While one might wish that Luther's creative output had continued at the fevered pace with which he began in 1523, we can give thanks to God for the truly wonderful legacy that Luther left us.**

#### *Scripture Hymns.*

Unlike John Calvin (another 16th-century reformer), who held to the conviction that only paraphrases of the psalms were suitable for congregational singing, Luther looked beyond the psalms and borrowed from other sources, both biblical and non-biblical. Among his Scripture hymns are two on the Ten Commandments, another on the Lord's Prayer, and hymns on texts from Isaiah 6:1-4, Luke 2:29-32, and Revelation 12. Also included in this category is his most famous hymn, "A Mighty Fortress." While this hymn is often considered to be a paraphrase of Psalm 46, it is much freer than Luther's other Psalm hymns, and

only alludes to the general thoughts of the Psalm. It is also interesting to note that this hymn was not written at the same time as the other paraphrase but five years later.

*Latin Hymns.* Another important biblical source for Luther's hymns was the rich treasury of Latin hymns. These are hymns with which Luther and others would have been well-acquainted. In all, Luther translated seven of these hymns. Perhaps the most familiar is the hymn "Savior of the Nations, Come" (*LW* 13; *TLH* 95). By choosing these hymns Luther demonstrated a great respect for the church's tradition, recognizing that these hymns which had shaped the faith of countless generations were still valuable expressions of the Christian faith. In his work as a translator, Luther began a practice that also continues to this day as hymns from every age, not to mention location, are translated into countless languages.

*Medieval German Hymns.* Contrary to popular opinion, Christians in Germany did sing hymns in German *before* the Reformation. There was, in fact, a strong tradition of folk hymns that were quite popular with the people. Luther tapped into this tradition, often augmenting and strengthening the popular versions of these hymns, thus bringing them

into conformity with his Reformation teaching. In fact, Luther went so far as to describe some of these changes and additions as "improvements." Among the nine hymns in this category are hymns for Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, as well as his famous hymn on the Nicene Creed, "We All Believe in One True God" (*LW* 213; *TLH* 251). It is important to note that the melodies for these hymns were already existing religious songs. These tunes, as well as the tunes for Luther's other hymns, were not borrowed from secular songs, but from the religious melodies of his day.

*Original Hymns.* Finally, we come to the category that one generally thinks of when speaking of hymn writing. Among these are the hymns "From Heaven Above" (*LW* 37/38; *TLH* 85) and "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice" (*LW* 353; *TLH* 387). Despite being original hymns, several of these hymns still followed patterns that were currently in use, such as the ballad and the carol.

#### **Teaching the People in Song**

While the preceding classifications are convenient for describing the sources of Luther's hymns, there are other ways of categorizing the hymns. For example, Luther wrote several of his hymns specifically for liturgical use. In place of the creed, one could sing "We All Believe in One True God." Or in place of the Sanctus ("Holy, Holy, Holy") in the communion liturgy, Luther provided his versification of the account of Isaiah's vision in the temple.

Another category that draws on hymns from several sources is Luther's catechism hymns. For each of the six chief parts of the catechism Luther wrote a corresponding hymn. In some cases the hymn stanzas are more general and are not intended to parallel closely the catechism text. But in several cases, the similarities between hymn and catechism are remarkable. Consider this stanza from Luther's Ten Commandments hymn, "Here Is the Tenfold Sure Command" (*LW* 331; *TLH* 287):

Curb anger, do not harm or kill,  
Hate not, repay not ill with ill.  
Be patient and of gentle mind,  
Convince your foe you are kind.  
Have mercy, Lord!

Now hear Luther's explanation of the fifth commandment from the Small Catechism: "We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need." Perhaps the most surprising observation is that Luther composed this hymn five years *before* he completed the catechism!

#### **Conclusion**

After his initial burst of hymn writing, Luther only wrote another dozen hymns during the remaining 21 years of his life. While one might wish that Luther's creative output had continued at the fevered pace with which he began in 1523, we can give thanks to God for the truly wonderful legacy that Luther left us. Not only are we able to sing Luther's hymns in our own day, we also benefit from the rich treasure of Lutheran chorales and Christian hymns that have been and still are being written to this day. We can rejoice that God gives us His good gifts of verse and song to instill the Gospel in the hearts and minds of the faithful.

Toward the end of his life, Luther wrote the following summary of Christian hymnody, a fitting summary to this brief survey of his hymns: "Like Moses in his song [Exodus 15:2], we may now boast that Christ is our praise and song and say with St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 2:2, that we should know nothing to sing or say, save Jesus Christ our Savior."

*The Rev. Dr. Paul Grime is Executive Director of the Commission on Worship for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.*

Christmas in the Land of Luther

<http://media.ctsfw.edu/Audio/ViewDetails/9853>



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DR. HOFFMANN: Five hundred years ago — next November — a young German couple gave birth to a boy, one day to be known as the Lion of the Reformation: Martin Luther.

I'm Oswald Hoffmann and I'm here today in the German Democratic Republic, East Germany, where Luther was born, to celebrate the birth of Christ — a happening once heralded by angels and shepherds, but now honored and celebrated throughout the world. Join us, won't you, for a look at Christmas from the land of Luther — a place that proves the cradle of Christ still rocks the world.

ANNOUNCER: Joining Dr. Hoffmann later on today's program will be Dr. Friedrich de Boor, professor of church history at the University Halle, Bishop Werner Leich, head of the Lutheran Church of Thuringia, and others, as well as the St. Thomas Boys Choir of Leipzig, East Germany.

DR. HOFFMANN: Martin Luther was born in the quaint little German hamlet of Eisleben. While he was still an infant, his parents moved to neighboring Mansfeld.

The oldest of seven children, Luther studied mainly at Eisenach and Erfurt. There he became a monk and spent most of his life teaching and preaching in Wittenberg.

From the start of his ministry, he wrote Christmas carols, both words and music. He worked out little pageants for his children. He preached as much as six months out of the year about the Son of God coming into the flesh at Christmas time. He often stood beside the tile stove in the family living quarters at Wittenberg and plucked his lute like some strolling troubador.

The Luther home in the Black Cloister had been given to him as a wedding present by the Elector, the government's head in Saxony. It was almost continually filled with visiting pastors and students, at least four of whom left a record in their letters or diaries of how Luther celebrated Christmas.

One of them reported that Luther loved to spend Christmas meditating and rejoicing. One suggested that Luther could not understand how anyone could ever get sick on that day if his heart was properly focused on Christ. Still another remarked that Luther often chided himself that he was not as joyful as he thought he really should have been, in the light of the great blessings that God had sent to humanity on that day.

Said Luther: "It is not for the angels to be proud of Christ's incarnation, for Christ did not assume an angelic, but a human, nature. Therefore, it would not be a surprise if the angels looked at us with envy in their eyes because we human beings, creatures far inferior to them and sinners besides, are placed above them into an honor so high and great. They worship Christ, who has become our Brother. They marvel at the human nature in Christ; and yet the honor and glory are not theirs but ours. And we human beings are unable to rejoice and be proud of it . . . Is not this a great pity? Accursed of God be this wretched unbelief!"

Luther often gets credit for starting the tradition of the Christmas tree. The legend goes that he was out walking in the countryside, spellbound by the scent of fir trees and the twinkling of bright stars overhead. To share the wonder of God's redemption for us on a tree, Luther is said to have brought into his family quarters at the Old Augustinian monastery in Wit-

tenberg a fir tree, and then lighted it up with candles. And there you have it — the first Christmas tree.

Lovely as this tale is, it probably did not really happen that way. Widespread use of an evergreen with candles was not common until a century later. In churches there was often something of a tree at Christmas time, but usually not evergreen. Hung with apples, it symbolized the first human beings, Adam and Eve. In Luther's time, Christmas Eve was the feast day for Adam and Eve, a timely reminder that the coming of God's Son was needed by all mankind. Those who saw the tree remembered their own sins which were forgiven by the death of Christ on a tree.

Luther's sermons for all seasons of the church year are loaded with references to the events of Christmas. This is especially true in the collection of sermon materials he prepared for other preachers. While under the ban of death, he found refuge at the Wartburg castle. There he wrote a famous set of study materials for pastors called the *Church Postils*, in addition to translating the New Testament there. More than half of those sermon studies deal with the events of Christmas.

Dr. Martin loved to focus on the individual characters of the Christmas story, what they must have been thinking and doing: the shepherds and the wise men; Mary and Joseph; Simeon and Anna; what the angels in the heavenly host must have felt; what people staying at the inn might have done if they had really known who the Baby Jesus was.

Always he drove his lesson home so that people in the pews knew exactly what he was talking about in the language of the marketplace, the school bench, and the laundry tub. Even today, nearly 500 years after his birth, you can still hear his voice touching people at Christmas time:

" 'And there were in the same country shepherds, working in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.' That was a tough job, watching flocks by night. Common sense calls it low-down work for men who are regarded as trash . . . And yet look at those shepherds. . . I would rather be one of them than that the Pope should make me a saint or the emperor make me a king."

Here in Eisenach, a town closely associated with Martin Luther, located right below the Wartburg Castle, we are in the headquarters of the Lutheran Church of Thuringia, Luther's home ground.

Bishop Werner Leich, you are the head of this church and also chairperson for the Church's Luther Committee in celebration of the anniversary of his birth. Tell us something about the upcoming Luther anniversary celebration.

LEICH: Gladly. We are happy because in preparation for the celebration we have discovered how worldwide the influence of Martin Luther is. We began preparation for the celebration in 1978 when the Luther Committee of the Lutheran Church in the German Democratic Republic was formed. We have made preparations for certain substantive presentations which will place in the foreground the work of Martin Luther as expositor of the Holy Scriptures and as a churchman who brought the Gospel to people. But we would like to avoid any glorification of Luther's person. As he himself wanted to be a servant of Christ, so do we wish to follow him in service. So we have chosen the theme: "Fear, love, and trust in God above all things," from

Luther's Explanation to the First Article of the Apostles' Creed. From this overall theme of the Luther Year . . . we wish to make it clear that Martin Luther wanted nothing else than to bring Jesus Christ as close as possible to people.

DR. HOFFMANN: Now sir, please tell us how you personally view Luther?

LEICH: Your question is good precisely because it is impossible to understand Luther outside of this direct approach, which is not just an approach to Luther himself, but to Jesus Christ.

For me, Martin Luther is the man who, in a unique way, has shown how immediate, without any condition or stipulation . . . is the love of the Father toward us His children, who through His Son are united with Him. That is evident in the love of Martin Luther . . . from his close relationship to Christ. Only those who are prepared to follow this relationship have an approach to Martin Luther.

DR. HOFFMANN: At the Christmas celebration Martin Luther would be right at home here.

LEICH: Yes. The Christmas celebration of our evangelical churches here has the stamp of Luther upon it. His Christmas hymn, "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come," is still the common possession among all evangelical Christians; also the custom of the family Christmas celebration . . . Christmas is unthinkable without the influence which Martin Luther is responsible for since the Reformation.

DR. HOFFMANN: The Christmas music Martin Luther wrote included several simple cradle songs. The most famous, mentioned by Bishop Leich, you hear right now, in the background, performed on instruments from Luther's era. It's titled: "From Heaven Above," or "Vom Himmel Hoch." Its child-like melody is appropriate because this is a song Luther composed for his own children and published in 1535, when his son Hans was 9, Magdalena 6, Martin 4, Paul 2, and Margaret 1.

For the melody Luther borrowed a simple folk tune, taking care to wed the words very carefully to the music. The words are very childlike, focusing closely on the birth of Jesus as a sort of musical conversation between the angels and the children of God who witnessed the birth of His Son:

*From heav'n above to earth I come  
To bring good news to every home!  
Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To all the world and gladly sing:*

*To you this night is born a child  
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;  
This new born Child of lowly birth  
Shall be the joy of all the earth.*

*Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,  
Through whom this sinful world is blest!  
You turned not from our needs away!  
How can our thanks such love repay!*

*Were earth a thousand times as fair  
And set with gold and jewels rare,  
Still such a cradle would not do,  
To rock a Prince so great as You!*

Here in Leipzig, where the great St. Thomas Church is located, that once was served by Johann Sebastian Bach and by distinguished musicians since that time, we have with us Dr. Rudolph Obendorf, and also, to interpret his remarks, Dr. Irene Runge. Dr. Obendorf, what do you do at St. Thomas?

OBENDORF: I've been a teacher for a long time in my life, but now actually I am the head of the Thomanerchor, the business manager.

DR. HOFFMANN: And of course, the St. Thomas Choir, made up of boys — about 75 of them or so, are there not?

OBENDORF: Only boys — and 90 boys belong.

DR. HOFFMANN: Would you tell us what your function is in that school? What your relationship is with those boys?

OBENDORF: I add what I mentioned before: I was a teacher for a long time. Now, as the business manager, I'm trying still to have a lot of contact with the boys, so not to be a formal manager. And I think it keeps me young and alive to have contact with young people.

DR. HOFFMANN: How old are those boys?

OBENDORF: They're between 10 and 18.

DR. HOFFMANN: Where do they come from?

OBENDORF: They're from all over the country. A lot of them come from the city of Leipzig and the district of Leipzig. And from the district of Berlin, from the Erdsgebirge and from Thuringia.

DR. HOFFMANN: Martin Luther was always known as being a lover of music. And indeed, he played instruments and composed music, too. Do the German people still feel that love of music at Christmas time?

OBENDORF: Yes, I would say so. And also, what we know is that the attendance, for example, of concertos the Thomanerchor gives — it's still increasing. The people come there.

DR. HOFFMANN: It's a very great thing to have had you here, Mr. Obendorf, and also Dr. Irene Runge, who has been interpreting his remarks in a very nice way, and to be here in the land where people speak the language of Mozart and Brahms and Beethoven and Gustav Mahler and Hayden and most of all, Johann Sebastian Bach. And it's a very great privilege to have had both of you here in order to talk about this splendid musical, and also spiritual organization.

Coming here to Leipzig, in Eastern Germany, is Professor Dr. Friedrich de Boor, who's professor of church history at the Martin Luther University of Halle. This was formerly Wittenberg University, and it's now Wittenberg-Halle, is it not? And you have studied Luther particularly, and also the way he used to live and celebrate Christmas. I understand you have something to say about that.

DE BOOR: Luther was intimately involved with preaching every Christmas, and today we have more than a hundred sermons that are still with us. Luther first started with the custom of the day in the Catholic church, and that meant that the 25th of December was the only day to have a Christmas service. But shortly after, from 1523 on, Luther was including the two days

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following Christmas in the celebration, and he was always preaching the Gospel — the Christmas Gospel of Luke, chapter two. He actually loved the story because in a very easy way for the people it was describing the wonders of Christmas. For him the most important thing was not to describe the cradle and the stall, but to proclaim it, this announcement of the angel: "Today a Savior is born for you."

DR. HOFFMANN: With all of his preaching in the town church and in other churches, and with all of his interest in music and everything else, how would you sum up the influence of Martin Luther on people today?

DE BOOR: Very often in our communities Luther is an unknown person. But it's our hope and our wish in looking upon the Luther Anniversary, that Luther himself will be more present in our community.

We're trying two things. The one is to publish Luther's translation of the Scriptures and work in them again as scholars and also to have a publication of Luther's words in everyday language.

DR. HOFFMANN: Would you have a greeting for the people all over the world, in your own words, if not in the words of Martin Luther?

DE BOOR: Also, als Gruss an alle, moechte ich das Thema aufnehmen, das fuer uns in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik in den Kirchen das Thema des Luther Jubilauams sein wird, Gott ueber alle Dinge, fuerchten, lieben, und vertrauen.

DR. HOFFMANN: Dr. de Boor, who comes from the University of Halle, successor of the University of Wittenberg, where Martin Luther taught, has just stated the theme of the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth. And it is his Christmas greeting to the world, and that is: "We should all love God and fear God and trust God." It's been a great privilege to have you here, Dr. de Boor, and to convey these remarks from the great historical background that you enjoy to people all over the world for the celebration of Christmas from the land of Luther. And, in a way, I think we could just feel Luther rocking the cradle of the Christ Child, as you spoke.

Christmas reminds us once again of everything that is important about our lives — the God who made us and who loved us enough to send His Son; the childlike awe and wonder we experience as the sons and daughters of God; the joys we know as His children throughout the course of our lives.

Many of these same experiences of wonder and awe were the lot of one of the greatest churchmen ever known — Martin Luther, the schoolboy, monk, scholar, and saint, who probably did more to turn the world to the pages of Scripture than anyone else who lived before or after.

Luther really did love Christmas. He preached about it almost incessantly, even apart from the Christmas season. He thought he could never really celebrate Christmas enough, the wonderful act of God in sending salvation to His people.

1983 will mark the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth in the rather insignificant little town of Eisleben in the Thuringian Forest.

Perhaps you may feel that in no way can your life be as full of significance for the world or as filled with faith as was that of Martin Luther. But at the time of his birth, no one would have guessed anything astounding from the new-born Luther, either. Yet God used him magnificently to the blessing of this world in which we live.

My wish for you this Christmas is that the birth of the Savior may bring you as much awe and happiness as it brought every year to Luther. And may it also make your life fruitful and helpful, forgiven and forgiving to others as was His life. For when we live in Christ, His cradle truly does rock the world. Amen.

ANNOUNCER: This special broadcast owes a word of thanks to many people, particularly the Rev. Clancy Kleinhans of the Aid Association for Lutherans, and to the foreign press officers of the German Democratic Republic. Without the help of these people, this program would not have been possible.

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*"CHRISTMAS IN THE LAND OF LUTHER"*  
Form (50-E-14) December 19, 1982 Printed in U.S.A.

## Visitations Begin in Saxony

<http://reformation500.csl.edu/timeline/visitations-begin-in-saxony/>

### Visitations begin in Saxony

The first parish visitations in Electoral Saxony proceeded in fits and stops from 1526 through 1528. In 1526, the recess of the Diet of Speyer suspended the Edict of Worms, which had proscribed Luther's teachings in the empire, and this enabled the respective territories to pursue reform on their own. The idea of a general visitation was first broached by Landgrave Philip of Hesse, but Luther rejected its rationale as the imposition of reform by the government. Instead, he favored a slower, more cautious approach built on the secular ruler overseeing visitation as a fellow Christian acting in brother love rather than a government official wielding final authority over the church. Luther at first appealed for a governmental visitation to insure that parish pastors were receiving sufficient remuneration, though this was not to be confused with an ecclesiastical visitation concerned with examining the faith and morals of both pastor and laity. John of Saxony, who replaced his brother Frederick as elector of Saxony, was eventually persuaded in 1527 to support the visitations. The elector oversaw the publication of the *Instructions*, or regulations for visitors, in June of 1527 prior the early visitations in July.

What the early visitors found was a poorly educated clergy lacking in theological competence and financial support. This led Philipp Melanchthon to provide a more extensive theological rationale and practical guidelines for the visitation than those produced by the elector. The *Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony* was published in March 1528 with a preface from Luther emphasizing that such a visitation carried out under the auspices of the secular ruler was an emergency measure necessitated by the lack of quality bishops to fulfill their tasks of oversight. The list of regulations Melanchthon originally penned was the result of concerns expressed after the first visitations of 1527. He emphasized the role of order and law in the church, imposed behavioral expectations on clergy and laity alike, and demanded obedience to authority and the preaching of repentance. The 1528 *Instructions* caused some controversy with John Agricola in Eisleben, a colleague of Luther and Melanchthon, who opposed the use of law in regulating religious life, but it subsided for the time being after mediation by Luther.

The actual visitation resumed again in July 1528. Saxony was divided into four districts and Luther himself joined the cohort that visited Wittenberg and its surrounding parishes. What he and the other visitors found there shocked them. Most preachers were sound doctrinally, but others were not, nor were all provided for sufficiently. They found a laity that was lacking in strong moral conviction. But what bothered them the most was the absence of basic doctrinal knowledge, such the ability to recite the Apostles' Creed or the Lord's Prayer. This gave impetus to Luther's drafting of the catechisms, modeled largely after a series of sermons delivered in May 1528 and published in 1529.

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## The Saxon Visitation (1528): Insights for Contemporary Lutheran Church Life

<http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/PlessTheSaxonVisitation.pdf>.

The Saxon Visitation (1528): Insights for Contemporary Lutheran Church Life  
LCSA Pastors' Convention  
Cyara, South Africa  
August 31-September 2, 2010

*May God, the Father of all mercy, grant us through Jesus Christ, his dear Son, the spirit of unity and the power to do his will. Even though the finest spirit of unity prevails among us we still have our hands full to do good and be established by the power of God. What would happen if there were disunity and disagreement among us? The devil has become neither pious nor devout this year, nor will he ever be so. So let us be on guard and anxious to keep (as Paul teaches) the spiritual unity in the bond of love and peace (Eph. 4:3). Amen*" –Luther, "Preface to the Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors" AE 40:273

### Introduction

The practice of visitation might be said to reach back to the New Testament church where after the Jerusalem Council Paul says to Barnabas "Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing" (Acts 15:36). The term "visitation" became current in the 9<sup>th</sup> century but the practice goes back earlier into the 5<sup>th</sup> century where bishops were expected to make official visits to examine, inspect, teach and if necessary correct errant practices in parish life. A model for such visitation can be found in the 10<sup>th</sup> century in a handbook prepared by the abbot of Prüm written at the directive of the Archbishop of Trier, included an inventory of ninety-six items of inquiry centering around overall conditions of parochial life, the integrity of clerical life, and pastoral care.

By the late Middle Ages, the practice of visitation had gradually declined. Early in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Jean Gerson delivered a passionate plea for churchly reform including a scheme for the visitation of parishes. "Thus, while sixteenth-century reformers claimed in their pronouncements to have revived a long-defunct ancient practice, they could, in fact, build their own visitation procedures on tried and established precedents."<sup>1</sup>

On June 24, 1524, Elector John the Steadfast (1468-1532) wrote to Luther suggesting a visitation: "May God hear our complaint, but there are too many enthusiasts, and these are causing us plenty of trouble up here. But in my opinion there would be no better way of quieting things down than for you to take some time to travel from one town to another in this principality and to see for yourself (as Paul did) what kinds of preachers are serving the faithful in the towns. I believe that among us here in Thuringia you could hardly do a more Christian task. Whichever preachers proved unsuited you could then remove with the help of the authorities."<sup>2</sup> An early attempt at a visitation was made just after the beginning of the year in 1525 when Elector John commissioned Jacob Strauss,

<sup>1</sup> Gerald Strauss, "Visitations" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* – Volume e edited by Hans Hillerbrand (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 238

<sup>2</sup> Cited from WA BR 3:310/44ff in Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther in Mid-Career 1521-1530* trans. E. Theodore Bachmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 485.

the pastor in Eisenach and a ducal councilman Burkhard Hund of Wendheim to visit the congregations in and around Eisenach. Hund was unable to participate in the visitation leaving Strauss on his own. The first effort proved futile. A second attempt was made in March of the same year with the visitor provided with documentation authorizing the work. Another visitation was undertaken on May 2, 1525 by Pastor Nicholas Hausmann in Zwickau.

Believing that poor ecclesiastical supervision had been responsible for the growth of abuses in the pre-Reformation church, Luther recognized a need for evangelical oversight exercised through visitation. Worried about the chaotic conditions in the Saxon congregations, Luther urged the Elector John to see to take measures to ensure stability and good order in the religious and social life of his territory<sup>3</sup>. In 1527, John issued *Instructions and Order for Dispatching Visitors*, a catalog of items to be investigated by teams of four appointed visitors. Yet this document proved insufficient for the task.

Melanchthon then set about drafting *Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors*. This document would provide a theological platform for the visitations. John Agricola (1492-1566)<sup>4</sup> objected to this document, believing that Melanchthon was conceding to the Romanists. In November of 1527, Luther would bring Agricola and Melanchthon together to attempt to reconcile their competing positions on the relationship of repentance and faith which was at the heart of Agricola's objection to Melanchthon's document. Further consultation and correspondence would lead to revisions and a final draft of the articles for visitation but not without questioning on a temporary allowance of communion under one kind<sup>5</sup> and marriage matters by the Elector.

Early in 1528, the Elector would direct Luther to prepare a preface for the *Instructions*. Luther's preface begins with the recollection of various examples of visitations in not only the New Testament but also in the Old Testament. He recalls, for example, that Peter traveled among the Jewish congregations in Acts 9 while Barnabas and Paul visited the places they had preached in Acts 5. He notes that when the Apostles heard of how the Word of the Lord was received in Samaria, Peter and John were dispatched there. Luther sees examples of visitation in the Old Testament in the narratives of Samuel's travels to Ramah, Nob, and Gikal. Above all, Luther observes that Christ Jesus is the visitor *par excellence*: "More than any Christ has done this kind of work on behalf of all, and on this account possessed no place on earth where he could lay his head or which he could call

<sup>3</sup> "Luther took the momentous step and—so he himself, at any rate, viewed it—told the princes that 'out of Christian love' he wanted certain persons appointed as visitors. He derives the office of the visitors from the original meaning of the term 'bishop' and archbishop" (WA 26, 197, 17ff). Although here, too, he considers the bishop the pastor (*Pfarrherr*), who 'should visit, look after, and supervise his parishioners' (*pfarrkinder besuchen, warten und auff sehen sol*), 'the archbishop should visit, look after, and supervise such bishops to see how they are teaching'—Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, trans. Walter Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 372.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed treatment of the controversy with Agricola in the formation of the *Instructions*, see Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation 1521-1530*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 264ff. Agricola would argue that repentance is the consequence of the preaching of the gospel., thus evaporating the realities of the law, wrath, and judgment of God.

<sup>5</sup> The provision for communion under one kind was omitted in the second edition of the *Instructions* in 1538. Cf. Brecht, 266.

his own. This began even while he was in the womb, for he went with his mother over the hills to visit St. John (Luke 1:39)” (AE 40:269).

The ancient fathers, Luther observed, also practiced visitation. In fact Luther argues that the essence of the episcopal office is to visit and examine. To be a bishop is to be a supervisor or visitor. Archbishops supervise bishops. Bishops oversee the work of parish pastors. Yet Luther argues the office fell into abuse and misuse. Luther writes “The holy synods were forgotten. In brief that is what befell so worthy an office and nothing remained of it except the burdening and banning of people because of money, debts, and temporal goods and the making of a divine order out of the bellowing of antiphons and versicles in churches. No attention is paid to how one teaches, believes, loves, how one lives a Christian life, how to care for the poor, how one comforts the weak, or punishes the unruly. They are altogether officious and gluttonous fellows who destroy what belongs to the people and do worse than nothing for them. This office has fared like all holy and ancient Christian doctrine and order – it has become the farce and contempt of the devil and Antichrist with awful and terrible destruction of souls” (AE 40:270).

Luther seeks to retrieve this venerable office from political and economic mishandling. He sees it as a pressing need that the office be restored to its pristine spiritual purpose of service to the Gospel to counteract confusion, dissension, and abuses in the evangelical parishes of Saxony. To this end, Luther commends the Elector for re-constituting the practice of visitation as the fulfillment of the office of Christian love. Because this work is undertaken and guided by “love’s office,” the Elector may be confident that it is in conformity with “God’s will for the benefit of the gospel and the welfare of the wretched Christians in his territory” (AE 40:271).

By way of the preface, Luther gives his endorsement and approval to Melancthon’s *Instructions*. Observing that some have seen the *Instructions* as a recantation of evangelical teaching, Luther counters that he has carefully reviewed them and they are consistent with the aim of God’s Word. Luther envisions the *Instructions* not as a new form of the papal decree but “as a witness and confession of our faith” offered with the “hope that all devout and peaceable pastors who find their sincere joy in the gospel and delight to be of one mind with us will act as St. Paul teaches in Phil. 2[:2]. And will heed our prince and gracious lord.” (AE 40:272). Luther hopes that the *Instructions* will be received in the spirit and intention they are offered. Congregations and pastors should willingly and peacefully receive the visitors and subject themselves in a spirit of love and humility to their work. Those who refuse are to be recognized as self-centered and undisciplined who finally separate themselves from the evangelical cause and must be recognized as “chaff on the threshing floor.” Luther further adds that we “will not accommodate ourselves to them” (AE 40:273). The Elector, Luther says, even though he has no call to teach and rule in spiritual affairs must deal with these undisciplined people just as Constantine did not tolerate the political unrest created by Arius.

*The Instructions*

Melanchthon includes eighteen items in the *Instructions*: The Doctrine, the Ten Commandments, True Christian Prayer, Tribulation, the Sacrament of Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, Christian Penance, Christian Confession, Christian Satisfaction for Sin, the Human Order of the Church, Marriage, Free Will, Christian Freedom, the Turks, Daily Worship in the Church, the Christian Ban, the Office of Superintendents, and Schools.

Melanchthon seeks to use the *Instructions* to catechize the evangelical doctrine and aim for its pastoral application in preaching and the care of souls. Thus Melanchthon begins with a discussion of the necessity that both repentance and faith be preached. Faith cannot be divorced from repentance. Without the preaching of repentance the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins will not only ring empty, it will lead to a carnal security. So evangelical preachers are to preach the law in all of its potency so that people are brought "to repent and grieve over their sins and to fear the judgment of God" (AE 40:275). This preaching condemns gross and outward sins but Melanchthon reminds his readers that both John the Baptist and Christ do not neglect "the greatest and most important element of repentance," namely the condemnation of a false holiness which puts its trust in human merit or worth.

Clearly Melanchthon is addressing the antinomian teaching of Agricola when he says that some have taught repentance follows faith. The law is preached not to make men righteous but to reveal and crush sin only where this takes place will the Gospel be heard as the good news that sinners are justified by faith apart from the works of the law. The section on "the doctrine" is a brief lesson in the necessity of the right distinction of the law from the Gospel.

The dual theme of repentance and faith is carried forward in Melanchthon's section on the Ten Commandments. As though the law comes knowledge of sin, the commandments are to be preached to specifically condemn various vices such as adultery, drunkenness, envy, hate, and the like. The commandments are not only to be explained. Preachers are to tell their hearers of how God threatens to punish sins, recalling biblical examples, so that they might learn to fear God. Such preaching is to produce repentance, that is contrition and grief over sin and true fear of God. Melanchthon says that preachers are "to teach the people diligently that this faith (saving faith) cannot exist without earnest and true contrition and fear of God" (AE 40:276).

Melanchthon only provides explicit treatment of the first and second commandments in this section. He is more concerned to lay out a paradigm for teaching the commandments rather than for providing the more detailed exposition of individual commandments as Luther will come to do in the *Large Catechism*. Here he wishes to outline instead the threefold pattern of the Christian life: repentance, faith in the forgiveness of sins, and the doing of good works. Good works are to be done because they are pleasing to God and beneficial to the welfare of the neighbor.

The nature of the Christian's life of good works is taken up in the next section under the title "True Christian Prayer." This section anticipates Luther's treatment of the Lord's

Prayer in the *Small Catechism* even as it echoes elements from Luther's earlier sermons on prayer<sup>6</sup> for here Melanchthon accents the fact that genuine prayer is anchored in the divine commandment and promise. God has commanded us to pray and has promised to hear us.

Since God has promised to hear the prayers of His people, Christians should not be frightened away from praying on account of their sins. God gives freely for Christ's sake therefore believers are invited to make their supplications with boldness and without doubt. Christians are to be taught that God hears them for the sake of Christ and not because of formulaic repetition. Christians are to be instructed to pray for both spiritual and temporal things without setting a time or place for God's fulfillment.

Then Melanchthon picks up other aspects of the Decalogue. Christians are to be instructed in the hearing and learning of God's Word under the rubric of the third commandment. Obedience to parents and governing authorities is enjoined by the fourth commandment. Prayers are to be made for civil authorities and taxes are to be paid. Christians are to live in such a manner "that the holy gospel is not slandered and disgraced as happens in the case of those who claim in the name of the holy gospel to be free from tithes and other temporal burdens" (AE 40:287).

The life of good works will include tribulation. Pastors need to be capable of teaching their people how to face tribulation in body and soul. Melanchthon notes that pastors should teach their people that tribulations are sent by God to "admonish us and awaken us to patience" (AE 40:287). Christians are to be tutored to have confidence in the divine promises and call upon God in the midst of these troubles, knowing that the devil in tribulation attempting to bring the Christian into shame and misery.

Sections follow on baptism and the Lord's Supper. Infant baptism is affirmed. The benefits of baptism are to be taught so that people understand the gifts God bestows in baptism and value baptism not only as a point of initiation for children but a gift for the entire life of the Christian. Melanchthon urges the use of German in the baptismal order so that the people may understand the word and prayer. There need be no quarrel over the chrism for the real anointing is not done with oil but by the Holy Spirit.

Drawing on the words of institution from the Synoptic Gospels and I Corinthians, Melanchthon directs pastors to teach the people that the true body and blood of Christ are present in the bread and wine not by virtue of priestly power but on account of the institution of Christ. The sacrament is not to be received as ordinary food. The people are to be taught to receive the Sacrament under both kinds for no one may alter the last will and testament of the Son of God.

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<sup>6</sup> See Luther's "An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer for Simple Laymen" -1519(AE 42:15-81) and "On Rogationtide Prayer and Procession" -1519 (AE 42:83-94)

In this sermon, Luther sets forth an evangelical approach to prayer that centers in God's promise and command. Recognizing the abuses that had accumulated around the blessing of the field associated with Rogate (the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Easter), Luther uses this occasion to teach that prayer is a gift of God to be exercised by faith alone. Also see Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology* trans. Thomas Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 343-354.

Yet Melanchthon urges consideration of weak Christians. While the teaching of communion under both kinds is to be taught clearly and without compromise, pastors may be allowed to commune these weak believers with only the Lord's body for a time. Melanchthon notes that it would be "uncharitable" and "even un-Christian" to force these people to receive the sacrament in both kinds or to withhold it altogether less they be made to sin. However such is not the case with the obstinate that know the doctrine but reject it. These are to be allowed to go their own way. This section stirred some objections from the Elector but Luther insisted on keeping in the *Instructions* in line with his principle that only the Word of God, not legislation of practice would change spiritual conditions.

Several points are made regarding the proper preparation for the Sacrament. First, the pastor is to instruct the people as to what the Sacrament is and warn them against abusing in such a way to profane the body and blood of the Lord (I Cor. 11:27). Second, the pastor is to examine all communicants, inquiring of their understanding of the Sacrament. Those who show no contrition and are living in open sin are not to be admitted. Melanchthon goes on to speak of the right remembrance of Christ in the Sacrament, asserting that it is "Not that the outward reception will comfort the heart, but it is a sign of the comfort and of the forgiveness of sins. This sign encourages the heart to believe that God forgives a penitent his sins" (AE 40:293). In this the Sacrament is to be preached. Forgiveness comes not through an outward act of eating and drinking but through faith. Melanchthon concludes this section by linking faith and love in the Sacrament. Those who partake together of the Lord's body and blood are one with each other as "one loaf" and are not to harbor envy or hate toward the fellow communicant.

Next, Melanchthon includes an article on true Christian penance which he counts as a third sacrament<sup>7</sup>. Once again Melanchthon warns against a carnal or fleshly security which overlooks ignores contrition by speaking of sin in spacious and generic categories. It is not simply "to know oneself" (AE 40:295). One must know one's sin. That is, one must have "contrition and sorrow over it and sincere fear of the wrath and judgment of God" (AE 40:295). Preachers must preach the law with such incisiveness that "a person fears all his good works and understands that he sins even in his good works" (AE 40:295). Genuine penance consists of two parts. First, is contrition and sorrow *coram deo*. The second part of penance is faith that sins will be forgiven on account of Christ. Faith without contrition is presumption and carnal security.

From this vantage point, Melanchthon moves to contrast true Christian confession with papal confession. Evangelical confession is urged. Once again Melanchthon insist that "no one should be allowed to go to communion who has not been individual examined to see if he is prepared to go the holy sacrament" (AE 40:296). One is not to go the

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<sup>7</sup> For an overview of the practice of confession and absolution in the Reformation, see Ronald K Rittgers, *The Reformation of the Keys: Confession, Conscience and Authority in Sixteenth-Century Germany*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004

sacrament as a matter of custom without knowing why he needs the sacrament. The goal of the examination is repentance and faith in the words of the absolution. In contrast to papal confession which adds satisfaction to contrition and faith, Melancthon points to the atoning work of Christ who has made satisfaction for our sins in our place.

The human order of the church is a secondary matter governed by the Apostle's words in I Corinthians 14:40 that "All things shall be done in order in the churches." Holy days are not abolished but are kept in Christian freedom so that the Gospel might be proclaimed and taught. But they are not matters which should fragment the church. Church order is differentiated from secular government. Masses and vigils for the dead are not to be continued for the Sacrament of the Altar is not for the dead but the living.

Both Latin and German are permissible liturgical languages but it is reasonable to use the vernacular so that the common people understand and are edified. Saints are honored when they are held up as a mirror of God's mercy and grace in Christ and when Christians exercise themselves in the faith and good works exemplified in their lives.

Marriage is to be honored as an estate instituted by God. Pastors are told to teach and act sympathetically in matters related to forbidden degrees of relationship in marriage. Christian liberty is to prevail but not in such a way as to invite each to satisfy his own feelings. Each is to behave in such a way that he may live with a clear conscience and serve the neighbor in love. The *Instructions* maintain that in cases where pastors are confused or uncertain in matters of casuistry they should seek the counsel of those who are more learned or let the cases go to the appropriate authorities<sup>8</sup>.

The *Instructions* take up the question of the freedom of the will as Luther's work against Erasmus had occasioned debate within the Evangelical camp<sup>9</sup>. Melancthon affirms the

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<sup>8</sup> Civil laws rightly govern marriage. This is reflected in Luther's *A Marriage Booklet for Simple Pastors* appended to the *Small Catechism* (see Kolb/Wengert, 367). Here Luther writes "'So many lands, so many customs,' says the common proverb. For this reason, because weddings and the married estate are worldly affairs, it behooves those of us who are 'spirituals' ('clergy') or ministers of the church in no way to order or direct anything regarding marriage, but instead to allow every city and land to continue their own customs that are now in use" (Kolb/Wengert, 367-368). See the fine treatments by Scott Hendrix, "Luther on Marriage" *Lutheran Quarterly* (Autumn 2000), 335-350; James Nestingen, "Luther on Marriage, Vocation, and the Cross" *Word & World* (Winter 2003), 31-39; Oswald Bayer, "Luther's View of Marriage" in *Freedom in Response-Lutheran Ethics: Sources and Controversies* (Cambridge), 169-182) and Carter Lindberg, "The Future of a Tradition: Luther and the Family" in *All Theology is Christology: Essays in Honor of David P. Scaer* edited by Dean Wenthe et al (Fort Wayne: CTS Press, 2000), 133-151. Lindberg writes "Luther's application of evangelical theology to marriage and family desacramentalized marriage; desacralized the clergy and resacralized the life of the laity; opposed the maze of canonical impediments to marriage; strove to unravel the skein of canon law, imperial law, and German customs; and joyfully affirmed God's good creation, including sexual relations. In return, Luther was in such demand as a marriage counselor that he often complained of the burden imposed on him" (133).

<sup>9</sup> See Luther's 1525 treatise on "The Bondage of the Will" (AE 33). Also see Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Gerhard Forde, *The Captivation of the Will: Luther vs. Erasmus on Freedom and Bondage* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) and Hans Joachim Iwand, "The Freedom of the Christian and the Bondage of the Will" trans. Jacob Corzine in *Logia* (Eastertide 2008), 7-16.

freedom of the will in external works-works regulated by law and punishment. In these things which are “below” him, man is freedom. However the “righteousness of the flesh” which is a secular or civil righteousness is not the righteousness that saves. When it comes to the righteousness of faith or saving righteousness before God man is not free. He lacks the capacity to purify his heart. Without the Holy Spirit, the natural man cannot accomplish anything that is godly.

The section on Christian freedom is directed against antinomian mishandlings of the liberty granted by the Gospel. Positively Melanchthon states that Christian freedom is the forgiveness of sins granted by the Spirit without reference to human achievement. This freedom, he continues, means that Christ rules over the believer protecting him against the power of the devil. The proclamation of this liberty always is to carry with it a warning not to fall back into captivity to Satan and sin. Negatively, Christian liberty is not freedom from proper government and the payment of taxes. Melanchthon explains the application of Christian freedom in fasting and worship practices. The Christian is free from any obligation that would be imposed upon him with the promise of earning grace or meriting salvation.

A section on “The Turks” is an application of the teaching of the two governments. The government is given the power of the sword to defend, protect, and punish. Melanchthon dismisses outright any notion that Christians should not defend themselves against the Turk on the grounds that Christians are not to take revenge on enemies as seditious. Just war may be waged. Christians are to pray for God’s protection against this enemy even as they must be ready to defend their families against his assault.

“Daily Worship in the Church” provides general rubrics for matins and vespers. Instructions are given for preaching on Wednesdays and Fridays. Preachers are counseled in the selection of appropriate texts for the right proclamation of repentance and faith. Catechetical preaching on the Ten Commandments, Creed, and Lord’s Prayer is urged for the sake of the children and unlearned. There should also be preaching on baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, and marriage. Festivals are to be celebrated without superstition. The Latin introits, the *Gloria Excelsis*, *Halleljuah*, *Sanctus*, *Agnus Dei*, and simple sequences are recommended for high festivals. It is recognized that different forms of the Mass are in use and that this should not be a matter of agitation until greater uniformity can be achieved. Instructions are given for Christian burial<sup>10</sup> and practices surrounding childbirth.

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<sup>10</sup> The Reformation transformed death and dying See Austra Reimis, *Reforming the Art of Dying: The ars moriendi in the German Reformation (1519-1528)* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007) and Neil R Leroux, *Martin Luther as Comforter: Writings on Death* (Leiden: Brill, 2007),

Melanchthon then moves to a discussion of “The True Christian Ban.” After a brief defense of right use of excommunication, Melanchthon rather abruptly takes up a treatment of the custom of ringing church bells, attempting to forestall unnecessary controversies and dispelling superstitious beliefs.

“The Office of Superintendent” is the pastor given responsibility in the region for the oversight of other clergy assuring that they preach God’s Word correctly and rightly administer the sacraments. Instructions are given for the discipline of preachers who err in doctrine or lead an ungodly and offensive life. The superintendent is to examine candidates for ordination so that the churches are spared from incompetent pastors.<sup>11</sup>

A final section outlines the place of the school. After giving a rationale for education, namely, that young people are equipped for faithful service in church and state, Melanchthon goes on to provide a curriculum in three divisions embracing both spiritual and secular courses for study.

#### The Visitation

A general visitation of Saxony would commence in 1528 and continue with interruptions to 1531. The territory was divided into a number of circuits to be visited by teams composed of lay officials (jurists) and theologians. Armed with the *Instructions*, the visitors were to take stock of both spiritual and economic conditions in the region, working for unity in doctrine and practice between the churches. The practice of visitation would continue with a second round in 1533-1534. A third general visitation was taken in 1555. An attempt was made after the death of Elector August to advance Calvinistic theology in Saxony by the counselors who surrounded Christian the First, August’s young son and successor. After Christian’s death in 1591, his cousin, Duke Friedrich Wilhelm restored Lutheran theologians to their positions and commissioned the Wittenberg theologian Aegidius Hunnius (1550-1603) to compose articles of visitation to restore the theology of the Formula of Concord to the Saxon church.<sup>12</sup> This was done in the next year, in 1592. The practice would be incorporated in various territorial church orders and continue as a feature of Lutheran ecclesiastical life.

#### The Catechisms: A Fruit of the Visitation

Luther’s own catechisms may be seen as a response to three events: (a) The request of Pastor Nicholas Hausmann for a catechism to use in the instruction of the “common folk” in 1524; (b) Controversy between Agricola and Melanchthon on the place of the law in the Christian life; (c) a remedy to the maladies diagnosed in the Visitations of 1528. The

<sup>11</sup> “For the need of examination before a pastor is installed into office as well as the need of it in the further course of official activity is inextricably bound up with the specific duty to teach”-Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, 351

<sup>12</sup> For the text of “The Saxon Visitation Articles of 1592” see Robert Kolb and James Nestingen (editors), *Sources and Context for the Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 256-261. These Articles were appended to the *Book of Concord* and were part of the visitation tradition that shaped the practice in the early Missouri Synod.

impact of the Saxon Visitations is seen in Luther's preface to the Small Catechism: "The deplorable, wretched deprivation that I recently encountered while I was a visitor has constrained and compelled me to prepare this catechism, or Christian instruction, in such a brief, plain, and simple version. Dear God, what misery I beheld! The ordinary person, especially in the villages, knows absolutely nothing about the Christian faith, and unfortunately many pastors are completely unskilled and incompetent teachers. Yet supposedly they all bear the name Christian, are baptized, and receive the holy sacrament, even though they do not know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments! As a result they live like simple cattle or irrational pigs and, despite the fact that the Gospel has returned, have mastered the fine art of misusing their freedom" (Kolb/Wengert, 347-348)

Luther saw the Catechism as a book to be used in home and congregation. "While Luther addressed the catechisms to pastors, he still envisioned the head of the household as the primary teacher."<sup>13</sup> James Nestingen observes "The *Small Catechism*, in chart and pamphlet form, quickly became one of the most important documents of the Lutheran Reformation. It moved the village altar into the family kitchen, literally bringing instruction in the faith home to the intimacies of family life."<sup>14</sup> The careful literary craftsmanship evidenced in Luther's nuanced phrases and his repetition of key words would make the Catechism a useful tool for reinforcing the evangelical message that the laity were hearing from Saxon pulpits as God's Word echoed in ordinary households.

The Catechism provided a basic summary of Christian doctrine along with a template for teaching. Luther's pattern for catechesis outlined in the Preface to the Small Catechism: (a) Avoid changes or variations in the text; (b) After people have learned the text, teach them to understand it; (c) Once people have been taught the shorter catechism, take up the longer catechism (Kolb/Wengert, 348-349). Luther intended the Small Catechism to be a handbook for Christian doctrine, a prayer book, and a book for the on-going Christian life.<sup>15</sup>

The theological structure of the Small Catechism is geared to the proper distinction of law and Gospel. Luther departs from the traditional, medieval ordering of the chief parts as Lord's Prayer, Creed and Ten Commandments. He explains his rationale for the sequencing of the Decalogue, Creed, and Our Father: "Thus the commandments teach man to recognize his sickness, enabling him to perceive what he must do or refrain from doing, consent to or refuse, and so he will recognize himself a sinful and wicked person.

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<sup>13</sup> Charles Arand, *That I May Be His Own: An Overview of Luther's Catechisms* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 95

<sup>14</sup> James Nestingen, *Martin Luther: A Life* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2003), 76

<sup>15</sup> The catechism looks at the concrete daily life of the simple Christian taking both calling and estate into consideration and understands them as the place in life God "gave us in the coordinate system of natural/creaturely, societal/social, as well as historical/cultural, relations" – Albrecht Peters, *Commentary on Luther's Catechisms: Ten Commandments*, trans. Holger Sonntag. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009) 20. In this way the catechism teaches and exercises Christians in faith and love. "The catechism desires to instruct for this purpose, not only as a doctrinal, confessional book but also a book of prayer and comfort" (Peters, 20).

The Creed will teach and show him where to find the medicine-grace-which will help him to become devout and keep the commandments. The Creed points him to God and his mercy, given and made plain to him in Christ. Finally, the Lord's Prayer teaches all this namely, through the fulfillment of God's commandments everything will be given him. In these three are the essentials of the entire Bible" (AE 43, 4).

The core theological themes expressed in the visitation articles are expressed in the *Small Catechism*. The structure of the Catechism itself follows the threefold shape of the Christian life: Repentance, faith, and godly living. The Decalogue is preached to bring out about repentance. The Creed is the summary of the Trinitarian gospel that creates faith. The Lord's Prayer is voice of faith. The sacraments strengthen faith. The daily prayers and table of duties are about the godly life, the vocation engendered by the Gospel as faith is active in love, calling upon the name of the Lord and serving the neighbor in the stations of life. Even as the Saxon Visitation served to diagnose the maladies of parish life in early Lutheranism so the Luther's Catechisms, both Small and Large served to address these deficiencies and guide both pastor and people to congregational, family, and personal life lived under the cross and in the hope of the resurrection.

#### Some Items for Discussion and Deliberation

- How might the practice of visitation best be implemented to serve the spiritual needs of pastors and congregations in the LCSA?
- Both Melancthon and Luther stress not only the centrality of preaching but also its content (repentance and faith). It has been observed that Luther did not set out to reform the church but to reform preaching. God's Word is rightly preached when the law is properly distinguished from the gospel so that sinners trust in the righteousness of Christ alone for salvation. How might visitation serve to strengthen preaching in our midst? Would you be intimidated by having your bishop or dean listen to your preaching and offer constructive criticism?
- The visitation conducted by the bishop and/or deans should serve as a model for the way pastors visit the homes of their congregants. How is the pastoral visitation different than a social visit?
- We have observed the connection between visitation and catechesis. How might the practice of visitation help us reclaim the centrality of the *Small Catechism* as a handbook for Christian doctrine, prayer, and life?
- Obviously visitations are always contextual. Luther and Melancthon knew of the social and spiritual circumstances of Saxon and designed the articles accordingly. While the Lutheran practice of visitation should begin with the catechetical core, what additional items should be included in visitation in the southern Africa context?
- Hans Joachim Iwand writes: "An evangelical church that views the teaching of the righteousness of faith as self-evident – but about which no one should trouble himself further because other issues are more important – has in principle robbed itself of the central solution by which other questions are illuminated. Such a church will become increasingly more splintered and worn down. If we

take the article of justification out of the center very soon we will not know why we are evangelical Christians or should remain so. As a result, we will strive for the unity of the church and will sacrifice the purity of the gospel; we will have more confidence in church organization and church government and will promise more on the basis of the reform of Christianity authority and church training than either can deliver. If we lose our center, we will court pietism and listen to other teachings and we will be in danger of being tolerant where we should be radical and radical where we should be tolerant. In short, the standards will be lowered and along with them everything that is necessary and correct in the reforms that we sing about will be incomprehensible.”<sup>16</sup> How does the righteousness of faith (i.e. justification by faith alone) keep us from expecting either too much or too little from the practice of visitation?

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For Further Study

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<sup>16</sup> Hans Joachim Iwand, *The Righteousness of Faith According to Luther*, trans. Randi H. Lundell (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Press, 2008), 16

## Martin Luther's Small Catechism

<http://bookofconcord.org/smallcatechism.php>

# The Small Catechism by Martin Luther

Luther's Preface to the Small Catechism

*Martin Luther* to All Faithful and Godly Pastors and Preachers:

Grace, Mercy, and Peace in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The deplorable, miserable condition which I discovered lately when I, too, was a visitor, has forced and urged me to prepare [publish] this Catechism, or Christian doctrine, in this small, plain, simple form. Mercy! Good God! what manifold misery I beheld! The common people, especially in the villages, have no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine, and, alas! many pastors are altogether incapable and incompetent to teach [so much so, that one is ashamed to speak of it]. Nevertheless, all maintain that they are Christians, have been baptized and receive the [common] holy Sacraments. Yet they [*do not* understand and] cannot [*even*] recite either the Lord's Prayer, or the Creed, or the Ten Commandments; they live like dumb brutes and irrational hogs; and yet, now that the Gospel has come, they have nicely learned to abuse all liberty like experts.

O ye bishops! [to whom this charge has been committed by God,] what will ye ever answer to Christ for having so shamefully neglected the people and never for a moment discharged your office? [You are the persons to whom alone this ruin of the Christian religion is due. You have permitted men to err so shamefully; yours is the guilt; for you have ever done anything rather than what your office required you to do.] May all misfortune flee you! [I do not wish at this place to invoke evil on your heads.] You command the Sacrament in one form [but is not this the highest ungodliness coupled with the greatest impudence that you are insisting on the administration of the Sacrament in one form only, and on your traditions] and insist on your human laws, and yet at the same time you do not care in the least [while you are utterly without scruple and concern] whether the people know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, or any part of the Word of God. Woe, woe, unto you forever!

Therefore I entreat [and adjure] you all for God's sake, my dear sirs and brethren, who are pastors or preachers, to devote yourselves heartily to

your office, to have pity on the people who are entrusted to you, and to help us inculcate the Catechism upon the people, and especially upon the young. And let those of you who cannot do better [If any of you are so unskilled that you have absolutely no knowledge of these matters, let them not be ashamed to] take these tables and forms and impress them, word for word, on the people, as follows:--

In the first place, let the preacher above all be careful to avoid many kinds of or various texts and forms of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Sacraments, etc., but choose one form to which he adheres, and which he inculcates all the time, year after year. For [I give this advice, however, because I know that] young and simple people must be taught by uniform, settled texts and forms, otherwise they easily become confused when the teacher to-day teaches them thus, and in a year some other way, as if he wished to make improvements, and thus all effort and labor [which has been expended in teaching] is lost.

Also our blessed fathers understood this well; for they all used the same form of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. Therefore we, too, should [imitate their diligence and be at pains to] teach the young and simple people these parts in such a way as not to change a syllable, or set them forth and repeat them one year differently than in another [no matter how often we teach the Catechism].

Hence, choose whatever form you please, and adhere to it forever. But when you preach in the presence of learned and intelligent men, you may exhibit your skill, and may present these parts in as varied and intricate ways and give them as masterly turns as you are able. But with the young people stick to one fixed, permanent form and manner, and teach them, first of all, these parts, namely, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, etc., according to the text, word for word, so that they, too, can repeat it in the same manner after you and commit it to memory.

But those who are unwilling to learn it should be told that they deny Christ and are no Christians, neither should they be admitted to the Sacrament, accepted as sponsors at baptism, nor exercise any part of Christian liberty, but should simply be turned back to the Pope and his officials, yea, to the devil himself. Moreover, their parents and employers should refuse them food and drink, and [they would also do well if they were to] notify them that the prince will drive such rude people from the country, etc.

For although we cannot and should not force any one to believe, yet we should insist and urge the people that they know what is right and wrong with those among whom they dwell and wish to make their living. For

whoever desires to reside in a town must know and observe the town laws, the protection of which he wishes to enjoy, no matter whether he is a believer or at heart and in private a rogue or knave.

In the second place, after they have well learned the text, then teach them the sense also, so that they know what it means, and again choose the form of these tables, or some other brief uniform method, whichever you like, and adhere to it, and do not change a single syllable, as was just said regarding the text; and take your time to it. For it is not necessary that you take up all the parts at once, but one after the other. After they understand the First Commandment well, then take up the Second, and so on, otherwise they will be overwhelmed, so as not to be able to retain any well.

In the third place, after you have thus taught them this Short Catechism, then take up the Large Catechism, and give them also a richer and fuller knowledge. Here explain at large every commandment, [article,] petition, and part with its various works, uses, benefits, dangers, and injuries, as you find these abundantly stated in many books written about these matters. And particularly, urge that commandment or part most which suffers the greatest neglect among your people. For instance, the Seventh Commandment, concerning stealing, must be strenuously urged among mechanics and merchants, and even farmers and servants, for among these people many kinds of dishonesty and thieving prevail. So, too, you must urge well the Fourth Commandment among the children and the common people, that they may be quiet and faithful, obedient and peaceable, and you must always adduce many examples from the Scriptures to show how God has punished or blessed such persons.

Especially should you here urge magistrates and parents to rule well and to send their children to school, showing them why it is their duty to do this, and what a damnable sin they are committing if they do not do it. For by such neglect they overthrow and destroy both the kingdom of God and that of the world, acting as the worst enemies both of God and of men. And make it very plain to them what an awful harm they are doing if they will not help to train children to be pastors, preachers, clerks [also for other offices, with which we cannot dispense in this life], etc., and that God will punish them terribly for it. For such preaching is needed. [Verily, I do not know of any other topic that deserves to be treated as much as this.] Parents and magistrates are now sinning unspeakably in this respect. The devil, too, aims at something cruel because of these things [that he may hurl Germany into the greatest distress].

Lastly, since the tyranny of the Pope has been abolished, people are no longer willing to go to the Sacrament and despise it [as something useless

and unnecessary]. Here again urging is necessary, however, with this understanding: We are to force no one to believe, or to receive the Sacrament, nor fix any law, nor time, nor place for it, but are to preach in such a manner that of their own accord, without our law, they will urge themselves and, as it were, compel us pastors to administer the Sacrament. This is done by telling them: Whoever does not seek or desire the Sacrament at least some four times a year, it is to be feared that he despises the Sacrament and is no Christian, just as he is no Christian who does not believe or hear the Gospel; for Christ did not say, *This omit, or, This despise, but, This do ye, as oft as ye drink it,* etc. Verily, He wants it done, and not entirely neglected and despised. *This do ye,* He says.

Now, whoever does not highly value the Sacrament thereby shows that he has no sin, no flesh, no devil, no world, no death, no danger, no hell; that is, he does not believe any such things, although he is in them over head and ears and is doubly the devil's own. On the other hand, he needs no grace, life, Paradise, heaven, Christ, God, nor anything good. For if he believed that he had so much that is evil, and needed so much that is good, he would not thus neglect the Sacrament, by which such evil is remedied and so much good is bestowed. Neither will it be necessary to force him to the Sacrament by any law, but he will come running and racing of his own accord, will force himself and urge you that you must give him the Sacrament.

Hence, you must not make any law in this matter, as the Pope does. Only set forth clearly the benefit and harm, the need and use, the danger and the blessing, connected with this Sacrament, and the people will come of themselves without your compulsion. But if they do not come, let them go and tell them that such belong to the devil as do not regard nor feel their great need and the gracious help of God. But if you do not urge this, or make a law or a bane of it, it is your fault if they despise the Sacrament. How could they be otherwise than slothful if you sleep and are silent? Therefore look to it, ye pastors and preachers. Our office is now become a different thing from what it was under the Pope; it is now become serious and salutary. Accordingly, it now involves much more trouble and labor, danger and trials, and, in addition thereto, little reward and gratitude in the world. But Christ Himself will be our reward if we labor faithfully. To this end may the Father of all grace help us, to whom be praise and thanks forever through Christ, our Lord! Amen.

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## I. The Ten Commandments

*As the head of the family should teach them in a simple way to his household.*

### **The First Commandment.**

Thou shalt have no other gods.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

### **The Second Commandment.**

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

We should fear and love God that we may not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

### **The Third Commandment.**

Thou shalt sanctify the holy-day.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

We should fear and love God that we may not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it.

### **The Fourth Commandment.**

Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother [that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long upon the earth].

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

We should fear and love God that we may not despise nor anger our parents and masters, but give them honor, serve, obey, and hold them in love and esteem.

### **The Fifth Commandment.**

Thou shalt not kill.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

We should fear and love God that we may not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need [in every need and danger of life and body].

### **The Sixth Commandment.**

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

We should fear and love God that we may lead a chaste and decent life in words and deeds, and each love and honor his spouse.

### **The Seventh Commandment.**

Thou shalt not steal.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

We should fear and love God that we may not take our neighbor's money or property, nor get them by false ware or dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and business [that his means are preserved and his condition is improved].

### **The Eighth Commandment.**

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

We should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, or defame our neighbor, but defend him, [think and] speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

### **The Ninth Commandment.**

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

We should fear and love God that we may not craftily seek to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, and obtain it by a show of [justice and] right, etc., but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

### **The Tenth Commandment.**

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

We should fear and love God that we may not estrange, force, or entice away our neighbor's wife, servants, or cattle, but urge them to stay and [diligently] do their duty.

### **What Does God Say of All These Commandments?**

Answer.

He says thus (Exod. 20:5f): I the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

God threatens to punish all that transgress these commandments. Therefore we should dread His wrath and not act contrary to these commandments. But He promises grace and every blessing to all that keep these commandments. Therefore we should also love and trust in Him, and gladly do [zealously and diligently order our whole life] according to His commandments.

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## II. The Creed

*As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household.*

### **The First Article.**

*Of Creation.*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them; in addition thereto, clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and homestead, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all my goods; that He provides me richly and daily with all that I need to support this body and life, protects me from all danger, and guards me and preserves me from all evil; and all this out of pure, fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which I owe it to Him to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

### **The Second Article.**

*Of Redemption.*

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won [delivered] me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, in order that I may be [wholly] His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

### **The Third Article.**

*Of Sanctification.*

I believe in the Holy Ghost; one holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.

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### III. The Lord's Prayer

*As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household.*

Our Father who art in heaven.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

God would thereby [with this little introduction] tenderly urge us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that we may ask Him confidently with all assurance, as dear children ask their dear father.

### **The First Petition.**

Hallowed be Thy name.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

God's name is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may become holy among us also.

*How is this done?--Answer.*

When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God also lead holy lives in accordance with it. To this end help us, dear Father in heaven. But he that teaches and lives otherwise than God's Word teaches profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, Heavenly Father.

### **The Second Petition.**

Thy kingdom come.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

The kingdom of God comes indeed without our prayer, of itself; but we pray in this petition that it may come unto us also.

*How is this done?--Answer.*

When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life here in time and yonder in eternity.

### **The Third Petition.**

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

The good and gracious will of God is done indeed without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

*How is this done?--Answer.*

When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will which would not let us hallow the name of God nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh; but strengthens and keeps us steadfast in His Word and in faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.

### **The Fourth Petition.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

God gives daily bread, even without our prayer, to all wicked men; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to know it, and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

*What is meant by daily bread?--Answer.*

Everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as meat, drink, clothing, shoes, house, homestead, field, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful magistrates, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

### **The Fifth Petition.**

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins, nor deny such petitions on account of them; for we are worthy of none of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them; but that He would grant them all to us by grace; for we daily sin much, and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. So will we verily, on our part, also heartily forgive and also readily do good to those who sin against us.

### **The Sixth Petition.**

And lead us not into temptation.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

God, indeed, tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us, nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and though we be assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome and gain the victory.

### **The Seventh Petition.**

But deliver us from evil.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from all manner of evil, of body and soul, property and honor, and at last, when our last hour shall come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself into heaven.

Amen.

What does this mean?--Answer.

That I should be certain that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and heard; for He Himself has commanded us so to pray, and has promised that He will hear us. Amen, Amen; that is, Yea, yea, it shall be so.

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#### IV. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

*As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household.*

##### **First.**

*What is Baptism?--Answer.*

Baptism is not simple water only, but it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's Word.

*Which is that word of God?--Answer.*

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Matthew: *Go ye into all the world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

##### **Secondly.**

*What does Baptism give or profit?--Answer.*

It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

*Which are such words and promises of God? Answer.*

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Mark: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

### **Thirdly.**

*How can water do such great things?--Answer.*

It is not the water indeed that does them, but the word of God which is in and with the water, and faith, which trusts such word of God in the water. For without the word of God the water is simple water and no baptism. But with the word of God it is a baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says, Titus, chapter three: *By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.*

### **Fourthly.**

*What does such baptizing with water signify?--Answer.*

It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise; who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

*Where is this written?--Answer.*

St. Paul says *Romans, chapter 6: We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that, like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

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## V. Confession

*How Christians should be taught to confess.*

*What is Confession?\**

Confession embraces two parts: the one is, that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the confessor, as from God Himself, and in no wise doubt, but firmly believe, that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

*What sins should we confess?*

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even of those which we do not know, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But before the confessor we should confess those sins alone which we know and feel in our hearts.

*Which are these?*

Here consider your station according to the Ten Commandments, whether you are a father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, a man-servant or maid-servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, slothful; whether you have grieved any one by words or deeds; whether you have stolen, neglected, or wasted aught, or done other injury.

### **Pray, Propose to Me a Brief Form of Confession.**

Answer.

You should speak to the confessor thus: Reverend and dear sir, I beseech you to hear my confession, and to pronounce forgiveness to me for God's sake.

### **Proceed!**

I, a poor sinner, confess myself before God guilty of all sins; especially I confess before you that I am a man-servant, a maidservant, etc. But, alas, I serve my master unfaithfully; for in this and in that I have not done what they commanded me; I have provoked them, and caused them to curse, have been negligent [in many things] and permitted damage to be done; have also been immodest in words and deeds, have quarreled with my equals, have grumbled and sworn at my mistress, etc. For all this I am sorry, and pray for grace; I want to do better.

*A master or mistress may say thus:*

In particular I confess before you that I have not faithfully trained my children, domestics, and wife [family] for God's glory. I have cursed, set a bad example by rude words and deeds, have done my neighbor harm and spoken evil of him, have overcharged and given false ware and short measure.

And whatever else he has done against God's command and his station, etc.

But if any one does not find himself burdened with such or greater sins, he should not trouble himself or search for or invent other sins, and thereby make confession a torture, but mention one or two that he knows. Thus: In particular I confess that I once cursed; again, I once used improper words, I have once neglected this or that, etc. Let this suffice.

But if you know of none at all (which, however is scarcely possible), then mention none in particular, but receive the forgiveness upon your general confession which you make before God to the confessor.

**Then shall the confessor say:**

God be merciful to thee and strengthen thy faith! Amen.

**Furthermore:**

Dost thou believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?

Answer.

Yes, dear sir.

**Then let him say:**

As thou believest, so be it done unto thee. And by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ I forgive thee thy sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Depart in peace.

But those who have great burdens upon their consciences, or are distressed and tempted, the confessor will know how to comfort and to encourage to faith with more passages of Scripture. This is to be merely a general form of confession for the unlearned.

\* These questions may not have been composed by Luther himself but reflect his teachings and were included in editions of the Small Catechism during his lifetime.

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## VI. The Sacrament of the Altar

*As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household.*

*What is the Sacrament of the Altar?*

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.

*Where is this written?*

The holy Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul, write thus:

*Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.*

*After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Take, drink ye all of it. This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.*

*What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?*

That is shown us in these words: *Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins*; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

*How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?*

It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them, but the words which stand here, namely: *Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins*. Which words are, beside the bodily eating and drinking, as the chief

thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins.

*Who, then, receives such Sacrament worthily?*

Fasting and bodily preparation is, indeed, a fine outward training; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: *Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins.*

But he that does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unfit; for the words *For you* require altogether believing hearts.

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## Daily Prayers

*How the head of the family should teach his household to pray morning and evening*

### **Morning Prayer.**

**1]** In the morning, when you rise, you shall bless yourself with the holy cross and say:

In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**2]** Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may, in addition, say this little prayer:

I thank Thee, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray Thee to keep me this day also from sin and all evil, that all my doings and life may please Thee. For into Thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the Wicked Foe may have no power over me. Amen.

**3]** Then go to your work with joy, singing a hymn, as the Ten Commandments, or what your devotion may suggest.

## **Evening Prayer.**

**4]** In the evening, when you go to bed, you shall bless yourself with the holy cross and say:

In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**5]** Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may, in addition, say this little prayer:

I thank Thee, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast graciously kept me this day, and I pray Thee to forgive me all my sins, where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the Wicked Foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Then go to sleep promptly and cheerfully.

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## **6] HOW THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY**

### **Should Teach His Household to Ask a Blessing and Return Thanks.**

#### **Asking a Blessing**

The children and servants shall go to the table with folded hands and reverently, and say:

The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O Lord; and Thou givest them their meat in due season; Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

#### *Note*

To satisfy the desire means that all animals receive so much to eat that they are on this account joyful and of good cheer; for care and avarice hinder such satisfaction.

Then the Lord's Prayer, and the prayer here following:

Lord God, Heavenly Father, bless us and these Thy gifts, which we take from Thy bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **Returning Thanks.**

Likewise also after the meal they shall reverently and with folded hands say:

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. He giveth food to all flesh; He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry. He delighteth not in the strength of the horse; He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.

Then the Lord's Prayer and the prayer here following:

We thank Thee, Lord God, Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for all Thy benefits, who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

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### Table of Duties

*Certain passages of scripture for various holy orders and positions, admonishing them about their duties and responsibilities*

#### **For Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers.**

A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; not a novice; holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. 1 Tim. 3:2ff ; Titus 1:6.

#### **What the Hearers Owe to Their Pastors.**

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. 1 Cor. 9:14. Let him that is taught in the Word

communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Gal. 6:6. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and the laborer is worthy of his reward. 1 Tim. 5:17-18. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. Heb. 13:17.]

### **Concerning Civil Government.**

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For the power which exists anywhere is ordained of God. Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Rom. 13:1-4.

### **What Subjects Owe to the Magistrates.**

Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. Matt. 22:21. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, etc. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honor, to whom honor. Rom. 13:1,5ff. I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 1 Tim. 2:1f Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, etc. Titus 3:1. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him, etc. 1 Pet. 2:13f ]

### **For Husbands.**

Ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered. 1 Pet. 3:7. And be not bitter against them. Col. 3:9.

### **For Wives.**

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are, as long

as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 1 Pet. 3:6; Eph. 5:22.

### **For Parents.**

Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Eph. 6:4.

### **For Children.**

Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. Eph. 6:1-3.

### **For Male and Female Servants, Hired Men, and Laborers.**

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Eph. 6:5ff ; Col. 3:22.

### **For Masters and Mistresses.**

Ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him. Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1.

### **For Young Persons in General.**

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time. 1 Pet. 5:5-6.

### **For Widows.**

She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. 1 Tim. 5:5-6.

### **For All in Common.**

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Herein are comprehended all the commandments. Rom. 13:8ff And persevere in prayer for all men. 1 Tim. 2:1-2.

Let each his lesson learn with care,  
And all the household well shall fare.

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## Christian Questions with Their Answers

*Prepared by Dr. Martin Luther for those who intend to go to the Sacrament*

[The "Christian Questions with Their Answers," designating Luther as the author, first appeared in an edition of the Small Catechism in 1551, five years after Luther's death].

After confession and instruction in the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the pastor may ask, or Christians may ask themselves these questions:

1. *Do you believe that you are a sinner?*  
Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.
2. *How do you know this?*  
From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.
3. *Are you sorry for your sins?*  
Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.
4. *What have you deserved from God because of your sins?*  
His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation.  
See Romans 6:21, 23.
5. *Do you hope to be saved?*  
Yes, that is my hope.

6. *In whom then do you trust?*

In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.

7. *Who is Christ?*

The Son of God, true God and man.

8. *How many Gods are there?*

Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

9. *What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?*

He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

10. *Did the Father also die for you?*

He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed his blood for me.

11. *How do you know this?*

From the holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.

12. *What are the Words of Institution?*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

13. *Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?*

Yes, I believe it.

14. *What convinces you to believe this?*

The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

15. *What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?*

We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

*16. Why should we remember and proclaim His death?*

First, so that we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that. Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious. Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

*17. What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?*

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in *John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2* and *Ephesians 5*.

*18. Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?*

That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

*19. What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?*

First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

*20. But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?*

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in *Galatians 5* and *Romans 7*. Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in *John 15-16* and in *1 John 2 and 5*. Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in *John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2*.

Note:

These questions and answers are no child's play, but are drawn up with great earnestness of purpose by the venerable and devout Dr. Luther for both young and old. Let each one pay attention and consider it a serious matter; for St. Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter six: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked."

## Martin Luther's Large Catechism

<http://bookofconcord.org/lc-1-intro.php>

# The Large Catechism

## Introduction

A Christian, Profitable, and Necessary Preface, and Faithful, Earnest Exhortation of Dr. Martin Luther to All Christians, but Especially to All Pastors and Preachers, that They Should Daily Exercise Themselves in the Catechism, which is a Short Summary and, Epitome of the Entire Holy Scriptures, and that They May Always Teach the Same.

1] We have no slight reasons for treating the Catechism so constantly [in sermons] and for both desiring and beseeching others to teach it, since we see to our sorrow that many pastors and preachers are very negligent in this, and slight both their office and this teaching; some from great and high art (giving their mind, as they imagine, to much higher matters), but others from sheer laziness and care for their paunches, assuming no other relation to this business than if they were pastors and preachers, for their bellies' sake, and had nothing to do but, to [spend and] consume their emoluments as long as they live, as they have been accustomed to do under the Papacy.

2] And although they have now everything that they are to preach and teach placed before them so abundantly, clearly, and easily, in so many [excellent and] helpful books, and the true Sermones per se loquentes, Dormi secure, Paratos et Thesaurus, as they were called in former times; yet they are not so godly and honest as to buy these books, or even when they have them, to look at them or read them. Alas! they are altogether shameful gluttons and servants of their own bellies who ought to be more properly swineherds and dog-tenders than care-takers of souls and pastors.

3] And now that they are delivered from the unprofitable and burdensome babbling of the Seven Canonical Hours, oh, that, instead thereof, they would only, morning, noon, and evening, read a page or two in the Catechism, the Prayer-book, the New Testament, or elsewhere in the Bible, and pray the Lord's Prayer for themselves and their parishioners, so that they might render, in return, honor and thanks to the Gospel, by which they have been delivered from burdens and troubles so manifold, and might feel a little shame because like pigs and dogs they retain no more of the Gospel than such a lazy, pernicious, shameful, carnal liberty! 4] For, alas! as it is, the common people regard the Gospel altogether too lightly, and we accomplish

nothing extraordinary even though we use all diligence. What, then, will be achieved if we shall be negligent and lazy as we were under the Papacy?

5] To this there is added the shameful vice and secret infection of security and satiety, that is, that many regard the Catechism as a poor, mean teaching, which they can read through at one time, and then immediately know it, throw the book into a corner, and be ashamed, as it were, to read in it again.

6] Yea, even among the nobility there may be found some louts and scrimps, who declare that there is no longer any need either of pastors or preachers; that we have everything in books, and every one can easily learn it by himself; and so they are content to let the parishes decay and become desolate, and pastors and preachers to suffer distress and hunger a plenty, just as it becomes crazy Germans to do. For we Germans have such disgraceful people, and must endure them.

7] But for myself I say this: I am also a doctor and preacher, yea, as learned and experienced as all those may be who have such presumption and security; yet I do as a child who is being taught the Catechism, and ever morning, and whenever I have time, I read and say, word for word, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, etc. And I must still read and study daily, and yet I cannot master it as I wish, 8] but must remain a child and pupil of the Catechism, and am glad so to remain. And yet these delicate, fastidious fellows would with one reading promptly be doctors above all doctors, know everything and be in need of nothing. Well, this, too, is indeed a sure sign that they despise both their office and the souls of the people, yea, even God and His Word. They do not have to fall, they are already fallen all too horribly; they would need to become children, and begin to learn their alphabet, which they imagine that they have long since outgrown.

9] Therefore I beg such lazy paunches or presumptuous saints to be persuaded and believe for God's sake that they are verily, verily! not so learned or such great doctors as they imagine; and never to presume that they have finished learning this [the parts of the Catechism], or know it well enough in all points, even though they think that they know it ever so well. For though they should know and understand it perfectly (which, however, is impossible in this life), yet there are manifold benefits and fruits still to be obtained, if it be daily read and practised in thought and speech; namely, that the Holy Ghost is present in such reading and repetition and meditation, and bestows ever new and more light and devoutness, so that it is daily relished and appreciated better, as Christ promises, *Matt. 18:20*: Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.

10] Besides, it is an exceedingly effectual help against the devil, the world, and the flesh and all evil thoughts to be occupied with the Word of God, and to speak of it, and meditate upon it, so that the First Psalm declares those blessed who meditate upon the Law of God day and night. Undoubtedly, you will not start a stronger incense or other fumigation against the devil than by being engaged upon God's commandments and words, and speaking, singing, or thinking of them. For this is indeed the true holy water and holy sign from which he flees, and by which he may be driven away.

11] Now, for this reason alone you ought gladly to read, speak, think and treat of these things, if you had no other profit and fruit from them than that by doing so you can drive away the devil and evil thoughts. For he cannot hear or endure God's Word; and God's Word is not like some other silly prattle, as that about Dietrich of Berne, etc., but as St. Paul says, Rom. 1:16, the power of God. Yea, indeed, the power of God which gives the devil burning pain, and strengthens, comforts, and helps us beyond measure.

12] And what need is there of many words? If I were to recount all the profit and fruit which God's Word produces, whence would I get enough paper and time? The devil is called the master of a thousand arts. But what shall we call God's Word, which drives away and brings to naught this master of a thousand arts with all his arts and power? It must indeed be the master of more than a hundred thousand arts. 13] And shall we frivolously despise such power, profit, strength, and fruit-we, especially, who claim to be pastors and preachers? If so, we should not only have nothing given us to eat, but be driven out, being baited with dogs, and pelted with dung, because we not only need all this every day as we need our daily bread, but must also daily use it against the daily and unabated attacks and lurking of the devil, the master of a thousand arts.

14] And if this were not sufficient to admonish us to read the Catechism daily, yet we should feel sufficiently constrained by the command of God alone, who solemnly enjoins in Deut. 6:6ff that we should always meditate upon His precepts, sitting, walking, standing, lying down, and rising, and have them before our eyes and in our hands as a constant mark and sign. Doubtless He did not so solemnly require and enjoin this without a purpose; but because He knows our danger and need, as well as the constant and furious assaults and temptations of devils, He wishes to warn, equip, and preserve us against them, as with a good armor against their fiery darts and with good medicine against their evil infection and suggestion.

15] Oh, what mad, senseless fools are we that, while we must ever live and dwell among such mighty enemies as the devils are, we nevertheless

despise our weapons and defense, and are too lazy to look at or think of them!

16] And what else are such supercilious, presumptuous saints, who are unwilling to read and study the Catechism daily, doing than esteeming themselves much more learned than God Himself with all His saints, angels, [patriarchs], prophets, apostles, and all Christians? For inasmuch as God Himself is not ashamed to teach these things daily, as knowing nothing better to teach, and always keeps teaching the same thing, and does not take up anything new or different, and all the saints know nothing better or different to learn, and cannot finish learning this, are we not the finest of all fellows to imagine, if we have once read or heard it, that we know it all, and have no further need to read and learn, but can finish learning in one hour what God Himself cannot finish teaching, although He is engaged in teaching it from the beginning to the end of the world, and all prophets, together with all saints, have been occupied with learning it, and have ever remained pupils, and must continue to be such?

17] For it needs must be that whoever knows the Ten Commandments perfectly must know all the Scriptures, so that, in all affairs and cases, he can advise, help, comfort, judge, and decide both spiritual and temporal matters, and is qualified to sit in judgment upon all doctrines, estates, spirits, laws, and whatever else is in the world. And what, indeed, is the entire Psalter but thoughts and exercises upon the First Commandment? 18] Now I know of a truth that such lazy paunches and presumptuous spirits do not understand a single psalm, much less the entire Holy Scriptures; and yet they pretend to know and despise the Catechism, which is a compend and brief summary of all the Holy Scriptures.

19] Therefore I again implore all Christians, especially pastors and preachers, not to be doctors too soon, and imagine that they know everything (for imagination and cloth unshrunk [and false weights] fall far short of the measure), but that they daily exercise themselves well in these studies and constantly treat them; moreover, that they guard with all care and diligence against the poisonous infection of such security and vain imagination, but steadily keep on reading, teaching, learning, pondering, and meditating, and do not cease until they have made a test and are sure that they have taught the devil to death, and have become more learned than God Himself and all His saints.

20] If they manifest such diligence, then I will promise them, and they shall also perceive, what fruit they will obtain, and what excellent men God will make of them, so that in due time they themselves will acknowledge that the longer and the more they study the Catechism, the less they know of it,

and the more they find yet to learn; and then only, as hungry and thirsty ones, will they truly relish that which now they cannot endure, because of great abundance and satiety. To this end may God grant His grace! Amen.

#### Short Preface of Dr. Martin Luther

1] This sermon is designed and undertaken that it might be an instruction for children and the simple-minded. Hence of old it was called in Greek Catechism, i.e., instruction for children, 2] what every Christian must needs know, so that he who does not know this could not be numbered with the Christians nor be admitted to any Sacrament, just as a mechanic who does not understand the rules and customs of his trade is expelled and considered incapable. 3] Therefore we must have the young learn the parts which belong to the Catechism or instruction for children well and fluently and diligently exercise themselves in them and keep them occupied with them.

4] Therefore it is the duty of every father of a family to question and examine his children and servants at least once a week and to ascertain what they know of it, or are learning, and, if they do not know it, to keep them faithfully at it. 5] For I well remember the time, indeed, even now it is a daily occurrence that one finds rude, old persons who knew nothing and still know nothing of these things, and who, nevertheless, go to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and use everything belonging to Christians, notwithstanding that those who come to the Lord's Supper ought to know more and have a fuller understanding of all Christian doctrine than children and new scholars. 6] However, for the common people we are satisfied with the three parts, which have remained in Christendom from of old, though little of it has been taught and treated correctly until both young and old, who are called and wish to be Christians, are well trained in them and familiar with them. These are the following:

#### First - THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

1] 1. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

2] 2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain [for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain].

3] 3. Thou shalt sanctify the holy-day. [Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.]

4] 4. Thou shalt honor thy father and mother [that thou mayest live long upon the earth].

5] 5. Thou shalt not kill.

6] 6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

7] 7. Thou shalt not steal.

8] 8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

9] 9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

10] 10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his cattle [ox, nor his ass], nor anything that is his.

Secondly - THE CHIEF ARTICLES OF OUR FAITH.

11] 1. I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

12] 2. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

13] 3. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

14] Thirdly - THE PRAYER, OR "OUR FATHER," WHICH CHRIST TAUGHT.

Our Father who art in heaven.

1. Hallowed be Thy name.

2. Thy kingdom come.

3. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

4. Give us this day our daily bread.

5. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

6. And lead us not into temptation.

7. But deliver us from evil. [For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever.] Amen.

15] These are the most necessary parts which one should first learn to repeat word for word, 16] and which our children should be accustomed to recite daily when they arise in the morning, when they sit down to their meals, and when they retire at night; and until they repeat them, they should be given neither food nor drink. 17] Likewise every head of a household is obliged to do the same with respect to his domestics, man-servants and maid-servants, and not to keep them in his house if they do not know these things and are unwilling to learn them. 18] For a person who is so rude and unruly as to be unwilling to learn these things is not to be tolerated; for in these three parts everything that we have in the Scriptures is comprehended in short, plain, and simple terms. 19] For the holy Fathers or apostles (whoever they were) have thus embraced in a summary the doctrine, life, wisdom, and art of Christians, of which they speak and treat, and with which they are occupied.

20] Now, when these three parts are apprehended, it behooves a person also to know what to say concerning our Sacraments, which Christ Himself instituted, Baptism and the holy body and blood of Christ, namely, the text which Matthew 28:19ff and Mark 16:15f record at the close of their Gospels when Christ said farewell to His disciples and sent them forth.

21] OF BAPTISM.

Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

22] So much is sufficient for a simple person to know from the Scriptures concerning Baptism. In like manner, also, concerning the other Sacrament, in short, simple words, namely, the text of St. Paul [1 Cor. 11:23f ].

OF THE SACRAMENT.

23] Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples and said, Take, eat; this is, My body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; this cup is the new

testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

24] Thus would have, in all, five parts of the entire Christian doctrine which should be constantly treated and required [of children], and heard recited word for word. For you must not rely upon it that the young people will learn and retain these things from the sermon alone. 25] When these parts have been well learned, you may, as a supplement and to fortify them, lay before them also some psalms or hymns, which have been composed on these parts, and thus lead the young into the Scriptures, and make daily progress therein.

26] However, it is not enough for them to comprehend and recite these parts according to the words only, but the young people should also be made to attend the preaching, especially during the time which is devoted to the Catechism, that they may hear it explained, and may learn to understand

what every part contains, so as to be able to recite it as they have heard it, and, when asked, may give a correct answer, so that the preaching may not be without profit and fruit. 27] For the reason why we exercise such diligence in preaching the Catechism so often is that it may be inculcated on our youth, not in a high and subtile manner, but briefly and with the greatest simplicity, so as to enter the mind readily and be fixed in the memory.

28] Therefore we shall now take up the above-mentioned articles one by one and in the plainest manner possible say about them as much as is necessary.

## The Ten Commandments

### The First Commandment.

*Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*

1] That is: Thou shalt have [and worship] Me alone as thy God. What is the force of this, and how is it to be understood? What does it mean to have a god? or, what is God? 2] Answer: A god means that from which we are to expect all good and to which we are to take refuge in all distress, so that to have a God is nothing else than to trust and believe Him from the [whole] heart; as I have often said that the confidence and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol. 3] If your faith and trust be right, then is your

god also true; and, on the other hand, if your trust be false and wrong, then you have not the true God; for these two belong together, faith and God. That now, I say, upon which you set your heart and put your trust is properly your god.

4] Therefore it is the intent of this commandment to require true faith and trust of the heart which settles upon the only true God, and clings to Him alone. That is as much as to say: "See to it that you let Me alone be your God, and never seek another," i.e.: Whatever you lack of good things, expect it of Me, and look to Me for it, and whenever you suffer misfortune and distress, creep and cling to Me. I, yes, I, will give you enough and help you out of every need; only let not your heart cleave to or rest in any other.

5] This I must unfold somewhat more plainly, that it may be understood and perceived by ordinary examples of the contrary. Many a one thinks that he has God and everything in abundance when he has money and, possessions; he trusts in them and boasts of them with such firmness and assurance as to care for no one. 6] Lo, such a man also has a god, Mammon by name, i.e., money and possessions, on which he sets all his heart, and which is also the most common idol on earth. 7] He who has money and possessions feels secure, and is joyful and undismayed as though he were sitting in the midst of Paradise. 8] On the other hand, he who has none doubts and is despondent, as though he knew of no God. 9] For very few are to be found who are of good cheer, and who neither mourn nor complain if they have not Mammon. This [care and desire for money] sticks and clings to our nature, even to the grave.

10] So, too, whoever trusts and boasts that he possesses great skill, prudence, power, favor, friendship, and honor has also a god, but not this true and only God. This appears again when you notice how presumptuous, secure, and proud people are because of such possessions, and how despondent when they no longer exist or are withdrawn. Therefore I repeat that the chief explanation of this point is that to have a god is to have something in which the heart entirely trusts.

11] Besides, consider what, in our blindness, we have hitherto been practising and doing under the Papacy. If any one had toothache, he fasted and honored St. Apollonia [macerated his flesh by voluntary fasting to the honor of St. Apollonia]; if he was afraid of fire, he chose St. Lawrence as his helper in need; if he dreaded pestilence, he made a vow to St. Sebastian or Rochio, and a countless number of such abominations, where every one selected his own saint, worshiped him, and called for help to him in distress. 12] Here belong those also, as, e. g., sorcerers and magicians, whose idolatry is most gross, and who make a covenant with the devil, in

order that he may give them plenty of money or help them in love-affairs, preserve their cattle, restore to them lost possessions, etc. For all these place their heart and trust elsewhere than in the true God, look for nothing good to Him nor seek it from Him.

13] Thus you can easily understand what and how much this commandment requires, namely, that man's entire heart and all his confidence be placed in God alone, and in no one else. For to have God, you can easily perceive, is not to lay hold of Him with our hands or to put Him in a bag [as money], or to lock Him in a chest [as silver vessels]. 14] But to apprehend Him means when the heart lays hold of Him and clings to Him. 15] But to cling to Him with the heart is nothing else than to trust in Him entirely. For this reason He wishes to turn us away from everything else that exists outside of Him, and to draw us to Himself, namely, because He is the only eternal good. As though He would say; Whatever you have heretofore sought of the saints, or for whatever [things] you have trusted in Mammon or anything else, expect it all of Me, and regard Me as the one who will help you and pour out upon you richly all good things.

16] Lo, here you have the meaning of the true honor and worship of God, which pleases God, and which He commands under penalty of eternal wrath, namely, that the heart know no other comfort or confidence than in Him, and do not suffer itself to be torn from Him, but, for Him, risk and disregard everything upon earth. 17] On the other hand, you can easily see and judge how the world practises only false worship and idolatry. For no people has ever been so reprobate as not to institute and observe some divine worship; every one has set up as his special god whatever he looked to for blessings, help, and comfort.

18] Thus, for example, the heathen who put their trust in power and dominion elevated Jupiter as the supreme god; the others, who were bent upon riches, happiness, or pleasure, and a life of ease, Hercules, Mercury, Venus, or others; women with child, Diana or Lucina, and so on; thus every one made that his god to which his heart was inclined, so that even in the mind of the heathen to have a god means to trust and believe. 19] But their error is this, that their trust is false and wrong; for it is not placed in the only God, besides whom there is truly no God in heaven or upon earth. 20] Therefore the heathen really make their self-invented notions and dreams of God an idol, and put their trust in that which is altogether nothing. 21] Thus it is with all idolatry; for it consists not merely in erecting an image and worshiping it, but rather in the heart, which stands gaping at something else, and seeks help and consolation from creatures, saints, or devils, and neither cares for God, nor looks to Him for so much good as to

believe that He is willing to help, neither believes that whatever good it experiences comes from God.

22] Besides, there is also a false worship and extreme idolatry, which we have hitherto practised, and is still prevalent in the world, upon which also all ecclesiastical orders are founded, and which concerns the conscience alone, that seeks in its own works help, consolation, and salvation, presumes to wrest heaven from God, and reckons how many bequests it has made, how often it has fasted, celebrated Mass, etc. Upon such things it depends, and of them boasts, as though unwilling to receive anything from God as a gift, but desires itself to earn or merit it superabundantly, just as though He must serve us and were our debtor, and we His liege lords. 23] What is this but reducing God to an idol, yea, [a fig image or] an apple-god, and elevating and regarding ourselves as God? But this is slightly too subtile, and is not for young pupils.

24] But let this be said to the simple, that they may well note and remember the meaning of this commandment, namely, that we are to trust in God alone, and look to Him and expect from Him naught but good, as from one who gives us body, life, food, drink, nourishment, health, protection, peace, and all necessaries of both temporal and eternal things. He also preserves us from misfortune, and if any evil befall us, delivers and rescues us, so that it is God alone (as has been sufficiently said) from whom we receive all good, and by whom 25] we are delivered from all evil. Hence also, I think, we Germans from ancient times call God (more elegantly and appropriately than any other language) by that name from the word Good, as being an eternal fountain which gushes forth abundantly nothing but what is good, and from which flows forth all that is and is called good.

26] For even though otherwise we experience much good from men, still whatever we receive by His command or arrangement is all received from God. For our parents, and all rulers, and every one besides with respect to his neighbor, have received from God the command that they should do us all manner of good, so that we receive these blessings not from them, but, through them, from God. For creatures are only the hands, channels, and means whereby God gives all things, as He gives to the mother breasts and milk to offer to her child, and corn and all manner of produce from the earth for nourishment, none of which blessings could be produced by any creature of itself.

27] Therefore no man should presume to take or give anything except as God has commanded, in order that it may be acknowledged as God's gift, and thanks may be rendered Him for it, as this commandment requires. On this account also these means of receiving good gifts through creatures are

not to be rejected, neither should we in presumption seek other ways and means than God has commanded. For that would not be receiving from God, but seeking of ourselves.

28] Let every one, then, see to it that he esteem this commandment great and high above all things, and do not regard it as a joke. Ask and examine your heart diligently, and you will find whether it cleaves to God alone or not. If you have a heart that can expect of Him nothing but what is good, especially in want and distress, and that, moreover, renounces and forsakes everything that is not God, then you have the only true God. If, on the contrary, it cleaves to anything else, of which it expects more good and help than of God, and does not take refuge in Him, but in adversity flees from Him, then you have an idol, another god.

29] In order that it may be seen that God will not have this commandment thrown to the winds, but will most strictly enforce it, He has attached to it first a terrible threat, and then a beautiful, comforting promise which is also to be urged and impressed upon young people, that they may take it to heart and retain it:

[Exposition of the Appendix to the First Commandment.]

30] For I am the Lord, thy God, strong and jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

31] Although these words relate to all the commandments (as we shall hereafter learn), yet they are joined to this chief commandment because it is of first importance that men have a right head; for where the head is right, the whole life must be right, and vice versa. 32] Learn, therefore, from these words how angry God is with those who trust in anything but Him, and again, how good and gracious He is to those who trust and believe in Him alone with the whole heart; so that His anger does not cease until the fourth generation, while, on the other hand, His blessing and goodness extend to many thousands, 33] lest you live in such security and commit yourself to chance, as men of brutal heart, who think that it makes no great difference [how they live]. 34] He is a God who will not leave it unavenged if men turn from Him, and will not cease to be angry until the fourth generation, even until they are utterly exterminated. Therefore He is to be feared, and not to be despised.

35] He has also demonstrated this in all history, as the Scriptures abundantly show and daily experience still teaches. For from the beginning

He has utterly extirpated all idolatry, and, on account of it, both heathen and Jews; even as at the present day He overthrows all false worship, so that all who remain therein must finally perish. 36] Therefore, although proud, powerful, and rich worldlings [Sardanapaluses and Phalarides, who surpass even the Persians in wealth] are now to be found, who boast defiantly of their Mammon, with utter disregard whether God is angry at or smiles on them, and dare to withstand His wrath, yet they shall not succeed, but before they are aware, they shall be wrecked, with all in which they trusted; as all others have perished who have thought themselves more secure or powerful.

37] And just because of such hardened heads who imagine because God connives and allows them to rest in security, that He either is entirely ignorant or cares nothing about such matters, He must deal a smashing blow and punish them, so that He cannot forget it unto children's children; so that every one may take note and see that this is no joke to Him. 38] For they are those whom He means when He says: Who hate Me, i.e., those who persist in their defiance and pride; whatever is preached or said to them, they will not listen; when they are reproved, in order that they may learn to know themselves and amend before the punishment begins, they become mad and foolish so as to fairly merit wrath, as now we see daily in bishops and princes.

39] But terrible as are these threatenings, so much the more powerful is the consolation in the promise, that those who cling to God alone should be sure that He will show them mercy, that is, show them pure goodness and blessing, not only for themselves, but also to their children and children's children, even to the thousandth generation and beyond that. 40] This ought certainly to move and impel us to risk our hearts in all confidence with God, if we wish all temporal and eternal good, since the Supreme Majesty makes such sublime offers and presents such cordial inducements and such rich promises.

41] Therefore let every one seriously take this to heart, lest it be regarded as though a man had spoken it. For to you it is a question either of eternal blessing, happiness, and salvation, or of eternal wrath, misery, and woe. What more would you have or desire than that He so kindly promises to be yours with every blessing, and to protect and help you in all need?

42] But, alas! here is the failure, that the world believes nothing of this, nor regards it as God's Word because it sees that those who trust in God and not in Mammon suffer care and want, and the devil opposes and resists them, that they have neither money, favor, nor honor, and, besides, can scarcely support life; while, on the other hand, those who serve Mammon have

power, favor, honor, possessions, and every comfort in the eyes of the world. For this reason, these words must be grasped as being directed against such appearances; and we must consider that they do not lie or deceive, but must come true.

43] Reflect for yourself or make inquiry and tell me: Those who have employed all their care and diligence to accumulate great possessions and wealth, what have they finally attained? You will find that they have wasted their toil and labor, or even though they have amassed great treasures, they have been dispersed and scattered, so that they themselves have never found happiness in their wealth, and afterwards it never reached the third generation.

44] Instances of this you will find a plenty in all histories, also in the memory of aged and experienced people. Only observe and ponder them.

45] Saul was a great king, chosen of God, and a godly man; but when he was established on his throne, and let his heart decline from God, and put his trust in his crown and power, he had to perish with all that he had, so that none even of his children remained.

46] David, on the other hand, was a poor, despised man, hunted down and chased, so that he nowhere felt secure of his life; yet he had to remain in spite of Saul, and become king. For these words had to abide and come true, since God cannot lie or deceive. Only let not the devil and the world deceive you with their show, which indeed remains for a time, but finally is nothing.

47] Let us, then, learn well the First Commandment, that we may see how God will tolerate no presumption nor any trust in any other object, and how He requires nothing higher of us than confidence from the heart for everything good, so that we may proceed right and straightforward and use all the blessings which God gives no farther than as a shoemaker uses his needle, awl, and thread for work, and then lays them aside, or as a traveler uses an inn, and food, and his bed only for temporal necessity, each one in his station, according to God's order, and without allowing any of these things to be our lord or idol. 48] Let this suffice with respect to the First Commandment, which we have had to explain at length, since it is of chief importance, because, as before said, where the heart is rightly disposed toward God and this commandment is observed, all the others follow.

The Second Commandment.

*49] Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain.*

50] As the First Commandment has instructed the heart and taught [the basis of] faith, so this commandment leads us forth and directs the mouth and tongue to God. For the first objects that spring from the heart and manifest themselves are words. Now, as I have taught above how to answer the question, what it is to have a god, so you must learn to comprehend simply the meaning of this and all the commandments, and to apply it to yourself.

51] If, then, it be asked: How do you understand the Second Commandment, or what is meant by taking in vain, or misusing God's name? answer briefly thus: It is misusing God's name when we call upon the Lord God, no matter in what way, for purposes of falsehood or wrong of any kind. Therefore this commandment enjoins this much, that God's name must not be appealed to falsely, or taken upon the lips, while the heart knows well enough, or should know, differently; as among those who take oaths in court, where one side lies against the other. 52] For God's name cannot be misused worse than for the support of falsehood and deceit. Let this remain the exact German and simplest meaning of this commandment.

53] From this every one can readily infer when and in how many ways God's name is misused, although it is impossible to enumerate all its misuses. Yet, to tell it in a few words, all misuse of the divine name occurs, first, in worldly business and in matters which concern money, possessions, honor, whether it be publicly in court, in the market, or wherever else men make false oaths in God's name, or pledge their souls in any matter. And this is especially prevalent in marriage affairs, where two go and secretly betroth themselves to one another, and afterward abjure [their plighted troth].

54] But, the greatest abuse occurs in spiritual matters, which pertain to the conscience, when false preachers rise up and offer their lying vanities as God's Word.

55] Behold, all this is decking one's self out with God's name, or making a pretty show, or claiming to be right, whether it occur in gross, worldly business or in sublime, subtile matters of faith and doctrine. And among liars belong also blasphemers, not alone the very gross, well known to every one, who disgrace God's name without fear (these are not for us, but for the hangman to discipline); but also those who publicly traduce the truth and God's Word and consign it to the devil. Of this there is no need now to speak further.

56] Here, then, let us learn and take to heart the great importance of this commandment, that with all diligence we may guard against and dread every misuse of the holy name, as the greatest sin that can be outwardly committed. For to lie and deceive is in itself a great sin, but is greatly aggravated when we attempt to justify it, and seek to confirm it by invoking the name of God and using it as a cloak for shame, so that from a single lie a double lie, nay, manifold lies, result.

57] For this reason, too, God has added a solemn threat to this commandment, to wit: For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. That is: It shall not be condoned to any one nor pass unpunished. For as little as He will leave it unavenged if any one turn his heart from Him, as little will He suffer His name to be employed for dressing up a lie. 58] Now, alas! it is a common calamity in all the world that there are as few who are not using the name of God for purposes of lying and all wickedness as there are those who with their heart trust alone in God.

59] For by nature we all have within us this beautiful virtue, to wit, that whoever has committed a wrong would like to cover up and adorn his disgrace, so that no one may see it or know it; and no one is so bold as to boast to all the world of the wickedness he has perpetrated; all wish to act by stealth and without any one being aware of what they do. Then, if any one be arraigned, the name of God is dragged into the affair and must make the villainy look like godliness, and the shame like honor. This is the common course of the world, which, like a great deluge, has flooded all lands. 60] Hence we have also as our reward what we seek and deserve: pestilences, wars, famines, conflagrations, floods, wayward wives, children, servants, and all sorts of defilement. Whence else should so much misery come? It is still a great mercy that the earth bears and supports us.

61] Therefore, above all things, our young people should have this commandment earnestly enforced upon them, and they should be trained to hold this and the First Commandment in high regard; and whenever they transgress, we must at once be after them with the rod, and hold the commandment before them, and constantly inculcate it, so as to bring them up not only with punishment, but also in the reverence and fear of God.

62] Thus you now understand what it is to take God's name in vain, that is (to recapitulate briefly), either simply for purposes of falsehood, and to allege God's name for something that is not so, or to curse, swear, conjure, and, in short, to practise whatever wickedness one may.

63] Besides this you must also know how to use the name [of God] aright. For when saying: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain,

He gives us to understand at the same time that it is to be used properly. For it has been revealed and given to us for the very purpose that it may be of constant use and profit. 64] Hence it is a natural inference, since using the holy name for falsehood or wickedness is here forbidden, that we are, on the other hand, commanded to employ it for truth and for all good, as when one swears truly where there is need and it is demanded. So also when there is right teaching, and when the name is invoked in trouble or praised and thanked in prosperity, etc.; all of which is comprehended summarily and commanded in the passage Ps. 50:15: Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me. For all this is bringing it into the service of truth, and using it in a blessed way, and thus His name is hallowed, as we pray in the Lord's Prayer.

65] Thus you have the sum of the entire commandment explained. And with this understanding the question with which many teachers have troubled themselves has been easily solved, to wit, why swearing is prohibited in the Gospel Matt 5:24ff, James 5:12; Matt 5:33-37;26:29; Acts 21:20-26, and yet Christ, St. Paul, and other saints often swore. 66] The explanation is briefly this: We are not to swear in support of evil, that is, of falsehood, and where there is no need or use; but for the support of good and the advantage of our neighbor we should swear. For it is a truly good work, by which God is praised, truth and right are established, falsehood is refuted, peace is made among men, obedience is rendered, and quarrels are settled. For in this way God Himself interposes and separates between right and wrong, good and evil. 67] If one part swears falsely, he has his sentence that he shall not escape punishment, and though it be deferred a long time, he shall not succeed; so that all that he may gain thereby will slip out of his hands, and he will never enjoy it; 68] as I have seen in the case of many who perjured themselves in their marriage-vows, that they have never had a happy hour or a healthful day, and thus perished miserably in body, soul, and possessions.

69] Therefore I advise and exhort as before that by means of warning and threatening, restraint and punishment, the children be trained betimes to shun falsehood, and especially to avoid the use of God's name in its support. For where they are allowed to do as they please, no good will result, as is even now evident that the world is worse than it has ever been, and that there is no government, no obedience, no fidelity, no faith, but only daring, unbridled men, whom no teaching or reproof helps; all of which is God's wrath and punishment for such wanton contempt of this commandment.

70] On the other hand, they should be constantly urged and incited to honor God's name, and to have it always upon their lips in everything that may

happen to them or come to their notice. For that is the true honor of His name, to look to it and implore it for all consolation, so that (as we have heard above) first the heart by faith gives God the honor due Him, and afterwards the lips by confession.

71] This is also a blessed and useful habit and very effectual against the devil, who is ever about us, and lies in wait to bring us into sin and shame, calamity and trouble, but who is very loath to hear God's name, and cannot remain long where it is uttered and called upon from the heart. And, indeed, many a terrible and shocking calamity would befall us if, by our calling upon His name, God did not preserve us. 72] I have myself tried it, and learned by experience that often sudden great calamity was immediately averted and removed during such invocation. To vex the devil, I say, we should always have this holy name in our mouth, so that he may not be able to injure us as he wishes.

73] For this end it is also of service that we form the habit of daily commending ourselves to God, with soul and body, wife, children, servants, and all that we have, against every need that may occur; whence also the blessing and thanksgiving at meals, and other prayers, morning and evening, have originated and remain in use. 74] Likewise the practice of children to cross themselves when anything monstrous or terrible is seen or heard, and to exclaim: "Lord God, protect us!" "Help, dear Lord Jesus!" etc. Thus, too, if any one meets with unexpected good fortune, however trivial, that he say: "God be praised and thanked; this God has bestowed on me!" etc., as formerly the children were accustomed to fast and pray to St. Nicholas and other saints. This would be more pleasing and acceptable to God than all monasticism and Carthusian sanctity.

75] Behold, thus we might train our youth, in a childlike way and playfully in the fear and honor of God, so that the First and Second Commandments might be well observed and in constant practise, Then some good might take root, spring up and bear fruit, and men grow up whom 76] an entire land might relish and enjoy. Moreover, this would be the true way to bring up children well as long as they can become trained with kindness and delight. For what must be enforced with rods and blows only will not develop into a good breed, and at best they will remain godly under such treatment no longer than while the rod is upon their back.

77] But this [manner of training] so spreads its roots in the heart that they fear God more than rods and clubs. This I say with such simplicity for the sake of the young, that it may penetrate their minds. For since we are preaching to children, we must also prattle with them. Thus we have prevented the abuse and have taught the right use of the divine name,

which should consist not only in words, but also in practise and life, so that we may know that God is well pleased with this, and will as richly reward it as He will terribly punish the abuse.

The Third Commandment.

*78] Thou shalt sanctify the holy day. [Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.]*

79] The word holy day (Feiertag) is rendered from the Hebrew word sabbath which properly signifies to rest, that is, to abstain from labor. Hence we are accustomed to say, Feierabend machen [that is, to cease working], or heiligen Abend geben [sanctify the Sabbath]. 80] Now, in the Old Testament, God separated the seventh day, and appointed it for rest, and commanded that it should be regarded as holy above all others. As regards this external observance, this commandment was given to the Jews alone, that they should abstain from toilsome work, and rest, so that both man and beast might recuperate, and not be weakened by unremitting labor. Although they afterwards restricted this too closely, and grossly abused it, so that they traduced and could not endure in Christ those works which they themselves were accustomed to do on that day, as we read in the Gospel; just as though the commandment were fulfilled by doing no external, [manual] work whatever, which, however, was not the meaning, but, as we shall hear, that they sanctify the holy day or day of rest.

82] This commandment, therefore, according to its gross sense, does not concern us Christians; for it is altogether an external matter, like other ordinances of the Old Testament, which were attached to particular customs, persons, times, and places, and now have been made free through Christ.

83] But to grasp a Christian meaning for the simple as to what God requires in this commandment, note that we keep holy days not for the sake of intelligent and learned Christians (for they have no need of it [holy days]), but first of all for bodily causes and necessities, which nature teaches and requires; for the common people, man-servants and maid-servants, who have been attending to their work and trade the whole week, that for a day they may retire in order to rest and be refreshed.

84] Secondly, and most especially, that on such day of rest (since we can get no other opportunity) freedom and time be taken to attend divine service, so that we come together to hear and treat of God's Word, and then to praise God, to sing and pray.

85] However, this, I say, is not so restricted to any time, as with the Jews, that it must be just on this or that day; for in itself no one day is better than

another; but this should indeed be done daily; however, since the masses cannot give such attendance, there must be at least one day in the week set apart. But since from of old Sunday [the Lord's Day] has been appointed for this purpose, we also should continue the same, in order that everything be done in harmonious order, and no one create disorder by unnecessary innovation.

86] Therefore this is the simple meaning of the commandment: since holidays are observed anyhow, such observance should be devoted to hearing God's Word, so that the special function of this day should be the ministry of the Word for the young and the mass of poor people; yet that the resting be not so strictly interpreted as to forbid any other incidental work that cannot be avoided.

87] Accordingly, when asked, What is meant by the commandment: Thou shalt sanctify the holy day? answer: To sanctify the holy day is the same as to keep it holy. But what is meant by keeping it holy? Nothing else than to be occupied in holy words, works, and life. For the day needs no sanctification for itself; for in itself it has been created holy [from the beginning of the creation it was sanctified by its Creator]. But God desires it to be holy to you. Therefore it becomes holy or unholy on your account, according as you are occupied on the same with things that are holy or unholy.

88] How, then, does such sanctification take place? Not in this manner, that [with folded hands] we sit behind the stove and do no rough [external] work, or deck ourselves with a wreath and put on our best clothes, but (as has been said) that we occupy ourselves with God's Word, and exercise ourselves therein.

89] And, indeed we Christians ought always to keep such a holy day, and be occupied with nothing but holy things, i.e., daily be engaged upon God's Word, and carry it in our hearts and upon our lips. But (as has been said) since we do not at all times have leisure, we must devote several hours a week for the sake of the young, or at least a day for the sake of the entire multitude, to being concerned about this alone, and especially urge the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, and thus direct our whole life and being according to God's Word. 90] At whatever time, then, this is being observed and practised, there a true holy day is being kept; otherwise it shall not be called a Christians' holy day. For, indeed, non-Christians can also cease from work and be idle, just as the entire swarm of our ecclesiastics, who stand daily in the churches, singing, and ringing bells but keeping no holy day holy, because they neither preach nor practise God's Word, but teach and live contrary to it.

91] For the Word of God is the sanctuary above all sanctuaries, yea, the only one which we Christians know and have. For though we had the bones of all the saints or all holy and consecrated garments upon a heap, still that would help us nothing; for all that is a dead thing which can sanctify nobody. But God's Word is the treasure which sanctifies everything, and by which even all the saints themselves were sanctified. At whatever hour, then, God's Word is taught, preached, heard, read or meditated upon, there the person, day, and work are sanctified thereby, not because of the external work, but because of the Word, which makes saints of us all. 92] Therefore I constantly say that all our life and work must be ordered according to God's Word, if it is to be God-pleasing or holy. Where this is done, this commandment is in force and being fulfilled.

93] On the contrary, any observance or work that is practised without God's Word is unholy before God, no matter how brilliantly it may shine, even though it be covered with relics, such as the fictitious spiritual orders, which know nothing of God's Word and seek holiness in their own works.

94] Note, therefore, that the force and power of this commandment lies not in the resting, but in the sanctifying, so that to this day belongs a special holy exercise. For other works and occupations are not properly called holy exercises, unless the man himself be first holy. But here a work is to be done by which man is himself made holy, which is done (as we have heard) alone through God's Word. For this, then, fixed places, times, persons, and the entire external order of worship have been created and appointed, so that it may be publicly in operation.

95] Since, therefore, so much depends upon God's Word that without it no holy day can be sanctified, we must know that God insists upon a strict observance of this commandment, and will punish all who despise His Word and are not willing to hear and learn it, especially at the time appointed for the purpose.

96] Therefore not only those sin against this commandment who grossly misuse and desecrate the holy day, as those who on account of their greed or frivolity neglect to hear God's Word or lie in taverns and are dead drunk like swine; but also that other crowd, who listen to God's Word as to any other trifle, and only from custom come to preaching, and go away again, and at the end of the year know as little of it as at the beginning. 97] For hitherto the opinion prevailed that you had properly hallowed Sunday when you had heard a mass or the Gospel read; but no one cared for God's Word, as also no one taught it. Now, while we have God's Word, we nevertheless do not correct the abuse; we suffer ourselves to be preached to and admonished, but we listen without seriousness and care.

98] Know, therefore, that you must be concerned not only about hearing, but also about learning and retaining it in memory, and do not think that it is optional with you or of no great importance, but that it is God's commandment, who will require of you how you have heard, learned, and honored His Word.

99] Likewise those fastidious spirits are to be reprov'd who, when they have heard a sermon or two, find it tedious and dull, thinking that they know all that well enough, and need no more instruction. For just that is the sin which has been hitherto reckoned among mortal sins, and is called *ajkhdia*, i.e., torpor or satiety, a malignant, dangerous plague with which the devil bewitches and deceives the hearts of many, that he may surprise us and secretly withdraw God's Word from us.

100] For let me tell you this, even though you know it perfectly and be already master in all things, still you are daily in the dominion of the devil, who ceases neither day nor night to steal unawares upon you, to kindle in your heart unbelief and wicked thoughts against the foregoing and all the commandments. Therefore you must always have God's Word in your heart, upon your lips, and in your ears. But where the heart is idle, and the Word does not sound, he breaks in and has done the damage before we are aware. 101] On the other hand, such is the efficacy of the Word, whenever it is seriously contemplated, heard, and used, that it is bound never to be without fruit, but always awakens new understanding, pleasure, and devoutness, and produces a pure heart and pure thoughts. For these words are not inoperative or dead, but creative, living words. 102] And even though no other interest or necessity impel us, yet this ought to urge every one thereunto, because thereby the devil is put to flight and driven away, and, besides, this commandment is fulfilled, and [this exercise in the Word] is more pleasing to God than any work of hypocrisy, however brilliant.

The Fourth Commandment.

103] Thus far we have learned the first three commandments, which relate to God. First, that with our whole heart we trust in Him, and fear and love Him throughout all our life. Secondly, that we do not misuse His holy name in the support of falsehood or any bad work, but employ it to the praise of God and the profit and salvation of our neighbor and ourselves. Thirdly, that on holidays and when at rest we diligently treat and urge God's Word, so that all our actions and our entire life be ordered according to it. Now follow the other seven, which relate to our neighbor, among which the first and greatest is:

*104] Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother.*

105] To this estate of fatherhood and motherhood God has given the special distinction above all estates that are beneath it that He not simply commands us to love our parents, but to honor them. For with respect to brothers, sisters, and our neighbors in general He commands nothing higher than that we love them, so that He separates and distinguishes father and mother above all other persons upon earth, and places them at His side. 106] For it is a far higher thing to honor than to love one, inasmuch as it comprehends not only love, but also modesty, humility, and deference as to a majesty there hidden, 107] and requires not only that they be addressed kindly and with reverence, but, most of all, that both in heart and with the body we so act as to show that we esteem them very highly, and that, next to God, we regard them as the very highest. For one whom we are to honor from the heart we must truly regard as high and great.

108] We must, therefore, impress it upon the young that they should regard their parents as in God's stead, and remember that however lowly, poor, frail, and queer they may be, nevertheless they are father and mother given them by God. They are not to be deprived of their honor because of their conduct or their failings. Therefore we are not to regard their persons, how they may be, but the will of God who has thus created and ordained. In other respects we are, indeed, all alike in the eyes of God; but among us there must necessarily be such inequality and ordered difference, and therefore God commands it to be observed, that you obey me as your father, and that I have the supremacy.

109] Learn, therefore, first, what is the honor towards parents required by this commandment, to wit, that they be held in distinction and esteem above all things, as the most precious treasure on earth. 110] Furthermore, that also in our words we observe modesty toward them, do not accost them roughly, haughtily, and defiantly, but yield to them and be silent, even though they go too far. 111] Thirdly, that we show them such honor also by works, that is, with our body and possessions, that we serve them, help them, and provide for them when they are old, sick, infirm, or poor, and all that not only gladly, but with humility and reverence, as doing it before God. For he who knows how to regard them in his heart will not allow them to suffer want or hunger, but will place them above him and at his side, and will share with them whatever he has and possesses.

112] Secondly, notice how great, good, and holy a work is here assigned children, which is, alas! utterly neglected and disregarded, and no one perceives that God has commanded it, or that it is a holy, divine Word and doctrine. For if it had been regarded as such, every one could have inferred

that they must be holy men who live according to these words. Thus there would have been no need of inventing monasticism nor spiritual orders, but every child would have abided by this commandment, and could have directed his conscience to God and said: "If I am to do good and holy works, I know of none better than to render all honor and obedience to my parents, because God has Himself commanded it. 113] For what God commands must be much and far nobler than everything that we may devise ourselves; and since there is no higher or better teacher to be found than God, there can be no better doctrine, indeed, than He gives forth. Now, He teaches fully what we should do if we wish to perform truly good works; and by commanding them, He shows that they please Him. If, then, it is God who commands this, and who knows not how to appoint anything better, I will never improve upon it."

114] Behold, in this manner we would have had a godly child properly taught, reared in true blessedness, and kept at home in obedience to his parents and in their service, so that men should have had blessing and joy from the spectacle. However, God's commandment was not permitted to be thus [with such care and diligence] commended, but had to be neglected and trampled under foot, so that a child could not lay it to heart, and meanwhile gaped [like a panting wolf] at the devices which we set up, without once [consulting or] giving reverence to God.

115] Let us, therefore, learn at last, for God's sake, that, placing all other things out of sight, our youths look first to this commandment, if they wish to serve God with truly good works, that they do what is pleasing to their fathers and mothers, or to those to whom they may be subject in their stead. For every child that knows and does this has, in the first place, this great consolation in his heart, that he can joyfully say and boast (in spite of and against all who are occupied with works of their own choice): "Behold, this work is well pleasing to my God in heaven, that I know for certain." 116] Let them all come together with their many great, distressing, and difficult works and make their boast; we will see whether they can show one that is greater and nobler than obedience to father and mother, to whom God has appointed and commanded obedience next to His own majesty; so that if God's Word and will are in force and being accomplished, nothing shall be esteemed higher than the will and word of parents; yet so that it, too, is subordinated to obedience toward God and is not opposed to the preceding commandments.

117] Therefore you should be heartily glad and thank God that He has chosen you and made you worthy to do a work so precious and pleasing to Him. Only see that, although it be regarded as the most humble and despised, you esteem it great and precious, not on account of our

worthiness, but because it is comprehended in, and controlled by, the jewel and sanctuary, namely, the Word and commandment of God. 118] Oh, what a high price would all Carthusians, monks, and nuns pay, if in all their religious doings they could bring into God's presence a single work done by virtue of His commandment, and be able before His face to say with joyful heart: "Now I know that this work is well pleasing to Thee." Where will these poor wretched persons hide when in the sight of God and all the world they shall blush with shame before a young child who has lived according to this commandment, and shall have to confess that with their whole life they are not worthy to give it a drink of water? 119] And it serves them right for their devilish perversion in treading God's commandment under foot that they must vainly torment themselves with works of their own device, and, in addition, have scorn and loss for their reward.

120] Should not the heart, then, leap and melt for joy when going to work and doing what is commanded, saying: Lo, this is better than all holiness of the Carthusians, even though they kill themselves fasting and praying upon their knees without ceasing? For here you have a sure text and a divine testimony that He has enjoined this; but concerning the other He did not command a word. But this is the plight and miserable blindness of the world that no one believes these things; to such an extent the devil has deceived us with false holiness and the glamour of our own works.

121] Therefore I would be very glad (I say it again) if men would open their eyes and ears, and take this to heart, lest some time we may again be led astray from the pure Word of God to the lying vanities of the devil. Then, too, all would be well; for parents would have more joy, love, friendship, and concord in their houses; thus the children could captivate their parents' hearts. 122] On the other hand, when they are obstinate, and will not do what they ought until a rod is laid upon their back, they anger both God and their parents, whereby they deprive themselves of this treasure and joy of conscience, and lay up for themselves only misfortune. 123] Therefore, as every one complains, the course of the world now is such that both young and old are altogether dissolute and beyond control, have no reverence nor sense of honor, do nothing except as they are driven to it by blows, and perpetrate what wrong and detraction they can behind each other's back; therefore God also punishes them, that they sink into all kinds of filth and misery. 124] As a rule, the parents, too, are themselves stupid and ignorant; one fool trains [teaches] another, and as they have lived, so live their children after them.

125] This, now, I say should be the first and most important consideration to urge us to the observance of this commandment; on which account, even if we had no father and mother, we ought to wish that God would set up wood

and stone before us, whom we might call father and mother. How much more, since He has given us living parents, should we rejoice to show them honor and obedience, because we know it is so highly pleasing to the Divine Majesty and to all angels, and vexes all devils, and is, besides, 126] the highest work which we can do, after the sublime divine worship comprehended in the previous commandments; so that giving of alms and every other good work toward our neighbor are not equal to this. For God has assigned this estate the highest place, yea, has set it up in His own stead, upon earth. This will and pleasure of God ought to be a sufficient reason and incentive to us to do what we can with good will and pleasure.

127] Besides this, it is our duty before the world to be grateful for benefits and every good which we have of our parents. 128] But here again the devil rules in the world, so that the children forget their parents, as we all forget God, and no one considers how God nourishes, protects, and defends us, and bestows so much good on body and soul; especially when an evil hour comes, we are angry and grumble with impatience, and all the good which we have received throughout our life is wiped out [from our memory]. Just so we do also with our parents, and there is no child that understands and considers this [what the parents have endured while nourishing and fostering him], except the Holy Ghost grant him this grace.

129] God knows very well this perverseness of the world; therefore He admonishes and urges by commandments that every one consider what his parents have done for him, and he will find that he has from them body and life, moreover, that he has been fed and reared when otherwise he would have perished a hundred times in his own filth. 130] Therefore it is a true and good saying of old and wise men: Deo, parentibus et magistris non potest satis gratiae rependi, that is, To God, to parents, and to teachers we can never render sufficient gratitude and compensation. He that regards and considers this will indeed without compulsion do all honor to his parents, and bear them up on his hands as those through whom God has done him all good.

131] Over and above all this, another great reason that should incite us the more [to obedience to this commandment] is that God attaches to this commandment a temporal promise and says: That thou mayest live long upon the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee.

132] Here you can see yourself how much God is in earnest in respect to this commandment, inasmuch as He not only declares that it is well pleasing to Him, and that He has joy and delight therein; but also that it shall be for our prosperity and promote our highest good; so that we may have a pleasant and agreeable life, furnished with every good thing. 133] Therefore

also St. Paul greatly emphasizes the same and rejoices in it when he says, Eph. 6:2-3: This is the first commandment with promise: That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. For although the rest also have their promises contained in them, yet in none is it so plainly and explicitly stated.

134] Here, then, you have the fruit and the reward, that whoever observes this commandment shall have happy days, fortune, and prosperity; and on the other hand, the punishment, that whoever is disobedient shall the sooner perish, and never enjoy life. For to have long life in the sense of the Scriptures is not only to become old, but to have everything which belongs to long life, such as health, wife, and children, livelihood, peace, good government, etc., without which this life can neither be enjoyed in cheerfulness nor long endure. 135] If, therefore, you will not obey father and mother and submit to their discipline, then obey the hangman; if you will not obey him, then submit to the skeleton-man, i.e., death [death the all-subduer, the teacher of wicked children]. 136] For on this God insists peremptorily: Either if you obey Him, rendering love and service, He will reward you abundantly with all good, or if you offend Him, He will send upon you both death and the hangman.

137] Whence come so many knaves that must daily be hanged, beheaded, broken upon the wheel, but from disobedience [to parents], because they will not submit to discipline in kindness, so that, by the punishment of God, they bring it about that we behold their misfortune and grief? For it seldom happens that such perverse people die a natural or timely death.

But the godly and obedient have this blessing, that they live long in pleasant quietness, and see their children's children (as said above) to the third and fourth generation.

138] Thus experience also teaches, that where there are honorable, old families who fare well and have many children, they owe their origin to the fact, to be sure, that some of them were brought up well and were regardful of their parents. On the other hand, it is written of the wicked, Ps. 109:13: Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. 139] Therefore heed well how great a thing in God's sight obedience is, since He so highly esteems it, is so highly pleased with it, and rewards it so richly, and besides enforces punishment so rigorously on those who act contrariwise.

140] All this I say that it may be well impressed upon the young. For no one believes how necessary this commandment is, although it has not been esteemed and taught hitherto under the papacy. These are simple and easy

words, and everybody thinks he knew them afore; therefore men pass them lightly by, are gaping after other matters, and do not see and believe that God is so greatly offended if they be disregarded, nor that one does a work so well pleasing and precious if he follows them.

141] In this commandment belongs a further statement regarding all kinds of obedience to persons in authority who have to command and to govern. For all authority flows and is propagated from the authority of parents. For where a father is unable alone to educate his [rebellious and irritable] child, he employs a schoolmaster to instruct him; if he be too weak, he enlists the aid of his friends and neighbors; if he departs this life, he delegates and confers his authority and government upon others who are appointed for the purpose. 142] Likewise, he must have domestics, man-servants and maid-servants, under himself for the management of the household, so that all whom we call masters are in the place of parents and must derive their power and authority to govern from them. Hence also they are all called fathers in the Scriptures, as those who in their government perform the functions of a father, and should have a paternal heart toward their subordinates. As also from antiquity the Romans and other nations called the masters and mistresses of the household *patres- et matres- familiae*, that is, housefathers and housemothers. So also they called their national rulers and overlords *patres patriae*, that is, fathers of the entire country, for a great shame to us who would be Christians that we do not likewise call them so, or, at least, do not esteem and honor them as such.

143] Now, what a child owes to father and mother, the same owe all who are embraced in the household. Therefore man-servants and maid-servants should be careful not only to be obedient to their masters and mistresses, but also to honor them as their own fathers and mothers, and to do everything which they know is expected of them, not from compulsion and with reluctance, but with pleasure and joy for the cause just mentioned, namely, that it is God's command and is pleasing to Him above all other works. 144] Therefore they ought rather to pay wages in addition and be glad that they may obtain masters and mistresses to have such joyful consciences and to know how they may do truly golden works; a matter which has hitherto been neglected and despised, when, instead, everybody ran, in the devil's name, into convents or to pilgrimages and indulgences, with loss [of time and money] and with an evil conscience.

145] If this truth, then, could be impressed upon the poor people, a servant-girl would leap and praise and thank God; and with her tidy work for which she receives support and wages she would acquire such a treasure as all that are esteemed the greatest saints have not obtained. Is it not an excellent boast to know and say that, if you perform your daily domestic

task, this is better than all the sanctity and ascetic life of monks? 146] And you have the promise, in addition, that you shall prosper in all good and fare well. How can you lead a more blessed or holier life as far as your works are concerned? 147] For in the sight of God faith is what really renders a person holy, and alone serves Him, but the works are for the service of man. 148] There you have everything good, protection and defense in the Lord, a joyful conscience and a gracious God besides, who will reward you a hundredfold, so that you are even a nobleman if you be only pious and obedient. But if not, you have, in the first place, nothing but the wrath and displeasure of God, no peace of heart, and afterwards all manner of plagues and misfortunes.

149] Whoever will not be influenced by this and inclined to godliness we hand over to the hangman and to the skeleton-man. Therefore let every one who allows himself to be advised remember that God is not making sport, and know that it is God who speaks with you and demands obedience. If you obey Him, you are His dear child; but if you despise to do it, then take shame, misery, and grief for your reward.

150] The same also is to be said of obedience to civil government, which (as we have said) is all embraced in the estate of fatherhood and extends farthest of all relations. For here the father is not one of a single family, but of as many people as he has tenants, citizens, or subjects. For through them, as through our parents, God gives to us food, house and home, protection and security. Therefore, since they bear such name and title with all honor as their highest dignity, it is our duty to honor them and to esteem them great as the dearest treasure and the most precious jewel upon earth.

151] He, now, who is obedient here, is willing and ready to serve, and cheerfully does all that pertains to honor, knows that he is pleasing God and that he will receive joy and happiness for his reward. If he will not do it in love, but despises and resists [authority] or rebels, let him also know, on the other hand, that he shall have no favor nor blessing, and where he thinks to gain a florin thereby, he will elsewhere lose ten times as much, or become a victim to the hangman, perish by war, pestilence, and famine, or experience no good in his children, and be obliged to suffer injury, injustice, and violence at the hands of his servants, neighbors, or strangers and tyrants; so that what we seek and deserve is paid back and comes home to us.

152] If we would ever suffer ourselves to be persuaded that such works are pleasing to God and have so rich a reward, we would be established in altogether abundant possessions and have what our heart desires. But because the word and command of God are so lightly esteemed, as though some babbling had spoken it, let us see whether you are the man to oppose

Him. How difficult, do you think, it will be for Him to recompense you! Therefore you would certainly live much better with the divine favor, peace, and happiness than with His displeasure and misfortune. 154] Why, think you, is the world now so full of unfaithfulness, disgrace, calamity, and murder, but because every one desires to be his own master and free from the emperor, to care nothing for any one, and do what pleases him? Therefore God punishes one knave by another, so that, when you defraud and despise your master, another comes and deals in like manner with you, yea, in your household you must suffer ten times more from wife, children, or servants.

155] Indeed, we feel our misfortune, we murmur and complain of unfaithfulness, violence, and injustice, but will not see that we ourselves are knaves who have fully deserved this punishment, and yet are not thereby reformed. We will have no favor and happiness, therefore it is but fair that we have nothing but misfortune without mercy. 156] There must still be somewhere upon earth some godly people because God continues to grant us so much good! On our own account we should not have a farthing in the house nor a straw in the field. 157] All this I have been obliged to urge with so many words, in hope that some one may take it to heart, that we may be relieved of the blindness and misery in which we are steeped so deeply, and may truly understand the Word and will of God, and earnestly accept it. For thence we would learn how we could have joy, happiness, and salvation enough, both temporal and eternal.

158] Thus we have two kinds of fathers presented in this commandment, fathers in blood and fathers in office, or those to whom belongs the care of the family, and those to whom belongs the care of the country. Besides these there are yet spiritual fathers; not like those in the Papacy, who have indeed had themselves called thus, but have performed no function of the paternal office. For those only are called spiritual fathers who govern and guide us by the Word of God; 159] as St. Paul boasts his fatherhood 1 Cor. 4:15, where he says: In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel. Now, 160] since they are fathers they are entitled to their honor, even above all others. But here it is bestowed least; for the way which the world knows for honoring them is to drive them out of the country and to grudge them a piece of bread, and, in short, they must be (as says St. Paul, 1 Cor. 4:13) as the filth of the world and everybody's refuse and footrag.

161] Yet there is need that this also be urged upon the populace, that those who would be Christians are under obligation in the sight Of God to esteem them worthy of double honor who minister to their souls, that they deal well with them and provide for them. For that, God is willing to add to you

sufficient blessing and will not let you come to want. 162] But in this matter every one refuses and resists, and all are afraid that they will perish from bodily want, and cannot now support one respectable preacher, where formerly they filled ten fat paunches. 163] In this we also deserve that God deprive us of His Word and blessing, and again allow preachers of lies to arise to lead us to the devil, and, in addition, to drain our sweat and blood.

164] But those who keep in sight God's will and commandment have the promise that everything which they bestow upon temporal and spiritual fathers, and whatever they do to honor them, shall be richly recompensed to them, so that they shall have, not bread, clothing, and money for a year or two, but long life, support, and peace, and shall be eternally rich and blessed. 165] Therefore only do what is your duty, and let God take care how He is to support you and provide for you sufficiently. Since He has promised it, and has never yet lied, He will not be found lying to you.

166] This ought indeed to encourage us, and give us hearts that would melt in pleasure and love toward those to whom we owe honor, so that we would raise our hands and joyfully thank God who has given us such promises, for which we ought to run to the ends of the world [to the remotest parts of India]. For although the whole world should combine, it could not add an hour to our life or give us a single grain from the earth. But God wishes to give you all exceeding abundantly according to your heart's desire. He who despises and casts this to the winds is not worthy ever to hear a word of God. This has now been stated more than enough for all who belong under this commandment.

167] In addition, it would be well to preach to the parents also, and such as bear their office, as to how they should deport themselves toward those who are committed to them for their government. For although this is not expressed in the Ten Commandments, it is nevertheless abundantly enjoined in many places in the Scripture. And God desires to have it embraced in this commandment when He speaks of father and mother. 168] For He does not wish to have in this office and government knaves and tyrants; nor does He assign to them this honor, that is, power and authority to govern, that they should have themselves worshiped; but they should consider that they are under obligations of obedience to God; and that, first of all, they should earnestly and faithfully discharge their office, not only to support and provide for the bodily necessities of their children, servants, subjects, etc., but, most of all, to train them to the honor and praise of God. 169] Therefore do not think that this is left to your pleasure and arbitrary will, but that it is a strict command and injunction of God, to whom also you must give account for it.

170] But here again the sad plight arises that no one perceives or heeds this, and all live on as though God gave us children for our pleasure or amusement, and servants that we should employ them like a cow or ass, only for work, or as though we were only to gratify our wantonness with our subjects, ignoring them, as though it were no concern of ours what they learn or how they live; 171] and no one is willing to see that this is the command of the Supreme Majesty, who will most strictly call us to account and punish us for it; nor that there is so great need to be so seriously concerned about the young. 172] For if we wish to have excellent and apt persons both for civil and ecclesiastical government, we must spare no diligence, time, or cost in teaching and educating our children, that they may serve God and the world, 173] and we must not think only how we may amass money and possessions for them. For God can indeed without us support and make them rich, as He daily does. But for this purpose He has given us children, and issued this command that we should train and govern them according to His will, else He would have no need of father and mother. Let every one know, therefore, that it is his duty, on peril of losing the divine favor, to bring up his children above all things in the fear and knowledge of God, and if they are talented, have them learn and study something, 174] that they may be employed for whatever need there is [to have them instructed and trained in a liberal education, that men may be able to have their aid in government and in whatever is necessary].

175] If that were done, God would also richly bless us and give us grace to train men by whom land and people might be improved, and likewise well-educated citizens, chaste and domestic wives, who afterwards would rear godly children and servants. 176] Here consider now what deadly injury you are doing if you be negligent and fail on your part to bring up your child to usefulness and piety, and how you bring upon yourself all sin and wrath, thus earning hell by your own children, even though you be otherwise pious and holy. 177] And because this is disregarded, God so fearfully punishes the world that there is no discipline, government, or peace, of which we all complain, but do not see that it is our fault; for as we train them, we have spoiled and disobedient children and subjects. Let this be sufficient exhortation; for to draw this out at length belongs to another time.

The Fifth Commandment.

*179] Thou shalt not kill.*

180] We have now completed both the spiritual and the temporal government, that is, the divine and the paternal authority and obedience. But here now we go forth from our house among our neighbors to learn how we should live with one another, every one himself toward his neighbor. 181] Therefore God and government are not included in this

commandment, nor is the power to kill, which they have, taken away. For God has delegated His authority to punish evil-doers to the government instead of parents, who aforetime (as we read in Moses) were required to bring their own children to judgment and sentence them to death. Therefore, what is here forbidden is forbidden to the individual in his relation to any one else, and not to the government.

182] Now this commandment is easy enough, and has been often treated, because we hear it annually in the Gospel of St. Matthew 5:21ff, where Christ Himself explains and sums it up, namely, that we must not kill, neither with hand, heart, mouth, signs, gestures, help, nor counsel. Therefore it is here forbidden to every one to be angry, except those (as we said) who are in the place of God, that is, parents and the government. For it is proper for God and for every one who is in a divine estate to be angry, to reprove and punish, namely, on account of those very persons who transgress this and the other commandments.

183] But the cause and need of this commandment is that God well knows that the world is evil, and that this life has much unhappiness; therefore He has placed this and the other commandments between the good and the evil. Now, as there are many assaults upon all commandments, so it happens also in this commandment that we must live among many people who do us harm, so that we have cause to be hostile to them.

184] As when your neighbor sees that you have a better house and home [a larger family and more fertile fields], greater possessions and fortune from God than he, he is sulky, envies you, and speaks no good of you.

Thus by the devil's incitement you will get many enemies who cannot bear to see you have any good, either bodily or spiritual. When we see such people, our hearts, in turn, would rage and bleed and take vengeance. Then there arise cursing and blows, from which follow finally misery and murder. Here, now, God like a kind father steps in ahead of us, interposes and wishes to have the quarrel settled, that no misfortune come of it, nor one destroy another. And briefly, He would hereby protect, set free, and keep in peace every one against the crime and violence of every one else; and would have this commandment placed as a wall, fortress, and refuge about our neighbor, that we do him no hurt nor harm in his body.

186] Thus this commandment aims at this, that no one offend his neighbor on account of any evil deed, even though he have fully deserved it. For where murder is forbidden, all cause also is forbidden whence murder may originate. For many a one, although he does not kill, yet curses and utters a wish, which would stop a person from running far if it were to strike him in

the neck [makes imprecations, which if fulfilled with respect to any one, he would not live long]. 187] Now, since this inheres in every one by nature and it is a common practise that no one is willing to suffer at the hands of another, God wishes to remove the root and source by which the heart is embittered against our neighbor, and to accustom us ever to keep in view this commandment, always to contemplate ourselves in it as in a mirror, to regard the will of God, and with hearty confidence and invocation of His name to commit to Him the wrong which we suffer. Thus we shall suffer our enemies to rage and be angry, doing what they can, and we learn to calm our wrath, and to have a patient, gentle heart, especially toward those who give us cause to be angry, that is, our enemies.

188] Therefore the entire sum of what it means not to kill is to be impressed most explicitly upon the simple-minded. In the first place, that we harm no one, first, with our hand or by deed. Then, that we do not employ our tongue to instigate or counsel thereto. Further, that we neither use nor assent to any kind of means or methods whereby any one may be injured. And finally, that the heart be not ill disposed toward any one, nor from anger and hatred wish him ill, so that body and soul may be innocent in regard to every one, but especially those who wish you evil or inflict such upon you. For to do evil to one who wishes and does you good is not human, but diabolical.

189] Secondly, under this commandment not only he is guilty who does evil to his neighbor, but he also who can do him good, prevent, resist evil, defend and save him, so that no bodily harm or hurt happen to him, and yet does not do it. 190] If, therefore, you send away one that is naked when you could clothe him, you have caused him to freeze to death; if you see one suffer hunger and do not give him food, you have caused him to starve. So also, if you see any one innocently sentenced to death or in like distress, and do not save him, although you know ways and means to do so, you have killed him. And it will not avail you to make the pretext that you did not afford any help, counsel, or aid thereto, for you have withheld your love from him and deprived him of the benefit whereby his life would have been saved.

191] Therefore God also rightly calls all those murderers who do not afford counsel and help in distress and danger of body and life, and will pass a most terrible sentence upon them in the last day, as Christ Himself has announced when He shall say, Matt. 25:42f : I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not. That is: You would have suffered Me and Mine to die of hunger, thirst, and cold, would have suffered the wild beasts to tear us to

pieces, or left us to rot in prison or perish in distress. What else is that but to reproach them 192] as murderers and bloodhounds? For although you have not actually done all this, you have nevertheless, so far as you were concerned, suffered him to pine and perish in misfortune.

It is just as if I saw some one navigating and laboring in deep water [and struggling against adverse winds] or one fallen into fire, and could extend to him the hand to pull him out and save him, and yet refused to do it. What else would I appear, even in the eyes of the world, than as a murderer and a criminal?

193] Therefore it is God's ultimate purpose that we suffer harm to befall no man, but show him all good and love; 194]and, as we have said, it is specially directed toward those who are our enemies. For to do good to our friends is but an ordinary heathen virtue, as Christ says Matt. 5:46.

195] Here we have again the Word of God whereby He would encourage and urge us to true noble and sublime works, as gentleness, patience, and, in short, love and kindness to our enemies, and would ever remind us to reflect upon the First Commandment, that He is our God, that is, that He will help, assist, and protect us, in order that He may thus quench the desire of revenge in us.

196] This we ought to practise and inculcate, and we would have our hands full doing good works. 197] But this would not be preaching for monks; it would greatly detract from the religious estate, and infringe upon the sanctity of Carthusians, and would even be regarded as forbidding good works and clearing the convents. For in this wise the ordinary state of Christians would be considered just as worthy, and even worthier, and everybody would see how they mock and delude the world with a false, hypocritical show of holiness, because they have given this and other commandments to the winds, and have esteemed them unnecessary, as though they were not commandments, but mere counsels; and have at the same time shamelessly proclaimed and boasted their hypocritical estate and works as the most perfect life, in order that they might lead a pleasant, easy life, without the cross and without patience, for which reason, too, they have resorted to the cloisters, so that they might not be obliged to suffer any wrong from any one or to do him any good. 198] But know now that these are the true, holy, and godly works, in which, with all the angels, He rejoices, in comparison with which all human holiness is but stench and filth, and, besides, deserves nothing but wrath and damnation.

The Sixth Commandment.

*199] Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

200] These commandments now [that follow] are easily understood from [the explanation of] the preceding; for they are all to the effect that we [be careful to] avoid doing any kind of injury to our neighbor. But they are arranged in fine [elegant] order. In the first place, they treat of his own person. Then they proceed to the person nearest him, or the closest possession next after his body, namely, his wife, who is one flesh and blood with him, so that we cannot inflict a higher injury upon him in any good that is his. Therefore it is explicitly forbidden here to bring any disgrace upon him in respect to his wife. 201] And it really aims at adultery, because among the Jews it was ordained and commanded that every one must be married. Therefore also the young were early provided for [married], so that the virgin state was held in small esteem, neither were public prostitution and lewdness tolerated (as now). Therefore adultery was the most common form of unchastity among them.

202] But because among us there is such a shameful mess and the very dregs of all vice and lewdness, this commandment is directed also against all manner of unchastity, whatever it may be called; 203] and not only is the external act forbidden, but also every kind of cause, incitement, and means, so that the heart, the lips, and the whole body may be chaste and afford no opportunity, help, or persuasion to in chastity. 204] And not only this, but that we also make resistance, afford protection and rescue wherever there is danger and need; and again, that we give help and counsel, so as to maintain our neighbor's honor. For whenever you omit this when you could make resistance, or connive at it as if it did not concern you, you are as truly guilty as the one perpetrating the deed. 205] Thus, to state it in the briefest manner, there is required this much, that every one both live chastely himself and help his neighbor do the same, so that God by this commandment wishes to hedge round about and protect [as with a rampart] every spouse that no one trespass against them.

206] But since this commandment is aimed directly at the state of matrimony and gives occasion to speak of the same, you must well understand and mark, first, how gloriously God honors and extols this estate, inasmuch as by His commandment He both sanctions and guards it. He has sanctioned it above in the Fourth Commandment: Honor thy father and thy mother; but here He has (as we said) hedged it about and protected it. 207] Therefore He also wishes us to honor it, and to maintain and conduct it as a divine and blessed estate; because, in the first place, He has instituted it before all others, and therefore created man and woman separately (as is evident), not for lewdness, but that they should

[legitimately] live together, be fruitful, beget children, and nourish and train them to the honor of God.

208] Therefore God has also most richly blessed this estate above all others, and, in addition, has bestowed on it and wrapped up in it everything in the world, to the end that this estate might be well and richly provided for. Married life is therefore no jest or presumption; but it is an excellent thing and a matter of divine seriousness. For it is of the highest importance to Him that persons be raised who may serve the world and promote the knowledge of God, godly living, and all virtues, to fight against wickedness and the devil.

209] Therefore I have always taught that this estate should not be despised nor held in disrepute, as is done by the blind world and our false ecclesiastics, but that it be regarded according to God's Word, by which it is adorned and sanctified, so that it is not only placed on an equality with other estates, but that it precedes and surpasses them all, whether they be that of emperor, princes, bishops, or whoever they please. For both ecclesiastical and civil estates must humble themselves and all be found in this estate, as we shall hear. 210] Therefore it is not a peculiar estate, but the most common and noblest estate, which pervades all Christendom, yea which extends through all the world.

211] In the second place, you must know also that it is not only an honorable, but also a necessary state, and it is solemnly commanded by God that, in general, in all conditions, men and women, who were created for it, shall be found in this estate; yet with some exceptions (although few) whom God has especially excepted, so that they are not fit for the married estate, or whom He has released by a high, supernatural gift that they can maintain chastity without this estate. 212] For where nature has its course, as it is implanted by God, it is not possible to remain chaste without marriage. For flesh and blood remain flesh and blood, and the natural inclination and excitement have their course without let or hindrance, as everybody sees and feels. In order, therefore, that it may be the more easy in some degree to avoid in chastity, God has commanded the estate of matrimony, that every one may have his proper portion and be satisfied therewith; although God's grace besides is required in order that the heart also may be pure.

213] From this you see how this popish rabble, priests, monks, and nuns, resist God's order and commandment, inasmuch as they despise and forbid matrimony, and presume and vow to maintain perpetual chastity, and, besides, deceive the simple-minded with lying words and appearances [impostures]. 214] For no one has so little love and inclination to chastity as just those who because of great sanctity avoid marriage, and either indulge

in open and shameless prostitution, or secretly do even worse, so that one dare not speak of it, as has, alas! been learned too fully. 215] And, in short, even though they abstain from the act, their hearts are so full of unchaste thoughts and evil lusts that there is a continual burning and secret suffering, which can be avoided in the married life. 216] Therefore all vows of chastity out of the married state are condemned by this commandment, and free permission is granted, yea, even the command is given, to all poor ensnared consciences which have been deceived by their monastic vows to abandon the unchaste state and enter the married life, considering that even if the monastic life were godly, it would nevertheless not be in their power to maintain chastity, and if they remain in it, they must only sin more and more against this commandment.

217] Now, I speak of this in order that the young may be so guided that they conceive a liking for the married estate, and know that it is a blessed estate and pleasing to God. For in this way we might in the course of time bring it about that married life be restored to honor, and that there might be less of the filthy, dissolute, disorderly doings which now run riot the world over in open prostitution and other shameful vices arising from disregard of married life. 218] Therefore it is the duty of parents and the government to see to it that our youth be brought up to discipline and respectability, and when they have come to years of maturity, to provide for them [to have them married] in the fear of God and honorably; He would not fail to add His blessing and grace, so that men would have joy and happiness from the same.

219] Let me now say in conclusion that this commandment demands not only that every one live chastely in thought, word, and deed in his condition, that is, especially in the estate of matrimony, but also that every one love and esteem the spouse given him by God. For where conjugal chastity is to be maintained, man and wife must by all means live together in love and harmony, that one may cherish the other from the heart and with entire fidelity. For that is one of the principal points which enkindle love and desire of chastity, so that, where this is found, chastity will follow as a matter of course without any command. 220] Therefore also St. Paul so diligently exhorts husband and wife to love and honor one another. 221] Here you have again a precious, yea, many and great good works, of which you can joyfully boast, against all ecclesiastical estates, chosen without God's Word and commandment.

The Seventh Commandment.

222] *Thou shalt not steal.*

223] After your person and spouse temporal property comes next. That also God wishes to have protected, and He has commanded that no one shall subtract from, or curtail, his neighbor's possessions. 224] For to steal is nothing else than to get possession of another's property wrongfully, which briefly comprehends all kinds of advantage in all sorts of trade to the disadvantage of our neighbor. Now, this is indeed quite a wide-spread and common vice, but so little regarded and observed that it exceeds all measure, so that if all who are thieves, and yet do not wish to be called such, were to be hanged on gallows, the world would soon be devastated, and there would be a lack both of executioners and gallows. For, as we have just said, to steal is to signify not only to empty our neighbor's coffer and pockets, but to be grasping in the market, in all stores, booths, wine- and beer- cellars, workshops, and, in short, wherever there is trading or taking and giving of money for merchandise or labor.

225] As, for instance, to explain this somewhat grossly for the common people, that it may be seen how godly we are: When a manservant or maid-servant does not serve faithfully in the house, and does damage, or allows it to be done when it could be prevented, or otherwise ruins and neglects the goods entrusted to him, from indolence, idleness, or malice, to the spite and vexation of master and mistress, and in whatever way this can be done purposely (for I do not speak of what happens from oversight and against one's will), you can in a year abscond thirty, forty florins, which if another had taken secretly or carried away, he would be hanged with the rope. But here you [while conscious of such a great theft] may even bid defiance and become insolent, and no one dare call you a thief.

226] The same I say also of mechanics, workmen, and day-laborers, who all follow their wanton notions, and never know enough ways to overcharge people, while they are lazy and unfaithful in their work. All these are far worse than sneak-thieves, against whom we can guard with locks and bolts, or who, if apprehended, are treated in such a manner that they will not do the same again. But against these no one can guard, no one dare even look awry at them or accuse them of theft, so that one would ten times rather lose from his purse. For here are my neighbors, good friends, my own servants, from whom I expect good [every faithful and diligent service], who defraud me first of all.

227] Furthermore, in the market and in common trade likewise, this practise is in full swing and force to the greatest extent, where one openly defrauds another with bad merchandise, false measures, weights, coins, and by

nimbleness and queer finances or dexterous tricks takes advantage of him; likewise, when one overcharges a person in a trade and wantonly drives a hard bargain, skins and distresses him. And who can recount or think of all these things? 228] To sum up, this is the commonest craft and the largest guild on earth, and if we regard the world throughout all conditions of life, it is nothing else than a vast, wide stall, full of great thieves.

229] Therefore they are also called swivel-chair robbers, land- and highway-robbers, not pick-locks and sneak-thieves who snatch away the ready cash, but who sit on the chair [at home] and are styled great noblemen, and honorable, pious citizens, and yet rob and steal under a good pretext.

230] Yes, here we might be silent about the trifling individual thieves if we were to attack the great, powerful arch-thieves with whom lords and princes keep company, who daily plunder not only a city or two, but all Germany. Yea, where should we place the head and supreme protector of all thieves, the Holy Chair at Rome with all its retinue, which has grabbed by theft the wealth of all the world, and holds it to this day?

231] This is, in short, the course of the world: whoever can steal and rob openly goes free and secure, unmolested by any one, and even demands that he be honored. Meanwhile the little sneak-thieves, who have once trespassed, must bear the shame and punishment to render the former godly and honorable. But let them know that in the sight of God they are the greatest thieves, and that He will punish them as they are worthy and deserve.

232] Now, since this commandment is so far-reaching [and comprehensive], as just indicated, it is necessary to urge it well and to explain it to the common people, not to let them go on in their wantonness and security, but always to place before their eyes the wrath of God, and inculcate the same. For we have to preach this not to Christians, but chiefly to knaves and scoundrels, to whom it would be more fitting for judges, jailers, or Master Hannes [the executioner] to preach. 233] Therefore let every one know that it is his duty, at the risk of God's displeasure, not only to do no injury to his neighbor, nor to deprive him of gain, nor to perpetrate any act of unfaithfulness or malice in any bargain or trade, but faithfully to preserve his property for him, to secure and promote his advantage, especially when one accepts money, wages, and one's livelihood for such service.

234] He now who wantonly despises this may indeed pass along and escape the hangman, but he shall not escape the wrath and punishment of God; and when he has long practised his defiance and arrogance, he shall yet remain a tramp and beggar, and, in addition, have all plagues and

misfortune. 235] Now you are going your way [wherever your heart's pleasure calls you] while you ought to preserve the property of your master and mistress, for which service you fill your crop and maw, take your wages like a thief, have people treat you as a nobleman; for there are many that are even insolent towards their masters and mistresses, and are unwilling to do them a favor or service by which to protect them from loss.

236] But reflect what you will gain when, having come into your own property and being set up in your home (to which God will help with all misfortunes), it [your perfidy] will bob up again and come home to you, and you will find that where you have cheated or done injury to the value of one mite, you will have to pay thirty again.

237] Such shall be the lot also of mechanics and day-laborers of whom we are now obliged to hear and suffer such intolerable maliciousness, as though they were noblemen in another's possessions, and every one were obliged to give them what they demand. 238] Just let them continue practising their exactions as long as they can; but God will not forget His commandment, and will reward them according as they have served, and will hang them, not upon a green gallows, but upon a dry one, so that all their life they shall neither prosper nor accumulate anything. 239] And indeed, if there were a well-ordered government in the land, such wantonness might soon be checked and prevented, as was the custom in ancient times among the Romans, where such characters were promptly seized by the pate in a way that others took warning.

240] No more shall all the rest prosper who change the open free market into a carrion pit of extortion and a den of robbery, where the poor are daily overcharged, new burdens and high prices are imposed, and every one uses the market according to his caprice, and is even defiant and brags as though it were his fair privilege and right to sell his goods for as high a price as he please, and no one had a right to say a word against it. 241] We will indeed look on and let these people skin, pinch, and hoard, 242] but we will trust in God,-who will, however, do this of His own accord,-that, after you have been skinning and scraping for a long time, He will pronounce such a blessing on your gains that your grain in the garner, your beer in the cellar, your cattle in the stalls shall perish; yea, where you have cheated and overcharged any one to the amount of a florin, your entire pile shall be consumed with rust, so that you shall never enjoy it.

243] And indeed, we see and experience this being fulfilled daily before our eyes, that no stolen or dishonestly acquired possession thrives. How many there are who rake and scrape day and night, and yet grow not a farthing richer! And though they gather much, they must suffer so many plagues and

misfortunes that they cannot relish it with cheerfulness nor transmit it to their children. 244] But as no one minds it, and we go on as though it did not concern us, God must visit us in a different way and teach us manners by imposing one taxation after another, or billeting a troop of soldiers upon us, who in one hour empty our coffers and purses, and do not quit as long as we have a farthing left, and in addition, by way of thanks, burn and devastate house and home, and outrage and kill wife and children.

245] And, in short, if you steal much, depend upon it that again as much will be stolen from you; and lie who robs and acquires with violence and wrong will submit to one who shall deal after the same fashion with him. For God is master of this art, that since every one robs and steals from the other, He punishes one thief by means of another. Else where should we find enough gallows and ropes?

246] Now, whoever is willing to be instructed, let him know that this is the commandment of God, and that it must not be treated as a jest. For although you despise us, defraud, steal, and rob, we will indeed manage to endure your haughtiness, suffer, and, according to the Lord's Prayer, forgive and show pity; for we know that the godly shall nevertheless have enough, and you injure yourself more than another.

247] But beware of this: When the poor man comes to you (of whom there are so many now) who must buy with the penny of his daily wages and live upon it, and you are harsh to him, as though every one lived by your favor, and you skin and scrape to the bone, and, besides, with pride and haughtiness turn him off to whom you ought to give for nothing, he will go away wretched and sorrowful, and since he can complain to no one, he will cry and call to heaven, then beware (I say again) as of the devil himself. For such groaning and calling will be no jest, but will have a weight that will prove too heavy for you and all the world. For it will reach Him who takes care of the poor sorrowful hearts, and will not allow them to go unavenged. But if you despise this and become defiant, see whom you have brought upon you: if you succeed and prosper, you may before all the world call God and me a liar.

248] We have exhorted, warned, and protested enough; he who will not heed or believe it may go on until he learns this by experience. Yet it must be impressed upon the young that they may be careful not to follow the old lawless crowd, but keep their eyes fixed upon God's commandment, lest His wrath and punishment come upon them too. 249] It behooves us to do no more than to instruct and reprove with God's Word; but to check such open wantonness there is need of the princes and government, who themselves would have eyes and the courage to establish and maintain order in all

manner of trade and commerce, lest the poor be burdened and oppressed nor they themselves be loaded with other men's sins.

250] Let this suffice as an explanation of what stealing is, that it be not taken too narrowly, but made to extend as far as we have to do with our neighbors. And briefly, in a summary, as in the former commandments, it is herewith forbidden, in the first place, to do our neighbor any injury or wrong (in whatever manner supposable, by curtailing, forestalling, and withholding his possessions and property), or even to consent or allow such a thing, but to interpose and prevent it. 251] And, on the other hand, it is commanded that we advance and improve his possessions, and in case he suffers want, that we help, communicate, and lend both to friends and foes.

252] Whoever now seeks and desires good works will find here more than enough such as are heartily acceptable and pleasing to God, and in addition are favored and crowned with excellent blessings, that we are to be richly compensated for all that we do for our neighbor's good and from friendship; as King Solomon also teaches Prov. 19:17: He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again. Here, then, you have 253] a rich Lord, who is certainly sufficient for you, and who will not suffer you to come short in anything or to want; thus you can with a joyful conscience enjoy a hundred times more than you could scrape together with unfaithfulness and wrong. Now, whoever does not desire the blessing will find wrath and misfortune enough.

The Eighth Commandment.

254] *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

255] Over and above our own body, spouse, and temporal possessions, we have yet another treasure, namely, honor and good report [the illustrious testimony of an upright and unsullied name and reputation], with which we cannot dispense. For it is intolerable to live among men in open shame and general contempt. 256] Therefore God wishes the reputation, good name, and upright character of our neighbor to be taken away or diminished as little as his money and possessions, that every one may stand in his integrity before wife, children, servants, and neighbors. 257] And in the first place, we take the plainest meaning of this commandment according to the words (Thou shalt not bear false witness), as pertaining to the public courts of justice, where a poor innocent man is accused and oppressed by false witnesses in order to be punished in his body, property, or honor.

258] Now, this appears as if it were of little concern to us at present; but with the Jews it was quite a common and ordinary matter. For the people were organized under an excellent and regular government; and where

there is still such a government, instances of this sin will not be wanting. The cause of it is that where judges, burgomasters, princes, or others in authority sit in judgment, things never fail to go according to the course of the world; namely, men do not like to offend anybody, flatter, and speak to gain favor, money, prospects, or friendship; and in consequence a poor man and his cause must be oppressed, denounced as wrong, and suffer punishment. And it is a common calamity in the world that in courts of justice there seldom preside godly men.

259] For to be a judge requires above all things a godly man, and not only a godly, but also a wise, modest, yea, a brave and hold man; likewise, to be a witness requires a fearless and especially a godly man. For a person who is to judge all matters rightly and carry them through with his decision will often offend good friends, relatives, neighbors, and the rich and powerful, who can greatly serve or injure him. Therefore he must be quite blind, have his eyes and ears closed, neither see nor hear, but go straight forward in everything that comes before him, and decide accordingly.

260] Therefore this commandment is given first of all that every one shall help his neighbor to secure his rights, and not allow them to be hindered or twisted, but shall promote and strictly maintain them, no matter whether he be judge or witness, and let it pertain to whatsoever it will. 261] And especially is a goal set up here for our jurists that they be careful to deal truly and uprightly with every case, allowing right to remain right, and, on the other hand, not perverting anything [by their tricks and technical points turning black into white and making wrong out to be right], nor glossing it over or keeping silent concerning it, irrespective of a person's money, possession, honor, or power. This is one part and the plainest sense of this commandment concerning all that takes place in court.

262] Next, it extends very much further, if we are to apply it to spiritual jurisdiction or administration; here it is a common occurrence that every one bears false witness against his neighbor. For wherever there are godly preachers and Christians, they must bear the sentence before the world that they are called heretics, apostates, yea, seditious and desperately wicked miscreants. Besides, the Word of God must suffer in the most shameful and malicious manner, being persecuted, blasphemed, contradicted, perverted, and falsely cited and interpreted. But let this pass; for it is the way of the blind world that she condemns and persecutes the truth and the children of God, and yet esteems it no sin.

263] In the third place, what concerns us all, this commandment forbids all sins of the tongue whereby we may injure or approach too closely to our neighbor. For to bear false witness is nothing else than a work of the tongue.

Now, whatever is done with the tongue against a fellow-man God would have prohibited, whether it be false preachers with their doctrine and blasphemy, false judges and witnesses with their verdict, or outside of court by lying and evil-speaking. 264] Here belongs particularly the detestable, shameful vice of speaking behind a person's back and slandering, to which the devil spurs us on, and of which there would be much to be said. For it is a common evil plague that every one prefers hearing evil to hearing good of his neighbor; and although we ourselves are so bad that we cannot suffer that any one should say anything bad about us, but every one would much rather that all the world should speak of him in terms of gold, yet we cannot bear that the best is spoken about others.

Therefore, to avoid this vice we should note that 265] no one is allowed publicly to judge and reprove his neighbor, although he may see him sin, unless he have a command to judge and to reprove. 266] For there is a great difference between these two things, judging sin and knowing sin. You may indeed know it, but you are not to judge it. I can indeed see and hear that my neighbor sins, but I have no command to report it to others. Now, if I rush in, judging and passing sentence, I fall into a sin which is greater than his. But if you know it, do nothing else than turn your ears into a grave and cover it, until you are appointed to be judge and to punish by virtue of your office.

267] Those, then, are called slanderers who are not content with knowing a thing, but proceed to assume jurisdiction, and when they know a slight offense of another, carry it into every corner, and are delighted and tickled that they can stir up another's displeasure [baseness], as swine roll themselves in the dirt and root in it with the snout. 268] This is nothing else than meddling with the judgment and office of God, and pronouncing sentence and punishment with the most severe verdict. For no judge can punish to a higher degree nor go farther than to say: "He is a thief, a murderer, a traitor," etc. Therefore, whoever presumes to say the same of his neighbor goes just as far as the emperor and all governments. For although you do not wield the sword, you employ your poisonous tongue to the shame and hurt of your neighbor.

269] God therefore would have it prohibited, that any one speak evil of another even though he be guilty, and the latter know it right well; much less if he do not know it, and have it only from hearsay. But you say: 270] Shall I not say it if it be the truth? Answer: Why do you not make accusation to regular judges? Ah, I cannot prove it publicly, and hence I might be silenced and turned away in a harsh manner [incur the penalty of a false accusation]. "Ah, indeed, do you smell the roast?" If you do not trust yourself to stand before the proper authorities and to make answer, then

hold your tongue. But if you know it, know it for yourself and not for another. For if you tell it to others, although it be true, you will appear as a liar, because you cannot prove it, and you are, besides, acting like a knave. For we ought never to deprive any one of his honor or good name unless it be first taken away from him publicly.

271] False witness, then, is everything which cannot be properly proved. 272] Therefore, what is not manifest upon sufficient evidence no one shall make public or declare for truth; and, in short, whatever is secret should be allowed to remain secret, or, at any rate, should be secretly reprov'd, as we shall hear. 273] Therefore, if you encounter an idle tongue which betrays and slanders some one, contradict such a one promptly to his face, that he may blush; thus many a one will hold his tongue who else would bring some poor man into bad repute, from which he would not easily extricate himself. For honor and a good name are easily taken away, but not easily restored.

274] Thus you see that it is summarily forbidden to speak any evil of our neighbor, however, the civil government, preachers, father and mother excepted, on the understanding that this commandment does not allow evil to go unpunished. Now, as according to the Fifth Commandment no one is to be injured in body, and yet Master Hannes [the executioner] is excepted, who by virtue of his office does his neighbor no good, but only evil and harm, and nevertheless does not sin against God's commandment, because God has on His own account instituted that office; for He has reserved punishment for His own good pleasure, as He threatens in the First Commandment,-just so also, although no one has a right in his own person to judge and condemn anybody, yet if they to whose office it belongs fail to do it, they sin as well as he who would do so of his own accord, without such office. For here necessity requires one to speak of the evil, to prefer charges, to investigate and testify; 275] and it is not different from the case of a physician who is sometimes compelled to examine and handle the patient whom he is to cure in secret parts. Just so governments, father and mother, brothers and sisters, and other good friends, are under obligation to each other to reprove evil wherever it is needful and profitable.

276] But the true way in this matter would be to observe the order according to the Gospel, Matt. 18:15, where Christ says: If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. Here you have a precious and excellent teaching for governing well the tongue, which is to be carefully observed against this detestable misuse. Let this, then, be your rule, that you do not too readily spread evil concerning your neighbor and slander him to others, but admonish him privately that he may amend [his life]. Likewise, also, if some one report to you what this or

that one has done, teach him, too, to go and admonish him personally, if he have seen it himself; but if not, that he hold his tongue.

277] The same you can learn also from the daily government of the household. For when the master of the house sees that the servant does not do what he ought, he admonishes him personally. But if he were so foolish as to let the servant sit at home, and went on the streets to complain of him to his neighbors, he would no doubt be told: "You fool, what does that concern us? 278] Why do you not tell it to him?" Behold, that would be acting quite brotherly, so that the evil would be stayed, and your neighbor would retain his honor. As Christ also says in the same place: If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. Then you have done a great and excellent work; for do you think it is a little matter to gain a brother? Let all monks and holy orders step forth, with all their works melted together into one mass, and see if they can boast that they have gained a brother.

279] Further, Christ teaches: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. So he whom it concerns is always to be treated with personally, and not to be spoken of without his knowledge. 280] But if that do not avail, then bring it publicly before the community, whether before the civil or the ecclesiastical tribunal. For then you do not stand alone, but you have those witnesses with you by whom you can convict the guilty one, relying on whom the judge can pronounce sentence and punish. This is the right and regular course for checking and reforming a wicked person. 281] But if we gossip about another in all corners, and stir the filth, no one will be reformed, and afterwards when we are to stand up and bear witness, we deny having said so. 282] Therefore it would serve such tongues right if their itch for slander were severely punished, as a warning to others. 283] If you were acting for your neighbor's reformation or from love of the truth, you would not sneak about secretly nor shun the day and the light.

284] All this has been said regarding secret sins. But where the sin is quite public so that the judge and everybody know it, you can without any sin avoid him and let him go, because he has brought himself into disgrace, and you may also publicly testify concerning him. For when a matter is public in the light of day, there can be no slandering or false judging or testifying; as, when we now reprove the Pope with his doctrine, which is publicly set forth in books and proclaimed in all the world. For where the sin is public, the reproof also must be public, that every one may learn to guard against it.

285] Thus we have now the sum and general understanding of this commandment, to wit, that no one do any injury with the tongue to his

neighbor, whether friend or foe, nor speak evil of him, no matter whether it be true or false, unless it be done by commandment or for his reformation, but that every one employ his tongue and make it serve for the best of every one else, to cover up his neighbor's sins and infirmities, excuse them, palliate and garnish them with his own reputation. 286] The chief reason for this should be the one which Christ alleges in the Gospel, in which He comprehends all commandments respecting our neighbor, Matt. 7:12: Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.

287] Even nature teaches the same thing in our own bodies, as St. Paul says, 1 Cor. 12:22: Much more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary; and those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. No one covers his face, eyes, nose, and mouth, for they, being in themselves the most honorable members which we have, do not require it. But the most infirm members, of which we are ashamed, we cover with all diligence; hands, eyes, and the whole body must help to cover and conceal them. 288] Thus also among ourselves should we adorn whatever blemishes and infirmities we find in our neighbor, and serve and help him to promote his honor to the best of our ability, and, on the other hand, prevent whatever may be discreditable to him. 289] And it is especially an excellent and noble virtue for one always to explain advantageously and put the best construction upon all he may hear of his neighbor (if it be not notoriously evil), or at any rate to condone it over and against the poisonous tongues that are busy wherever they can pry out and discover something to blame in a neighbor, and that explain and pervert it in the worst way; as is done now especially with the precious Word of God and its preachers.

290] There are comprehended therefore in this commandment quite a multitude of good works which please God most highly, and bring abundant good and blessing, if only the blind world and the false saints would recognize them. For there is nothing on or in entire man which can do both greater and more extensive good or harm in spiritual and in temporal matters than the tongue, though it is the least and feeblest member.

The Ninth and Tenth Commandments.

*292] Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.*

293] These two commandments are given quite exclusively to the Jews; nevertheless, in part they also concern us. For they do not interpret them as

referring to unchastity or theft, because these are sufficiently forbidden above. They also thought that they had kept all those when they had done or not done the external act. Therefore God has added these two commandments in order that it be esteemed as sin and forbidden to desire or in any way to aim at getting our neighbor's wife or possessions; 294] and especially because under the Jewish government man-servants and maid-servants were not free as now to serve for wages as long as they pleased, but were their master's property with their body and all they had, as cattle and other possessions. 295] Moreover, every man had power over his wife to put her away publicly by giving her a bill of divorce, and to take another. Therefore they were in constant danger among each other that if one took a fancy to another's wife, he might allege any reason both to dismiss his own wife and to estrange the other's wife from him, that he might obtain her under pretext of right. That was not considered a sin nor disgrace with them; as little as now with hired help, when a proprietor dismisses his man-servant or maid-servant, or takes another's servants from him in any way.

296] Therefore (I say) they thus interpreted these commandments, and that rightly (although their scope reaches somewhat farther and higher), that no one think or purpose to obtain what belongs to another, such as his wife, servants, house and estate, land, meadows, cattle, even with a show of right or by a subterfuge, yet with injury to his neighbor. For above, in the Seventh Commandment, the vice is forbidden where one wrests to himself the possessions of others, or withholds them from his neighbor, which he cannot do by right. But here it is also forbidden to alienate anything from your neighbor, even though you could do so with honor in the eyes of the world, so that no one could accuse or blame you as though you had obtained it wrongfully.

297] For we are so inclined by nature that no one desires to see another have as much as himself, and each one acquires as much as he can; the other may fare as best he can. 298] And yet we pretend to be godly, know how to adorn ourselves most finely and conceal our rascality, resort to and invent adroit devices and deceitful artifices (such as now are daily most ingeniously contrived) as though they were derived from the law codes; yea, we even dare impertinently to refer to it, and boast of it, and will not have it called rascality, but shrewdness and caution. 299] In this lawyers and jurists assist, who twist and stretch the law to suit it to their cause, stress words and use them for a subterfuge, irrespective of equity or their neighbor's necessity. And, in short, whoever is the most expert and cunning in these affairs finds most help in law, as they themselves say: *Vigilantibus iura subveniunt* [that is, The laws favor the watchful].

300] This last commandment therefore is given not for rogues in the eyes of the world, but just for the most pious, who wish to be praised and be called honest and upright people, since they have not offended against the former commandments, as especially the Jews claimed to be, and even now many great noblemen, gentlemen, and princes. For the other common masses belong yet farther down, under the Seventh Commandment, as those who are not much concerned whether they acquire their possessions with honor and right.

301] Now, this occurs most frequently in cases that are brought into court, where it is the purpose to get something from our neighbor and to force him out of his own. As (to give examples), when people quarrel and wrangle about a large inheritance, real estate, etc., they avail themselves of, and resort to, whatever has the appearance of right, so dressing and adorning everything that the law must favor their side, and they keep the property with such title that no one can make complaint or lay claim thereto. 302] In like manner, if any one desire to have a castle, city, duchy, or any other great thing, he practises so much financiering through relationships, and by any means he can, that the other is judicially deprived of it, and it is adjudicated to him, and confirmed with deed and seal and declared to have been acquired by princely title and honestly.

303] Likewise also in common trade where one dexterously slips something out of another's hand, so that he must look after it, or surprises and defrauds him in a matter in which he sees advantage and benefit for himself, so that the latter, perhaps on account of distress or debt, cannot regain or redeem it without injury, and the former gains the half or even more; and yet this must not be considered as acquired by fraud or stolen, but honestly bought. Here they say: First come, first served, and every one must look to his own interest, let another get what he can. 304] And who can be so smart as to think of all the ways in which one can get many things into his possession by such specious pretexts? This the world does not consider wrong [nor is it punished by laws], and will not see that the neighbor is thereby placed at a disadvantage, and must sacrifice what he cannot spare without injury. Yet there is no one who wishes this to be done to him; from which we can easily perceive that such devices and pretexts are false.

305] Thus it was done formerly also with respect to wives: they knew such devices that if one were pleased with another woman, he personally or through others (as there were many ways and means to be invented) caused her husband to conceive a displeasure toward her, or had her resist him and so conduct herself that he was obliged to dismiss her and leave her to the other. That sort of thing undoubtedly prevailed much under the Law, as also we read in the Gospel of King Herod that he took his brother's wife

while he was yet living, and yet wished to be thought an honorable, pious man, as St. Mark also testifies of him. 306] But such an example, I trust, will not occur among us, because in the New Testament those who are married are forbidden to be divorced, except in such a case where one [shrewdly] by some stratagem takes away a rich bride from another. But it is not a rare thing with us that one estranges or alienates another's man-servant or maid-servant, or entices them away by flattering words.

307] In whatever way such things happen, we must know that God does not wish that you deprive your neighbor of anything that belongs to him, so that he suffer the loss and you gratify your avarice with it, even if you could keep it honorably before the world; for it is a secret and insidious imposition practised under the hat, as we say, that it may not be observed. For although you go your way as if you had done no one any wrong, you have nevertheless injured your neighbor; and if it is not called stealing and cheating, yet it is called coveting your neighbor's property, that is, aiming at possession of it, enticing it away from him without his will, and being unwilling to see him enjoy what God has granted him.308] And although the judge and every one must leave you in possession of it, yet God will not leave you therein: for He sees the deceitful heart and the malice of the world, which is sure to take an ell in addition where-ever you yield to her a finger's breadth, and at length public wrong and violence follow.

309] Therefore we allow these commandments to remain in their ordinary meaning, that it is commanded, first, that we do not desire our neighbor's damage, nor even assist, nor give occasion for it, but gladly wish and leave him what he has, and, besides, advance and preserve for him what may be for his profit and service, as we should wish to be treated. 310] Thus these commandments are especially directed against envy and miserable avarice, God wishing to remove all causes and sources whence arises everything by which we do injury to our neighbor, and therefore He expresses it in plain words: Thou shalt not covet, etc. For He would especially have the heart pure, although we shall never attain to that as long as we live here; so that this commandment will remain, like all the rest, one that will constantly accuse us and show how godly we are in the sight of God!

Conclusion of the Ten Commandments.

311] Thus we have the Ten Commandments, a compend of divine doctrine, as to what we are to do in order that our whole life may be pleasing to God, and the true fountain and channel from and in which everything must arise and flow that is to be a good work, so that outside of the Ten Commandments no work or thing can be good or pleasing to God, however great or precious it be in the eyes of the world. 312] Let us see now what

our great saints can boast of their spiritual orders and their great and grievous works which they have invented and set up, while they let these pass, as though they were far too insignificant, or had long ago been perfectly fulfilled.

313] I am of opinion, indeed, that here one will find his hands full, [and will have enough] to do to observe these, namely, meekness, patience, and love towards enemies, chastity, kindness, etc., and what such virtues imply. But such works are not of value and make no display in the eyes of the world; for they are not peculiar and conceited works, and restricted to particular times, places, rites, and customs, but are common, every-day domestic works which one neighbor can practise toward another; therefore they are not of high esteem.

314] But the other works cause people to open their eyes and ears wide, and men aid to this effect by the great display, expense, and magnificent buildings with which they adorn them, so that everything shines and glitters. There they waft incense, they sing and ring bells, they light tapers and candles, so that nothing else can be seen or heard. For when a priest stands there in a surplice embroidered with gilt, or a layman continues all day upon his knees in church, that is regarded as a most precious work which no one can sufficiently praise. But when a poor girl tends a little child and faithfully does what she is told, that is considered nothing; for else what should monks and nuns seek in their cloisters?

315] But see, is not that a cursed presumption of those desperate saints who dare to invent a higher and better life and estate than the Ten Commandments teach, pretending (as we have said) that this is an ordinary life for the common man, but that theirs is for saints and perfect ones? 316] And the miserable blind people do not see that no man can get so far as to keep one of the Ten Commandments as it should be kept, but both the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer must come to our aid (as we shall hear), by which that [power and strength to keep the commandments] is sought and prayed for and received continually. Therefore all their boasting amounts to as much as if I boasted and said: To be sure, I have not a penny to make payment with, but I confidently undertake to pay ten florins.

317] All this I say and urge in order that men might become rid of the sad misuse which has taken such deep root and still cleaves to everybody, and in all estates upon earth become used to looking hither only, and to being concerned about these matters. For it will be a long time before they will produce a doctrine or estates equal to the Ten Commandments, because they are so high that no one can attain to them by human power; and

whoever does attain to them is a heavenly, angelic man, far above all holiness of the world. 318] Only occupy yourself with them, and try your best, apply all power and ability, and you will find so much to do that you will neither seek nor esteem any other work or holiness.

319] Let this be sufficient concerning the first part of the common Christian doctrine, both for teaching and urging what is necessary. In conclusion, however, we must repeat the text which belongs here, of which we have treated already in the First Commandment, in order that we may learn what pains God requires to the end we may learn to inculcate and practise the Ten Commandments:

320] For I the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

321] Although (as we have heard above) this appendix was primarily attached to the First Commandment, it was nevertheless [we cannot deny that it was] laid down for the sake of all the commandments, as all of them are to be referred and directed to it. Therefore I have said that this, too, should be presented to and inculcated upon the young, that they may learn and remember it, in order to see what is to urge and compel us to keep these Ten Commandments. And it is to be regarded as though this part were specially added to each, so that it inheres in, and pervades, them all.

322] Now, there is comprehended in these words (as said before) both an angry word of threatening and a friendly promise to terrify and warn us, and, moreover, to induce and encourage us to receive and highly esteem His Word as a matter of divine earnestness, because He Himself declares how much He is concerned about it, and how rigidly He will enforce it, namely, that He will horribly and terribly punish all who despise and transgress His commandments; 323] and again, how richly He will reward, bless, and do all good to those who hold them in high esteem, and gladly do and live according to them. Thus He demands that all our works proceed from a heart which fears and regards God alone, and from such fear avoids everything that is contrary to His will, lest it should move Him to wrath; and, on the other hand, also trusts in Him alone and from love to Him does all He wishes, because he speaks to us as friendly as a father, and offers us all grace and every good.

324] Just this is also the meaning and true interpretation of the first and chief commandment, from which all the others must flow and proceed, so that this word: Thou shalt have no other gods before Me, in its simplest

meaning states nothing else than this demand: Thou shalt fear, love, and trust in Me as thine only true God. For where there is a heart thus disposed towards God, the same has fulfilled this and all the other commandments. On the other hand, whoever fears and loves anything else in heaven and upon earth will keep neither this nor any. 325] Thus the entire Scriptures have everywhere preached and inculcated this commandment, aiming always at these two things: fear of God and trust in Him. And especially the prophet David throughout the Psalms, as when he says [ Ps. 147:11 ]: The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy. As if the entire commandment were explained by one verse, as much as to say: The Lord taketh pleasure in those who have no other gods.

326] Thus the First Commandment is to shine and impart its splendor to all the others. Therefore you must let this declaration run through all the commandments, like a hoop in a wreath, joining the end to the beginning and holding them all together, that it be continually repeated and not forgotten; as, namely, in the Second Commandment, that we fear God and do not take His name in vain for cursing, lying, deceiving, and other modes of leading men astray, or rascality, but make proper and good use of it by calling upon Him in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, derived from love and trust according to the First Commandment. In like manner such fear, love, and trust is to urge and force us not to despise His Word, but gladly to learn, hear, and esteem it holy, and honor it.

327] Thus continuing through all the following commandments towards our neighbor likewise, everything is to proceed by virtue of the First Commandment, to wit, that we honor father and mother, masters, and all in authority, and be subject and obedient to them, not on their own account, but for God's sake. For you are not to regard or fear father or mother, or from love of them do or omit anything. But see to that which God would have you do, and what He will quite surely demand of you; if you omit that, you have an angry Judge, but in the contrary case a gracious Father.

328] Again, that you do your neighbor no harm, injury, or violence, nor in any wise encroach upon him as touching his body, wife, property, honor, or rights, as all these things are commanded in their order, even though you have opportunity and cause to do so and no man would reprove you; but that you do good to all men, help them, and promote their interest, howsoever and wherever you can, purely from love of God and in order to please Him, in the confidence that He will abundantly reward you for everything. 329] Thus you see how the First Commandment is the chief source and fountainhead which flows into all the rest, and again, all return to that and depend upon it, so that beginning and end are fastened and bound to each other.

330] This (I say) it is profitable and necessary always to teach to the young people, to admonish them and to remind them of it, that they may be brought up not only with blows and compulsion, like cattle, but in the fear and reverence of God. For where this is considered and laid to heart that these things are not human trifles, but the commandments of the Divine Majesty, who insists upon them with such earnestness, is angry with, and punishes those who despise them, and, on the other hand, abundantly rewards those who keep them, there will be a spontaneous impulse and a desire gladly to do the will of God. 331] Therefore it is not in vain that it is commanded in the Old Testament to write the Ten Commandments on all walls and corners, yes, even on the garments, not for the sake of merely having them written in these places and making a show of them, as did the Jews, but that we might have our eyes constantly fixed upon them, and have them always in our memory, and that we might practise them in all our actions and ways, 332] and every one make them his daily exercise in all cases, in every business and transaction, as though they were written in every place wherever he would look, yea, wherever he walks or stands. Thus there would be occasion enough, both at home in our own house and abroad with our neighbors, to practise the Ten Commandments, that no one need run far from them.

333] From this it again appears how highly these Ten Commandments are to be exalted and extolled above all estates, commandments, and works which are taught and practised aside from them. For here we can boast and say: Let all the wise and saints step forth and produce, if they can, a [single] work like these commandments, upon which God insists with such earnestness, and which He enjoins with His greatest wrath and punishment, and, besides, adds such glorious promises that He will pour out upon us all good things and blessings. Therefore they should be taught above all others, and be esteemed precious and dear, as the highest treasure given by God.

### The Apostles' Creed

1] Thus far we have heard the first part of Christian doctrine, in which we have seen all that God wishes us to do or to leave undone. Now, there properly follows the Creed, which sets forth to us everything that we must expect and receive from God, and, to state it quite briefly, teaches us to know Him fully. 2] And this is intended to help us do that which according to the Ten Commandments we ought to do. For (as said above) they are set so high that all human ability is far too feeble and weak to [attain to or] keep them. Therefore it is as necessary to learn this part as the former in order that we may know how to attain thereto, whence and whereby to obtain

such power. 3] For if we could by our own powers keep the Ten Commandments as they are to be kept, we would need nothing further, neither the Creed nor the Lord's Prayer. 4] But before we explain this advantage and necessity of the Creed, it is sufficient at first for the simple-minded that they learn to comprehend and understand the Creed itself.

5] In the first place, the Creed has hitherto been divided into twelve articles, although, if all points which are written in the Scriptures and which belong to the Creed were to be distinctly set forth, there would be far more articles, nor could they all be clearly expressed in so few words. 6] But that it may be most easily and clearly understood as it is to be taught to children, we shall briefly sum up the entire Creed in three chief articles, according to the three persons in the Godhead, to whom everything that we believe is related, so that the First Article, of God the Father, explains Creation, the Second Article, of the Son, Redemption, and the Third, of the Holy Ghost, Sanctification. 7] Just as though the Creed were briefly comprehended in so many words: I believe in God the Father, who has created me; I believe in God the Son, who has redeemed me; I believe in the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies me. One God and one faith, but three persons, therefore also three articles or confessions. 8] Let us briefly run over the words.

Article I.

9] I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

10] This portrays and sets forth most briefly what is the essence, will, activity, and work of God the Father. For since the Ten Commandments have taught that we are to have not more than one God, the question might be asked, What kind of a person is God? What does He do? How can we praise, or portray and describe Him, that He may be known? Now, that is taught in this and in the following article, so that the Creed is nothing else than the answer and confession of Christians arranged with respect to the First Commandment. As if you were to ask a little child: 11] My dear, what sort of a God have you? What do you know of Him? he could say: This is my God: first, the Father, who has created heaven and earth; besides this only One I regard nothing else as God; for there is no one else who could create heaven and earth.

12] But for the learned, and those who are somewhat advanced [have acquired some Scriptural knowledge], these three articles may all be expanded and divided into as many parts as there are words. But now for young scholars let it suffice to indicate the most necessary points, namely, as we have said, that this article refers to the Creation: that we emphasize the words: Creator of heaven and earth. 13] But what is the force of this, or

what do you mean by these words: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker, etc.? Answer: This is what I mean and believe, that I am a creature of God; that is, that He has given and constantly preserves to me my body, soul, and life, members great and small, all my senses, reason, and understanding, and so on, food and drink, clothing and support, wife and children, domestics, house and home, etc. 14] Besides, He causes all creatures to serve for the uses and necessities of life sun, moon, and stars in the firmament, day and night, air, fire, water, earth, and whatever it bears and produces, birds and fishes beasts, grain, and all kinds of produce, 15] and whatever else there is of bodily and temporal goods, good government, peace, security. 16] Thus we learn from this article that none of us has of himself, nor can preserve, his life nor anything that is here enumerated or can be enumerated, however small and unimportant a thing it might be, for all is comprehended in the word Creator.

17] Moreover, we also confess that God the Father has not only given us all that we have and see before our eyes, but daily preserves and defends us against all evil and misfortune, averts all sorts of danger and calamity; and that He does all this out of pure love and goodness, without our merit, as a benevolent Father, who cares for us that no evil befall us. 18] But to speak more of this belongs in the other two parts of this article, where we say: Father Almighty.

19] Now, since all that we possess, and, moreover, whatever, in addition, is in heaven and upon the earth, is daily given, preserved, and kept for us by God, it is readily inferred and concluded that it is our duty to love, praise, and thank Him for it without ceasing, and, in short, to serve Him with all these things, as He demands and has enjoined in the Ten Commandments.

20] Here we could say much if we were to expatiate, how few there are that believe this article. For we all pass over it, hear it and say it, but neither see nor consider what the words teach us. 21] For if we believed it with the heart, we would also act accordingly, and not stalk about proudly, act defiantly, and boast as though we had life, riches, power, and honor, etc., of ourselves, so that others must fear and serve us, as is the practise of the wretched, perverse world, which is drowned in blindness, and abuses all the good things and gifts of God only for its own pride, avarice, lust, and luxury, and never once regards God, so as to thank Him or acknowledge Him as Lord and Creator.

22] Therefore, this article ought to humble and terrify us all, if we believed it. For we sin daily with eyes, ears, hands, body and soul, money and possessions, and with everything we have, especially those who even fight against the Word of God. Yet Christians have this advantage, that they

acknowledge themselves in duty bound to serve God for all these things, and to be obedient to Him [which the world knows not how to do].

23] We ought, therefore, daily to practise this article, impress it upon our mind, and to remember it in all that meets our eyes, and in all good that falls to our lot, and wherever we escape from calamity or danger, that it is God who gives and does all these things, that therein we sense and see His Paternal heart and his transcendent love toward us. Thereby the heart would be warmed and kindled to be thankful, and to employ all such good things to the honor and praise of God.

24] Thus we have most briefly presented the meaning of this article, as much as is at first necessary for the most simple to learn, both as to what we have and receive from God, and what we owe in return, which is a most excellent knowledge, but a far greater treasure. For here we see how the Father has given Himself to us, together with all creatures, and has most richly provided for us in this life, besides that He has overwhelmed us with unspeakable, eternal treasures by His Son and the Holy Ghost, as we shall hear.

## Article II.

25] And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

26] Here we learn to know the Second Person of the Godhead, so that we see what we have from God over and above the temporal goods aforementioned; namely, how He has completely poured forth Himself and withheld nothing from us that He has not given us. Now, this article is very rich and broad; but in order to expound it also briefly and in a childlike way we shall take up one word and sum up in that the entire article, namely (as we have said), that we may here learn how we have been redeemed; and we shall base this on these words: In Jesus Christ, our Lord.

27] If now you are asked, What do you believe in the Second Article of Jesus Christ? answer briefly: I believe that Jesus Christ, true Son of God, has become my Lord. But what is it to become Lord? It is this, that He has redeemed me from sin, from the devil, from death, and all evil. For before I had no Lord nor King, but was captive under the power of the devil, condemned to death, enmeshed in sin and blindness.

28] For when we had been created by God the Father, and had received from Him all manner of good, the devil came and led us into disobedience, sin, death, and all evil, so that we fell under His wrath and displeasure and were doomed to eternal damnation, as we had merited and deserved. 29] There was no counsel, help, or comfort until this only and eternal Son of God in His unfathomable goodness had compassion upon our misery and wretchedness, and came from heaven to help us. 30] Those tyrants and jailers, then, are all expelled now, and in their place has come Jesus Christ, Lord of life, righteousness, every blessing, and salvation, and has delivered us poor lost men from the jaws of hell, has won us, made us free, and brought us again into the favor and grace of the Father, and has taken us as His own property under His shelter and protection, that He may govern us by His righteousness, wisdom, power, life, and blessedness.

31] Let this, then, be the sum of this article that the little word Lord signifies simply as much as Redeemer, i.e., He who has brought us from Satan to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and who preserves us in the same. But all the points which follow in order in this article serve no other end than to explain and express this redemption, how and whereby it was accomplished, that is, how much it cost Him, and what He spent and risked that He might win us and bring us under His dominion, namely, that He became man, conceived and born without [any stain of] sin, of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary, that He might overcome sin; moreover, that He suffered, died and was buried, that He might make satisfaction for me and pay what I owe, not with silver nor gold, but with His own precious blood. And all this, in order to become my Lord; for He did none of these for Himself, nor had He any need of it. And after that He rose again from the dead, swallowed up and devoured death, and finally ascended into heaven and assumed the government at the Father's right hand, so that the devil and all powers must be subject to Him and lie at His feet, until finally, at the last day, He will completely part and separate us from the wicked world, the devil, death, sin, etc.

32] But to explain all these single points separately belongs not to brief sermons for children, but rather to the ampler sermons that extend throughout the entire year, especially at those times which are appointed for the purpose of treating at length of each article-of the birth, sufferings, resurrection, ascension of Christ, etc.

33] Ay, the entire Gospel which we preach is based on this, that we properly understand this article as that upon which our salvation and all our happiness rest, and which is so rich and comprehensive that we never can learn it fully.

### Article III.

34] I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

35] This article (as I have said) I cannot relate better than to Sanctification, that through the same the Holy Ghost, with His office, is declared and depicted, namely, that He makes holy. Therefore we must take our stand upon the word Holy Ghost, because it is so precise and comprehensive that we cannot find another. 36] For there are, besides, many kinds of spirits mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, as, the spirit of man, heavenly spirits, and evil spirits. But the Spirit of God alone is called Holy Ghost, that is, He who has sanctified and still sanctifies us. For as the Father is called Creator, the Son Redeemer, so the Holy Ghost, from His work, must be called Sanctifier, or One that makes holy. 37] But how is such sanctifying done? Answer: Just as the Son obtains dominion, whereby He wins us, through His birth, death, resurrection, etc., so also the Holy Ghost effects our sanctification by the following parts, namely, by the communion of saints or the Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting; that is, He first leads us into His holy congregation, and places us in the bosom of the Church, whereby He preaches to us and brings us to Christ.

38] For neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe on Him, and obtain Him for our Lord, unless it were offered to us and granted to our hearts by the Holy Ghost through the preaching of the Gospel. The work is done and accomplished; for Christ has acquired and gained the treasure for us by His suffering, death, resurrection, etc. But if the work remained concealed so that no one knew of it, then it would be in vain and lost. That this treasure, therefore, might not lie buried, but be appropriated and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed, in which He gives the Holy Ghost to bring this treasure home and appropriate it to us. 39] Therefore sanctifying is nothing else than bringing us to Christ to receive this good, to which we could not attain of ourselves.

40] Learn, then, to understand this article most clearly. If you are asked: What do you mean by the words: I believe in the Holy Ghost? you can answer: I believe that the Holy Ghost makes me holy, as His name implies. 41] But whereby does He accomplish this, or what are His method and means to this end? Answer: By the Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. 42] For, in the first place, He has a peculiar congregation in the world, which is the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God, which He

reveals and preaches, [and through which] He illumines and enkindles hearts, that they understand, accept it, cling to it, and persevere in it.

43] For where He does not cause it to be preached and made alive in the heart, so that it is understood, it is lost, as was the case under the Papacy, where faith was entirely put under the bench, and no one recognized Christ as his Lord or the Holy Ghost as his Sanctifier, that is, no one believed that Christ is our Lord in the sense that He has acquired this treasure for us, without our works and merit, and made us acceptable to the Father. What, then, was lacking? 44] This, that the Holy Ghost was not there to reveal it and cause it to be preached; but men and evil spirits were there, who taught us to obtain grace and be saved by our works. 45] Therefore it is not a Christian Church either; for where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Ghost who creates, calls, and gathers the Christian Church, without which no one can come to Christ the Lord. 46] Let this suffice concerning the sum of this article. But because the parts which are here enumerated are not quite clear to the simple, we shall run over them also.

47] The Creed denominates the holy Christian Church, *communio sanctorum*, a communion of saints; for both expressions, taken together, are identical. But formerly the one [the second] expression was not there, and it has been poorly and unintelligibly translated into German *eine Gemeinschaft der Heiligen*, a communion of saints. If it is to be rendered plainly, it must be expressed quite differently in the German idiom; for the word *ecclesia* properly means in German *eine Versammlung*, an assembly. 48] But we are accustomed to the word church, by which the simple do not understand an assembled multitude, but the consecrated house or building, although the house ought not to be called a church, except only for the reason that the multitude assembles there. For we who assemble there make and choose for ourselves a particular place, and give a name to the house according to the assembly.

Thus the word *Kirche* (church) means really nothing else than a common assembly, and is not German by idiom, but Greek (as is also the word *ecclesia*); for in their own language they call it *kyria*, as in Latin it is called *curia*. Therefore in genuine German, in our mother-tongue, it ought to be called a Christian congregation or assembly (*eine christliche Gemeinde oder Sammlung*), or, best of all and most clearly, holy Christendom (*eine heilige Christenheit*).

49] So also the word *communio*, which is added, ought not to be rendered communion (*Gemeinschaft*), but congregation (*Gemeinde*). And it is nothing else than an interpretation or explanation by which some one meant to explain what the Christian Church is. This our people, who understood

neither Latin nor German, have rendered *Gemeinschaft der Heiligen* (communion of saints), although no German language speaks thus, nor understands it thus. But to speak correct German, it ought to be *eine Gemeinde der Heiligen* (a congregation of saints), that is, a congregation made up purely of saints, or, to speak yet more plainly, *eine heilige Gemeinde*, a holy congregation. 50] I say this in order that the words *Gemeinschaft der Heiligen* (communion of saints) may be understood, because the expression has become so established by custom that it cannot well be eradicated, and it is treated almost as heresy if one should attempt to change a word.

51] But this is the meaning and substance of this addition: I believe that there is upon earth a little holy group and congregation of pure saints, under one head, even Christ, called together by the Holy Ghost in one faith, one mind, and understanding, with manifold gifts, yet agreeing in love, without sects or schisms. 52] I am also a part and member of the same, a sharer and joint owner of all the goods it possesses, brought to it and incorporated into it by the Holy Ghost by having heard and continuing to hear the Word of God, which is the beginning of entering it. For formerly, before we had attained to this, we were altogether of the devil, knowing nothing of God and of Christ. 53] Thus, until the last day, the Holy Ghost abides with the holy congregation or Christendom, by means of which He fetches us to Christ and which He employs to teach and preach to us the Word, whereby He works and promotes sanctification, causing it [this community] daily to grow and become strong in the faith and its fruits which He produces.

54] We further believe that in this Christian Church we have forgiveness of sin, which is wrought through the holy Sacraments and Absolution, moreover, through all manner of consolatory promises of the entire Gospel. Therefore, whatever is to be preached concerning the Sacraments belongs here, and, in short, the whole Gospel and all the offices of Christianity, which also must be preached and taught without ceasing. For although the grace of God is secured through Christ, and sanctification is wrought by the Holy Ghost through the Word of God in the unity of the Christian Church, yet on account of our flesh which we bear about with us we are never without sin.

55] Everything, therefore, in the Christian Church is ordered to the end that we shall daily obtain there nothing but the forgiveness of sin through the Word and signs, to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live here. Thus, although we have sins, the [grace of the] Holy Ghost does not allow them to injure us, because we are in the Christian Church, where there is nothing but [continuous, uninterrupted] forgiveness of sin, both in that God forgives us, and in that we forgive, bear with, and help each other.

56] But outside of this Christian Church, where the Gospel is not, there is no forgiveness, as also there can be no holiness [sanctification]. Therefore all who seek and wish to merit holiness [sanctification], not through the Gospel and forgiveness of sin, but by their works, have expelled and severed themselves [from this Church].

57] Meanwhile, however, while sanctification has begun and is growing daily, we expect that our flesh will be destroyed and buried with all its uncleanness, and will come forth gloriously, and arise to entire and perfect holiness in a new eternal life.<sup>58</sup> For now we are only half pure and holy, so that the Holy Ghost has ever [some reason why] to continue His work in us through the Word, and daily to dispense forgiveness, until we attain to that life where there will be no more forgiveness, but only perfectly pure and holy people, full of godliness and righteousness, removed and free from sin, death, and all evil, in a new, immortal, and glorified body.

59] Behold, all this is to be the office and work of the Holy Ghost, that He begin and daily increase holiness upon earth by means of these two things, the Christian Church and the forgiveness of sin. But in our dissolution He will accomplish it altogether in an instant, and will forever preserve us therein by the last two parts.

60] But the term Auferstehung des Fleisches (resurrection of the flesh) here employed is not according to good German idiom. For when we Germans hear the word Fleisch (flesh), we think no farther than of the shambles. But in good German idiom we would say Auferstehung des Leibes, or Leichnams (resurrection of the body). However, it is not a matter of much moment, if we only understand the words aright.

61] This, now, is the article which must ever be and remain in operation. For creation we have received; redemption, too, is finished. But the Holy Ghost carries on His work without ceasing to the last day. And for that purpose He has appointed a congregation upon earth by which He speaks and does everything. 62] For He has not yet brought together all His Christian Church nor dispensed forgiveness. Therefore we believe in Him who through the Word daily brings us into the fellowship of this Christian Church, and through the same Word and the forgiveness of sins bestows, increases, and strengthens faith, in order that when He has accomplished it all, and we abide therein, and die to the world and to all evil, He may finally make us perfectly and forever holy; which now we expect in faith through the Word.

63] Behold, here you have the entire divine essence, will, and work depicted most exquisitely in quite short and yet rich words, wherein consists all our wisdom, which surpasses and exceeds the wisdom, mind, and reason of all

men. For although the whole world with all diligence has endeavored to ascertain what God is, what He has in mind and does, yet has she never been able to attain to [the knowledge and understanding of] any of these things. 64] But here we have everything in richest measure; for here in all three articles He has Himself revealed and opened the deepest abyss of his paternal heart and of His pure unutterable love. For He has created us for this very object, that He might redeem and sanctify us; and in addition to giving and imparting to us everything in heaven and upon earth, He has given to us even His Son and the Holy Ghost, by whom to bring us to Himself. 65] For (as explained above) we could never attain to the knowledge of the grace and favor of the Father except through the Lord Christ, who is a mirror of the paternal heart, outside of whom we see nothing but an angry and terrible Judge. But of Christ we could know nothing either, unless it had been revealed by the Holy Ghost.

66] These articles of the Creed, therefore, divide and separate us Christians from all other people upon earth. For all outside of Christianity, whether heathen, Turks, Jews, or false Christians and hypocrites, although they believe in, and worship, only one true God, yet know not what His mind towards them is, and cannot expect any love or blessing from Him; therefore they abide in eternal wrath and damnation. For they have not the Lord Christ, and, besides, are not illumined and favored by any gifts of the Holy Ghost.

67] From this you perceive that the Creed is a doctrine quite different from the Ten Commandments; for the latter teaches indeed what we ought to do, but the former tells what God does for us and gives to us. Moreover, apart from this, the Ten Commandments are written in the hearts of all men; the Creed, however, no human wisdom can comprehend, but it must be taught by the Holy Ghost alone. 68] The latter doctrine [of the Law], therefore, makes no Christian, for the wrath and displeasure of God abide upon us still, because we cannot keep what God demands of us; but this [namely, the doctrine of faith] brings pure grace, and makes us godly and acceptable to God. 69] For by this knowledge we obtain love and delight in all the commandments of God, because here we see that God gives Himself entire to us, with all that He has and is able to do, to aid and direct us in keeping the Ten Commandments-the Father, all creatures; the Son, His entire work; and the Holy Ghost, all His gifts.

70] Let this suffice concerning the Creed to lay a foundation for the simple, that they may not be burdened, so that, if they understand the substance of it, they themselves may afterwards strive to acquire more, and to refer to these parts whatever they learn in the Scriptures, and may ever grow and

increase in richer understanding. For as long as we live here, we shall daily have enough to do to preach and to learn this.

## The Lord's Prayer

1] We have now heard what we must do and believe, in which things the best and happiest life consists. Now follows the third part, how we ought to pray. 2] For since we are so situated that no man can perfectly keep the Ten Commandments, even though he have begun to believe, and since the devil with all his power, together with the world and our own flesh, resists our endeavors, nothing is so necessary as that we should continually resort to the ear of God, call upon Him, and pray to Him, that He would give, preserve, and increase in us faith and the fulfilment of the Ten Commandments, and that He would remove everything that is in our way and opposes us therein. 3] But that we might know what and how to pray, our Lord Christ has Himself taught us both the mode and the words, as we shall see.

4] But before we explain the Lord's Prayer part by part, it is most necessary first to exhort and incite people to prayer, as Christ and the apostles also have done. 5] And the first matter is to know that it is our duty to pray because of God's commandment. For thus we heard in the Second Commandment: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain, that we are there required to praise that holy name, and call upon it in every need, or to pray. For to call upon the name of God is nothing else than to pray. 6] Prayer is therefore as strictly and earnestly commanded as all other commandments: to have no other God, not to kill, not to steal, etc. Let no one think that it is all the same whether he pray or not, as vulgar people do, who grope in such delusion and ask, Why should I pray? Who knows whether God heeds or will hear my prayer? If I do not pray, some one else will. And thus they fall into the habit of never praying, and frame a pretext, as though we taught that there is no duty or need of prayer, because we reject false and hypocritical prayers.

7] But this is true indeed that such prayers as have been offered hitherto when men were babbling and bawling in the churches were no prayers. For such external matters, when they are properly observed, may be a good exercise for young children, scholars, and simple persons, and may be called singing or reading, but not really praying. 8] But praying, as the Second Commandment teaches, is to call upon God in every need. This He requires of us, and has not left it to our choice. But it is our duty and obligation to pray if we would be Christians, as much as it is our duty and obligation to

obey our parents and the government; for by calling upon it and praying the name of God is honored and profitably employed. 9] This you must note above all things, that thereby you may silence and repel such thoughts as would keep and deter us from prayer. For just as it would be idle for a son to say to his father, "Of what advantage is my obedience? I will go and do what I can; it is all the same;" but there stands the commandment, Thou shalt and must do it, so also here it is not left to my will to do it or leave it undone, but prayer shall and must be offered at the risk of God's wrath and displeasure.

10] This is therefore to be understood and noted before everything else, in order that thereby we may silence and repel the thoughts which would keep and deter us from praying, as though it were not of much consequence if we do not pray, or as though it were commanded those who are holier and in better favor with God than we; as, indeed, the human heart is by nature so despondent that it always flees from God and imagines that He does not wish or desire our prayer, because we are sinners and have merited nothing but wrath. 11] Against such thoughts (I say) we should regard this commandment and turn to God, that we may not by such disobedience excite His anger still more. For by this commandment He gives us plainly to understand that He will not cast us from Him nor chase us away, although we are sinners, but rather draw us to Himself, so that we might humble ourselves before Him, bewail this misery and plight of ours, and pray for grace and help. Therefore we read in the Scriptures that He is angry also with those who were smitten for their sin, because they did not return to Him and by their prayers assuage His wrath and seek His grace.

12] Now, from the fact that it is so solemnly commanded to pray, you are to conclude and think, that no one should by any means despise his prayer, but rather set great store by it, 13] and always seek an illustration from the other commandments. A child should by no means despise his obedience to father and mother, but should always think: This work is a work of obedience, and what I do I do with no other intention than that I may walk in the obedience and commandment of God, on which I can settle and stand firm, and esteem it a great thing, not on account of my worthiness, but on account of the commandment. So here also, what and for what we pray we should regard as demanded by God and done in obedience to Him, and should reflect thus: On my account it would amount to nothing; but it shall avail, for the reason that God has commanded it. Therefore everybody, no matter what he has to say in prayer, should always come before God in obedience to this commandment.

14] We pray, therefore, and exhort every one most diligently to take this to heart and by no means to despise our prayer. For hitherto it has been taught

thus in the devil's name that no one regarded these things, and men supposed it to be sufficient to have done the work, whether God would hear it or not. But that is staking prayer on a risk, and murmuring it at a venture; and therefore it is a lost prayer. 15] For we allow such thoughts as these to lead us astray and deter us: I am not holy or worthy enough; if I were as godly and holy as St. Peter or St. Paul, then I would pray. But put such thoughts far away, for just the same commandment which applied to St. Paul applies also to me; and the Second Commandment is given as much on my account as on his account, so that he can boast of no better or holier commandment.

16] Therefore you should say: My prayer is as precious, holy, and pleasing to God as that of St. Paul or of the most holy saints. This is the reason: For I will gladly grant that he is holier in his person, but not on account of the commandment; since God does not regard prayer on account of the person, but on account of His word and obedience thereto. For on the commandment on which all the saints rest their prayer I, too, rest mine. Moreover, I pray for the same thing for which they all pray and ever have prayed; besides, I have just as great a need of it as those great saints, yea, even a greater one than they.

17] Let this be the first and most important point, that all our prayers must be based and rest upon obedience to God, irrespective of our person, whether we be sinners or saints, worthy or unworthy. 18] And we must know that God will not have it treated as a jest, but be angry, and punish all who do not pray, as surely as He punishes all other disobedience; next, that He will not suffer our prayers to be in vain or lost. For if He did not intend to answer your prayer, He would not bid you pray and add such a severe commandment to it.

19] In the second place, we should be the more urged and incited to pray because God has also added a promise, and declared that it shall surely be done to us as we pray, as He says Ps. 50:15: Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee. And Christ in the Gospel of St. Matthew 7:7: Ask, and it shall be given you. For every one that asketh receiveth. 20] Such promises ought certainly to encourage and kindle our hearts to pray with pleasure and delight, since He testifies with His [own] word that our prayer is heartily pleasing to Him, moreover, that it shall assuredly be heard and granted, in order that we may not despise it or think lightly of it, and pray at a venture.

21] This you can hold up to Him and say: Here I come, dear Father, and pray, not of my own purpose nor upon my own worthiness, but at Thy commandment and promise, which cannot fail or deceive me. Whoever,

therefore, does not believe this promise must know again that he excites God to anger as a person who most highly dishonors Him and reproaches Him with falsehood.

22] Besides this, we should be incited and drawn to prayer because in addition to this commandment and promise God anticipates us, and Himself arranges the words and form of prayer for us, and places them upon our lips as to how and what we should pray, that we may see how heartily He pities us in our distress, and may never doubt that such prayer is pleasing to Him and shall certainly be answered; which [the Lord's Prayer] is a great advantage indeed over all other prayers that we might compose ourselves. 23] For in them the conscience would ever be in doubt and say: I have prayed, but who knows how it pleases Him, or whether I have hit upon the right proportions and form? Hence there is no nobler prayer to be found upon earth than the Lord's Prayer which we daily pray, because it has this excellent testimony, that God loves to hear it, which we ought not to surrender for all the riches of the world.

24] And it has been prescribed also for this reason that we should see and consider the distress which ought to urge and compel us to pray without ceasing. For whoever would pray must have something to present, state, and name which he desires; if not, it cannot be called a prayer.

25] Therefore we have rightly rejected the prayers of monks and priests, who howl and growl day and night like fiends; but none of them think of praying for a hair's breadth of anything. And if we would assemble all the churches, together with all ecclesiastics, they would be obliged to confess that they have never from the heart prayed for even a drop of wine. For none of them has ever purposed to pray from obedience to God and faith in His promise, nor has any one regarded any distress, but (when they had done their best) they thought no further than this, to do a good work, whereby they might repay God, as being unwilling to take anything from Him, but wishing only to give Him something.

26] But where there is to be a true prayer, there must be earnestness. Men must feel their distress, and such distress as presses them and compels them to call and cry out; then prayer will be made spontaneously, as it ought to be, and men will require no teaching how to prepare for it and to attain to the proper devotion. 27] But the distress which ought to concern us most, both as regards ourselves and every one, you will find abundantly set forth in the Lord's Prayer. Therefore it is to serve also to remind us of the same, that we contemplate it and lay it to heart, lest we become remiss in prayer. For we all have enough that we lack, but the great want is that we do not feel nor see it. Therefore God also requires that you lament and plead

such necessities and wants, not because He does not know them, but that you may kindle your heart to stronger and greater desires, and make wide and open your cloak to receive much.

28] Therefore, every one of us should accustom himself from his youth daily to pray for all his wants, whenever he is sensible of anything affecting his interests or that of other people among whom he may live, as for preachers, the government, neighbors, domestics, and always (as we have said) to hold up to God His commandment and promise, knowing that He will not have them disregarded. 29] This I say because I would like to see these things brought home again to the people that they might learn to pray truly, and not go about coldly and indifferently, whereby they become daily more unfit for prayer; which is just what the devil desires, and for what he works with all his powers. For he is well aware what damage and harm it does him when prayer is in proper practise.

30] For this we must know, that all our shelter and protection rest in prayer alone. For we are far too feeble to cope with the devil and all his power and adherents that set themselves against us, and they might easily crush us under their feet. Therefore we must consider and take up those weapons with which 31] Christians must be armed in order to stand against the devil. For what do you think has hitherto accomplished such great things, has checked or quelled the counsels, purposes, murder, and riot of our enemies, whereby the devil thought to crush us, together with the Gospel, except that the prayer of a few godly men intervened like a wall of iron on our side? They should else have witnessed a far different tragedy, namely, how the devil would have destroyed all Germany in its own blood. But now they may confidently deride it and make a mock of it; however, we shall nevertheless be a match both for themselves and the devil by prayer alone, if we only persevere diligently and not become slack. 32] For whenever a godly Christian prays: Dear Father, let Thy will be done, God speaks from on high and says: Yes, dear child, it shall be so, in spite of the devil and all the world.

33] Let this be said as an exhortation, that men may learn, first of all, to esteem prayer as something great and precious, and to make a proper distinction between babbling and praying for something. For we by no means reject prayer, but the bare, useless howling and murmuring we reject, as Christ Himself also rejects and prohibits long palavers. 34] Now we shall most briefly and clearly treat of the Lord's Prayer. Here there is comprehended in seven successive articles, or petitions, every need which never ceases to relate to us, and each so great that it ought to constrain us to keep praying it all our lives.

## The First Petition.

35] Hallowed be Thy name.

36] This is, indeed, somewhat obscure, and not expressed in good German, for in our mother-tongue we would say: Heavenly Father, help that by all means Thy name may be holy. 37] But what is it to pray that His name may be holy? Is it not holy already? Answer: Yes, it is always holy in its nature, but in our use it is not holy. For God's name was given us when we became Christians and were baptized, so that we are called children of God and have the Sacraments, by which He so incorporates us in Himself that everything which is God's must serve for our use.

38] Here now the great need exists for which we ought to be most concerned, that this name have its proper honor, be esteemed holy and sublime as the greatest treasure and sanctuary that we have; and that as godly children we pray that the name of God, which is already holy in heaven, may also be and remain holy with us upon earth and in all the world.

39] But how does it become holy among us? Answer, as plainly as it can be said: When both our doctrine and life are godly and Christian. For since in this prayer we call God our Father, it is our duty always to deport and demean ourselves as godly children, that He may not receive shame, but honor and praise from us.

40] Now the name of God is profaned by us either in words or in works. (For whatever we do upon the earth must be either words or works, speech or act.) 41] In the first place, then, it is profaned when men preach, teach, and speak in the name of God what is false and misleading, so that His name must serve to adorn and to find a market for falsehood. That is, indeed, the greatest profanation and dishonor of the divine name. Furthermore, also when men, by swearing, cursing, conjuring, etc., grossly abuse the holy name as a cloak for their shame. In the second place, also by an openly wicked life and works, when those who are called Christians and the people of God are adulterers, drunkards, misers, envious, and slanderers. 42] Here again must the name of God come to shame and be profaned because of us. 43] For just as it is a shame and disgrace to a natural father to have a bad, perverse child that opposes him in words and deeds, so that on its account he suffers contempt and reproach, 44] so also it brings dishonor upon God if we who are called by His name and have all manner of goods from Him teach, speak, and live in any other manner except as godly and heavenly children, so that people say of us that we must be not God's, but the devil's children.

45] Thus you see that in this petition we pray just for that which God demands in the Second Commandment; namely, that His name be not taken in vain to swear, curse, lie, deceive, etc., but be usefully employed to the praise and honor of God. For whoever employs the name of God for any sort of wrong profanes and desecrates this holy name, as aforetime a church was considered desecrated when a murder or any other crime had been committed in it, or when a pyx or relic was desecrated, as being holy in themselves, yet become unholy in use. 46] Thus this point is easy and clear if only the language is understood, that to hallow is the same as in our idiom to praise, magnify, and honor both in word and deed.

47] Here, now, learn how great need there is of such prayer. For because we see how full the world is of sects and false teachers, who all wear the holy name as a cover and sham for their doctrines of devils, we ought by all means to pray without ceasing, and to cry and call upon God against all such as preach and believe falsely and whatever opposes and persecutes our Gospel and pure doctrine, and would suppress it, as bishops, tyrants, enthusiasts, etc. Likewise also for ourselves who have the Word of God, but are not thankful for it, nor live as we ought according to the same. 48] If now you pray for this with your heart, you can be sure that it pleases God; for He will not hear anything more dear to Him than that His honor and praise is exalted above everything else, and His Word is taught in its purity and is esteemed precious and dear.

The Second Petition.

Thy kingdom come.

49] As we prayed in the First Petition concerning the honor and name of God that He would prevent the world from adorning its lies and wickedness with it, but cause it to be esteemed sublime and holy both in doctrine and life, so that He may be praised and magnified in us, so here we pray that His kingdom also may come. 50] But just as the name of God is in itself holy, and we pray nevertheless that it be holy among us, so also His kingdom comes of itself, without our prayer, yet we pray nevertheless that it may come to us, that is, prevail among us and with us, so that we may be a part of those among whom His name is hallowed and His kingdom prospers.

51] But what is the kingdom of God? Answer: Nothing else than what we learned in the Creed, that God sent His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, into the world to redeem and deliver us from the power of the devil, and to bring us to Himself, and to govern us as a King of righteousness, life, and salvation against sin, death, and an evil conscience, for which end He has also

bestowed His Holy Ghost, who is to bring these things home to us by His holy Word, and to illumine and strengthen us in the faith by His power.

52] Therefore we pray here in the first place that this may become effective with us, and that His name be so praised through the holy Word of God and a Christian life that both we who have accepted it may abide and daily grow therein, and that it may gain approbation and adherence among other people and proceed with power throughout the world, that many may find entrance into the Kingdom of Grace, be made partakers of redemption, being led thereto by the Holy Ghost, in order that thus we may all together remain forever in the one kingdom now begun.

53] For the coming of God's Kingdom to us occurs in two ways; first, here in time through the Word and faith; and secondly, in eternity forever through revelation. Now we pray for both these things, that it may come to those who are not yet in it, and, by daily increase, to us who have received the same, and hereafter in eternal life. 54] All this is nothing else than saying: Dear Father, we pray, give us first Thy Word, that the Gospel be preached properly throughout the world; and secondly, that it be received in faith, and work and live in us, so that through the Word and the power of the Holy Ghost Thy kingdom may prevail among us, and the kingdom of the devil be put down, that he may have no right or power over us, until at last it shall be utterly destroyed, and sin, death, and hell shall be exterminated, that we may live forever in perfect righteousness and blessedness.

55] From this you perceive that we pray here not for a crust of bread or a temporal, perishable good, but for an eternal inestimable treasure and everything that God Himself possesses; which is far too great for any human heart to think of desiring if He had not Himself commanded us to pray for the same. 56] But because He is God, He also claims the honor of giving much more and more abundantly than any one can comprehend,-like an eternal, unfailing fountain, which, the more it pours forth and overflows, the more it continues to give,-and He desires nothing more earnestly of us than that we ask much and great things of Him, and again is angry if we do not ask and pray confidently.

57] For just as when the richest and most mighty emperor would bid a poor beggar ask whatever he might desire, and were ready to give great imperial presents, and the fool would beg only for a dish of gruel, he would be rightly considered a rogue and a scoundrel, who treated the command of his imperial majesty as a jest and sport, and was not worthy of coming into his presence: so also it is a great reproach and dishonor to God if we, to whom He offers and pledges so many unspeakable treasures, despise the same, or

have not the confidence to receive them, but scarcely venture to pray for a piece of bread.

58] All this is the fault of the shameful unbelief which does not look to God for as much good as will satisfy the stomach, much less expects without doubt such eternal treasures of God. Therefore we must strengthen ourselves against it, and let this be our first prayer; then, indeed, we shall have all else in abundance, as Christ teaches [ Matt. 6:33 ]: Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. For how could He allow us to suffer want and to be straitened in temporal things when He promises that which is eternal and imperishable?

The Third Petition.

59] Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

60] Thus far we have prayed that God's name be honored by us, and that His kingdom prevail among us; in which two points is comprehended all that pertains to the honor of God and to our salvation, that we receive as our own God and all His riches. But now a need just as great arises, namely, that we firmly keep them, and do not suffer ourselves to be torn therefrom. 61] For as in a good government it is not only necessary that there be those who build and govern well, but also those who make defense, afford protection and maintain it firmly, so here likewise, although we have prayed for the greatest need, for the Gospel, faith, and the Holy Ghost, that He may govern us and redeem us from the power of the devil, we must also pray that His will be done. For there will be happenings quite strange if we are to abide therein, as we shall have to suffer many thrusts and blows on that account from everything that ventures to oppose and prevent the fulfilment of the two petitions that precede.

62] For no one believes how the devil opposes and resists them, and cannot suffer that any one teach or believe aright. And it hurts him beyond measure to suffer his lies and abominations, that have been honored under the most specious pretexts of the divine name, to be exposed, and to be disgraced himself, and, besides, be driven out of the heart, and suffer such a breach to be made in his kingdom. Therefore he chafes and rages as a fierce enemy with all his power and might, and marshals all his subjects, and, in addition, enlists the world and our own flesh as his allies. 63] For our flesh is in itself indolent and inclined to evil, even though we have accepted and believe the Word of God. The world, however, is perverse and wicked; this he incites against us, fans and stirs the fire, that he may hinder and drive us back, cause us to fall, and again bring us under his power. 64] Such is all his will,

mind, and thought, for which he strives day and night, and never rests a moment, employing all arts, wiles, ways, and means whichever he can invent.

65] If we would be Christians, therefore, we must surely expect and reckon upon having the devil with all his angels and the world as our enemies who will bring every possible misfortune and grief upon us. For where the Word of God is preached, accepted, or believed, and produces fruit, there the holy cross cannot be wanting. And let no one think that he shall have peace; but he must risk whatever he has upon earth—possessions, honor, house and estate, wife and children, body and life. 66] Now, this hurts our flesh and the old Adam; for the test is to be steadfast and to suffer with patience in whatever way we are assailed, and to let go whatever is taken from us.

67] Hence there is just as great need, as in all the others, that we pray without ceasing: "Dear Father, Thy will be done, not the will of the devil and of our enemies, nor of anything that would persecute and suppress Thy holy Word or hinder Thy kingdom; and grant that we may bear with patience and overcome whatever is to be endured on that account, lest our poor flesh yield or fall away from weakness or sluggishness."

68] Behold, thus we have in these three petitions, in the simplest manner, the need which relates to God Himself, yet all for our sakes. For whatever we pray concerns only us, namely, as we have said, that what must be done anyway without us, may also be done in us. For as His name must be hallowed and His kingdom come without our prayer, so also His will must be done and succeed, although the devil with all his adherents raise a great tumult, are angry and rage against it, and undertake to exterminate the Gospel utterly. But for our own sakes we must pray that even against their fury His will be done without hindrance also among us, that they may not be able to accomplish anything and we remain firm against all violence and persecution, and submit to such will of God.

69] Such prayer, then, is to be our protection and defense now, is to repel and put down all that the devil, Pope, bishops, tyrants, and heretics can do against our Gospel. Let them all rage and attempt their utmost, and deliberate and resolve how they may suppress and exterminate us, that their will and counsel may prevail: over and against this one or two Christians with this petition alone shall be our wall against which they shall run and dash themselves to pieces. 70] This consolation and confidence we have, that the will and purpose of the devil and of all our enemies shall and must fail and come to naught, however proud, secure, and powerful they know themselves to be. For if their will were not broken and hindered, the kingdom of God could not abide on earth nor His name be hallowed.

## The Fourth Petition.

71] Give us this day our daily bread.

72] Here, now, we consider the poor bread basket, the necessaries of our body and of the temporal life. It is a brief and simple word, but it has a very wide scope. For when you mention and pray for daily bread, you pray for everything that is necessary in order to have and enjoy daily bread and, on the other hand, against everything which interferes with it. Therefore you must open wide and extend your thoughts not only to the oven or the flour-bin, but to the distant field and the entire land, which bears and brings to us daily bread and every sort of sustenance. For if God did not cause it to grow, and bless and preserve it in the field, we could never take bread from the oven or have any to set upon the table.

73] To comprise it briefly, this petition includes everything that belongs to our entire life in the world, because on that account alone do we need daily bread. Now for our life it is not only necessary that our body have food and covering and other necessaries, but also that we spend our days in peace and quiet among the people with whom we live and have intercourse in daily business and conversation and all sorts of doings, in short, whatever pertains both to the domestic and to the neighborly or civil relation and government. For where these two things are hindered [intercepted and disturbed] that they do not prosper as they ought, the necessaries of life also are impeded, so that ultimately life cannot be maintained. 74] And there is, indeed, the greatest need to pray for temporal authority and government, as that by which most of all God preserves to us our daily bread and all the comforts of this life. For though we have received of God all good things in abundance, we are not able to retain any of them or use them in security and happiness, if He did not give us a permanent and peaceful government. For where there are dissension, strife, and war, there the daily bread is already taken away, or at least checked.

75] Therefore it would be very proper to place in the coat-of-arms of every pious prince a loaf of bread instead of a lion, or a wreath of rue, or to stamp it upon the coin, to remind both them and their subjects that by their office we have protection and peace, and that without them we could not eat and retain our daily bread. Therefore they are also worthy of all honor, that we give to them for their office what we ought and can, as to those through whom we enjoy in peace and quietness what we have, because otherwise we would not keep a farthing; and that, in addition, we also pray for them that through them God may bestow on us the more blessing and good.

76] Let this be a very brief explanation and sketch, showing how far this petition extends through all conditions on earth. Of this any one might indeed make a long prayer, and with many words enumerate all the things that are included therein, as that we pray God to give us food and drink, clothing, house, and home, and health of body; also that He cause the grain and fruits of the field to grow and mature well; furthermore, that He help us at home towards good housekeeping, that He give and preserve to us a godly wife, children, and servants, that He cause our work, trade, or whatever we are engaged in to prosper and succeed, favor us with faithful neighbors and good friends, etc. 77] Likewise, that He give to emperors, kings, and all estates, and especially to the rulers of our country and to all counselors, magistrates, and officers, wisdom, strength, and success that they may govern well and vanquish the Turks and all enemies; to subjects and the common people, obedience, peace, and harmony in their life with one another; 78] and on the other hand, that He would preserve us from all sorts of calamity to body and livelihood, as lightning, hail, fire, flood, poison, pestilence, cattle-plague, war and bloodshed, famine, destructive beasts, wicked men, etc. 79] All this it is well to impress upon the simple, namely, that these things come from God, and must be prayed for by us.

80] But this petition is especially directed also against our chief enemy, the devil. For all his thought and desire is to deprive us of all that we have from God, or to hinder it; and he is not satisfied to obstruct and destroy spiritual government in leading souls astray by his lies and bringing them under his power, but he also prevents and hinders the stability of all government and honorable, peaceable relations on earth. There he causes so much contention, murder, sedition, and war, also lightning and hail to destroy grain and cattle, to poison the air, etc. 81] In short, he is sorry that any one has a morsel of bread from God and eats it in peace; and if it were in his power, and our prayer (next to God) did not prevent him, we would not keep a straw in the field, a farthing in the house, yea, not even our life for an hour, especially those who have the Word of God and would like to be Christians.

82] Behold, thus God wishes to indicate to us how He cares for us in all our need, and faithfully provides also for our temporal support. 83] And although He abundantly grants and preserves these things even to the wicked and knaves, yet He wishes that we pray for them, in order that we may recognize that we receive them from His hand, and may feel His paternal goodness toward us therein. For when He withdraws His hand, nothing can prosper nor be maintained in the end, as, indeed, we daily see and experience. 84] How much trouble there is now in the world only on account of bad coin, yea, on account of daily oppression and raising of prices in common trade, bargaining and labor on the part of those who wantonly

oppress the poor and deprive them of their daily bread! This we must suffer indeed; but let them take care that they do not lose the common intercession, and beware lest this petition in the Lord's Prayer be against them.

The Fifth Petition.

85] And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

86] This part now relates to our poor miserable life, which, although we have and believe the Word of God, and do and submit to His will, and are supported by His gifts and blessings, is nevertheless not without sin. For we still stumble daily and transgress because we live in the world among men who do us much harm and give us cause for impatience, anger, revenge, etc. 87] Besides, we have Satan at our back, who sets upon us on every side, and fights (as we have heard) against all the foregoing petitions, so that it is not possible always to stand firm in such a persistent conflict.

88] Therefore there is here again great need to call upon God and to pray: Dear Father, forgive us our trespasses. Not as though He did not forgive sin without and even before our prayer (for He has given us the Gospel, in which is pure forgiveness before we prayed or ever thought about it). But this is to the intent that we may recognize and accept such forgiveness. 89] For since the flesh in which we daily live is of such a nature that it neither trusts nor believes God, and is ever active in evil lusts and devices, so that we sin daily in word and deed, by commission and omission, by which the conscience is thrown into unrest, so that it is afraid of the wrath and displeasure of God, and thus loses the comfort and confidence derived from the Gospel; therefore it is ceaselessly necessary that we run hither and obtain consolation to comfort the conscience again.

90] But this should serve God's purpose of breaking our pride and keeping us humble. For in case any one should boast of his godliness and despise others, God has reserved this prerogative to Himself, that the person is to consider himself and place this prayer before his eyes, and he will find that he is no better than others, and that in the presence of God all must lower their plumes, and be glad that they can attain forgiveness. 91] And let no one think that as long as we live here he can reach such a position that he will not need such forgiveness. In short, if God does not forgive without ceasing, we are lost.

92] It is therefore the intent of this petition that God would not regard our sins and hold up to us what we daily deserve, but would deal graciously with

us, and forgive, as He has promised, and thus grant us a joyful and confident conscience to stand before Him in prayer. For where the heart is not in right relation towards God, nor can take such confidence, it will nevermore venture to pray. But such a confident and joyful heart can spring from nothing else than the [certain] knowledge of the forgiveness of sin.

93] But there is here attached a necessary, yet consolatory addition: As we forgive. He has promised that we shall be sure that everything is forgiven and pardoned, yet in the manner that we also forgive our neighbor. 94] For just as we daily sin much against God, and yet He forgives everything through grace, so we, too, must ever forgive our neighbor who does us injury, violence, and wrong, shows malice toward us, etc. 95] If, therefore, you do not forgive, then do not think that God forgives you; but if you forgive, you have this consolation and assurance, that you are forgiven in heaven, not on account of your forgiving, for God forgives freely and without condition, out of pure grace, because He has so promised, as the Gospel teaches, but in order that He may set this up for our confirmation and assurance for a sign alongside of the promise which accords with this prayer, Luke 6:37: Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Therefore Christ also repeats it soon after the Lord's Prayer, and says, Matt. 6:14: For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, etc.

97] This sign is therefore attached to this petition, that, when we pray, we remember the promise and reflect thus: Dear Father, for this reason I come and pray Thee to forgive me, not that I can make satisfaction, or can merit anything by my works, but because Thou hast promised and attached the seal thereto that I should be as sure as though I had absolution pronounced by Thyself. 98] For as much as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, appointed as external signs, effect, so much also this sign can effect to confirm our consciences and cause them to rejoice. And it is especially given for this purpose, that we might use and practise it every hour, as a thing that we have with us at all times.

The Sixth Petition.

99] And lead us not into temptation.

100] We have now heard enough what toil and labor is required to retain all that for which we pray, and to persevere therein, which, however, is not achieved without infirmities and stumbling. Besides, although we have received forgiveness and a good conscience and are entirely acquitted, yet is our life of such a nature that one stands to-day and to-morrow falls. Therefore, even though we be godly now and stand before God with a good

conscience, we must pray again that He would not suffer us to relapse and yield to trials and temptations.

101] Temptation, however, or (as our Saxons in olden times used to call it) *Bekoerunge*, is of three kinds, namely, of the flesh, of the world, and of the devil. 102] For in the flesh we dwell and carry the old Adam about our neck, who exerts himself and incites us daily to in chastity, laziness, gluttony and drunkenness, avarice and deception, to defraud our neighbor and to overcharge him, and, in short, to all manner of evil lusts which cleave to us by nature, and to which we are incited by the society, example and what we hear and see of other people, which often wound and inflame even an innocent heart.

103] Next comes the world, which offends us in word and deed, and impels us to anger, and impatience. In short, there is nothing but hatred and envy, enmity, violence and wrong, unfaithfulness, vengeance, cursing, raillery, slander, pride and haughtiness, with superfluous finery, honor, fame, and power, where no one is willing to be the least, but every one desires to sit at the head and to be seen before all.

104] Then comes the devil, inciting and provoking in all directions, but especially agitating matters that concern the conscience and spiritual affairs, namely, to induce us to despise and disregard both the Word and works of God, to tear us away from faith, hope, and love, and bring us into misbelief, false security, and obduracy, or, on the other hand, to despair, denial of God, blasphemy, and innumerable other shocking things. These are indeed snares and nets, yea, real fiery darts which are shot most venomously into the heart, not by flesh and blood, but by the devil.

105] Great and grievous, indeed, are these dangers and temptations which every Christian must bear, even though each one were alone by himself, so that every hour that we are in this vile life where we are attacked on all sides, chased and hunted down, we are moved to cry out and to pray that God would not suffer us to become weary and faint and to relapse into sin, shame, and unbelief. For otherwise it is impossible to overcome even the least temptation.

106] This, then, is leading us not into temptation, to wit, when He gives us power and strength to resist, the temptation, however, not being taken away or removed. For while we live in the flesh and have the devil about us, no one can escape temptation and allurements; and it cannot be otherwise than that we must endure trials, yea, be engulfed in them; but we pray for this, that we may not fall and be drowned in them.

107] To feel temptation is therefore a far different thing from consenting or yielding to it. We must all feel it, although not all in the same manner, but some in a greater degree and more severely than others; as, the young suffer especially from the flesh, afterwards, they that attain to middle life and old age, from the world, but others who are occupied with spiritual matters, that is, strong Christians, from the devil. 108] But such feeling, as long as it is against our will and we would rather be rid of it, can harm no one. For if we did not feel it, it could not be called a temptation. But to consent thereto is when we give it the reins and do not resist or pray against it.

109] Therefore we Christians must be armed and daily expect to be incessantly attacked, in order that no one may go on in security and heedlessly, as though the devil were far from us, but at all times expect and parry his blows. For though I am now chaste, patient, kind, and in firm faith, the devil will this very hour send such an arrow into my heart that I can scarcely stand. For he is an enemy that never desists nor becomes tired, so that when one temptation ceases, there always arise others and fresh ones.

110] Accordingly, there is no help or comfort except to run hither and to take hold of the Lord's Prayer, and thus speak to God from the heart: Dear Father, Thou hast bidden me pray; let me not relapse because of temptations. Then you will see that they must desist, and finally acknowledge themselves conquered. 111] Else if you venture to help yourself by your own thoughts and counsel, you will only make the matter worse and give the devil more space. For he has a serpent's head, which if it gain an opening into which he can slip, the whole body will follow without check. But prayer can prevent him and drive him back.

The Seventh Petition.

112] But deliver us from evil. Amen.

113] In the Greek text this petition reads thus: Deliver or preserve us from the Evil One, or the Malicious One; and it looks as if He were speaking of the devil, as though He would comprehend everything in one, so that the entire substance of all our prayer is directed against our chief enemy. For it is he who hinders among us everything that we pray for: the name or honor of God, God's kingdom and will, our daily bread, a cheerful good conscience, etc.

114] Therefore we finally sum it all up and say: Dear Father, pray, help that we be rid of all these calamities. 115] But there is nevertheless also included whatever evil may happen to us under the devil's kingdom-poverty, shame,

death, and, in short, all the agonizing misery and heartache of which there is such an unnumbered multitude on the earth. For since the devil is not only a liar, but also a murderer, he constantly seeks our life, and wreaks his anger whenever he can afflict our bodies with misfortune and harm. Hence it comes that he often breaks men's necks or drives them to insanity, drowns some, and incites many to commit suicide, and to many other terrible calamities. 116] Therefore there is nothing for us to do upon earth but to pray against this arch-enemy without ceasing. For unless God preserved us, we would not be safe from him even for an hour.

117] Hence you see again how God wishes us to pray to Him also for all the things which affect our bodily interests, so that we seek and expect help nowhere else except in Him. 118] But this matter He has put last; for if we are to be preserved and delivered from all evil, the name of God must first be hallowed in us, His kingdom must be with us, and His will be done. After that He will finally preserve us from sin and shame, and, besides, from everything that may hurt or injure us.

119] Thus God has briefly placed before us all the distress which may ever come upon us, so that we might have no excuse whatever for not praying. But all depends upon this, that we learn also to say Amen, that is, that we do not doubt that our prayer is surely heard, and [what we pray] shall be done. For this is nothing else than the word of undoubting faith, which does not pray at a venture, but knows that God does not lie to him, since He has promised to grant it. 120] Therefore, where there is no such faith, there cannot be true prayer either.

121] It is, therefore, a pernicious delusion of those who pray in such a manner that they dare not from the heart say yea and positively conclude that God hears them, but remain in doubt and say, How should I be so bold as to boast that God hears my prayer? For I am but a poor sinner, etc.

122] The reason for this is, they regard not the promise of God, but their own work and worthiness, whereby they despise God and reproach Him with lying, and therefore they receive nothing. 123] As St. James 1:6 says: But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. 124] Behold, such importance God attaches to the fact that we are sure we do not pray in vain, and that we do not in any way despise our prayer.

## Holy Baptism

1] We have now finished the three chief parts of the common Christian doctrine. Besides these we have yet to speak of our two Sacraments instituted by Christ, of which also every Christian ought to have at least an ordinary, brief instruction, because without them there can be no Christian; although, alas! hitherto no instruction concerning them has been given. 2] But, in the first place, we take up Baptism, by which we are first received into the Christian Church. However, in order that it may be readily understood, we will treat of it in an orderly manner, and keep only to that which it is necessary for us to know. For how it is to be maintained and defended against heretics and sects we will commend to the learned.

3] In the first place, we must above all things know well the words upon which Baptism is founded, and to which everything refers that is to be said on the subject, namely, where the Lord Christ speaks in Matthew 28:19:

4] Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Likewise in St. Mark 16:16: 5] He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

6] In these words you must note, in the first place, that here stand God's commandment and institution, lest we doubt that Baptism is divine, not devised nor invented by men. For as truly as I can say, No man has spun the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer out of his head, but they are revealed and given by God Himself, so also I can boast that Baptism is no human trifle, but instituted by God Himself, moreover, that it is most solemnly and strictly commanded that we must be baptized or we cannot be saved, lest any one regard it as a trifling matter, like putting on a new red coat. 7] For it is of the greatest importance that we esteem Baptism 8] excellent, glorious, and exalted, for which we contend and fight chiefly, because the world is now so full of sects clamoring that Baptism is an external thing, and that external things are of no benefit. But let it be ever so much an external thing, here stand God's Word and command which institute, establish, and confirm Baptism. But what God institutes and commands cannot be a vain, but must be a most precious thing, though in appearance it were of less value than a straw. 9] If hitherto people could consider it a great thing when the Pope with his letters and bulls dispensed indulgences and confirmed altars and churches, solely because of the letters and seals, we ought to esteem Baptism much more highly and more precious, because God has commanded it, and, besides, it is performed in

His name. For these are the words, Go ye, baptize; however, not in your name, but in the name of God.

10] For to be baptized in the name of God is to be baptized not by men, but by God Himself. Therefore, although it is performed by human hands, it is nevertheless truly God's own work. From this fact every one may himself readily infer that it is a far higher work than any work performed by a man or a saint. For what work greater than the work of God can we do?

11] But here the devil is busy to delude us with false appearances, and lead us away from the work of God to our own works. For there is a much more splendid appearance when a Carthusian does many great and difficult works; and we all think much more of that which we do and merit ourselves. 12] But the Scriptures teach thus: Even though we collect in one mass the works of all the monks, however splendidly they may shine, they would not be as noble and good as if God should pick up a straw. Why? Because the person is nobler and better. Here, then, we must not estimate the person according to the works, but the works according to the person, from whom they must derive their nobility. 13] But insane reason will not regard this, and because Baptism does not shine like the works which we do, it is to be esteemed as nothing.

14] From this now learn a proper understanding of the subject, and how to answer the question what Baptism is, namely thus, that it is not mere ordinary water, but water comprehended in God's Word and command, and sanctified thereby, so that it is nothing else than a divine water; not that the water in itself is nobler than other water, but that God's Word and command are added.

15] Therefore it is pure wickedness and blasphemy of the devil that now our new spirits, to mock at Baptism, omit from it God's Word and institution, and look upon it in no other way than as water which is taken from the well, and then blather and say: How is a handful of water to help the soul? 16] Aye, my friend, who does not know that water is water if tearing things asunder is what we are after? But how dare you thus interfere with God's order, and tear away the most precious treasure with which God has connected and enclosed it, and which He will not have separated? For the kernel in the water is God's Word or command and the name of God, which is a treasure greater and nobler than heaven and earth.

17] Comprehend the difference, then, that Baptism is quite another thing than all other water; not on account of the natural quality but because something more noble is here added; for God Himself stakes His honor, His power and might on it. Therefore it is not only natural water, but a divine,

heavenly, holy, and blessed water, and in whatever other terms we can praise it, -all on account of the Word, which is a heavenly, holy Word, that no one can sufficiently extol, for it has, and is able to do, all that God is and can do [since it has all the virtue and power of God comprised in it]. 18] Hence also it derives its essence as a Sacrament, as St. Augustine also taught: *Accedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*. That is, when the Word is joined to the element or natural substance, it becomes a Sacrament, that is, a holy and divine matter and sign.

19] Therefore we always teach that the Sacraments and all external things which God ordains and institutes should not be regarded according to the coarse, external mask, as we regard the shell of a nut, but as the Word of God is included therein. 20] For thus we also speak of the parental estate and of civil government. If we propose to regard them in as far as they have noses, eyes, skin, and hair, flesh and bones, they look like Turks and heathen, and some one might start up and say: Why should I esteem them more than others? But because the commandment is added: Honor thy father and thy mother, I behold a different man, adorned and clothed with the majesty and glory of God. The commandment (I say) is the chain of gold about his neck, yea, the crown upon his head, which shows to me how and why one must honor this flesh and blood.

21] Thus, and much more even, you must honor Baptism and esteem it glorious on account of the Word, since He Himself has honored it both by words and deeds; moreover, confirmed it with miracles from heaven. For do you think it was a jest that, when Christ was baptized, the heavens were opened and the Holy Ghost descended visibly, and everything was divine glory and majesty?

22] Therefore I exhort again that these two, the water and the Word, by no means be separated from one another and parted. For if the Word is separated from it, the water is the same as that with which the servant cooks, and may indeed be called a bath-keeper's baptism. But when it is added, as God has ordained, it is a Sacrament, and is called Christ-baptism. Let this be the first part, regarding the essence and dignity of the holy Sacrament.

23] In the second place, since we know now what Baptism is, and how it is to be regarded, we must also learn why and for what purpose it is instituted; that is, what it profits, gives, and works. And this also we cannot discern better than from the words of Christ above quoted: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. 24] Therefore state it most simply thus, that the power, work, profit, fruit, and end of Baptism is this, namely, to save. For no one is baptized in order that he may become a prince, but, as the words

declare, that he be saved. 25] But to be saved, we know, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil, and to enter into the kingdom of Christ, and to live with Him forever.

26] Here you see again how highly and precious we should esteem Baptism, because in it we obtain such an unspeakable treasure, which also indicates sufficiently that it cannot be ordinary mere water. For mere water could not do such a thing, but the Word does it, and (as said above) the fact that the name of God is comprehended therein. 27] But where the name of God is, there must be also life and salvation, that it may indeed be called a divine, blessed, fruitful, and gracious water; for by the Word such power is imparted to Baptism that it is a laver of regeneration, as St. Paul also calls it, Titus 3:5.

28] But as our would-be wise, new spirits assert that faith alone saves, and that works and external things avail nothing, we answer: It is true, indeed, that nothing in us is of any avail but faith, as we shall hear still further. 29] But these blind guides are unwilling to see this, namely, that faith must have something which it believes, that is, of which it takes hold, and upon which it stands and rests. Thus faith clings to the water, and believes that it is Baptism, in which there is pure salvation and life; not through the water (as we have sufficiently stated), but through the fact that it is embodied in the Word and institution of God, and the name of God inheres in it. Now, if I believe this, what else is it than believing in God as in Him who has given and planted His Word into this ordinance, and proposes to us this external thing wherein we may apprehend such a treasure?

30] Now, they are so mad as to separate faith, and that to which faith clings and is bound, though it be something external. Yea, it shall and must be something external, that it may be apprehended by the senses, and understood and thereby be brought into the heart, as indeed the entire Gospel is an external, verbal preaching. In short, what God does and works in us He proposes to work through such external ordinances. Wherever, therefore, He speaks, yea, in whichever direction or by whatever means He speaks, thither faith must look, and to that it must hold. 31] Now here we have the words: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. To what else do they refer than to Baptism, that is, to the water comprehended in God's ordinance? Hence it follows that whoever rejects Baptism rejects the Word of God, faith, and Christ, who directs us thither and binds us to Baptism.

32] In the third place, since we have learned the great benefit and power of Baptism, let us see further who is the person that receives what Baptism gives and profits. 33] This is again most beautifully and clearly expressed in

the words: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. That is, faith alone makes the person worthy to receive profitably the saving, divine water. For, since these blessings are here presented and promised in the words in and with the water, they cannot be received in any other way than by believing them with the heart. 34] Without faith it profits nothing, notwithstanding it is in itself a divine superabundant treasure. Therefore this single word (He that believeth) effects this much that it excludes and repels all works which we can do, in the opinion that we obtain and merit salvation by them. For it is determined that whatever is not faith avails nothing nor receives anything.

35] But if they say, as they are accustomed: Still Baptism is itself a work, and you say works are of no avail for salvation; what, then, becomes of faith? Answer: Yes, our works, indeed, avail nothing for salvation; Baptism, however, is not our work, but God's (for, as was stated, you must put Christ-baptism far away from a bath-keeper's baptism). God's works, however, are saving and necessary for salvation, and do not exclude, but demand, faith; for without faith they could not be apprehended. 36] For by suffering the water to be poured upon you, you have not yet received Baptism in such a manner that it benefits you anything; but it becomes beneficial to you if you have yourself baptized with the thought that this is according to God's command and ordinance, and besides in God's name, in order that you may receive in the water the promised salvation. Now, this the fist cannot do, nor the body; but the heart must believe it.

37] Thus you see plainly that there is here no work done by us, but a treasure which He gives us, and which faith apprehends; just as the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross is not a work, but a treasure comprehended in the Word, and offered to us and received by faith. Therefore they do us violence by exclaiming against us as though we preach against faith; while we alone insist upon it as being of such necessity that without it nothing can be received nor enjoyed.

38] Thus we have these three parts which it is necessary to know concerning this Sacrament, especially that the ordinance of God is to be held in all honor, which alone would be sufficient, though it be an entirely external thing, like the commandment, Honor thy father and thy mother, which refers to bodily flesh and blood. Therein we regard not the flesh and blood, but the commandment of God in which they are comprehended, and on account of which the flesh is called father and mother; so also, though we had no more than these words, Go ye and baptize, etc., it would be necessary for us to accept and do it as the ordinance of God. 39] Now there is here not only God's commandment and injunction, but also the promise, on account of which it is still far more glorious than whatever else God has commanded

and ordained, and is, in short, so full of consolation and grace that heaven and earth cannot comprehend it. 40] But it requires skill to believe this, for the treasure is not wanting, but this is wanting that men apprehend it and hold it firmly.

41] Therefore every Christian has enough in Baptism to learn and to practise all his life; for he has always enough to do to believe firmly what it promises and brings: victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, the grace of God, the entire Christ, and the Holy Ghost with His gifts. 42] In short, it is so transcendent that if timid nature could realize it, it might well doubt whether it could be true. 43] For consider, if there were somewhere a physician who understood the art of saving men from dying, or, even though they died, of restoring them speedily to life, so that they would thereafter live forever, how the world would pour in money like snow and rain, so that because of the throng of the rich no one could find access! But here in Baptism there is brought free to every one's door such a treasure and medicine as utterly destroys death and preserves all men alive.

44] Thus we must regard Baptism and make it profitable to ourselves, that when our sins and conscience oppress us, we strengthen ourselves and take comfort and say: Nevertheless I am baptized; but if I am baptized, it is promised me that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in soul and body. 45] For that is the reason why these two things are done in Baptism, namely, that the body, which can apprehend nothing but the water, is sprinkled, and, in addition, the word is spoken for the soul to apprehend. 46] Now, since both, the water and the Word, are one Baptism, therefore body and soul must be saved and live forever: the soul through the Word which it believes, but the body because it is united with the soul and also apprehends Baptism as it is able to apprehend it. We have, therefore, no greater jewel in body and soul, for by it we are made holy and are saved, which no other kind of life, no work upon earth, can attain.

Let this suffice respecting the nature, blessing, and use of Baptism, for it answers the present purpose.

Of Infant Baptism.

47] Here a question occurs by which the devil, through his sects, confuses the world, namely, Of Infant Baptism, whether children also believe, and are justly baptized. Concerning this we say briefly: 48] Let the simple dismiss this question from their minds, and refer it to the learned. But if you wish to answer, 49] then answer thus:-

That the Baptism of infants is pleasing to Christ is sufficiently proved from His own work, namely, that God sanctifies many of them who have been thus baptized, and has given them the Holy Ghost; and that there are yet many even to-day in whom we perceive that they have the Holy Ghost both because of their doctrine and life; as it is also given to us by the grace of God that we can explain the Scriptures and come to the knowledge of Christ, which is impossible without the Holy Ghost. 50] But if God did not accept the baptism of infants, He would not give the Holy Ghost nor any of His gifts to any of them; in short, during this long time unto this day no man upon earth could have been a Christian. Now, since God confirms Baptism by the gifts of His Holy Ghost, as is plainly perceptible in some of the church fathers, as St. Bernard, Gerson, John Hus, and others, who were baptized in infancy, and since the holy Christian Church cannot perish until the end of the world, they must acknowledge that such infant baptism is pleasing to God. For He can never be opposed to Himself, or support falsehood and wickedness, or for its promotion impart His grace and Spirit. 51] This is indeed the best and strongest proof for the simple-minded and unlearned. For they shall not take from us or overthrow this article: I believe a holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.

52] Further, we say that we are not so much concerned to know whether the person baptized believes or not; for on that account Baptism does not become invalid; but everything depends upon the Word and command of God. 53] This now is perhaps somewhat acute, but it rests entirely upon what I have said, that Baptism is nothing else than water and the Word of God in and with each other, that is, when the Word is added to the water, Baptism is valid, even though faith be wanting. For my faith does not make Baptism, but receives it. Now, Baptism does not become invalid even though it be wrongly received or employed; since it is not bound (as stated) to our faith, but to the Word.

54] For even though a Jew should to-day come dishonestly and with evil purpose, and we should baptize him in all good faith, we must say that his baptism is nevertheless genuine. For here is the water together with the Word of God, even though he does not receive it as he should, just as those who unworthily go to the Sacrament receive the true Sacrament, even though they do not believe.

55] Thus you see that the objection of the sectarians is vain. For (as we have said) even though infants did not believe, which, however, is not the case, yet their baptism as now shown would be valid, and no one should rebaptize them; just as nothing is detracted from the Sacrament though some one approach it with evil purpose, and he could not be allowed on account of his abuse to take it a second time the selfsame hour, as though

he had not received the true Sacrament at first; for that would mean to blaspheme and profane the Sacrament in the worst manner. How dare we think that God's Word and ordinance should be wrong and invalid because we make a wrong use of it?

56] Therefore I say, if you did not believe then believe now and say thus: The baptism indeed was right, but I, alas! did not receive it aright. For I myself also, and all who are baptized, must speak thus before God: I come hither in my faith and in that of others, yet I cannot rest in this, that I believe, and that many people pray for me; but in this I rest, that it is Thy Word and command. Just as I go to the Sacrament trusting not in my faith, but in the Word of Christ; whether I am strong or weak, that I commit to God. But this I know, that He bids me go, eat and drink, etc., and gives me His body and blood; that will not deceive me or prove false to me.

57] Thus we do also in infant baptism. We bring the child in the conviction and hope that it believes, and we pray that God may grant it faith; but we do not baptize it upon that, but solely upon the command of God. Why so? Because we know that God does not lie. I and my neighbor and, in short, all men, may err and deceive, but the Word of God cannot err.

58] Therefore they are presumptuous, clumsy minds that draw such inferences and conclusions as these: Where there is not the true faith, there also can be no true Baptism. Just as if I would infer: If I do not believe, then Christ is nothing; or thus: If I am not obedient, then father, mother, and government are nothing. Is that a correct conclusion, that whenever any one does not do what he ought, the thing in itself shall be nothing and of no value? 59] My dear, just invert the argument and rather draw this inference: For this very reason Baptism is something and is right, because it has been wrongly received. For if it were not right and true in itself, it could not be misused nor sinned against. The saying is: *Abusus non tollit, sed confirmat substantiam*, Abuse does not destroy the essence, but confirms it. For gold is not the less gold though a harlot wear it in sin and shame.

60] Therefore let it be decided that Baptism always remains true, retains its full essence, even though a single person should be baptized, and he, in addition, should not believe truly. For God's ordinance and Word cannot be made variable or be altered by men. 61] But these people, the fanatics, are so blinded that they do not see the Word and command of God, and regard Baptism and the magistrates only as they regard water in the brook or in pots, or as any other man; and because they do not see faith nor obedience, they conclude that they are to be regarded as invalid. 62] Here lurks a concealed seditious devil, who would like to tear the crown from the head of authority and then trample it under foot, and, in addition, pervert and bring

to naught all the works and ordinances of God. 63] Therefore we must be watchful and well armed, and not allow ourselves to be directed nor turned away from the Word, in order that we may not regard Baptism as a mere empty sign, as the fanatics dream.

64] Lastly, we must also know what Baptism signifies, and why God has ordained just such external sign and ceremony for the Sacrament by which we are first received into the Christian Church. 65] But the act or ceremony is this, that we are sunk under the water, which passes over us, and afterwards are drawn out again. These two parts, to be sunk under the water and drawn out again, signify the power and operation of Baptism, which is nothing else than putting to death the old Adam, and after that the resurrection of the new man, both of which must take place in us all our lives, so that a truly Christian life is nothing else than a daily baptism, once begun and ever to be continued. For this must be practised without ceasing, that we ever keep purging away whatever is of the old Adam, and that that which belongs to the new man come forth. 66] But what is the old man? It is that which is born in us from Adam, angry, hateful, envious, unchaste, stingy, lazy, haughty, yea, unbelieving, infected with all vices, and having by nature nothing good in it. 67] Now, when we are come into the kingdom of Christ, these things must daily decrease, that the longer we live we become more gentle, more patient, more meek, and ever withdraw more and more from unbelief, avarice, hatred, envy, haughtiness.

68] This is the true use of Baptism among Christians, as signified by baptizing with water. Where this, therefore, is not practised, but the old man is left unbridled, so as to continually become stronger, that is not using Baptism, but striving against Baptism. 69] For those who are without Christ cannot but daily become worse, according to the proverb which expresses the truth, "Worse and worse-the longer, the worse." 70] If a year ago one was proud and avaricious, then he is much prouder and more avaricious this year, so that the vice grows and increases with him from his youth up. A young child has no special vice; but when it grows up, it becomes unchaste and impure, and when it reaches maturity, real vices begin to prevail the longer, the more.

71] Therefore the old man goes unrestrained in his nature if he is not checked and suppressed by the power of Baptism. On the other hand, where men have become Christians, he daily decreases until he finally perishes. That is truly to be buried in Baptism, and daily to come forth again. 72] Therefore the external sign is appointed not only for a powerful effect, but also for a signification. 73] Where, therefore, faith flourishes with its fruits, there it has no empty signification, but the work [of mortifying the

flesh] accompanies it; but where faith is wanting, it remains a mere unfruitful sign.

74] And here you see that Baptism, both in its power and signification, comprehends also the third Sacrament, which has been called repentance, 75] as it is really nothing else than Baptism. For what else is repentance but an earnest attack upon the old man [that his lusts be restrained] and entering upon a new life? Therefore, if you live in repentance, you walk in Baptism, which not only signifies such a new life, but also produces, begins, and exercises it. 76] For therein are given grace, the Spirit, and power to suppress the old man, so that the new man may come forth and become strong.

77] Therefore our Baptism abides forever; and even though some one should fall from it and sin, nevertheless we always have access thereto, that we may again subdue the old man. 78] But we need not again be sprinkled with water; for though we were put under the water a hundred times, it would nevertheless be only one Baptism, although the operation and signification continue and remain. 79] Repentance, therefore, is nothing else than a return and approach to Baptism, that we repeat and practise what we began before, but abandoned.

80] This I say lest we fall into the opinion in which we were for a long time, imagining that our Baptism is something past, which we can no longer use after we have fallen again into sin. The reason is, that it is regarded only according to the external act once performed [and completed]. 81] And this arose from the fact that St. Jerome wrote that *repentance is the second plank by which we must swim forth and cross over after the ship is broken, on which we step and are carried across when we come into the Christian Church.* 82] Thereby the use of Baptism has been abolished so that it can profit us no longer. Therefore the statement is not correct, or at any rate not rightly understood. For the ship never breaks, because (as we have said) it is the ordinance of God, and not a work of ours; but it happens, indeed, that we slip and fall out of the ship. Yet if any one fall out, let him see to it that he swim up and cling to it till he again come into it and live in it, as he had formerly begun.

83] Thus it appears what a great, excellent thing Baptism is, which delivers us from the jaws of the devil and makes us God's own, suppresses and takes away sin, and then daily strengthens the new man; and is and remains ever efficacious until we pass from this estate of misery to eternal glory.

84] For this reason let every one esteem his Baptism as a daily dress in which he is to walk constantly, that he may ever be found in the faith and its

fruits, that he suppress the old man and grow up in the new. 85] For if we would be Christians, we must practise the work whereby we are Christians. 86] But if any one fall away from it, let him again come into it. For just as Christ, the Mercy-seat, does not recede from us or forbid us to come to Him again, even though we sin, so all His treasure and gifts also remain. If, therefore, we have once in Baptism obtained forgiveness of sin, it will remain every day, as long as we live, that is, as long as we carry the old man about our neck.

### The Sacrament of the Altar

1] In the same manner as we have heard regarding Holy Baptism, we must speak also concerning the other Sacrament, namely, these three points: What is it? What are its benefits? and, Who is to receive it? And all these are established by the words by which Christ has instituted it, 2] and which every one who desires to be a Christian and go to the Sacrament should know. For it is not our intention to admit to it and to administer it to those who know not what they seek, or why they come. The words, however, are these:

3] Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

4] Here also we do not wish to enter into controversy and contend with the traducers and blasphemers of this Sacrament, but to learn first (as we did regarding Baptism) what is of the greatest importance, namely, that the chief point is the Word and ordinance or command of God. For it has not been invented nor introduced by any man, but without any one's counsel and deliberation it has been instituted by Christ. 5] Therefore, just as the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed retain their nature and worth, although you never keep, pray, or believe them, so also does this venerable Sacrament remain undisturbed, so that nothing is detracted or taken from it, even though we employ and dispense it unworthily. 6] What do you think God cares about what we do or believe, so that on that account He should suffer His ordinance to be changed? Why, in all worldly matters

every thing remains as God has created and ordered it, no matter how we employ or use it. 7] This must always be urged, for thereby the prating of nearly all the fanatical spirits can be repelled. For they regard the Sacraments, aside from the Word of God, as something that we do.

8] Now, what is the Sacrament of the Altar?

Answer: It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in and under the bread and wine which we Christians are commanded by the Word of Christ to eat and to drink. 9] And as we have said of Baptism that it is not simple water, so here also we say the Sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread and wine, such as are ordinarily served at the table, but bread and wine comprehended in, and connected with, the Word of God.

10] It is the Word (I say) which makes and distinguishes this Sacrament, so that it is not mere bread and wine, but is, and is called, the body and blood of Christ. For it is said: *Accedat verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum*. If the Word be joined to the element, it becomes a Sacrament. This saying of St. Augustine is so properly and so well put that he has scarcely said anything better. The Word must make a Sacrament of the element, else it remains a mere element. 11] Now, it is not the word or ordinance of a prince or emperor, but of the sublime Majesty, at whose feet all creatures should fall, and affirm it is as He says, and accept it with all reverence, fear, and humility.

12] With this Word you can strengthen your conscience and say: If a hundred thousand devils, together with all fanatics, should rush forward, crying, How can bread and wine be the body and blood of Christ? etc., I know that all spirits and scholars together are not as wise as is the Divine Majesty in His little finger. 13] Now here stands the Word of Christ: *Take, eat; this is My body; Drink ye all of it; this is the new testament in My blood*, etc. Here we abide, and would like to see those who will constitute themselves His masters, and make it different from what He has spoken. It is true, indeed, that if you take away the Word or regard it without the words, you have nothing but mere bread and wine. 14] But if the words remain with them, as they shall and must, then, in virtue of the same, it is truly the body and blood of Christ. For as the lips of Christ say and speak, so it is, as He can never lie or deceive.

15] Hence it is easy to reply to all manner of questions about which men are troubled at the present time, such as this one: Whether even a wicked priest can minister at, and dispense, the Sacrament, and whatever other questions like this there may be. 16] For here we conclude and say: Even though a knave takes or distributes the Sacrament, he receives the true Sacrament,

that is, the true body and blood of Christ, just as truly as he who [receives or] administers it in the most worthy manner. For it is not founded upon the holiness of men, but upon the Word of God. And as no saint upon earth, yea, no angel in heaven, can make bread and wine to be the body and blood of Christ, so also can no one change or alter it, even though it be misused. 17] For the Word by which it became a Sacrament and was instituted does not become false because of the person or his unbelief. For He does not say: If you believe or are worthy, you receive My body and blood, but: *Take, eat and drink; this is My body and blood.* Likewise: *Do this* (namely, what I now do, institute, give, and bid you take). 18] That is as much as to say, No matter whether you are worthy or unworthy, you have here His body and blood by virtue of these words which are added to the bread and wine. 19] Only note and remember this well; for upon these words rest all our foundation, protection, and defense against all errors and deception that have ever come or may yet come.

20] Thus we have briefly the first point which relates to the essence of this Sacrament. Now examine further the efficacy and benefits on account of which really the Sacrament was instituted; which is also its most necessary part, that we may know what we should seek and obtain there. 21] Now this is plain and clear from the words just mentioned: *This is My body and blood, given and shed **for you**, for the remission of sins.* 22] Briefly that is as much as to say: For this reason we go to the Sacrament because there we receive such a treasure by and in which we obtain forgiveness of sins. Why so? Because the words stand here and give us this; for on this account He bids me eat and drink, that it may be my own and may benefit me, as a sure pledge and token, yea, the very same treasure that is appointed for me against my sins, death, and every calamity.

23] On this account it is indeed called a food of souls, which nourishes and strengthens the new man. For by Baptism we are first born anew; but (as we said before) there still remains, besides, the old vicious nature of flesh and blood in man, and there are so many hindrances and temptations of the devil and of the world that we often become weary and faint, and sometimes also stumble.

24] Therefore it is given for a daily pasture and sustenance, that faith may refresh and strengthen itself so as not to fall back in such a battle, but become ever stronger and stronger. 25] For the new life must be so regulated that it continually increase and progress; 26] but it must suffer much opposition. For the devil is such a furious enemy that when he sees that we oppose him and attack the old man, and that he cannot topple us over by force, he prowls and moves about on all sides, tries all devices, and does not desist, until he finally wearies us, so that we either renounce our

faith or yield hands and feet and become listless or impatient. 27] Now to this end the consolation is here given when the heart feels that the burden is becoming too heavy, that it may here obtain new power and refreshment.

28] But here our wise spirits contort themselves with their great art and wisdom, crying out and bawling: How can bread and wine forgive sins or strengthen faith? Although they hear and know that we do not say this of bread and wine, because in itself bread is bread, but of such bread and wine as is the body and blood of Christ, and has the words attached to it. That, we say, is verily the treasure, and nothing else, through which such forgiveness is obtained. 29] Now the only way in which it is conveyed and appropriated to us is in the words (*Given and shed for you*). For herein you have both truths, that it is the body and blood of Christ, and that it is yours as a treasure and gift. 30] Now the body of Christ can never be an unfruitful, vain thing, that effects or profits nothing. Yet, however great is the treasure in itself, it must be comprehended in the Word and administered to us, else we should never be able to know or seek it.

31] Therefore also it is vain talk when they say that the body and blood of Christ are not given and shed for us in the Lord's Supper, hence we could not have forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament. For although the work is accomplished and the forgiveness of sins acquired on the cross, yet it cannot come to us in any other way than through the Word. For what would we otherwise know about it, that such a thing was accomplished or was to be given us if it were not presented by preaching or the oral Word? Whence do they know of it, or how can they apprehend and appropriate to themselves the forgiveness, except they lay hold of and believe the Scriptures and the Gospel? 32] But now the entire Gospel and the article of the Creed: I believe a holy Christian Church, the forgiveness of sin, etc., are by the Word embodied in this Sacrament and presented to us. Why, then, should we allow this treasure to be torn from the Sacrament when they must confess that these are the very words which we hear every where in the Gospel, and they cannot say that these words in the Sacrament are of no use, as little as they dare say that the entire Gospel or Word of God, apart from the Sacrament, is of no use?

33] Thus we have the entire Sacrament, both as to what it is in itself and as to what it brings and profits. Now we must also see who is the person that receives this power and benefit. That is answered briefly, as we said above of Baptism and often elsewhere: Whoever believes it has what the words declare and bring. For they are not spoken or proclaimed to stone and wood, but to those who hear them, to whom He says: 34] Take and eat, etc. And because He offers and promises forgiveness of sin, it cannot be received otherwise than by faith. This faith He Himself demands in the Word when He

says: Given and shed for you. As if He said: For this reason I give it, and bid you eat and drink, that you may claim it as yours and enjoy it. 35] Whoever now accepts these words, and believes that what they declare is true, has it. But whoever does not believe it has nothing, as he allows it to be offered to him in vain, and refuses to enjoy such a saving good. The treasure, indeed, is opened and placed at every one's door, yea, upon his table, but it is necessary that you also claim it, and confidently view it as the words suggest to you 36] This, now, is the entire Christian preparation for receiving this Sacrament worthily. For since this treasure is entirely presented in the words, it cannot be apprehended and appropriated in any other way than with the heart. For such a gift and eternal treasure cannot be seized with the fist. 37] Fasting and prayer, etc., may indeed be an external preparation and discipline for children, that the body may keep and bear itself modestly and reverently towards the body and blood of Christ; yet what is given in and with it the body cannot seize and appropriate. But this is done by the faith of the heart, which discerns this treasure and desires it. 38] This may suffice for what is necessary as a general instruction respecting this Sacrament; for what is further to be said of it belongs to another time.

39] In conclusion, since we have now the true understanding and doctrine of the Sacrament, there is indeed need of some admonition and exhortation, that men may not let so great a treasure which is daily administered and distributed among Christians pass by unheeded, that is, that those who would be Christians make ready to receive this venerable Sacrament often. 40] For we see that men seem weary and lazy with respect to it; and there is a great multitude of such as hear the Gospel, and, because the nonsense of the Pope has been abolished, and we are freed from his laws and coercion, go one, two, three years, or even longer without the Sacrament, as though they were such strong Christians that they have no need of it; 41] and some allow themselves to be prevented and deterred by the pretense that we have taught that no one should approach it except those who feel hunger and thirst, which urge them to it. Some pretend that it is a matter of liberty and not necessary, and that it is sufficient to believe without it; and thus for the most part they go so far that they become quite brutish, and finally despise both the Sacrament and the Word of God.

42] Now, it is true, as we have said, that no one should by any means be coerced or compelled, lest we institute a new murdering of souls. Nevertheless, it must be known that such people as deprive themselves of, and withdraw from, the Sacrament so long a time are not to be considered Christians. For Christ has not instituted it to be treated as a show, but has commanded His Christians to eat and drink it, and thereby remember Him.

43] And, indeed, those who are true Christians and esteem the Sacrament precious and holy will urge and impel themselves unto it. Yet that the simple-minded and the weak who also would like to be Christians be the more incited to consider the cause and need which ought to impel them, we will treat somewhat of this point. 44] For as in other matters pertaining to faith, love, and patience, it is not enough to teach and instruct only, but there is need also of daily exhortation, so here also there is need of continuing to preach that men may not become weary and disgusted, since we know and feel how the devil always opposes this and every Christian exercise, and drives and deters therefrom as much as he can.

45] And we have, in the first place, the clear text in the very words of Christ: Do this in remembrance of Me. These are bidding and commanding words by which all who would be Christians are enjoined to partake of this Sacrament. Therefore, whoever would be a disciple of Christ, with whom He here speaks, must also consider and observe this, not from compulsion, as being forced by men, but in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to please Him. 46] However, if you say: But the words are added, As oft as ye do it; there He compels no one, but leaves it to our free choice, answer: 47] That is true, yet it is not written that we should never do so. Yea, just because He speaks the words, As oft as ye do it, it is nevertheless implied that we should do it often; and it is added for the reason that He wishes to have the Sacrament free, not limited to special times, like the Passover of the Jews, which they were obliged to eat only once a year, and that just upon the fourteenth day of the first full moon in the evening, and which they must not vary a day. As if He would say by these words: I institute a Passover or Supper for you which you shall enjoy not only once a year, just upon this evening, but often, when and where you will, according to every one's opportunity and necessity, bound to no place or appointed time; 48] although the Pope afterwards perverted it, and again made a Jewish feast of it.

49] Thus, you perceive, it is not left free in the sense that we may despise it. For that I call despising it if one allow so long a time to elapse and with nothing to hinder him yet never feels a desire for it. if you wish such liberty, you may just as well have the liberty to be no Christian, and neither have to believe nor pray; for the one is just as much the command of Christ as the other. But if you wish to be a Christian, you must from time to time render satisfaction and obedience to this commandment. 50] For this commandment ought ever to move you to examine yourself and to think: See, what sort of a Christian I am! If I were one, I would certainly have some little longing for that which my Lord has commanded [me] to do.

51] And, indeed, since we act such strangers to it, it is easily seen what sort of Christians we were under the Papacy, namely, that we went from mere compulsion and fear of human commandments, without inclination and love, and never regarded the commandment of Christ. 52] But we neither force nor compel any one; nor need any one do it to serve or please us. But this should induce and constrain you by itself, that He desires it and that it is pleasing to Him. You must not suffer men to coerce you unto faith or any good work. We are doing no more than to say and exhort you as to what you ought to do, not for our sake, but for your own sake. He invites and allures you; if you despise it, you must answer for it yourself.

53] Now, this is to be the first point, especially for those who are cold and indifferent, that they may reflect upon and rouse themselves. For this is certainly true, as I have found in my own experience, and as every one will find in his own case, that if a person thus withdraw from this Sacrament, he will daily become more and more callous and cold, and will at last disregard it altogether. 54] To avoid this, we must, indeed, examine heart and conscience, and act like a person who desires to be right with God. Now, the more this is done, the more will the heart be warmed and enkindled, that it may not become entirely cold.

55] But if you say: How if I feel that I am not prepared? Answer: That is also my scruple, especially from the old way under the Pope, in which a person tortured himself to be so perfectly pure that God could not find the least blemish in us. On this account we became so timid that every one was instantly thrown into consternation and said to himself: Alas! you are unworthy! 56] For then nature and reason begin to reckon our unworthiness in comparison with the great and precious good; and then it appears like a dark lantern in contrast with the bright sun, or as filth in comparison with precious stones. Because nature and reason see this, they refuse to approach and tarry until they are prepared, so long that one week trails another, and one half year the other. 57] But if you are to regard how good and pure you are, and labor to have no compunctions, you must never approach.

58] We must, therefore, make a distinction here among men. For those who are wanton and dissolute must be told to stay away; for they are not prepared to receive forgiveness of sin, since they do not desire it and do not wish to be godly. 59] But the others, who are not such callous and wicked people, and desire to be godly, must not absent themselves, even though otherwise they be feeble and full of infirmities, as St. Hilary also has said: If any one have not committed sin for which he can rightly be put out of the congregation and esteemed as no Christian, he ought not stay away from the Sacrament, lest he may deprive himself of life. 60] For no one will make

such progress that he will not retain many daily infirmities in flesh and blood.

61] Therefore such people must learn that it is the highest art to know that our Sacrament does not depend upon our worthiness. For we are not baptized because we are worthy and holy, nor do we go to confession because we are pure and without sin, but the contrary, because we are poor miserable men, and just because we are unworthy; unless it be some one who desires no grace and absolution nor intends to reform.

62] But whoever would gladly obtain grace and consolation should impel himself, and allow no one to frighten him away, but say: I, indeed, would like to be worthy; but I come, not upon any worthiness, but upon Thy Word, because Thou hast commanded it, as one who would gladly be Thy disciple, no matter what becomes of my worthiness. 63] But this is difficult; for we always have this obstacle and hindrance to encounter, that we look more upon ourselves than upon the Word and lips of Christ. For nature desires so to act that it can stand and rest firmly on itself, otherwise it refuses to make the approach. Let this suffice concerning the first point.

64] In the second place, there is besides this command also a promise, as we heard above, which ought most strongly to incite and encourage us. For here stand the kind and precious words: This is My body, given for you. This is My blood, shed for you, for the remission of sins. 65] These words, I have said, are not preached to wood and stone, but to me and you; else He might just as well be silent and not institute a Sacrament. Therefore consider, and put yourself into this You, that He may not speak to you in vain.

66] For here He offers to us the entire treasure which He has brought for us from heaven, and to which He invites us also in other places with the greatest kindness, as when He says in St. Matthew 11:28: Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 67] Now it is surely a sin and a shame that He so cordially and faithfully summons and exhorts us to our highest and greatest good, and we act so distantly with regard to it, and permit so long a time to pass [without partaking of the Sacrament] that we grow quite cold and hardened, so that we have no inclination or love for it. 68] We must never regard the Sacrament as something injurious from which we had better flee, but as a pure, wholesome, comforting remedy imparting salvation and comfort, which will cure you and give you life both in soul and body. For where the soul has recovered, the body also is relieved. Why, then, is it that we act as if it were a poison, the eating of which would bring death?

69] To be sure, it is true that those who despise it and live in an unchristian manner receive it to their hurt and damnation; for nothing shall be good or wholesome to them, just as with a sick person who from caprice eats and drinks what is forbidden him by the physician. 70] But those who are sensible of their weakness, desire to be rid of it and long for help, should regard and use it only as a precious antidote against the poison which they have in them. For here in the Sacrament you are to receive from the lips of Christ forgiveness of sin, which contains and brings with it the grace of God and the Spirit with all His gifts, protection, shelter, and power against death and the devil and all misfortune.

71] Thus you have, on the part of God, both the command and the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ. Besides this, on your part, your own distress which is about your neck, and because of which this command, invitation, and promise are given, ought to impel you. For He Himself says: They that be whole, need not a physician, but they that be sick; that is, those who are weary and heavy-laden with their sins, with the fear of death, temptations of the flesh and of the devil. 72] If, therefore, you are heavy-laden and feel your weakness, then go joyfully to this Sacrament and obtain refreshment, consolation, and strength. 73] For if you would wait until you are rid of such burdens, that you might come to the Sacrament pure and worthy, you must forever stay away. For in that case He pronounces sentence and says: 74] If you are pure and godly, you have no need of Me, and I, in turn, none of thee. Therefore those alone are called unworthy who neither feel their infirmities nor wish to be considered sinners.

75] But if you say: What, then, shall I do if I cannot feel such distress or experience hunger and thirst for the Sacrament? Answer: For those who are so minded that they do not realize their condition I know no better counsel than that they put their hand into their bosom to ascertain whether they also have flesh and blood. And if you find that to be the case, then go, for your good, to St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, and hear what sort of a fruit your flesh is: Now the works of the flesh (he says [Gal. 5:19ff ]) are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like.

76] Therefore, if you cannot feel it, at least believe the Scriptures; they will not lie to you, and they know your flesh better than you yourself. Yea, St. Paul further concludes in Rom. 7:18: I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. If St. Paul may speak thus of his flesh, we do not propose to be better nor more holy. 77] But that we do not feel it is so much the worse; for it is a sign that there is a leprous flesh which feels nothing, and yet [the leprosy] rages and keeps spreading. 78] Yet, as we have said,

if you are quite dead to all sensibility, still believe the Scriptures, which pronounce sentence upon you. And, in short, the less you feel your sins and infirmities, the more reason have you to go to the Sacrament to seek help and a remedy.

79] In the second place, look about you and see whether you are also in the world, or if you do not know it, ask your neighbors about it. If you are in the world, do not think that there will be lack of sins and misery. For only begin to act as though you would be godly and adhere to the Gospel, and see whether no one will become your enemy, and, moreover, do you harm, wrong, and violence, and likewise give you cause for sin and vice. If you have not experienced it, then let the Scriptures tell you, which everywhere give this praise and testimony to the world.

80] Besides this, you will also have the devil about you, whom you will not entirely tread under foot, because our Lord Christ Himself could not entirely avoid him. Now, what is the devil? 81] Nothing else than what the Scriptures call him, a liar and murderer. A liar, to lead the heart astray from the Word of God, and to blind it, that you cannot feel your distress or come to Christ. A murderer, who cannot bear to see you live one single hour. 82] If you could see how many knives, darts, and arrows are every moment aimed at you, you would be glad to come to the Sacrament as often as possible. But there is no reason why we walk so securely and heedlessly, except that we neither think nor believe that we are in the flesh, and in this wicked world or in the kingdom of the devil.

83] Therefore, try this and practise it well, and do but examine yourself, or look about you a little, and only keep to the Scriptures. If even then you still feel nothing, you have so much the more misery to lament both to God and to your brother. Then take advice and have others pray for you, and do not desist until the stone be removed from your heart. 84] Then, indeed, the distress will not fail to become manifest, and you will find that you have sunk twice as deep as any other poor sinner, and are much more in need of the Sacrament against the misery which unfortunately you do not see, so that, with the grace of God, you may feel it more and become the more hungry for the Sacrament, especially since the devil plies his force against you, and lies in wait for you without ceasing to seize and destroy you, soul and body, so that you are not safe from him one hour. How soon can he have brought you suddenly into misery and distress when you least expect it!

85] Let this, then, be said for exhortation, not only for those of us who are old and grown, but also for the young people, who ought to be brought up in the Christian doctrine and understanding. For thereby the Ten

Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer might be the more easily inculcated to our youth, so that they would receive them with pleasure and earnestness, and thus would practise them from their youth and accustom themselves to them. 86] For the old are now well-nigh done for, so that these and other things cannot be attained, unless we train the people who are to come after us and succeed us in our office and work, in order that they also may bring up their children successfully, that the Word of God and the Christian Church may be preserved. 87] Therefore let every father of a family know that it is his duty, by the injunction and command of God, to teach these things to his children, or have them learn what they ought to know. For since they are baptized and received into the Christian Church, they should also enjoy this communion of the Sacrament, in order that they may serve us and be useful to us; for they must all indeed help us to believe, love, pray, and fight against the devil.

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## Historical Context of the Augsburg Confession

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DAVID: I appreciate all that has been said about the ecumenical creeds, but now I would like to ask a question about the first of our Lutheran Confessions. Could you please indicate some of the developments that shaped the historical context surrounding the Augsburg Confession and explain to us how this confession came about?

DR. KLAUS DETLEV SHULTZ: Yes, David. The Augsburg Confession came about in June 1530. However, in order to understand the circumstances around that event of 1530, we need to go back, probably about 13 years, and began with 1517, when Luther posted the "95 Theses" on the church in Wittenberg and thereby setting off The Reformation as a movement in all of Germany. What Luther addressed at the time was a penitentiary system, that system that did not address confession and absolution properly and did not demand from those people who came to confession and absolution in the churches that contrition that was necessary to receive absolution. Now, Luther addressed The Reformation theologically, but it took hold in Germany also as a social and political movement. But in order to understand what the Augsburg Confession is all about, we should see The Reformation, first of all, as a theological movement. Now, let's go further on to the year 1521. Then the Edict of Worms was passed by Charles V. Now the Edict of worms goes back to 1520, the diet of worms, when Luther was invited to that city of Worms to express his point of view about his writings and his theology in front of the emperor, a young emperor, Charles V. Charles V was curious to hear about what Luther said theologically, and he gave him a chance to present his view, and above all, to recant all his writings. Luther stood up and said the famous words, here I stand. Meaning thereby, that he was only willing to recant and retract all his writings and theology if he was proven from scripture and by common reason that he was wrong. Now that, of course, could not be done. And so the result was that in 1521, the Edict of Worms was passed over Luther and all his writings. That meant nobody was allowed to further The Reformation, to offer Luther shelter, and to promote his writings and theology. We have, therefore, here a very important step toward The Reformation. Luther had written numerous articles and numerous writings already by that year 1521. These writings were disseminated, and thank goodness, that the printing press by Johann Gutenberg was already innovated and made public so that Luther became a best seller in terms of his writings. As the years ensued after 1521, numerous attempts were made to find some solution between those that supported The Reformation and Lutheranism and the sympathies of Charles V, namely, to further again the Roman Catholic Church in Germany. There was one territorial ruler, the \*Elector John Frederick the Wise of Saxony. This emperor favored Luther's theology, though he himself was a great fan of collecting relics. But \*John Frederick the Wise saw in Luther a person that also promoted the German cause, and the Elector John had a great chance, here, to present his view in front of the Emperor Charles V because he had the status of an elector, a very important status in the territories of Germany because not every ruler of a territory had that privilege. So \*Elector John Frederick had to be taken seriously by Charles V and probably because of his status as an elector, Charles V was willing to listen more carefully to that elector than perhaps to anyone else. And so he offered refuge to Luther in the territory of Saxony at Wittenberg, supported the new university and made Luther professor there and also brought a young man called Philipp Melancthon to Wittenberg, a young scholar who was asked to teach the biblical languages. But he was soon advanced to teach also theology. One important event is 1528, the Diet of Speyer. Here we have the name Protestant emerging for the first time. Because Charles V expected at that diet that all the territorial rulers of Germany should further the Edict of Worms. That means that they should rigorously pursue all those who had sympathies for Luther and his theology. \*Protestatio is called their document and their position. They are Protestants and refused to do that what Charles V said. So the thing still remained unresolved by 1528, and the events than led to the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. Two important occasions brought this diet about. One was the Ottoman Empire was spreading to Europe and was endangering the core of the empire of Charles V. Vienna, already, was

besieged by the Turks by 1529. So the emperor needed as many supporters as possible to support him to drive back the Turks from the empire that was his. Another problem was also France. The king there was rising up against the emperor, and he, too, had to be addressed. So it was also a political occasion, this Diet of Augsburg. But he was also interested to hear exactly what the position was now of the Lutherans in Saxony and other territories where it had now taken hold of. So the emperor, Charles V, invited all Germans to come to the Diet of Augsburg. And he wanted to hear exactly what abuses they had addressed. So Elector John, the son of John Frederick the Wise, called together all important theologians. Amongst these were also \*Justus Jonas and \*John Bugenhagen, both very important figures who furthered the cause of The Reformation. Next to Luther and Melanchthon, these were very important theologians. So these four theologians then immediately went about to set up a number of articles that would relate to those abuses in the Roman Catholic Church that they as Lutherans had addressed and corrected. There is a lot of theology in the \*Tourgau Articles. These are the other articles that they had compiled and presented in 1530, early in that year at \*Tourgau. The \*Tourgau Articles were taken to Augsburg and to be presented to Charles V. They were addressing the abuses only, which is very important to know because when the theologians and the emperor and other princes in free cities, all those who had sympathies for The Reformation, went to Augsburg. They soon discovered that there were other representatives invited to that diet who also had presented some of their statements of faith. For example, Zwingli, who presented his \*Fideratio, an explanation of his faith and his theology. And then there was also the \*Confessio Tetrapolitana, that confession of \*Martin Bootse and also that of the four cities in southern Germany. Upon that notice of all these further documents being submitted, and especially that of the Roman Catholic theologian, \*Johann Eck, the 404 Propositions, those statements that made allegations that Luther, Melanchthon, and other theologians of The Reformation were heretics. These all occasioned the Augsburg Confession itself to be written. The reason is that the \*Tourgau Articles were not enough to put forward what the Lutherans all believed. It was more an apology, less a confession. And so a confession had now to be compiled. Melanchthon, being the main author because of Luther's absence, set about to write the Augsburg Confession. He had a number of documents to which he could go back to find certain theological themes that they had already purported elsewhere. For example, Melanchthon could go back to the \*Marburg articles, those articles that were discussed at \*Marburg between Luther and Zwingli. There, you know, Luther and Zwingli could agree on 14 articles. But when it came to article 15 on Holy Communion, they could not agree on the presence of Christ in Holy Communion. There was also another document, the \*Schwabe Articles. These were articles compiled by Luther, Melanchthon, and other theologians, one of them also \*Johannes Brentz, that theologian who furthered The Reformation in southern Germany later on, and also responsible for much of what was said in the Formula of Concord. Melanchthon took the \*Schwabe Articles, together with the \*Marburg Articles, and then in addition to that, Luther's great confession of the Lord's Supper of 1528, and drew from these a number of articles, the articles that are now presented in the Augsburg Confession in the beginning, those from Article 1 to 21. Articles 22 to 28 are those that we have from the \*Tourgau Articles. This Augsburg Confession was repeatedly passed on to the theologians present at Augsburg itself. But Luther himself also remained in correspondence with Melanchthon finding out exactly what was being said and written. And he approved of the Augsburg Confession finding that it succinctly brought to the point all those questions that Lutherans had with the Roman Catholic faith. The Augsburg Confession was read at that diet in Augsburg on June 25th, 1530. Chancellor \*Beyer and John the Elector of Saxony read it out loud in front of the Emperor Charles V and all the other delegates that were present. It is said, and we don't know whether this is true, that Charles V was bored and fell asleep for the two hours when the Augsburg Confession was read. The response was mostly and predominantly negative. It seems that the Emperor Charles V already had an agenda when he came to the Augsburg Diet, and that was to listen to the cause of the Lutherans, but not to change his mind that he was not willing to condone a different theology in one of his countries and his lands. And so it seems that the hope that the Lutherans had coming to the Augsburg diet; namely, that they were going to present their cause and that they would be treated as equal partners with the Roman Catholic delegates and that their truth would persuade Charles V

because they would say nothing else than that what was said in scripture. And they hoped that their presentation of the Augsburg Confession, then, with persuade Charles V and all others. Officially, it was not approved and not accepted by Charles V. There is a lot of contrivance that happened behind the scenes, especially from the Roman Catholic delegates. They were asked by Charles V to present a response to the Augsburg Confession. \*Johann Eck and other leading theologians of the Roman Catholic delegation immediately set about to write a response that is called the \*Confutatio. It was read aloud in front of Charles V. He, too, found it very boring and very redundant and far too long. And it did not address the real situation of Lutheranism. So the \*Confutatio was not printed for a very, very long time precisely because Charles V, though he wanted to further the Roman Catholic Church, did not really accept the \*Confutatio in its entirety. Melanchthon had never received a copy of the \*Confutatio so it was not possible for him to review what was being said therein. But we know that certain notes were taken, handwritten notes, by those theologians that were present. So it was possible for him to review those, and upon that, had written the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. Unfortunately, Charles V was no longer to give the Lutherans another hearing, in other words, to listen again to the Apology. And so the hopes of Lutherans to be accepted by Charles V were dashed. They all left the Augsburg Confession they all left the Augsburg Diet back to the regions from which they came. Thereby, we have to consider June 1530 perhaps a watershed period in that it now defined Lutheranism. I think we can now speak of a Lutheran Church, whereas before and during Augsburg, they still hoped of being a movement within the Roman Catholic Church, hoping that they could reform it. But as things seem now, they had to accept the fact that they were now becoming a separate movement of the Roman Catholic Church.

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## Philip Melanchthon: Confessor of the Faith

<http://blogs.lcms.org/2010/philip-melanchthon-confessor-of-the-faith-2-2010>

# Philip Melanchthon: Confessor of the Faith

on February 2, 2010 in FEATURE, LUTHERAN WITNESS

by Dr. Robert Kolb

Like Daniel in the lion's den, Philip Melanchthon faced the papal legate Lorenzo Campeggio at Augsburg in 1530. The representative of the pope thundered and flashed bolts of lightning at the Wittenberg professor. The two confronted each other head to head in negotiations over the future of the Wittenberg Reformation sparked by Luther in 1517.

That is how Nikolaus Selnecker, Melanchthon's student and one of the authors of the Formula of Concord (1577), depicted the tension-filled situation at the Augsburg Diet (assembly) of the German empire in June 1530. There, Melanchthon directed efforts to confess the faith of Martin Luther, himself, their colleagues, and the government officials who were introducing their program for reform in their lands. Selnecker was telling his students the story of the confession at Augsburg. He related how Campeggio bared the claws of Satan himself with his intimidating snarl. "Saint Philip stood as if in the midst of lions, wolves, and bears which could tear him into little bits and pieces," Selnecker said. "But he displayed a superabundance of splendid courage in his slight frame, and he answered boldly, 'We commit ourselves and our cause to God, our Lord.'"



Philip Melanchthon

Photo: wikimedia

For a brief photo tour of Melanchthon's house in Wittenberg, [click here](#).

Different opinions of the author of the Augsburg Confession existed in competition with each other when Melanchthon died 450 years ago, on April 19, 1560. He had been Luther's closest aide and associate in reform. But, as Selnecker well knew, some disciples of Melanchthon were portraying him as a shy, retiring man, the victim of other students who had betrayed him. On the other hand, those who had developed deep suspicions and feelings of betrayal toward their beloved "preceptor" (teacher) regarded him as a traitor. The reason lay in his pursuit of a policy of compromise in his effort to save Lutheran reform after Emperor Charles V decisively defeated the armies of the leading Lutheran princes at the Battle of Mühlberg in 1547.

Charles and his imperial government were attempting to force their churches back into submission to the papacy. Melanchthon was making every effort to save Lutheran preachers in Saxony from being driven

into exile, but these followers believed his course to be false and compromising. Nonetheless, even they acknowledged him as their preceptor, who had taught them how to think as biblically faithful theologians. They never lost their appreciation for the preceptor who had educated them to preach and teach with intellectual depth and scriptural insight. They used his teaching and his way of thinking in arguing against the policies he was pursuing.

Selnecker belonged to another group of those who had studied in Wittenberg. This group sometimes departed from Melancthon's positions, but their devotion to the man who had shaped the way they thought never faltered. In 1575, Selnecker delivered an oration on the professor who had welcomed him a quarter century earlier into his own home. He recalled the toughness that Melancthon had consistently displayed when Luther's teaching on the justification of sinners through faith alone on the basis of the death and resurrection of Christ was at stake. But that was only one facet of a complex man who did more to mold the Lutheran church than anyone else other than Luther himself.

### AN INTELLECTUAL LEADER

Philip, as Luther called his colleague and friend, arrived in Wittenberg in 1518, a prime catch for a university without a reputation, scarcely a decade old. For at 21, Melancthon had a reputation as a *Wunderkind*, a young genius who was certain to provide intellectual leadership throughout the German empire and beyond. That he did. His textbooks in communication theory—called rhetoric and dialectic in his day—were reprinted, not only throughout Protestant lands into the 18th century, but also in Catholic regions, where they appeared from Roman Catholic presses, albeit with the name of the author omitted from the title page.

Like any great movement, the Lutheran Reformation was led by a team. If Luther was its captain and inspiration, Melancthon was his right-hand man. He executed many of the practical tasks that conveyed the teaching of the Wittenberg team to wider audiences. Luther was prophet; Melancthon, preceptor. He not only taught students how to preach and teach, how to communicate effectively with the gifts God creates and bestows for profitable human exchange, he also encouraged colleagues to explore God's creation, on which both he and Luther focused so much attention, through the study of history and literature, astronomy and botany. His leadership made Wittenberg a university so famous that Shakespeare took it for granted that his Danish Hamlet would have studied there.

Though never ordained, and shy of preaching because of a slight speech impediment, Melancthon contributed much to the Wittenberg reform movement. He not only encouraged the study of God's First Article gifts, he also promoted biblical studies and the public conveying of the faith through teaching and proclamation. He mastered Greek and Hebrew early in his career as a student. This gave his lectures on Scripture theological depth. The commentaries published on the basis of these lectures served as aids to

preachers who left Wittenberg's lecture halls for pulpits across Germany and Europe. They served as models for professors at other universities in their own training of new generations of pastors. In addition, his adaptation of the "topical" method (in Latin, *loci communes*) for organizing biblical material and selections from the writings of the Church Fathers provided the foundation for Lutheran doctrinal instruction to this day.

### THE 'VARIATA'

Melanchthon was a public figure beyond the university. He commanded the confidence of his own princes, particularly Elector John and his son John Frederick, who put their lives on the line with the Augsburg Confession in 1530. Both father and son employed Melanchthon as part of their diplomatic corps. He negotiated with representatives of the kings of France and England, as well as his own emperor, Charles V, on repeated occasions in order to win adherence for Luther's teaching or at least tolerance for the spread of his reforms.

In this role, as the one who was designated to lead negotiators in conversations with Roman Catholics from the emperor's entourage in 1539–42, Melanchthon followed John Frederick's order to update the Augsburg Confession. The so-called "Variata" was later seen as an evil attempt by Melanchthon to subvert the Lutheran teaching on the Lord's Supper through a change in the wording on the Sacrament. In fact, Philip revised the princes' confession most extensively by expanding its rather brief explanation of the doctrine of justification. He did that because John Frederick wanted that doctrine more explicitly set forth in what the Elector regarded as his public statement of faith. In fact, that is what Melanchthon had composed it in 1530 to be.

It was to preserve the proclamation of justification by faith in Christ that Melanchthon made one of the most serious moves of his life. Caught in political crosscurrents after John Frederick's imprisonment by Charles V a year after Luther's death, Melanchthon contributed to efforts by his new overlord, John Frederick's cousin, Elector Moritz, to stave off an invasion of his lands by the emperor. Melanchthon and his colleagues in Wittenberg fought against excessive concessions to Charles V, but they did formulate certain compromises in "adiaphora," neutral practices neither commanded nor forbidden by Scripture. Many of his students regarded these concessions as a betrayal of the truth and the Reformation because of the impression they would convey to the common people. Melanchthon in turn felt betrayed by these students. He thought they should have understood his striving to prevent Lutheran preachers in north Germany from being driven from their pulpits, as had already happened in 1548 in south Germany.

## DISAPPOINTMENT AND TRAGEDY

Melanchthon's bitter disappointment over the sharp attacks from these students was not the only tragedy that haunted his life. One son died in his second year. Acrimony over marriage plans clouded the relationship of his wife and himself with their older son. A trusted student married one of his daughters and maltreated her so badly that she died when she was but 24 years old. He did not live to see his other son-in-law, Caspar Peucer, who had become his staff and stay after the death of his wife in 1557, go to jail for "crypto-calvinistic" ideas.

Peucer taught astronomy and then medicine at Wittenberg. He may have influenced Melanchthon in his last years to depart from his earlier understanding of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. That stance earned both Peucer and his father-in-law harsh criticism from other students of both Luther and Melanchthon himself. They condemned him sharply for abandoning Luther's way of affirming of the true presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine. Melanchthon had never used exactly the same language as Luther did; neither he nor his senior colleague realized that Melanchthon was supposed to be Luther's clone.

While Luther lived, the two taught and worked alongside each other without public friction. Both confessed faith in the atoning work of Christ and spread the message they had developed together. But Melanchthon did develop new perspectives and convictions in the 14 years he lived after Luther's death.

Recent scholarship has suggested that the charge often lodged against Melanchthon of having abandoned Luther's emphasis on salvation by grace alone contradicts the sources. It is true that Melanchthon did use different expressions than Luther in using God's law to call sinners to exercise their God-given responsibilities to trust and obey their Lord. But Melanchthon did not speak of salvation without striving to make clear that rescue from sin and death comes only through God's gracious action, totally undeserved as the Holy Spirit bestows a living faith upon those whom God calls into his kingdom through the Word of the Gospel of Christ.

The censure of Melanchthon that developed toward the end of his life, largely around the issues of his views of the role of the human will in conversion and of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, have clouded "the Preceptor's" reputation for much of Lutheran history. Nonetheless, he stands as the one who expressed Wittenberg teaching in the Augsburg Confession of 1530, a document that remains the fundamental definition of what it means to be Lutheran. As parts of the Book of Concord, his defense of



Aerial photo of Wittenberg

Photo: wikimedia

that confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531), and his Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (1537) continue to determine the Lutheran expression of the biblical message.

Therefore, as we reflect on his death 450 years ago, we thank God that he confessed our faith in the Augsburg Confession. We recognize Philip Melanchthon as one who has put words of confession of the faith in our mouths, as one who remains our preceptor as well.

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### **What Was Crypto-Calvinism?**

Toward the end of Melanchthon's life, as some of his students at the University of Wittenberg and in the Electorate of Saxony pondered their preceptor's lectures and conversations about Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper and the relationship of Christ's divine and human natures, they developed Melanchthon's ideas in a direction that seemed to others, and perhaps even to themselves, as similar to those of the Genevan reformer John Calvin. Their ideas probably did not derive as much from their reading of Calvin as their listening to Melanchthon.

The Crypto-Calvinists, led by Christoph Pezel, a young professor of theology who had studied only briefly under Melanchthon, and Melanchthon's son-in-law, Caspar Peucer, taught that Christ was spiritually present in the Lord's Supper, and that the believer's soul received all the benefits of His death and resurrection when the believer ate the bread and wine of the Supper. Also, they taught that Christ's human body and blood were situated in heaven and could not be in more than one place at one time.

Their Lutheran opponents held, as Luther had taught, that because the divine and human natures of Christ share their characteristics (the ancient doctrine of "the communication of attributes") Christ's body and blood could indeed be present in whatever form, including sacramental form, that God willed them to be. Led by Martin Chemnitz, they repeated Luther's conviction that in the unique union of bread and wine with Christ's body and blood, based on His own words, He gives believers forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

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## MELANCHTHON: A TIMELINE

We commemorate Philip Melanchthon on Feb. 16, his natal day (*Lutheran Service Book*, xii).  
1497 Born Philipp Schwartzerd in Bretten, in southwest Germany.

Appointed professor in Wittenberg after study in Heidelberg and  
1518 Tübingen.

1520 Marries Katherina Krapp, daughter of the mayor of Wittenberg.

Writes the first edition of his *Loci communes theologici* as a guide to  
1521 reading Romans.

Composes the Augsburg Confession, and in 1531 the Apology of  
1530 the Augsburg Confession.

1546 Praises Luther in his funeral oration for his mentor.

Aids in writing the “Leipzig Proposal,” which earned him much  
1548 criticism.

1557 Death of Katherina, his beloved wife.

1560 His own death.

Unfortunately, popular English biographies of Melanchthon are rare. (Heinz Scheible’s biography in German is very good, but it is not available in English.)

Perhaps the best English resource is Heinz Scheible’s “Philip Melanchthon” in *The Reformation Theologians*, edited by Carter Lindberg (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002). It is not much, and it is, perhaps, not easy to find. If you would like to become more familiar with Melanchthon, a good place to begin is with his writings: the Augsburg Confession and its Apology, and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, all from the Book of Concord.

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Luther's Contribution to the Augsburg Confession

<http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/kluglutherscontribution.pdf>

CONCORDIA  
THEOLOGICAL  
QUARTERLY

CTQ

Volume 44, Numbers 2-3

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# Luther's Contribution to the Augsburg Confession

Eugene F. Klug

Why could Luther claim, "The Augsburg Confession is mine"? It was, after all, Melanchthon's scholarly, literary hand that had given final shape and form to this great document, one of history's noblest and most influential writings. Melanchthon's role is beyond dispute, of course. It was Luther, however, whose work and writings had supplied the doctrinal grist and content. All the evidence points this way, a proposition which is neither difficult to assert or demonstrate. The roots definitely run back into Luther's work during the previous dozen years before 1530.

But the mammoth size of Luther's production is enough to drive even the most daring soul away from the task of trying to uncover all the leads. The difficulty is not in uncovering this or that statement by Luther that connects up somehow with a given part of the Augsburg Confession, but of adequate coverage of all the sources out of which the various articles flowed.

Augsburg in many ways was simply the finest distillation in a very positive, objective way, of the totality of Luther's theological thought, the sum total of the Lutheran position in the Reformation. It expressed what the Lutheran confessors wanted the emperor and the world to know about their faith and their concern for purity of teaching, especially the precious Gospel drawn from the Word of God. For this stance there was precedent throughout Luther's work, voiced publicly in his treatises, sermons, letters, and classroom lecture.

## **The Schwabach, Marburg, and Torgau Articles**

The point is that the subject is more complicated than merely citing the immediate documents that preceded the writing of the Augsburg Confession. Usually mentioned are the fifteen Marburg Articles in which Luther had a leading hand, with others (Melanchthon, Jonas, Brenz, Agricola, Osiander), composed at the colloquium of October 2-4, 1529, with the Zwingli party (Bullinger, Oecolampadius, Bucer, Hedio).<sup>1</sup> These theses, prompted especially by pressure from Philip of Hesse, were designed to stress the points of agreement between the two Protestant factions. In this they seemed to succeed fairly well, with the notable exception of the fifteenth article, on the Lord's Supper. In actual fact, however, it is erroneous to conclude that this was the only point of variance because of the attention given to that article.

There were other differences; and this fact becomes clear in the so-called Schwabach Articles, which Luther, along with his colleagues (chiefly Melancthon), had prepared even earlier, during August of the summer of 1529 in preparation for a joint meeting of the Protestant princes and other leaders. They took their name from the place where they were first publicly released or made known. Undoubtedly Luther would have had a copy of them with him at the time of the Marburg Colloquy. At the prompting of the Lutheran princes they were presented at the Smalcald conclave of November 29, 1529, but met with little approval from the princes of the mediating, somewhat pro-Zwinglian side. Zwingli himself was not present.

The Schwabach Articles thus antedated the Marburg theses and were written by the Wittenberg theologians because they anticipated pressure from some of the Protestant princes, like Philip of Hesse, to compromise on articles of difference between the Lutheran and Zwinglian parties. Political considerations were thus of no small moment. Early in 1529 the Catholic side had succeeded in reversing the Diet of Speyer's ruling concerning *cuius regio eius religio*, which had granted a measure of toleration and religious freedom to the Protestants. The latter feared imperial pressure, and some stood for bolstering their union even if it meant compromise.

A comparison of the two sets of theses will demonstrate not only that the Schwabach Articles constituted the shape and frame of the Marburg Articles, but also that the former were somewhat more pointed in showing the differences existing between the Lutherans, on one side, and the Zwinglians and the sectarians, on the other. Luther, opposed, as always, to compromise at the expense of the truth, was chiefly responsible for their content.

Meanwhile, on January 21, 1530, came Emperor Charles V's summons of the Protestant princes to an imperial diet. The directive arrived at the Saxon court on March 11, 1530. Elector John Frederick immediately instructed his Wittenberg theologians to prepare a document that would explain the Lutheran stance on the controverted issues. The Torgau Articles were hurriedly composed for this purpose. Luther and company were to be at the Elector's residence by March 20 with said document in hand. Actually there was some delay; the Wittenberg theologians did not get on their way until April 3. At Torgau they met with the Elector and the theses were discussed.

The Elector's party, princely retinue, and theologians next proceeded to Coburg for a strategy session and rest that lasted from April 15 to 24. Thence they traveled on to Augsburg, arriving

May 2. For safe-keeping, and by the Elector's orders, Luther stayed in his "kingdom of the birds," as he called the Coburg castle, along with Veit Dietrich, his amanuensis.<sup>2</sup>

The Torgau Articles were directed against the abuses in the Roman system.<sup>3</sup> These articles clearly played a significant role in the shaping of the last part of the Augsburg Confession, Articles 22-28, which dealt with particular abuses. The Schwabach Articles, in turn, were significant for the articles with a pronouncedly doctrinal content, Articles 1-21. Altogether, when completed, the Augsburg Confession became famous for its positive, moderate tone. It is "defensive throughout," but "not aggressive," states Philip Schaff in a brief characterization of the whole Augsburg document.<sup>4</sup> In general one can agree with this assessment. Moreover, virtually every topic broached by the Schwabach and Torgau theses appears to be covered by the final document that was read on June 25, 1530, at Augsburg.

#### Luther at Coburg

Luther's voluminous correspondence during this time<sup>5</sup> is noteworthy. Very often historians refer only to his impatience evinced in letter after letter to Melancthon and the other colleagues concerning their failure to keep him informed. Yet Luther was hardly at leisure, with nothing but letters to write, during this enforced "exile."<sup>6</sup> By April 29 he already had his *Exhortation to All Clergy Assembled at Augsburg* under way; he completed it by May 12. It was sent off to Wittenberg for printing, and by June 7 the five hundred copies that arrived in Augsburg were promptly sold out.<sup>7</sup>

The emperor, who had announced the convening of the Diet for April 8, finally arrived in mid-June. Immediately he sought to impress his imperial presence upon the gathered notables, forbidding any preaching by the evangelical side. To this order the Lutherans acceded on advice from Luther, who in a letter to Elector John Frederick (May 15, 1530), had reasoned that it was, after all, not a crucial issue and that "the city belongs to him"; so that the better part of wisdom in this case would be to "let force prevail over right."<sup>8</sup> When the issue, however, came to be a threat to their faith, then, true to Luther's example, the Lutheran princes demonstrated heroic resistance to any compromise of their consciences. They stood bolt upright and refused to bow or doff the hat to the papal legate, Cardinal Campeggio, as he blessed the crowd hailing the emperor's entrance into Augsburg. Charles V tried to force their participation in the Corpus Christi procession. Again they refused. To the order that they forbid the preaching of the Gospel by their theologians, Margrave George of

Brandenburg hurled back at the emperor this reply: "Before I would deny my God and His Gospel, I would rather kneel down here before Your Imperial Majesty and let you cut off my head."<sup>9</sup> In the end, however, the evangelical party abode by Luther's advice not to exacerbate the situation by insisting upon certain rights, including public preaching.

For Luther the key issue was "keeping your heart strong and reliant on His Word and faith," as he wrote in a very beautiful letter to his father, Hans, on February 15, 1530. Luther received word of his beloved parent's death on June 5. To Melanchthon he wrote that day, from the Coburg: "I am too sad to write more today, and it is only right to mourn such a father, who by the sweat of his brow made me what I am."<sup>10</sup> It was a statement typical of this dutiful servant of God. He knew the Fourth Commandment and he respected authority, wherever he saw it, at home or in the state. If there was one hand that steadied the tremulous Lutheran participants in the Augsburg Diet and kept them from rash decisions, it was Luther. At the same time he pressed a leader like Philip of Hesse to stand firm and avoid compromise on the meaning of the Lord's Supper, lest it throw the Lutheran cause into reverse gear.<sup>11</sup> On May 20, 1530, Luther wrote to his Elector, John Frederick, urging patience and firm strength in the midst of what must be "a tiresome situation."<sup>12</sup>

Indeed it must have been an often irksome situation; on the one hand, the theologians, led by Melanchthon, were forever changing the wording of the *Apologia*, as the Augsburg Confession at first was called; and, on the other hand, they all had to wait patiently for the emperor's arrival as he dallied in Italy and then in Innsbruck. Earlier, in another letter to his Elector (May 15), Luther had high praise for Melanchthon's work on the proposed confession as then worded. He stated: "I have read through Master Philip's *Apologia*, which pleases me very much; I know nothing to improve or change it."<sup>13</sup>

Clearly it represented the consensus which long before had been attained through the joint efforts of Luther and Melanchthon, most recently in the Torgau and Schwabach Articles — as well as all of Luther's theological expression in the years before, something which Melanchthon, better than any other, knew and respected very much. Only in matters of style and wording did Luther admit that it would be more "appropriate" for Melanchthon to do the final writing, as was the case at Augsburg, for "I cannot step so softly and quietly."<sup>14</sup> In part, this remark reflected Luther's sincere admiration for Melanchthon's literary bent and skill; in part, it probably also was a gentle gibe at Melanchthon's

perpetual worrying over wording, an endless fiddling with the text, and a persisting Erasmian streak which was always on the alert for a compromise posture or phrase. Justus Jonas, in fact, in a letter dated June 12, 1530, asked Luther that he keep the letters coming to Melanchthon because of the latter's continuing anxiety and the effect that this might have on the eventual outcome of the presentation before the emperor.<sup>15</sup> Luther knew his colleague only too well; his letters continued to flow, virtually daily; he prodded Melanchthon constantly to keep him informed, undoubtedly aware of the good psychological effect that would accrue if he could convince Melanchthon to get things off his chest by unloading his worries on his esteemed mentor and friend.

#### June 25, 1530

June 25, 1530, came and went, one of the greatest days in human history, when the Augsburg Confession was first publicly read before the emperor. He had asked for the Latin version, but at the solemn urging of Elector John Frederick permission was granted for the reading of the German version on the grounds that the diet was meeting on German soil. As a result of this concession both versions have equal standing. The German version, which was read by Dr. Christian Beyer, chancellor of Electoral Saxony, was then given to Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz; the Latin copy was entrusted to the emperor and his advisers. Neither of these copies has survived. But the Lutherans had carefully seen to it that identical copies were kept.

There is no need to elaborate on the generally positive reception of the Augsburg Confession by the audience of some two hundred people in the hall; an eager crowd gathered outside, straining to hear Beyer intone each article.<sup>16</sup> Luther took note of this fact that the document made a good impression, according to the information he had received in reports from Augsburg; and he was also impressed with the courage of the evangelical princes who freely put their signatures to the document.<sup>17</sup> Melanchthon, on the other hand, greeted the next morning, June 26, with gloomy mien, and wrote to Luther that "we are in deepest trouble here and are forced to many tears."<sup>18</sup> He advocated further concessions and modifications.<sup>19</sup> Luther was understandably and mightily exasperated by his fretful colleague. In effect, he said, "Over my dead body!" On June 29, with a copy of the Augsburg Confession in hand, as it has been read at the diet, Luther wrote to Melanchthon in stern terms:

I have received your *Apologia*, and I wonder what it is you want when you ask what and how much is to be conceded to the papists. For me personally more than enough has been

conceded. Day and night I am occupied with this matter, considering it, turning it around, debating it, and searching the whole Scripture because of it; certainty grows continuously in me about this, our teaching, and I am more and more sure that now (God willing) I shall not permit anything further to be taken away from me, come what may.<sup>20</sup>

In the same letter, Luther, impressed with the princes' courage, summoned Melancthon to come out from hiding behind Luther's mantle and make this cause his own personal battle:

I don't like that you write in your letter that you have followed my authority in this cause. I don't wish to be, or be called, the originator of this cause for you people; even though this might be properly interpreted, yet I don't want this term. If this is not simultaneously and in the same way your cause, then I don't want it to be called mine and imposed upon you. If it is my cause alone, then I will handle it by myself.<sup>21</sup>

#### Luther and Melancthon

Basically, as Luther discerned, the doubt in Melancthon's mind stemmed from his uncertainty on the doctrine of the church, in this struggle against the monolithic papal organization. "If Christ is not with us," Luther asked in the same letter, "where, I earnestly wish to know, is He then in the whole world?" In fact, the issue could be put more pointedly still: "If we are not the church, or a part of the church, where is the church? Are the dukes of Bavaria [Eck's lord], Ferdinand [King of Bavaria and brother of Charles V], the Pope, the Turk, and those like them, the church?" Luther shoved Melancthon's nose into the pages of Holy Writ, stating: "If we don't have God's Word, who are the people who have it?" Luther closed with the wish — almost a threat — that he might come personally to Augsburg in spite of the imperial ban, all because Melancthon had become "so distressed and weak" under Satan's taunts.<sup>22</sup>

Luther assessed Melancthon well, as also himself, when he wrote in a letter to his beloved colleague on June 30: "In my personal affairs I am less resolute in battle, while you are more stout-hearted. In matters of the common weal you are the way I am in my personal affairs. You esteem yourself but lightly, yet in the common cause you are afraid. I, on the other hand, am of good and quiet courage in the common cause because I know with certainty that this cause is just and right, yes, that it is Christ's and God's cause, which need not blanch because of its sin, as a little saint like me must pale because of myself. Therefore, I am nothing but an unworried observer and do not fret in the least about

these menacing and threatening papists. Thus I beg you in the name of Christ not to despise those promises and consolations of God."<sup>23</sup> Melanchthon had simply forgotten Luther's eloquent message to the congregation of notables that had gathered at Coburg shortly before departing for Augsburg. There Luther had appealed to them to be ready for whatever cross or suffering God purposed to send their way. He stated:

If you give yourself to Scripture, you will feel comfort and all your concerns will be better, which otherwise you cannot control by any act or means of your own.<sup>24</sup>

In that same sermon Luther pleaded that they all be ready to risk much more for the Word of God than "merchants, knights, papists, and such riffraff" dare to risk for the sake of "filthy lucre." This course of conduct should be evident to every faithful Christian, he says, "because He [God] will defend His Word simply because it is His Word."<sup>25</sup>

One might conclude that Luther was unfeeling towards Melanchthon and the pressures he was facing as leader of the Lutheran party. That was hardly the case. The very next day after he had excoriated Melanchthon, Luther admitted in a letter to Spalatin on June 30, that he had been a bit too "angry and full of fear" because of "Philip's worries."<sup>26</sup> After all, "we are to be men and not God," he said, and anxieties and afflictions are naturally quite human. Luther had nothing but praise for the Confession and for those who had bravely presented and defended it at Augsburg. "Yesterday I carefully reread your whole *Apologia*, and I am tremendously pleased with it," wrote Luther in a letter to Melanchthon on July 3, 1530. In this same letter Luther reminded Melanchthon that it is sin to doubt God's support.<sup>27</sup> In a letter to Nicholas Hausmann on July 6, 1530, Luther spoke of the Augsburg Confession as "our confession (which Philip prepared)" and of how "one bishop stated in a private conversation: 'This is the pure truth, we cannot deny it.'"<sup>28</sup> "I am tremendously pleased to have lived to this moment when Christ, by his staunch confessors, has publicly been proclaimed in such a great assembly by means of this really most beautiful confession," said Luther in a letter to Conrad Cordatus on July 7, 1530.<sup>29</sup> To Justus Jonas on July 9, 1530, Luther wrote: "I only envy you this opportunity, for I could not be present at this, the beautiful confession. . . Yet I am pleased and comforted that in the meantime this, my Vienna, has been defended by others." (Luther was referring to Vienna's successful warding off of the Turk in 1529).<sup>30</sup> "Do not hope for unity or concession," Luther advised in a letter to his several colleagues at Augsburg on July 15. The emperor's party would not grant any.

"Our case has been made, and beyond this you will not accomplish anything better." So, come "home! home!"<sup>31</sup>

But the haggling went on, not least over the division of power between the secular and ecclesiastical realms. On this point Luther wrote to Melancthon (in full accord with what had been stated in the Augsburg Confession, especially Article XXVIII): "God's Word is the authority, and it commands that the two governments be preserved separate and unmixed."<sup>32</sup> In the meantime the papal theologians (Eck, *et al.*) scrambled to complete the confutation by Charles V's orders. It was miserably written and miserably supported from Scripture. Still it was being held threateningly over the heads of the Lutherans as an "official answer to the heretics." Luther, aware of the impact this pressure was bound to have, wrote to Elector John Frederick on August 26, 1530, with urgency: "Your Electoral Grace certainly knows that one of our principal tenets is that nothing is to be taught or done unless it is firmly based on God's Word." Thus, no concession could be made as regards "one kind" in the Sacrament of the Altar, for that was "a purely human invention, and was in no way confirmed by God's Word."<sup>33</sup> The same held true for the Mass as a sacrifice offered to God! In evident weariness Luther wrote September 8, 1530, to Katie, waiting patiently back in Wittenberg: "If only there will finally be an end to the diet. We have done and offered enough. The papists do not want to give a hair's breadth."<sup>34</sup>

On September 22, 1530, the emperor finally declared a recess, declaring that the Lutheran party had been given a fair hearing and that by April 15 of the next year (1531) they show cause why they should not be condemned in accordance with the so-called proof of their errors provided by the Confutation. The Elector of Saxony left with his party on the next day, September 23. Though they had not even been given a copy of the Confutation, Melancthon and others had made ample notes, and had, moreover, obtained a copy through friendly sources in Nuernberg. Melancthon's efforts to respond to this document led eventually to his Apology of the Augsburg Confession, in time for the April 15, 1531, deadline. It is now the companion document to the Augustana.

#### Luther's "Exhortation"

Luther's *Exhortation to All Clergy at Augsburg* has somewhat euphemistically been called Luther's "Augsburg Confession."<sup>35</sup> There is no doubt about its influence upon the Lutheran representatives. It was eagerly received, and still more eagerly read, as indicated above. It is tempered with genuine concern for "peace

and unity."<sup>36</sup> In a fatherly tone Luther urges less dependence upon human wisdom and clever maneuvers, and greater reliance upon God, who alone is truly wise. He defends the Lutheran side against the false charges of insidious and rebellious activities, like those of the sectarian and the *Schwaermer* spirits. Peace has been our goal, he asserts, along with the pure preaching of the Gospel, as God Himself commands in His Word. After clearly disproving the idea that the Lutherans could be dealt with as heretics, Luther cites in detail the abuses in Romanist teaching and practice that militate against the Gospel. First among these is the indulgence matter, a "shameful outrage and idolatry," in view of the fact that "the Gospel after all is the only true indulgence."<sup>37</sup> Once again he cites the gross distortions that came into the church as a result of the confession in the so-called Sacrament of Penance being used to control and manipulate souls. None values confession and absolution more than Luther, if it is left as the voluntary privilege of the sinner; but "that we should by our own works make satisfaction for sin, even against God," this, thunders Luther, "is the very worst and hell itself."<sup>38</sup> His criticism of the distortions of the Mass is equally as sharp; he rehearses the procedure by which God's sacramental gift to the communicants was turned into a sacrifice by men to God; and he wonders "that God could tolerate it so long."<sup>39</sup> Monkery has become so important in Romanist practice "that to become a monk is as good as to be baptized," Luther laments.<sup>40</sup> Ignorance of simple Biblical truth is so great that even the learned clergy do not really know the basics — the Decalog, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and their meaning. Luther thinks back to his ordination and exclaims in retrospect:

My suffragan bishop, when he made me a priest and put the cup in my hand, spoke these very words, "Receive power to sacrifice for the living and the dead." That the earth did not then swallow us both was unjust and due to God's all too great patience!<sup>41</sup>

The process of the excommunication of a manifest sinner, Luther further states, has been turned from its proper function of seeking to call the manifest sinner to repentance into a wanton, greedy mechanism for gaining a poor man's property.<sup>42</sup> Luther, in the *Exhortation*, again cites the Scriptural evidence against withholding the cup from the laity and forbidding the clergy to marry. As regards the latter, Luther challenges: "Now if it were true, as the dear canons blasphemously declare, that a pastor with a wife of his own cannot serve God, then this sixth commandment would really have to be repealed."<sup>43</sup> Luther does not oppose the idea of ecclesiastical machinery built on the bishops' administra-

tion of the church as such, but he reiterates a well-founded Scriptural principle that "there must be pastors, even if there were no longer bishops, canons, or monks."<sup>44</sup> Personally he has often found the demands of the pastoral office wearisome of the ingratitude of the people deplorable. He sighs: "I am so very tired of it."<sup>45</sup> But pastors for parishes there must be, by God's ordering of things. So, "if they do not want to be bishops in God's name [and provide pastors for the churches, in other words], let them be bathhouse keepers in the devil's name," he states in virtual exasperation over existing conditions in the church.<sup>46</sup>

In closing his *Exhortation* Luther drew up a list of some thirty points which closely parallel the articles treated by the Augsburg Confession, as also the Catechisms which had appeared in the previous year, 1529. Luther also sounded the cry for a proper hymnody for the people's worship. Luther's own "Ein Feste Burg" had appeared in that same year, 1529, in October. The last word added to the *Exhortation* was a reminder to the Catholic party, emperor and ecclesiastical prelate alike, that if force were to be used in the settlement of these religious issues, it would not be from the Lutheran side; and therefore it would be a burden which the consciences of the Romanists would have to bear.<sup>47</sup>

#### Luther — Primary Author

Philip Schaff is undoubtedly correct when he assesses the respective roles of Luther and Melancthon in the production of the Augsburg Confession as follows:

Luther thus produced the doctrinal matter of the Confession, while Melancthon's scholarly and methodical mind freely reproduced and elaborated it into its final shape and form, and his gentle, peaceful, compromising spirit breathed into it a moderate, conservative tone. In other words, Luther was the primary, Melancthon the secondary author, of the contents, and the sole author of the style and temper of the Confession.<sup>48</sup>

One may wish to debate whether such a clean division could actually be claimed between these two great spirits that loom behind the final product at Augsburg. Close examination of Luther's writings will demonstrate that much of the wording, if not the style, was as much his as Melancthon's. Who, for example, will ever challenge the incredible excellence of Luther's Small Catechism, as to both content and phrasing? Time has proven this to be one of the most precious literary gems of all times from every point of view. The Large Catechism is not far behind, on both counts, content and phrasing. These books, in turn, have to be seen and assessed in the context of the works that

preceded them, straight from the mind and pen of Luther himself, like the rightly famous *Ten Sermons on the Catechism*, of 1528. In turn, these were the third in the series of catechism sermons preached that year! And the story of Luther's sermonizing on the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer traces back all the way to the time when he became *Hilfspastor* at the *Stadtkirche* in Wittenberg. Nor may his sermon books, the *Postillen*, so extremely rich in pastoral and theological application, be discounted — nor his very influential personal prayer-book of 1522. One need only read to be convinced.

Then, when it comes to tracing the source of utterances concerning the abuses in the church in matters like indulgences; confessional practices; the so-called sacrament of penance; the Roman Mass, which to Luther was the greatest monstrosity and abomination; monastic orders; enforced celibacy; and the mixing of ecclesiastical power and secular power; one need only read through the treatises, sermons, lecture notes, and letters of Luther to find that every single complaint voiced publicly in the document of Augsburg had seen the light of day previously in one of Luther's works. He so lived out of the content of God's Holy Word, the Sacred Scriptures, that in everything that pertained to faith and life Luther had brought into the proper and true focus. For example, there is nothing said in the Augsburg Confession concerning ecclesiastical authority in relation to the secular realm which had not first been duly treated in Luther's numerous treatises on the Christian, or the church, in society.<sup>49</sup>

#### Luther's "Great Confession"

When all has been considered, however, Luther's greatest single contribution to the final shape of the Augsburg Confession, both in content and phrasing, must be sought in the closing part, the third section, of his "Great Confession," or *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*, of 1528. The document as a whole must rank as one of Luther's most profound theological pieces, side by side with the *De Servo Arbitrio* of 1525, written in answer to Erasmus. The "Great Confession" actually takes its name from its third section, in which Luther, item for item confesses his faith in simple, uncomplicated manner. In the first two parts his reasoning is highly polemical, often highly intricate, in defense of the real presence of Christ's true body and blood in the Lord's Supper. He thought of it as his final answer to the Sacramentarians, though it was destined to be followed by a number of others as the years rolled by. However, it remained his definitive effort on the subject.

At the same time, because he detected how closely a correct understanding of the Sacrament is interwoven with a correct view of the person and nature of Christ, the "Great Confession" is also one of the finest Christological pieces ever written. Little wonder that it is this document which is most often quoted, among all of Luther's works, by the framers of the Formula of Concord in 1577, especially in Articles VII and VIII on the Lord's Supper and Christ's person. Luther sensed how errors in doctrine tend to intersect, one with the other, as in the case of these two articles.

For that reason he felt the need, in the third and last part of his treatise, to make a brief summation of the articles of faith, because he saw how "schisms and errors are increasing proportionately with the passage of time."<sup>50</sup> This was his resolve:

I desire with this treatise to confess my faith before God and all the world, point by point. I am determined to abide by it until my death and (so help me God!) in this faith to depart from this world and to appear before the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>51</sup>

By that time he had already on numerous occasions experienced the galling and distasteful effect of people putting things in his mouth which in no way represented his true feelings and convictions. Therefore, he felt it was now time for him to state the articles of faith, as taught in Scripture and as held in his heart. This was his preamble:

Hence if any one shall say after my death, "If Luther were living now, he would teach and hold this or that article differently, for he did not consider it sufficiently," etc., let me say once and for all that by the grace of God I have most diligently traced all these articles through the Scriptures, have examined them again and again in the light thereof, and have wanted to defend all of them as certainly as I have now defended the sacrament of the altar. I am not drunk or irresponsible. I know what I am saying, and I well realize what this will mean for me before the Last Judgment at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>52</sup>

Since Luther alluded to his defense of the Lord's Supper, which covers some two hundred pages in the main body of the treatise, it would be interesting and pertinent to set his short statement of faith concerning the sacrament side by side with that which, by Melancthon's hand, finally appeared in the Augsburg Confession:

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In the same way I also say and confess that in the sacrament of the altar the true body and blood of Christ are orally eaten and drunk in the bread and wine, even if the priests who distribute them or those who receive them do not believe or otherwise misuse the sacrament. It does not rest on man's belief or unbelief but on the Word and ordinance of God — unless they first change God's Word and ordinance and misinterpret them, as the enemies of the sacrament do at the present time. They, indeed, have only bread and wine, for they do not also have the words and instituted ordinance of God but have perverted and changed it according to their own imagination.<sup>53</sup>

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X. Of the Lord's Supper they [the Lutheran Confessors] teach that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to those who eat in the Supper of the Lord; and they reject those that teach otherwise.

XIII. Of the Use of the Sacraments they teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments.

They therefore condemn those who teach that the Sacraments justify by the outward act, and who do not teach that, in the use of the Sacraments, faith which believes that sins are forgiven, is required.<sup>54</sup>

A comparison of these two statements will show evident similarities — also the obvious fact that the Confessors at Augsburg had to speak to the subject of the Lord's Supper with the Roman Catholic aberrations in mind, especially the *ex opere operato* theory of the sacrament; while in Luther's 1528 statement the concern is more for the Sacramentarians with their denial of the real presence of Christ's true body and blood. The brevity of Augustana X itself reminds one naturally of Luther's succinct, remarkably apt explanation of the nature and meaning of the Lord's Supper in the Small Catechism: "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us

Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.”

In similar way one can compare the statements on Christ's person:

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I believe and know that Scripture teaches us that the second person in the Godhead, viz., the Son, alone became true man, conceived by the Holy Spirit without the co-operation of man, and was born of the pure, holy Virgin Mary as of a real natural mother, all of which St. Luke clearly describes and the prophets foretold; so that neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit became man, as certain heretics have taught.

Also that God the Son assumed not a body without a soul, as certain heretics have taught, but also the soul, i.e., full, complete humanity, and was born the promised true seed or child of Abraham and of David and the son of Mary by nature, in every way and form a true man, as I am myself and every other man, except that he came without sin, by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary alone.

And that this man became true God, as one eternal, indivisible person, of God and man, so that Mary the holy Virgin is a real, true mother not only of the man Christ, as the Nestorians teach, but also of the Son of God, as Luke says, “The child to be born of you will be called the Son of

#### Augsburg Confession

III. Also they teach that *the Word*, that is, *the Son of God*, did assume *the human nature* in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are two natures, the divine and the human, inseparably conjoined in one Person, one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, that He might reconcile the Father unto us, and be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.

He also descended into hell, and truly rose again the third day; afterward He ascended into heaven that He might sit on the right hand of the Father, and forever reign and have dominion over all creatures, and sanctify them that believe in Him, by sending the Holy Ghost into their hearts, to rule, comfort, and quicken them, and to defend them against the devil and the power of sin.

The same Christ shall openly come again to judge the quick and the dead, etc., according to the Apostles' Creed.<sup>56</sup>

God," i.e., my Lord and the Lord of all, Jesus Christ, the only, true Son by nature of God and of Mary, true God and true man.

I believe also that this Son of God and of Mary, our Lord Jesus Christ, suffered for us poor sinners, was crucified, dead, and buried, in order that he might redeem us from sin, death, and the eternal wrath of God by His innocent blood; and that on the third day he arose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty, Lord over all lords, King over all kings and over all creatures in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, over death and life, over sin and righteousness.<sup>55</sup>

Every article of the Augsburg Confession can in this way be traced to statements in Luther's "Great Confession," sometimes virtually identical in length, often very close in wording. The content is all there, if the phrasing is not identical. One would have to be wearing blinders not to see the similarities and the dependence of the later confession on the earlier. Of course, as already stated, this one document was not the only source. However, it may rightly be termed *one* of the most significant, if not *the* most significant, antecedent of the final draft of the Augsburg Confession.

#### Conclusion

Luther's famous *Table Talk* has not really come into its own until recent times, as scholars, like Heiko Obermann, and others, give it more and more credibility and weight. Moreover, it was not really until after Augsburg that these intimate tidbits began to be gathered. Veit Dietrich, who weathered the ordeal with Luther at Coburg during those wearisome months of the Diet in 1530, was one of the first to make notes of Luther's comments, sermons, etc. He noted a comparison, for example, which Luther drew between Melanchthon's work on the Confession and all other theological writings, stating that "Philip's *Apologia* is superior to all the

doctors of the church, even to Augustine himself, [and also] Hilary, Theophylact, and Ambrose."<sup>57</sup> That, to say the least, is quite an accolade. For Luther what happened at Augsburg was like a miracle. Sometime around the second anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, in June of 1532, Veit Dietrich recorded the following remarks of Luther:

Our faith is an odd thing — that I should believe that that man who was hanged is the Son of God, although I have never seen him, known him, or met him. He is to be like a stone placed in the middle of the sea, a stone about which I know nothing except what the gospel says: I am the Lord. Well, then, if He says so, so be it! He has also demonstrated it at the diet in Augsburg, where the fury of all the kings and princes was arrayed against Him . . . Two whole years have now passed since one was compelled to say, "He is Christ!" And He will remain Christ a good deal longer. That great miracle at the diet is almost forgotten, as if it had never happened.<sup>58</sup>

Of course, this Luther never believed, that it would ever actually be forgotten. To him what God had accomplished there was "truly the last trump before the day of judgment."<sup>59</sup> God's Word had done it! The emperor and the pope "wanted to extinguish it, but the blaze grew and spread."<sup>60</sup> So it did, indeed. And it was to the Augustana that the Confessors in 1577-1580 turned in defense of their faith. We can state our need in no better, nor stronger, nor truer words:

Herewith we again whole-heartedly subscribe this Christian and thoroughly Scriptural Augsburg Confession, and we abide by the plain, clear, and pure meaning of its words. We consider this Confession a genuinely Christian symbol which all true Christians ought to accept next to the Word of God . . . Similarly we are determined by the grace of the Almighty to abide until our end by this repeatedly cited Christian Confession as it was delivered to Emperor Charles in 1530. And we do not intend, either in this or in subsequent doctrinal statements, to depart from the aforementioned Confession or to set up a different and new confession.<sup>61</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. Martin Luther, *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. Johann Georg Walch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1901), 17, pp. 1138 f.; Henry Eyster Jacobs, *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1912), pp. 69 ff.
2. The "winged jackdaws," or blackbirds, were both amusement and distraction to him while sequestered in safe-keeping, because of the imperial ban, at Coburg Castle. Cf. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, eds., *Luther's Works* (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and

- Fortress Press, 1955-1972), 49, pp. 287-295, for letters written to Melancthon and Spalatin on April 24, 1530.
3. For an English translation see H. E. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-98.
  4. Philip Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1899), I, pp. 233 f.
  5. He was at Coburg until October 13.
  6. Notable among Luther's productions during these months were his expositions of certain Psalms, especially his beautiful Commentary on Psalm 118, his favorite; translations of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets; and his treatise *On the Keys*; yet he complains that his time at Coburg was "a waste."
  7. Cf. the letter from Justus Jonas to Luther, June 13, 1530. *St. L.* 21a, 1477.
  8. *LW* 49, 298.
  9. Carolus Gottlieb Bretschneider, ed., *Corpus Reformatorum* (Halis: A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1835), II, p. 115. Also quoted in E. G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), p. 725. Margrave George's retort so shocked the emperor, in turn, that he exclaimed in his halting German, "Not cut off head! Not cut off head!"
  10. Margaret A. Currie, tr., *Letters of Martin Luther* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1908), p. 217.
  11. *LW* 49, 299. Letter of May 20, 1530.
  12. *LW* 49, 306.
  13. *LW* 49, 297.
  14. *Ibid.*
  15. *St. L.* 21a, 1471.
  16. In a letter to Luther, June 27, 1530, Justus Jonas reported that Charles V appeared to be very gracious, interested, and friendly at the time of the reading, that he listened attentively, and that several of the Catholic leaders nodded their approval; another report, however, speaks of the emperor nodding in slumber for a time — little wonder in a two-hour ordeal! *St. L.* 16, 883 f.
  17. *St. L.* 16, 882.
  18. *St. L.* 16, 896.
  19. See also his letter of June 26 to Camerarius, *St. L.* 16, 897.
  20. *LW* 49, 328.
  21. *Ibid.*, 330.
  22. *Ibid.*, 331 f.
  23. *St. L.* 16, 906, Comparing their different temperaments Luther states of Melancthon in his *Table Talk*: "Out of love Philip wants to be of service to everybody. If the papists came to me this way, I'd send them packing . . . Philip lets himself be devoured. I devour everything and spare no one. So God accomplishes the same thing in two different persons." *LW* 54, 355.
  24. *LW* 51, 204.
  25. *LW* 51, 205.
  26. *LW* 49, 336.
  27. *LW* 49, 343.
  28. *LW* 49, 348 ff.
  29. *LW* 49, 354.
  30. *LW* 49, 368 f.
  31. *LW* 49, 377.
  32. *LW* 49, 383.
  33. *LW* 49, 407.
  34. *LW* 49, 416 f.
  35. Cf. the editor's introduction to the treatise, *LW* 34, 7.

36. *Ibid.*, 10.
37. *Ibid.*, 16.
38. *Ibid.*, 19.
39. *Ibid.*, 22 ff. Luther later in his *Table Talk*, sometime in early 1532, comments concerning the Mass as sacrifice: "At the diet [Augsburg] the papists tried to frighten and threaten us. They wished us to agree that the mass is a sacrifice of praise merely to provide themselves with a subterfuge in the term 'sacrifice,' I'm ready to concede to them that the mass is a sacrifice of praise, provided they on their part concede that it's not only the priest at the altar but every communicant who sacrifices." *LW* 54, 139.
40. *Ibid.*, 28.
41. *Ibid.*, 30.
42. *Ibid.*, 33.
43. *Ibid.*, 42.
44. *Ibid.*, 44.
45. *Ibid.*, 50.
46. *Ibid.*, 52.
47. *Ibid.*, 60 f.
48. *Op. cit.*, 229.
49. A partial list here would include *Against Insurrection and Rebellion*, 1522; *Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed*, 1523; *Admonition to Peace*, 1525, *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*, 1525; *An Open Letter on the Harsh Book Against the Peasants*, 1525; *Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved*, 1526; *On War Against the Turk*, 1529; Commentary on Psalm 82, 1530, produced while Luther was at the Coburg. To this list would have to be added those equally significant works which Luther produced on marriage, economics, education, and other matters relevant to the Christian citizen's daily life in the sixteenth century.
50. *LW* 37, 360.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. *LW* 37, 367.
54. AC X and XIII; *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), pp. 47, 49. All references to the Lutheran Confessions are from this edition, unless otherwise noted.
55. *LW* 37, 362.
56. AC III; *Triglotta*, p. 45.
57. *LW* 54, 34.
58. *LW* 54, 39 f.
59. *LW* 54, 186.
60. *Ibid.*
61. FC Preface 4-5; Theodore G. Tappert, tr. and ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 502.

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## Germany during the Reformation

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### Germany During the Reformation

#### Luther's Cause

The Reformation in Germany was varied and complex, but for this course we shall divide it into three sections: the Lutheran Reformation, the Calvinist Reformation (sometimes called the Second Reformation), and the era of the Thirty Years War. The first period extends from 1517 to 1555, the second from 1555 to 1618, and the third from 1618 to 1648. You should not think of these three periods as being completely distinct. Lutheran reforming sentiment did not suddenly end in 1555, and there were Calvinists in Germany prior to that date; nor did religious war in Germany begin only in 1618. The divisions are for convenience of discussion and to point out trends in the various movements.

For a discussion of the first steps in the Reformation, you should refer to the essay on Luther. The present essay looks at events beyond Luther's immediate circle.

#### Early Years

The initial spread of Luther's ideas produced chaos, dissent, and rebellion, which naturally only confirmed in the minds of staunch Catholics their belief that religious dissent brought civil war as well as spiritual peril. Luther himself called for German resistance to the papacy in nationalist terms, and the call was quickly answered.

In 1522, knights in the Rhineland rebelled. They claimed to be loyal to the emperor, to be defending his rights in Germany, but in truth they were trying to defend their own, for the lower orders of knights in Germany had long been suffering both economically and socially. Many of these also had been persuaded to Lutheranism, and so almost from the beginning religious dissent and political rebellion became entangled.

The revolt of the knights was quickly suppressed, but soon after a peasant revolt broke out in southern Germany (1524). This revolt spread rapidly in breadth and severity. Here, too, many of the rebels cited Luther's ideas or professed Lutheran sympathies. This rebellion was finally crushed in 1525.

By the later 1520s, Lutheranism spread more peacefully, usually when a prince or a city council formally adopted Luther's ideas and formally suppressed the Catholic Church within their jurisdiction. Although this progress was not marked by violence, it still constituted a flagrant disregard and defiance of established authority (the Emperor and the Church). Becoming Lutheran was not a step taken lightly or without cost.

### The Reformation Spreads

It is worth recounting the way in which a town or principality "went Lutheran". While the details varied, and the variations are interesting and illustrative, I shall here reduce them to a standard account.

At the courts, the prince might decide that this Luther fellow had some interesting ideas; or, it might be the prince's wife or other relative who expressed a serious interest. The prince would bring in a preacher with Lutheran sympathies; he might keep his Catholic confessor as well, allowing the minister only to preach sermons, or he might openly dismiss the priests. The most convinced went further, confiscating Church property, dissolving the monasteries and nunneries, and bringing in Lutheran ministers.

Much the same happened in the cities. The city council was the key player here, and most city councils were dominated by a handful of families. If sufficient number of these families were of Lutheran sympathy, then the city might invite Lutheran preachers in. These would actually preach in the local cathedral; the Catholic church had a long tradition of guest speakers that could go further than the local priest or bishop dared.

If the preachers met with a favorable reception, then the city might go further. They might allow Lutheran congregations to worship openly, usually in private homes. The city might sponsor public debates between Catholic and Protestant authorities. And, as with the princes, a city might go further and decide to put an end to Catholic practices altogether.

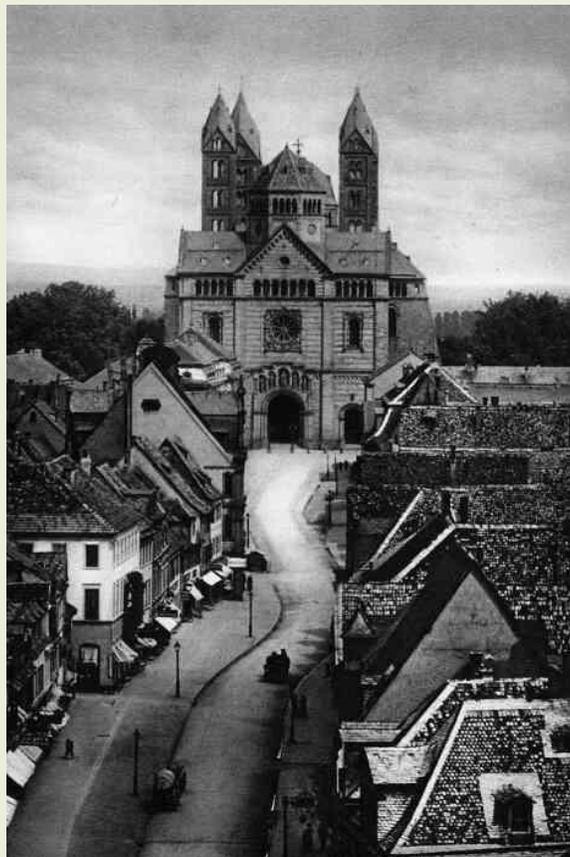
The city council would declare all Church property forfeit. The monks and nuns were ordered out, to find jobs or else to leave the city. Often provision would be made for elderly nuns and monks, who might be allowed to live out their lives in the cloister even though the monastery itself was converted to other purposes. At the same time, the city founded schools, to replace the cathedral school; this marked the true beginnings of public education in Europe. The council also put

Lutheran ministers on the public payroll, there being no Church fiscal system with which to fund them.

In the countryside, the Reformation spread more erratically. Lutheran ideas came often from itinerant preachers. Sometimes these co-existed with the existing Catholic structure, but other times the priests were driven away by the peasants or by the local landlord. As in the cities, the peasants wanted the right to choose their own ministers.

#### The Protestants

As the Reformation spread piecemeal throughout Germany, a larger issue loomed; namely, the conflict between Lutheran princes and the Catholic emperor. Luther himself did not want a separate religion, but a thorough-going reform of the one true church. The German princes who were sympathetic (and there were many who were not), likewise wanted a reform of the Church, but they looked to their emperor to provide it.



The cathedral of Speyer

The emperor, however, wanted none of it. He was a faithful Catholic who believed that kings had no place in matters of theology. When he called an imperial diet at Speyer in 1529, he specifically forbade any mention of religion or of Luther.

Some objected strongly to this position. They knew the emperor needed money and men, and they saw this diet as their best chance to bring their demands for religious reform out into the open. This was precisely what Charles did not want, and he rejected every plea along those lines.

Fourteen of the German lords refused to attend the Diet of Speyer. They sent a letter to the emperor protesting his decision and detailing their concerns. These lords became stamped by their signing this letter of protest. It is ironic that the term Protestant derives from some political maneuvering in the German Empire, and that it is applied to all the many offshoots of Lutheranism, however far removed.

#### Religious Tensions

In 1531, Charles V decided that he would have to use force to crush Lutheranism in the Empire. By this time, there were Lutheran princes throughout Germany and Charles was concerned about his ability to rule. Reason had been tried; it was time for force.

Charles' decision led the Lutheran princes to form a defensive alliance of their own, known as the League of Schmalkalden. It looked like war would break out any time, but in 1532 Charles agreed at the Diet of Regensburg to suspend actions against the Protestants in exchange for military support against the Turks.



## Regensburg

All during the 1530s, both Catholics and Lutherans continued to hope for a general church council might settle the controversies once and for all. When the pope finally set a council for 1537 at Mantua, it precipitated a crisis among the Protestants. Could they attend a council called by the pope? Wouldn't that legitimize the pope? On the other hand, did they dare refuse?

The Protestant princes ended by refusing to attend, not on religious but on political grounds. To attend would be to bind themselves to the decisions of the Council and this they would not do. The Council of Mantua did meet, but it was lightly attended, accomplished nothing, and was adjourned in 1539.

These maneuverings and hopes did at least keep war at bay for some years. The Catholic League was formed in 1537, but in 1539 there was a further interim peace between the emperor and the Protestants.

In 1541, at the Diet of Regensburg, Charles made a serious effort at compromise. Martin Bucer was there, as were John Calvin and Philip Melancthon. Cardinal Contarini was there to represent the pope. Despite best efforts, neither side could yield on crucial points, and the effort failed. With the Catholic League now ranged against the League of Schmalkalden, open war seemed inevitable.

### Religious War

Charles had other matters to attend to, first, however. Two years elapsed while he was in Italy, Algeria, Spain, and the Netherlands. The pope called another general council in 1545, this time at Trent. Again the Protestants refused to attend, and the Council of Trent went on to be the defining moment in the so-called Catholic Reformation.

With the other areas of his empire finally secure, Charles could finally concentrate on the Protestant powers. In February 1546, just before war broke out, Martin Luther died. But the forces he had unleashed had long passed beyond his control, and his death did not ease tensions.



## Augsburg

The League of Schmalkalden raised 50,000 men and 7,000 cavalry. They had a common commander, but they were not united either physically or in spirit. Charles swept the forces of the League before him. He captured Memmingen, Biberach, Esslingen, Reutlingen, and Frankfurt in the first year. Augsburg and Strassburg, two key centers of reform, fell in 1547. On 24 April 1547, Charles won the Battle of Muhlberg, capturing Duke John Frederick of Saxony. Philip of Hesse surrendered on 20 June.

Charles' victory was so decisive that it looked as if the Protestants might be crushed. The prospect of a united Germany so alarmed the French that they entered the war, and in 1552 a French army invaded Germany. By 1554, the Protestants had regained much of the lost ground.

The Peace of Augsburg in 1555 settled the matter. It was an arrangement between Catholics and Lutherans only—Calvinists, Anabaptists and others were anathema to both sides. By the terms of the Peace, every principality in Germany would

adhere to whatever faith was held by its prince—the phrase in Latin was *cuius regio, eius religio* (whose kingdom, his religion).

The Peace of Augsburg did not settle the religious conflict in Germany; rather, it was a declared truce. Both sides were exhausted and no one could see a way out, so everyone accepted matters as they stood.

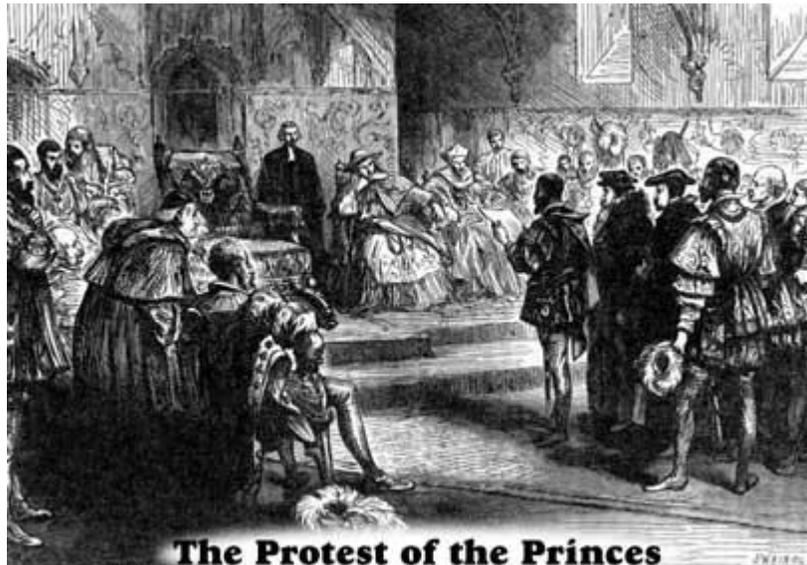
The result was that religious conflict in Germany did not break out into general war for another sixty years. When it did, though, the resulting war was devastating.

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## The Protest of the Princes

[http://beaconoftruth.net/christian\\_heritage/germany/protest\\_princes.html](http://beaconoftruth.net/christian_heritage/germany/protest_princes.html)

### The Protest of the Princes



King Ferdinand begged the Protestant princes to accept the decree, assuring them that this would be most pleasing to the emperor. Respectfully they replied that they were willing to obey the emperor in everything that contributed to maintaining the peace and the honor of God, and withdrew for deliberation. The crisis was a momentous one and the princes fully understood the gravity of their situation. Much rested on the outcome of their decision. They realized that they themselves could be left alone to follow their religious convictions without the fear of having to face dire threat, but in doing so, they would be denying the gospel commission and surrendering the rights of conscience throughout Christendom. Should they agree, they reasoned, how could they plead that they were innocent of the blood of the thousands who, in pursuance of this arrangement, would be forced to yield up their lives in popish lands? This they could not do and rather than betray the cause of the gospel at this hour of supreme test, they would rather sacrifice their dominions, their titles, and their own lives.

On April 18, the diet met once again. King Ferdinand seeking to wrap up the matter thanked the Catholic members of the Diet for having voted the proposition. He continued by informing the members that the sentiments passed would shortly be contained in an imperial edict that would be published throughout the Empire. Then, turning to the Protestant princes, he

pointed out that the Diet having decided and voted on the matter, it remained only for them to submit to the decision of the majority.

The Protestant members not having anticipated such a haughty and abrupt end of the matter, retired to frame a response. Ferdinand, however, refused to wait for their answer and left the Diet. It mattered not to him what the Lutheran princes might say, he had but one word for them—Submit. “To no purpose they sent a deputation entreating the king to return. “It is a settled affair,” repeated Ferdinand; “submission is all that remains.” This refusal completed the schism: it separated Rome from the Gospel. Perhaps more justice on the part of the empire and of the papacy might have prevented the rupture that since then has divided the Western Church.” D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, Book 13, Chapter 5

The following day, April 19, the Diet held its last meeting. The Elector of Saxony and his friends entered the hall. Ferdinand being gone, his chair was empty but that did not in the least detract from the validity nor the splendor of what followed. Though the king was not there personally, the princes did not lose sight of the audience they were addressing. They spoke not just to those then present, nor only to the states they represented, but to the emperor, Christendom, and the ages yet to come. The elector speaking for himself, and on behalf of the princess who stood with him, and indeed for the whole of the Reformation, proceeded to read a Declaration.

“We protest by these presents, before God, our only Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Saviour, and who will one day be our Judge, as well as before all men and all creatures, that we, for us and our people, neither consent nor adhere in any manner whatever to the proposed decree in anything that is contrary to God, to his Word, to our right conscience, or to the salvation of our souls. . . . We cannot assert that when Almighty God calls a man to his knowledge, he dare not embrace that divine knowledge. . . . There is no true doctrine but that which conforms to the Word of God. The Lord forbids the teaching of any other faith. The Holy Scriptures, with one text explained by other and plainer texts, are, in all things necessary for the Christian, easy to be understood, and adapted to enlighten. We are therefore resolved by divine grace to maintain the pure preaching of God's only Word, as it is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, without anything added thereto. This word is the only truth. It is the sure rule of all doctrine and life, and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the powers of hell, whilst all the vanities that are set up against it shall fall before the face of God.”

"We therefore reject the yoke that is imposed upon us." "At the same time we are in expectation that his imperial majesty will behave toward us like a Christian prince who loves God above all things; and we declare ourselves ready to pay unto him, as well as unto you, gracious lords, all the affection and obedience that are our just and legitimate duty."

*D'Aubgine, History of the Reformation, Book 13, Chapter 6*

A deep impression was made upon the Diet. By their protest, the princes had lifted the power of conscience above that of the State, and the authority of the Holy Scriptures above the visible church. They presented a solemn witness against religious intolerance, and an assertion of the right of all men to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

But a few years had passed since Luther stood and said No before the Diet of Worms. Now it was no longer one lone man, but princes and ministers who had refused to bow before the tyranny of Rome. Few, if any, understood the significance of what had taken place.

Though the Protestant princes had been denied a hearing by Ferdinand, they were yet to be granted the opportunity to present their cause before the emperor. In an attempt to quiet the dissensions that had disturbed the empire, Charles V determined to convoke a Diet at Augsburg over which he would preside in person and to which the Protestant leaders were summoned to appear.

Great dangers threatened the Reformation and the Elector of Saxony was urged by his councilors not to appear at the Diet. Seeing only a snare being laid by which as the result of some, as for yet unseen circumstances, the emperor might avail himself of the situation to take all his enemies in one cast of the net.

The chancellor, however, remained firm and refused to be intimidated, asserting that the princes only need remain firm to their convictions and God would save the cause.

Returning to Germany after an absence of nine years, what must Charles' thought have been as he gazed down from the northern slopes of the Tyrolese Alps upon the German plains below. During the years that had elapsed since his last visit, how little had he reaped.

As he thought of the Wittenberg movement, which he was advancing to confront, he must have had some misgivings. Though he had won victories over Francis, and even over the pope, he had won none over Luther. Each advance step he had taken against the intrepid monk had only resulted in

strengthening his cause. When he had fulminated his ban against him at the Diet of Worms, he little doubted but that a few weeks, or months at the most, and he would have the satisfaction of seeing that ban executed and the Rhine bearing away the ashes of Luther as a hundred years before it had those of Huss. How different had been the outcome. His ban, if it had consigned Luther to a brief captivity, had but resulted in removing him from all other distractions and allowed him liberate the Word of God, imprisoned in a dead language, so that it was now freely available to all in the mother tongue.

A second time he had essayed to destroy the monk and the movement of Wittenberg by convoking a Diet of the Empire at Spires in 1526. Again, the results had been just the opposite of that which he had planned. Rather than resulting in the destruction of the cause he had intended to crush, it resulted in an edict of toleration, and henceforward the propagation of Protestant truth throughout the dominions of the princes was to go on under sanction of the Diet, now surrounded by legal securities.

Twice had he failed but undaunted, Charles made third attempt. In 1529 he convoked the Diet anew at Spires. Sending a threatening message from Spain commanding the princes, by the obedience they owed him as emperor, and under peril of ban, to execute the edict against Luther, he awaited news of the outcome. It was now that the Lutheran princes unfurled their great Protest, and took up that position in the Empire and before all Christendom which they have ever since, through all variety of fortune, maintained. Every attempt of the emperor to destroy the detested cause results in infusing new life into the movement, moving it onward.

Even the dullest mind could not fail to perceive that these most extraordinary events, in which everything meant for the destruction of the Protestant movement turned out for its furtherance, did not originate with Luther. Nor were there any within the Protestant movement with either the sagacity or power to have effected such outcomes. In these events we behold the footprints of One is "wonderful in counsel, excellent in working."

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## Ulrich Zwingli

<http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/the-reformation/ulrich-zwingli/>

# Ulrich Zwingli

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Ulrich Zwingli was a Swiss Protestant leader in the Reformation. Ulrich Zwingli is not as famous as the likes as Martin Luther or John Calvin but he did play his part in the break with the Roman Catholic Church.

Ulrich (sometimes spelt Huldreich) Zwingli was born in 1484. He attended universities at Basle and Vienna and served as a parish priest in Glarus, Switzerland. Zwingli went with soldiers from Glarus to fight in the Habsburg-Valois Wars and between 1516 and 1518 he started to question the whole issue of Catholicism as Humanism started to make an impression on him. It is possible that Zwingli did not read any Lutheran literature until he moved in 1518 to Zurich as a Common Preacher (Leutpriester) at the Great Minster. It was at the Great Minster that Zwingli stated what is called the Zurich Reformation with sermons that were based on the Bible. Zwingli soon converted the city's council to his points of view. The council pushed the city into becoming a stronghold of Protestantism and Zurich's lead was followed by Berne and Basle.

Zwingli's '67 Articles' were adopted by Zurich as the city's official doctrine and the city experienced rapid reform. Preaching and Bible readings – known as prophesyings – were made more frequent; images and relics were frowned on, clerical marriage was allowed, monks and nuns were encouraged to come out of their isolated existence, monasteries were dissolved and their wealth was used to fund education and poor relief. In 1525, Zurich broke with Rome and the Mass became a very simple ceremony using both bread and blood which merely represented the body and blood of Christ. The church of Zwingli attempted to control moral behaviour and strict supervision became common in Zurich.

As with Martin Luther and John Calvin, the problem Zwingli faced was that some people were concerned that he had gone too far too soon while others, especially the Anabaptists, felt that he had not gone far enough. The Anabaptists were dealt with when Zwingli fell in with the city's magistrates and supported the move to exile the Anabaptists or if they refused to leave the city, deal with them in another way – drowning.

Zwingli and Luther met at Marburg in 1529 in an attempt to unite the Protestant faiths. This meeting failed to do this. Both men could not reach an agreement on what Christ said at the Last Supper. Luther believed that 'this is my body' meant just that whereas Zwingli believed that 'my' meant signifies. Such disunity among the Protestant faiths only served to encourage the Catholic Church that the Counter-Reformation was having an impact.

Though Zurich became a stronghold of Protestantism, the areas surrounding the city remained wary of a resurgent Catholic Church. They also feared that Zurich might become too powerful and assert its city powers within these regions. Also the area around Zurich was famed for the mercenaries it provided and such a 'profession' was frowned on by Zwingli. In 1529, these areas around Zurich formed the Christian Union and joined with the catholic Austrian monarchy. Zwingli preached a religious war against them and two campaigns were launched in 1529 and 1531. Zwingli was killed at the Battle of Kappel in October 1531. His work was continued by his son-in-law, Heinrich Bullinger.

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# The Evangelical Debate over the Person of Christ in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century: Luther and Zwingli at Marburg (1529)

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## The Evangelical Debate Over the Person of Christ in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century: Luther and Zwingli at Marburg (1529)

Evangelical Theological Society  
November 19-21, 2003

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One of the tragedies of Christian history is that so much of it is characterized by divisions - between east and west, Protestants and Catholics, Lutherans and Reformed, Calvinists and Arminians, etc. etc. To a certain extent - at least here in pluralistic America - we have long since learned to live with these divisions, but at a conference like this - devoted to Jesus but also dealing with more recent divisions in the evangelical community about the nature of God - it is worth recalling that differences among evangelicals regarding the person and work of our Lord go all the way back to the progenitors of the Protestant movement, Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli. Their dispute in the 1520's led to confessional differences between Lutheran and Reformed churches in the sixteenth century<sup>1</sup> - differences that are still evident today in the publications of members of the Evangelical Theological Society.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., "Therefore now not only as God, but also as man, he [Christ] knows all things, can do all things, is present to all creatures, has under his feet and in his hand all things which are in heaven, in the earth, and under the earth," "Formula of Concord" (Lutheran) in Philip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983) 3:152; and "According to his [Christ's] human nature, he is now not upon earth; but according to his Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit, he is at no time absent from us," "Heidelberg Catechism" (Reformed) in Schaff 3:322.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Millard J. Erickson, "If we take 'This is my body' and 'This is my blood' literally, a problem results....This would have been something of a denial of the incarnation, which limited his physical human nature to one location, *Introducing Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 355; and David P. Scaer, "What is distinctively Lutheran is the understanding that...the man Jesus...always possesses the divine majesty with all of God's attributes," *Christology* (Ft. Wayne: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, 1989), 30.

But how did this happen and why? To answer these questions is the purpose of this paper.

To begin with, it's important to note that, like the members of this society, both reformers recognized the ultimate authority of the Scriptures; and the debate that culminated at Marburg in 1529<sup>3</sup> was between two champions of biblical authority in the Church. Although the Marburg Articles that were signed by both men at the end of their meeting do not include a specific article regarding the Scriptures, the thirteenth article does say that tradition or human ordinances may be freely kept or abolished in accordance with the needs of the people, "provided they do not plainly contradict the word of God."<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, most of the Marburg debate revolved about the meaning of specific Bible passages, since for both men, the doctrine of the eucharist had to proceed from the Holy Scriptures. Patristic evidence was definitely secondary.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The Marburg Colloquy and the events leading up to it have been studied frequently. The most exhaustive treatment is that of Walther Köhler, *Zwingli und Luther: Ihr Streit über das Abendmahl nach seinen politischen und religiösen Beziehungen*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Verein für Reformationsgeschichte, 1924). The standard biographies of both Luther and Zwingli also cover it, e.g., Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521-1532* (Minn.: Fortress Press, 1990), 325-34, and G. R. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 316-32. There is a good introduction in Hans J. Hillerbrand, ed., *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, 4 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), s.v. "Marburg, Colloquy of." A monograph in English that is particularly useful on account of its efforts to reconstruct the debate as well as for its discussion of the issues is Hermann Sasse, *This Is My Body: Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar*, rev. ed. (Adelaide, Australia: Lutheran Publishing House, 1977).

<sup>4</sup> The Marburg Articles can be found in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vols. 1- (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1883- ) 30<sup>III</sup>:160-71 (hereafter cited as WA). Unless otherwise noted, the English translation in this essay is from Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, eds., *Luther's Works*, 55 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, and Phil.: Fortress Press, 1955-86) (hereafter cited as LW). The Marburg Articles can be found in LW 38:85-89. For this particular citation, see LW 38:88 (WA 30<sup>III</sup>:168.1-8).

Although no official minutes of the colloquy were taken, there are several accounts of the proceedings from the period that are still extant. These can be found in WA 30<sup>III</sup>:110-159 and are translated in LW 38:15-85. Both collections provide introductions to the various documents.

<sup>5</sup> According to the account of Andreas Osiander (LW 38:64; WA 30<sup>III</sup>:141.7-9), the two sides agreed that they would "refrain from mentioning the fathers until the

Both Luther and Zwingli had much earlier affirmed the normative authority of the Scriptures apart from an official ecclesiastical interpretation. Zwingli, for example, in his *Archeteles* (1522) had promised, “We will test everything by the touchstone of the Gospel and the fire of Paul. Where we find anything that is in conformity with the Gospel, we will preserve it; where we find something that does not conform to it, we will put it out....Because one must obey God rather than man.”<sup>6</sup> Luther too in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520) had insisted, “It is not right to give out as divinely instituted what was not divinely instituted. ...We ought to see that every article of faith of which we boast is certain, pure, and based on clear passages of Scripture.”<sup>7</sup>

Since both men were committed to the Scriptures as the Word of God and employed them as the source and norm of their theology, it has always been a source of dismay to evangelicals that they differed so profoundly over their understanding of two critical issues. Although the principal point of disagreement between Luther and Zwingli was whether Christ’s body and blood were truly present in the eucharist, their controversy also revealed different understandings of the person of Christ. But how could this be if they really accepted Scriptural authority? By examining their writings leading up to their face to face meeting at Marburg in 1529 as well

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sacred and divine Scripture had been first dealt with.” Regarding the fathers, Luther is quoted by Caspar Hedio (LW 38:33) as saying at Marburg, “When the fathers speak, they are to be accepted in accordance with the canon of Scripture. Whatever they appear to write contrary to Scripture must either be interpreted or be rejected.” See also Sasse, 212.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Gottfried W. Locher, *Zwingli’s Thought: New Perspectives* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 155 note 40. For original, see *Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke*, vols. 1- (Berlin: C. A. Schwetschke, 1905-) (hereafter cited as Z) 1:319.6-11. For Zwingli’s attitude toward the authority of the Scriptures, see W. P. Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 51-58.

<sup>7</sup> *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, LW 36:107 (WA 6:560.26-29). For Luther’s attitude toward the authority of the Scriptures, see Eugene F. Klug, *From Luther to Chemnitz on Scripture and the Word* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1971), 51-75.

as what they said in that encounter, one can see that other concerns intruded themselves as each side developed a scriptural argument regarding the person of Christ.

The principal responsibility for introducing the question of the person of Christ into the eucharistic discussion resides with Zwingli and his supporters. For his part, Luther, in his early writings on the sacrament directed mainly at his papal opponents, affirms the bodily presence of Christ in the elements of bread and wine without explaining how this is possible in view of the true humanity of our Lord. Nevertheless, in his attacks upon Rome's teachings, Luther takes the same basic approach that he would take in his argument with the Swiss.

In his *Babylonian Captivity* (1520), for example, as Luther takes issue with communion in one kind, transubstantiation, and the sacrifice of the mass, we find the same themes that would characterize the later controversy. Thus, Luther rejects a sacramental understanding of John 6 and instead insists that one derive eucharistic doctrine from the words of institution recorded in the synoptic gospels and St. Paul. Luther writes:

On [these words] we must rest; on them we must build as on a firm rock, if we would not be carried about by the wicked doctrines of men who reject the truth. For in these words nothing is omitted that pertains to the completeness, the use, and the blessing of this sacrament; and nothing is included that is superfluous and not necessary for us to know.<sup>8</sup>

In rejecting transubstantiation, Luther also argues that there is no need for an explanation of how the body and blood are present in the sacrament. "Why," he asks, "do we not put aside such curiosity and cling simply to the words of Christ, willing to remain in ignorance of what takes place here and content that the real body of

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<sup>8</sup> *Babylonian Captivity*, LW 36:37 (WA 6:513.6-11). For his opinion regarding John 6, see LW 36:19-20 (WA 6:502).

Christ is present by virtue of the words?”<sup>9</sup> Exactly the position he would later take with Zwingli.

Scholastic theologians wrestled with the question of how the bread and body, wine and blood related to one another. They ended up with the answer, “transubstantiation” – the substances of the earthly elements change into the substances of the heavenly while the accidents (quantity, appearance, etc.) remain constant. Later, Zwingli would give an entirely different answer. But in arguing against either, Luther contents himself with the *Verba* – “This is my body” – and relies on the power of God to accomplish what His Word says:

For my part, if I cannot fathom how the bread is the body of Christ, yet I will take my reason captive to the obedience of Christ, and clinging simply to his words, firmly believe not only that the body of Christ is in the bread, but that the bread is the body of Christ. My warrant for this is the words which say: “...Take, eat, this (that is, this bread, which he had taken and broken) is my body.”

After all, as Luther also says, “The authority of God’s Word is greater than the capacity of our intellect to grasp it.”<sup>10</sup>

For Luther in 1520 as later, efforts to explain the mystery of the Real Presence are beside the point. Even though Luther does offer a few additional arguments in the *Babylonian Captivity* in support of his views, this should not obscure his principal contention that “the real body of Christ is present by virtue of the words” and that one must not expect fully to understand how God works.<sup>11</sup>

Only at one point in this early work does Luther resort to christology and then very briefly in order to illustrate the union of bread and body in the sacrament by means of the union of the divine and human in one Christ. Luther writes:

<sup>9</sup> *Babylonian Captivity*, LW 36:33 (WA 6:510.32-34).

<sup>10</sup> *Babylonian Captivity*, LW 36:34, 35 (WA 6:511.18-23, 38-39).

<sup>11</sup> *Babylonian Captivity*, LW 36:33 (WA 6:510.34-35).

What is true in regard to Christ is also true in regard to the sacrament. In order for the divine nature to dwell in him bodily, it is not necessary for the human nature to be transubstantiated....Both natures are simply there in their entirety, and it is truly said: "This man is God; this God is man." Even though philosophy cannot grasp this, faith grasps it nonetheless....In like manner, it is not necessary in the sacrament that the bread and wine be transubstantiated...in order that the real body and real blood may be present. But both remain there at the same time, and it is truly said: "This bread is my body; this wine is my blood," and vice versa."<sup>12</sup>

At this point in Luther's thinking, the personal union simply models the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament. Only later would he suggest that the former is a precondition for the latter.

By that time, however, Zwingli was already contending that the reverse was true: the personal union rendered the bodily presence impossible. Since Christ was true man as well as true God, His body *could not* be present in the sacrament. According to W. P. Stephens, Zwingli first employed this argument from the human nature of Christ against the Real Presence in his 1526 treatise (in German), *On the Lord's Supper*.<sup>13</sup> For some time prior to that, he had already rejected the bodily presence of Christ in the supper and had been arguing for a symbolic understanding of the *Verba*, i.e., "This is my body" means "This signifies my body." John 6 had been crucial to his thinking, and Cornelius Honius<sup>14</sup> had opened up to

<sup>12</sup> *Babylonian Captivity*, LW 36:35 (WA 6:511.34-512.2).

<sup>13</sup> "On the Lord's Supper" in G. W. Bromiley, ed. and trans., *Zwingli and Bullinger* (Phil.: Westminster Press, 1953), 185-238. For original, see Z 4:789-862.

Zwingli's principal writings directed against Luther's eucharistic doctrine are: (1) *A Friendly Exegesis* (1527) (Z 5:562-758); (2) *A Friendly Answer* (1527) (Z 5:771-94); (3) *Zwingli's Christian Reply* (1527) (Z 5:805-977); and (4) *Two Replies to Luther's Book* (1528) (Z 6<sup>11</sup>:22-248). There are modern German versions of (3) and (4) in Joh. Georg Walch, *Dr. Martin Luthers sämtliche Schriften*, 23 vols., 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1880-1910) (hereafter cited as W<sup>2</sup>) 20:1122-1229, 1228-1473.

<sup>14</sup> For Honius, see OED, s.v. "Hoen, Cornelis Henricxzoen." His treatise is available in Z 4:512-19 and in English translation in Heiko Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation: The Shape of Late Medieval Thought Illustrated by Key Documents* (Phil.: Fortress Press, 1981), 268-78.

him the possibilities of reinterpreting the “is” in the words of institution. But now, in pursuit of additional reasons for rejecting a literal reading of the *Verba*, he resorts to classical christology.<sup>15</sup>

Zwingli introduces this new line of thought by showing the implications of the creed for the eucharistic presence. He is convinced that the ascension of our Lord, His sitting on the Father’s right hand, and His visible return to judgment all militate against His bodily presence in the eucharist. But he bases this conclusion on his understanding of the person of Christ. First of all, these credal affirmations are true only of the humanity of Christ, as he says, “When we read in Mark 16 that Christ was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God we have to refer this to his *human nature*, for according to his divine nature he is eternally omnipresent [emphasis mine].”<sup>16</sup>

For Zwingli, thus carefully distinguishing between the two natures in the one person is essential to making sense out of the Scriptures which on the one hand, promise the abiding presence of Christ with the faithful as in Matthew 28 (“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”), but on the other, say that He is not here as in Matthew 26 (“Ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always”). In order for both kinds of statements to be true, they must be understood as applying to each nature separately. However much Christ is present everywhere in His divinity, He is present in only one place according to His humanity. According to the Scriptures as confessed in the creed, that place is heaven;

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<sup>15</sup> Stephens, 227-38. See also Köhler 1:306. Christology continues to be a major argument in his subsequent contributions to the eucharistic debate. See, for example, Zwingli’s first major work written directly against Luther, *Friendly Exegesis, that is, Exposition of the Matter of the Eucharist to Martin Luther*, in H. Wayne Pipkin, ed. and trans., *Huldrych Zwingli Writings*, 2 vols. (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1984) 2:251, 266, 303, 305, 317-19, 319-36, 338-42.

<sup>16</sup> *On the Lord’s Supper*, 213 (Z 4:828.11-15).

and therefore, according to Zwingli, “the body and blood of Christ cannot be present in the sacrament.”<sup>17</sup>

For Luther, the obvious answer to this objection to the bodily presence is the almighty power of God. In his most comprehensive contribution to the eucharistic debates, his *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper* (1528), Luther writes:

I do not want to deny in any way that God’s power is able to make a body be simultaneously in many places, even in a corporeal and circumscribed manner. For who wants to try to prove that God is unable to do that? Who has seen the limits of his power? The fanatics may indeed think that God is unable to do it, but who will believe their speculations?<sup>18</sup>

For Zwingli, however, this appeal to divine omnipotence misses the point. It is not a question of what God *can* do but of what God *wills* to do, “The omnipotence of God accomplishes all things according to the Word of God: it never does that which is contrary to that Word....For because a thing is possible to God it does not follow that it is.”<sup>19</sup>

But what is the will of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, regarding a bodily presence in the sacrament? That is the question for Zwingli in this matter, and his christology – not the *Verba*<sup>20</sup> – provides the answer. For it was God’s will for the second person of the Godhead to become a true human being, and every true human being has a body, and an essential property of a body is that it be in one place. This is as true after the Resurrection as it was before. “We will now prove to them from the Word of God,” he promises,

<sup>17</sup> *On the Lord’s Supper*, 214 (Z 4:830.19-20).

<sup>18</sup> *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper*, LW 37:224 (WA 26:336.32-36). See also pp. 207, 209, and 213.

<sup>19</sup> *On the Lord’s Supper*, 215 (Z 4:831.23-25). See also, *Friendly Exegesis*, 314.

<sup>20</sup> In fact, Zwingli calls Jesus’ statement, “This is my body,” “obscure...and contradicted by the clear sayings,” *On the Lord’s Supper*, 215 (Z 4:831.15-16). In his *Friendly Exegesis*, 342 (Z 5:710.20-23), Zwingli makes the following point, “Everybody know what ‘this’ means, and ‘is’ and ‘body’ and ‘my,’ but the sentence is not necessarily plain because it consists of such plain words.”

“that it is not possible for the body of Christ to be in many or all places at one and the same time, but that even after the resurrection it is possible for his body only to be in the one place.” Although Zwingli uses the language of “impossibility,” he understands this not as a limitation to God’s power but rather one that God has imposed on Himself on account of the incarnation. Accordingly, Zwingli cites several passages which speak of Jesus’ presence or absence in order to show the limitation of His body to a place.<sup>21</sup>

For Zwingli insists that a real presence of Christ’s body in the eucharist leads either to physical eating of the sort specifically rejected by Jesus in John 6:63 or else threatens the integrity of Christ’s human nature in such a way as to undermine Jesus’ passion. Since the words of institution refer to the body that is put to death for us, if that body is truly present in the sacrament, one must be eating it as it suffered or it is the kind of body that didn’t really suffer on the cross. In other words, Zwingli concludes, either Christ “did not experience his passion or...he had only an incorporeal and spiritual body” – a position that Zwingli ascribes to Marcion.<sup>22</sup>

For Zwingli, therefore, a realistic understanding of the *Verba* contradicts the doctrine of the person of Christ; or, to put it more positively, Zwingli’s christology confirms his sacramentology. For Luther, it is the reverse: sacramentology shapes his christology. As a response to Zwingli’s attack upon the Real Presence, Luther develops a doctrine of the person of Christ that is consistent with his interpretation of the sacrament. For Luther accepts the words of Jesus at the first eucharist just as they read, “This is my body,” and

<sup>21</sup> *On the Lord’s Supper*, 220 (Z 4:838.19-21). Passages cited include Matt. 28:5-6; Matt. 24:23-27; John 12:26; John 14:1-4; and John 17:24.

<sup>22</sup> *On the Lord’s Supper*, 219 (Z 4:837.11-13). For Marcion, see F. L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), s.v. “Marcion.”

therefore refuses to set the ascension and session of our Lord against Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament. "They say," Luther writes, "it is a contradiction that Christ's body is in heaven and in the Supper. But they do not prove it. We say, therefore, on the contrary that it is not a contradiction, for Scripture says both."<sup>23</sup> Significantly, however, Luther goes well beyond this simple affirmation of Scriptural teaching to make important statements about the person of Christ.

Of course, like Zwingli, Luther assumes the chalcedonian doctrine of the two natures in one person; but instead of emphasizing the distinction of the natures, he emphasizes the oneness of the person as an explanation of how the body of Christ can be present in the sacrament as well as in heaven. For he maintains that Christ is *everywhere* in both natures. In his first foray into the eucharist debates, *The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ – Against the Fanatics*, Luther writes that "Christ, according to his human nature, is put over all creatures and fills all things....Not only according to his divine nature but also according to his human nature, he...is present everywhere" [emphasis mine].<sup>24</sup>

Zwingli, of course, has a field day in his rebuttal by mocking the notion of a body that expands to fill the universe,<sup>25</sup> so in his later writings, Luther elaborates – but does not retreat – by distinguishing three modes of presence for Christ's body, only one of

<sup>23</sup> *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*, LW 37:203 (WA 26:314.7-9). Luther's two other major works directed against Zwingli and his allies are *The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ – Against the Fanatics* (1526) (LW 36:335-61; WA 19:482-523) and *That These Words of Christ, "This Is My Body," Etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics* (LW 37:13-150; WA 23:64-283).

<sup>24</sup> *The Sacrament – Against the Fanatics* LW 36:342 (WA 19.17-20).

<sup>25</sup> "When...you say the body of Christ is everywhere and fills all things as barley fills a sack (I can hardly help laughing, my dear Luther, whenever your sack is mentioned), you expand human nature to the measure of the divine," *Friendly Exegesis*, 303 (Z 5:655.2-5). See also pp. 323, 341

which is spatial, the other two being definitive and repletive.<sup>26</sup> While Zwingli thinks only in terms of the first category (a kind of local, measurable presence occupying space), Luther insists that besides this kind of presence, the Scriptures also recognize a non-spatial presence like that of the angels whereby one can say they are *there* even if they do not occupy space. Similarly, on Easter, Christ's body passed through the gravestone and then through a closed door without displacing either stone or door. It was *in* these places but not in a measurable, spatial way.<sup>27</sup>

Even more importantly, however, Luther describes a third kind of presence – omnipresence – that is true only of God. But because Christ is both God and man in a single person, His humanity is everywhere just as His divinity is everywhere – not spatially but supernaturally. Luther explains:

If he [the Son of God] is present naturally and personally wherever he is, then he must be man there, too, since he is not two separate persons but a single person. Wherever this person is, it is the single, indivisible person, and if you can say, "Here is God," then you must also say, "Christ the man is present too."

And if you could show me one place where God is and not the man, then the person is already divided....For it would follow from this that space and place had separated the two natures from one another and thus had divided the person.<sup>28</sup>

For Luther, the omnipresence of the human nature is a necessary consequence of the personal union. But for Zwingli, Luther's position amounts to the destruction of the personal union because a human nature that is everywhere is no longer human at all but divine. Zwingli writes:

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<sup>26</sup> According to Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology in Its Historical and Systematic Development* (Minn.: Fortress Press, 1999), 230, Luther derived these distinctions from William of Occam and Gabriel Biel. See also Heiko A. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1983), 276.

<sup>27</sup> *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*, LW 37:215-16 (WA 26:327.2-329.7).

<sup>28</sup> *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*, LW 37:218 (WA 26:332.28-333.1).

You [Luther] say that it [the human nature of Christ] is unbounded. Then it would follow that it had been changed into infinite deity. But this is impossible....For if the humanity of Jesus Christ were turned into the deity, then he would not have been able to suffer, for the divine nature cannot suffer.<sup>29</sup>

Again Zwingli raises the specter of Marcion who taught that Christ did not have a real human body. If, says Zwingli, Luther believes that Christ's body was in heaven when it was also on earth, then one of two errors must follow. Either Christ's body was incapable of suffering in heaven and therefore also incapable of suffering on earth – Marcion's position – or else Christ had two bodies, one on earth (and suffering) and the other in heaven. In either case, the result is heresy.<sup>30</sup>

For Zwingli, the integrity of Christ's human nature is essential to the work of salvation. It is the vehicle by which God saved man through suffering and death, as he says:

When he who is from all eternity Son of God put on humanity, he was made Son of Man also...in the sense that God and a human being became one Christ, who, in that he is the Son of God, is the life of all (for all things were made by him) and in that he is a human being, is the offering through which the eternal righteousness, which is also his righteousness, is reconciled.<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, according to Zwingli, Luther was creating doubt about the reality of Christ's offering of Himself in the flesh by attributing divine characteristics to the human nature.

<sup>29</sup> *Zwingli's Christian Reply*, Z 5:933.15-934.2 (W<sup>2</sup> 20:1200).

<sup>30</sup> *Zwingli's Christian Reply*, Z 5:941.14-942.7 (W<sup>2</sup> 20:1205-06).

<sup>31</sup> *Friendly Exegesis*, 320 (Z 5: 681.14-682.6). Earlier (282), Zwingli had written, "We do not mean in any way to depreciate Christ's body as a sacrifice offered for us" (Z 5:626.3-4), and again (255), "I do not even understand the notion of faith in Christ Jesus without the idea of his body and blood. For it was from this that Jesus was anointed Savior and Christ, that taking a body he might save us" (Z 5:588.18-21). See also Gottfried W. Locher, *Zwingli's Thought: New Perspectives* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, ), 173-78., and Stephens, 111.

But Zwingli was also concerned for the integrity of Christ's divine nature, going so far as to insist that Christ is worshipped correctly only according to His divinity and not His humanity. Thus, Luther's view ran the risk of restoring papal abuses on account of its failure to distinguish the two natures properly.<sup>32</sup>

However, Luther also argued that his opponent's position threatened the gospel by separating the deity from the work of salvation. Luther writes:

He [Zwingli] leaves us no other Christ than a mere man who died for us and redeemed us. But what Christian heart can hear or endure this? This teaching altogether rejects and condemns the entire Christian faith and the whole world's salvation. For whoever is redeemed by the humanity only, is certainly not yet redeemed, nor will he ever be redeemed.<sup>33</sup>

For Luther, the work of redemption was a work of the entire person of Christ and had to be, for sinners need a *divine* Savior. Luther acknowledges Zwingli's point that "the Deity surely cannot suffer and die"; but on account of the personal union, Luther also maintains, "the Scriptures ascribe to the divinity...all that happens to humanity and vice versa." Zwingli explained such Scriptures as a figure of speech,<sup>34</sup> but Luther insists, "And in reality it is so....you must say that the person...suffers and dies. But this person is truly God, and therefore it is correct to say: the Son of God suffers." To separate the deity from the suffering and death is, according to Luther, to construct a Christ who does no more than any other Christian. In fact, says Luther, "if I believe that only the human nature

<sup>32</sup> "For all reject adoration for the humanity of Christ," *Friendly Exegesis*, 303 (Z 5:654.15-16). See also pp. 305, 318, 324, 330. Also Stephens, 116-18.

<sup>33</sup> *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*, LW 37:231 (WA 26:342.14-20).

<sup>34</sup> "Alloiōsis...is that leap or transition or, if you prefer, interchange, by which when, speaking of one of Christ's natures, we use the terms that apply to the other," *Friendly Exegesis*, 320 (Z 5:680.1-682.1). See also *Zwingli's Christian Reply*, Z 5:925.17-926.3 (W<sup>2</sup> 20:1194-95) and *Two Replies to Luther's Book*, Z 6<sup>11</sup>:126.26-127.2, 127.26-128.2 (W<sup>2</sup> 20:1309-10). Also Stephens, 112-15.

suffered for me, then Christ would be a poor Savior for me, in fact, he himself would need a Savior.”<sup>35</sup>

In short, for both men the position of the other threatened not only the eucharist but redemption itself. For Luther, Zwingli’s position dissolved the personal union. For Zwingli, Luther’s position destroyed the humanity of Christ. In either case, Christ’s redemptive work was threatened.

By the time of the Marburg Colloquy, therefore, it was clear from the standpoint of their rhetoric, that the two men were as far apart in their understanding of the person of Christ as they were in their interpretation of the eucharist. Nonetheless, something very interesting took place in their face to face meeting or rather, did not take place. There was no real debate about the person of Christ.

In fact, at the end of the Marburg Colloquy, the major participants, including Zwingli, signed a set of articles, drafted by Luther, that included the following christological statement,

We believe that...the Son of God the Father, true and natural God himself, became man....that this same Son of God and of Mary, undivided in person, Jesus Christ, was crucified for us, died and was buried, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, Lord over all creatures, and will come to judge the living and the dead.<sup>36</sup>

Obviously, these statements are more interesting for what they do not say than for what they do, since they affirm the personal union (“undivided in person,” *unzertrentte person*) and nothing more. Although Luther had charged Zwingli with dividing the person, Zwingli had always rejected the accusation, insisting instead that it was a question of carefully distinguishing the two natures not separating

<sup>35</sup> *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper*, LW 37:210 (WA 26:321.4-10, 320.10-12). For Luther’s insistence on the presence of God in the passion of Jesus, see Lohse, 228-31, and Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Phil.: Fortress Press), 197-98.

<sup>36</sup> “Marburg Articles,” LW 38:85-86 (WA 30<sup>III</sup>:161.3-162.2).

them.<sup>37</sup> Thus the phrase, “undivided in person,” was not enough to keep Zwingli from signing the articles.

As for Luther’s more distinctive position regarding the communication of attributes and, in particular, the omnipresence of Christ in both His divine and human natures, the articles are silent. But this is hardly surprising in view of the fact that the preceding conversations at Marburg likewise did not really address this argument. Instead, the various accounts of what took place there indicate that Zwingli persisted in his argument from the humanity of Christ that since the body was located in heaven, it could not be in the Supper; but for his part, Luther did not press his argument regarding the ubiquity of Christ’s body. Instead, he relied almost exclusively on the argument that God is able to accomplish what He has said.

Caspar Hedio records a conversation that is typical of the way in which the parties dealt with this issue during the colloquy. According to Hedio, Zwingli contended that “since the body of Christ is finite, it must therefore be in a certain place,” and Luther answered:

I have said that it can be in a place and not in a place. God can even arrange my body so that it is not in a place. In this text there is no room for mathematics. “Place” is a mathematical consideration. The sophists have held that one body can be in many places; he [Luther] does not want to deny this. Who am I to measure the power of God? The driving force of the universe is not in one place.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Stephens, 115-18. One of Luther’s allies, Osiander, later claimed that by signing the articles, the Swiss repudiated their earlier error regarding “the indivisible union of the divine and human nature in the one person of Christ.” LW 38:73 (WA 30<sup>III</sup>:151.23-24). However, throughout the dispute, Zwingli always affirmed the personal union, e.g., “The two natures that are each essentially and properly in Him are only one Christ Jesus,” *Zwingli’s Christian Reply*, Z 5:923.28-30 (W<sup>2</sup> 20:1193; also cols. 1200, 1207, 1213, 1215). See also *On the Lord’s Supper*, 212; *Two Replies to Luther’s Book*, W<sup>2</sup> 20:1352-54; and *Friendly Exegesis*, 302, 305, 320, and 324.

<sup>38</sup> “Hedio’s Account” LW 38:32 (WA 30<sup>III</sup>:137.2-138.3). See also Hedio’s Account, LW 38:29, 34; Anonymous, LW 38:44-45, 49, 50; Collin, LW 38:58, 60, 61; Osiander,

Instead of arguing from the properties of *Christ's* body, in communion with the divine nature, Luther talks about what God can do with *any* body, including Luther's.

At one point, Luther and Oecolampadius (Zwingli's ally from Basel) discussed the significance of christology for salvation. This started when Oecolampadius "began to admonish Luther not to cling to the humanity and flesh of Christ but to lift up his mind to his divinity." This aroused a rather sharp response from Luther, "that he could hardly put up with such remarks. For he did not know or worship any God except him who was made man; nor did he want to have another God besides him. And besides him there was no other God who could save us." But to this, Oecolampadius responded by changing the subject. He said "that he does not know any other God, nor is there another besides him who was made man. Nonetheless, even though he is himself true God and man, he is not to be known according to the flesh." At this point, then, the conversation moves toward what does it mean "to know Christ" and not the properties of the body.<sup>39</sup>

In summary, therefore, at the Marburg Colloquy, even though Zwingli persists in his argument from the nature of Christ's body that it cannot be in the eucharist, Luther ignores his previous argument regarding the ubiquity of that same body. He rejects Zwingli's position but does not advance his own. This is not to say that Luther repudiated his earlier position. He continued to insist, even after Marburg, on a real communication of attributes between the two natures.<sup>40</sup> However, at Marburg regarding the eucharist,

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der, LW 38:66, 67; Brenz, LW 38:75, 76-77; Rhapsodies, LW 38:81-82; and Summary, LW 38:84.

<sup>39</sup> "The Report of Anonymous," LW 38:46 (WA 30<sup>III</sup>:132.20-133.14). Also LW 38:82.

<sup>40</sup> There is, for example, a lengthy discussion of the person of Christ in Luther's 1539 treatise, *On the Councils and the Church* (LW 41:100-12; WA 50:587.29-

just as he did in his earlier argument with Rome, Luther finally rests with what Jesus originally said when He instituted the sacrament. For him, all other arguments – even christological ones – are at length besides the point.

May we then conclude that the differences between the two sides regarding the person of Christ were unimportant because not really debated at the Marburg Colloquy? One can hardly say so since, after all, it is Jesus who is at the center of the Christian faith and not the eucharist. The debate over the latter was simply the occasion for bringing to light differences over the former. While both sides affirmed the orthodox christology of the early Church, they had profound differences regarding the implications of that christology not only for the sacrament but also for Christ's redemptive work. Such differences may not have marred Marburg particularly in 1529, but they still characterize 21<sup>st</sup> century evangelical heirs of the two sides, the Lutherans and the Reformed.

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598.22). Luther (p. 109) summarizes the errors of Nestorius and Eutyches with these words, "Nestorius does not want to give the *idiomata* of humanity to the divinity of Christ, even though he maintains Christ is God and man. Eutyches...does not want to give the *idiomata* of divinity to the humanity....To sum up,...whoever confesses the two natures in Christ, God and man, must also ascribe the *idiomata* of both to the person; for to be God and man means nothing if they do not share their *idiomata*," (LW 41:109; WA 50:595.3-6, 30-33).

The Presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar according to Luther

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Vol. XXXIX

April 1968

No. 4

# The Presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar According to Luther

NORMAN NAGEL

The great feature of the 450th celebration of the Reformation is the extent of ecumenical participation. It might almost be said that our Roman Catholic brethren have taken over the show. Luther studies provide an index of the growth in mutual understanding, but what help is Luther at the heart of Christian unity, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper?

Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, it is said, is so enmeshed in the philosophy and scholasticism of the late Middle Ages that it is no longer viable in our day. To test this assertion, we shall go to what some regard as the worst incident of this enmeshedness: Luther's use of the Nominalist categories of presence — circumscriptive, definitive, and repletive. These are adduced in the *Large Confession* of 1528. We shall note where they are raised

and the function they are intended to serve and shall ask to what extent they are necessary for his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. This may also shed some light on the question whether the presence of Christ's body and blood rests on the ubiquity of Christ's human nature.

and the function they are intended to serve and shall ask to what extent they are necessary for his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. This may also shed some light on the question whether the presence of Christ's body and blood rests on the ubiquity of Christ's human nature.

That these are no mere academic mat-

ters has been made clear by Sasse and Sommerlath.<sup>1</sup> They are of very considerable ecumenical importance. Misunderstandings here may obscure the doctrine of the presence of Christ's body and blood and have it appear as entangled in a by-gone system of thought. This is ecumenically most harmful, for the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar is the place where the divisions of Christendom can alone be finally healed.

The apostolic and catholic doctrine of the presence of Christ's body and blood Luther never questioned, although he admits that he once thought of the practical advantage of making a common front against the pope with those who, as something of a novelty in Christian tradition,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hermann Sasse, *This Is My Body* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959), pp. 134 ff. Ernst Sommerlath, "Luthers Lehre von der Realpräsenz im Abendmahl im Zusammenhang mit seiner Gottesanschauung (nach den Abendmahlschriften von 1527—1528)," *Das Erbe Martin Luthers, Festschrift für Ludwig Ihmels*, ed. R. Jelke (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1928), pp. 320—38.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther, "Das diese Wort Christi 'Das ist mein leib' noch fest stehen, wider die Schwärmeister" [1527]. *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1901), XXIII, 129, 4. Hereafter cited as WA. Cp. *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), 38, 54. Hereafter cited as AE. Cf. Ernst Kinder, "Zur Sakramentslehre," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie*, III (1961), 165, n. 41.

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denied the presence of Christ's body and blood. It is from this body that the church is the body of Christ and hence arises the crucial ecumenical importance of this doctrine.<sup>3</sup>

Luther's great service to Christendom here was to confess the fact and revere the mystery of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar and to resist any categories and principles under and into which that fact and mystery might be squashed. Yet is he not guilty of this very thing when he adduces the Occamist categories of presence?

To be fair, however, we ought not to begin at that place but approach it by way of what went before. Luther was not a man content to say things once—he was too much the preacher and pastor for that—and least of all in what Sasse calls the Great Controversy, even though his first statement is often his best. Peters points to the *Sermon on the Body and Blood of Christ against the Enthusiasts* (1526) as the example of this in the great controversy.<sup>4</sup> Here omnipresence comes as the last of seven points, and Luther is not in the habit of leaving his best point until last.

In *That These Words* (1527) the argument revolves around the *Verba* and the Right Hand. The Right Hand does not

establish the sacramental presence. Christ's presence everywhere is not yet His gracious bestowing presence "for you" (*dir da*).<sup>5</sup> Luther expounds the Right Hand to demolish Zwingli's insistence on only a circumscriptive presence as possible for the body of Christ. He is in fine fettle when he depicts the enthusiasts with lantern and skeleton key climbing stealthily at midnight into heaven and there hunting through all the drawers and cupboards where God keeps His power, but finding none that weighs heavy enough on their precise little scales to manage a body simultaneously in heaven and the Supper.<sup>6</sup> His major omnipresence excursion he, however, calls *uberflus*.<sup>7</sup> The dam is full and the water that flows over is not necessary to keep it full, and yet this water plainly flows from the dam.

The case against Zwingli's "right hand" is drawn from what Scripture says about God's right hand. God's power is everywhere creating and preserving. Where His right hand is at work, He must be present, and where He is, Christ is, and apart from Christ there is no God. Luther quotes "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool" and mocks the Zwinglian spatial limitation and expansion: "Come on, guess what happens to his head, arms, chest, and body when he fills the earth with his feet and heaven with his legs?"<sup>8</sup>

"Wherever and whatever God's right

<sup>3</sup> Cf. The discussion of Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Cyril of Alexandria in Werner Elert, *Abendmahl und Kirchengemeinschaft in der alten Kirche hauptsächlich des Ostens* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1954), pp. 27 to 30; also *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1966), pp. 27—30.

<sup>4</sup> Albrecht Peters, "Luthers Turmerlebnis," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie*, III (1961), 212.

<sup>5</sup> WA XXIII, 151, 14; AE 37, 68.

<sup>6</sup> WA XXIII, 119, 1; AE 37, 48.

<sup>7</sup> WA XXIII, 139, 24; AE 37, 61.

<sup>8</sup> WA XXIII, 131, 18—135, 33; cf. AE 37, 56—59. Occam would seem to qualify for similar mockery. Cf. Erwin Iserloh, *Gnade und Eucharistie in der philosophischen Theologie des Wilhelm von Ockham* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1956), p. 206.

hand is and is called, there is Christ, the Son of man."<sup>9</sup> Luther, however, is not contending for infinite attributes. His opponents draw him into discussion of omnipresence, but his soteriology pulls him back home to the certain and specific place assured by Christ's words.

Though he is in your bread, you will not grasp him there unless he binds himself there for you and appoints a particular table with his word where you are to eat him. This he has done in the Sacrament saying, "This is my body," as if to say, "You may also eat bread at home where I am indeed present enough, but this is the true *'tonto'*," "This is my body." When you eat this, you eat my body and nowhere else. Why? Because here I would fasten myself with my word so that you are not to flutter about and desire to seek me all over the place — where I am. That would be too much for you. You are too small for grasping me there without my word.<sup>10</sup>

That Word and that bestowing presence are what matter. God binds Himself to our humanity, wine and bread through His Word and words to give Himself and His salvation into our grasp. Luther's basis for this is simply the fact that this is what God has done and does. He will therefore allow nothing that He sees as a diminution

or disruption of this. The heart of His concern is not some notional omnipresence, but what God has said, done, and gives. Here is the contingency of what God does and says which cannot survive in any philosophical system.

Why then ubiquity? The Real Presence does not need it, nor is it Luther's basis for

<sup>9</sup> WA XXIII, 145, 1; cf. AE 37, 64.

<sup>10</sup> WA XXIII, 151, 29; AE 37, 69. Cf. WA XX, 400, 25; XXXI/1, 223, 28.

the Real Presence. It posits too much and has in it indeed the danger of flattening the peculiar character of the presence of the body and blood of Christ. Luther flows on so voluminously beyond what might be thought necessary to establish the sacramental presence that this is quite clearly not the point for which he is seeking a foundation. This stands whether Zwingli can demolish ubiquity or not.<sup>11</sup> His home ground is the *Verba*, and here he feels confident no attack can score against him, but he does go off to rout his opponents on their ground. He borrows their bat to punish them with,<sup>12</sup> but it is not really their kind of cricket at all, nor his either.

The Swiss would allow only one way for Christ's body to be present. This would permit it to be in only one circumscribed place<sup>13</sup> and so would catastrophically sunder the Personal Union. Their local Right Hand Luther rejects for an omnipresent one of God's power that is at work everywhere, creating and sustaining all things.<sup>14</sup> He insists that Christ has more than one way of being present. He gives examples *zum ubersflus*, and if these are disallowed, God doubtless has yet other ways.<sup>15</sup> He is not to be fenced in.<sup>16</sup>

However, Zwingli was not intent on fencing God in but rather Christ's human

<sup>11</sup> WA XXVI, 319, 4; AE 37, 208 f.

<sup>12</sup> Actually Goliath's sword. WA XXIII, 143, 25; AE 37, 62.

<sup>13</sup> WA XXIII, 133, 23; AE 37, 57.

<sup>14</sup> WA XXIII, 133, 21; 135, 12; 143, 10; XXVI, 339, 25; 333, 20; AE 37, 57, 58, 63, 227 f., 219.

<sup>15</sup> WA XXIII, 139, 4; 145, 33; XXVI, 319, 7; 329, 34; 331, 30; 336, 28; 338, 9; AE 37, 61, 65, 208 f., 216, 217, 223, 226.

<sup>16</sup> WA XXIII, 152, 15; XXVI, 339, 36; AE 37, 69 f., 228.

body. The whole crux is that he could think of this separately while Luther could not. It is impossible, Zwingli affirmed, for this body to be in more than one place. Luther expends much hot ink to show this possibility. But this does not provide a foundation for the positive affirmation. For this Luther has to return home to the *Verba*. To them every notion and category of ours must be brought into subjection.

In the *Large Confession* the battle thunders over much the same country, and Luther, who is a poor strategist, allows his opponents to choose the ground. Instead of staying dug in in the *Verba* he charges out against their various positions throwing at them whatever he can lay his hands on. After lengthy bombardment of their local Right Hand he confesses that his aim is not to prove Christ everywhere but in the Supper.<sup>17</sup> The former does not really belong here.<sup>18</sup> We are now, at last, nearing the point where he picks up Occam and throws him in, too.

He has just said for the umpteenth time that the words "This is my body" say what they say.<sup>19</sup> He will give ground to no allocosis, synecdoche, or trope.<sup>20</sup> Then he defines the position on which he stands, and the order is significant.<sup>21</sup> The first is this article of our faith that Jesus Christ is essentially, naturally, truly, and completely God and man in one inseparable and undivided person. Second, God's right hand is everywhere. Third, there is no falsehood or lie in God's word.

<sup>17</sup> WA XXVI, 318, 1; 329, 34; AE 37, 207, 216.

<sup>18</sup> WA XXVI, 320, 25; AE 37, 210

<sup>19</sup> WA XXVI, 325, 22; AE 37, 213.

<sup>20</sup> WA XXVI, 326, 26; AE 37, 214.

<sup>21</sup> WA XXVI, 326, 29; AE 37, 214 f.

Fourth, God has many a way and manner of being in a place, and not only that single way which the enthusiasts pull out of their hats and which the philosophers term "local." The sophists<sup>22</sup> are justified in speaking of three ways of being in a place: local or circumscriptive, definitive, and repletive. *Local* presence is as wine in a barrel or straw in a sack or Jesus of Nazareth in a boat. Here a body displaces the amount of air required by its mass. This can be measured and grasped. *Definitive* presence is when something is in a place but where there is no congruence between it and the limits of space, as an angel in a room, house, town, or even a nutshell. Thus Christ rose through the stone and passed through a door without

<sup>22</sup> Occam, *Super quatuor libros sententiarum quaestiones*, IV, q. 4C (London: Gregg, 1962). *Quodlibet* I, q. 4. *De Sacramento Altaris*, ed. T. Bruce Birch (Burlington: Lutheran Literary Board, 1930), pp. 188—97.

Biel, who is in substantial agreement with Occam, quotes at length from this chapter. *Canonis Missae Expositio*, ed. H. A. Oberman and W. J. Courtenay (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1965), II, 146. *Collectorium*, IB, d, x, q. 1, art. 2, concl. 2. Biel clarifies his logic by establishing the third category of repletive presence and so has a definitive presence that, in contrast with Occam, is demarcated against repletive suffusion. Friedrich Loofs finds in Occam a bent toward a virtual presence. *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte*, 4th ed. (Halle: Niemeyer, 1906), p. 619. Cf. Heiko Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 276. Oberman and Courtenay, p. 158. Reinhold Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 5th ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgemeinschaft, 1953), III, 789 f., IV/1, 471—75. Rudolf Damerau, *Die Abendmahlslehre des Nominalismus insbesondere die des Gabriel Biel* (Giessen: Schmitz, 1963), pp. 179—97. Albrecht Peters, *Realpräsenz* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1960), pp. 79—86. Sasse, pp. 155 to 158. For Usingen see Otto Scheel, *Martin Luther* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1917), I, 194 f.

displacing any stone or door.<sup>23</sup> This cannot be measured or grasped. This is the way Christ's body is and can be in the bread (WA XXVI, 329, 2), and yet He can also show Himself tangibly wherever He wishes. The Easter stone and door remained stone and wood. Bread and wine

<sup>23</sup> Luther does not follow Occam's definition of definitive presence. *Quando aliquid est in loco sic quod totum est in toto et totum est in qualibet parte, tunc per se et vere in loco diffinitive, sic est de quantitate corporis Christi sub illis speciebus, igitur non est ibi per concomitantiam naturalem.* Quoted by Iserloh, p. 174, n. 1. Luther follows a more general use of the term. E. g. Aquinas, *Summa* I, 52, 2c. Cf. Ludwig Schütz, *Thomas-Lexikon* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1881), p. 91; 2d ed. (1895), p. 450.

Occam's definition is vital to his argument, which intends to demonstrate a metaphysical miracle. Luther's purpose, on the other hand, is to remove obstacles from taking Christ's words as saying what they say.

Biel is dominated by Occam's definition. He also would use the rules of logic to furnish proof, and adduces Occam's examples from *De Sacramento*, vi [Birch], p. 193, plus the Easter stone. Oberman and Courtenay, p. 147.

Occam there lists soul, angels, Easter door, the Virgin's closed womb and the ascension. This last is significantly not used by Luther. For Occam the ascension is definitive and the session circumscriptive with ubiquitous possibilities. To put it no stronger, Occam (for Occam's alloosis see Iserloh, pp. 32—35), Biel, and Zwingli accept at least theoretically a presence of Christ apart from His human nature. This is utterly repugnant to Luther, for it threatens his Christology, soteriology, and theology. For Occam's *extra Calvinisticum* see *Super IV libros sententiarum* IV, q. 4N. The relation of the two natures is said to be that of subject and accident, and hence *potest natura divina et verbum esse et est alicubi ubi non est natura assumpta*. When such a Christ was commended to Luther by Oecolampadius, he recoiled from it.

Oberman, pp. 264 f., finds *extra Calvinisticum* in Biel and *kenosis* as well, but his evidence is not compelling. *Kenosis* is far from Biel, for the divine nature is for him of predominant importance. *Extra Calvinisticum*, on the other hand, is inimical to the human nature. Damerau, p. 165 f., presents Biel as orthodox regarding the

are not changed from bread and wine when Christ's body is in them. They are measurably long and wide, but not He. The *repletive* presence can only be ascribed to God who fills all in all. This must be held by faith alone in the word.

Then a sort of analogy comes to Luther's mind, and unfortunately it is not the last. The sight of our eyes is present to all places up to 20 miles and more. If this is so, cannot God's power find a

personal union and excuses passages that sound like separation as due to merely logical distinctions. While we must be as fair to Biel as to Luther and acknowledge that he also works as a devout servant of the church, this plea of Damerau does not quite cover *Lectio* 46P, where the *extra Calvinisticum* is stated. Oberman and Courtenay, p. 206. And milk that has color but is not white will not really wash.

It is also worth noting that when Luther speaks of the bread and the presence of Christ's body there, he says, "is and can," (WA XXVI, 329, 2; 332, 21; AE 37, 216, 218) and not with Occam, "can and is." When Luther says only "can" we may well suspect that he is ploughing with Occam's heifer of the *potentia absoluta*, as when with Scotist voluntarism he mentions in passing the possibility of a multiple circumscriptive presence. This last is unequivocally expressed in a section (WA XXVI, 336, 28; AE 37, 223 ff.) following *meine sachen*. Not content with that he goes over the three modes again and then charges off, throwing anything he can lay his hands on. These missiles, however, are leftovers from the time before gunpowder. There are broken pieces of mirror and a crystal. Angels and spirits reappear together with other odds and ends. But then like a naughty boy who has rather enjoyed clouting the other boy, who was not nice to him, he feels somewhat ashamed — though not too much — and so we then get the usual excuses: He started it, so I can speculate too. I am not now speaking from Scripture. I do not hold this idea as certainly so, but such things are not impossible, and they do help to show what a fool he is.

On this *potentia absoluta* line it is indeed impossible to disprove that God has bacon and eggs for breakfast every morning.

way by which all creatures can be present and permeable to Christ's body? Sensing the weakness of his argument here, Luther has his opponents interpose the objection that nothing is proved in this way. He has no better rejoinder than that they cannot prove such a thing impossible to God's power.<sup>24</sup> Occam would do no worse. However, he does return to what matters to him (*meine sachen*).

Our faith holds that Christ is God and man. The two natures is [!] one person. . . . He can indeed show himself in the bodily apprehensible way in whatever place he wishes as he did after the Resurrection and will do at the Last Day . . . but he can also use the second way that cannot be grasped as we have proved from the Gospel as he did at the grave and the locked door.<sup>25</sup> . . . Since, however, he is

<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately Elert's telling observation does not apply here. *Es steht hier nicht die Wunderbarkeit, sondern die Tatsächlichkeit eines Geschehens in Frage.* (It is not the marvellous character of the event but its factuality that is at issue.) Werner Elert, *Der Christliche Glaube* (3d ed., Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1956), p. 383. When it does apply, Luther is back at home with the *Verba*. See n. 46.

<sup>25</sup> Here Luther has no weapon of a definition and the only examples are two Scriptural instances which serve to demonstrate that Christ can be present in a way that cannot be rationally grasped. This last is just what Occam would demonstrate. He is certain that by using the rules of logic he can furnish a proof. Birch, p. 191.

The disappearance of the angels is significant. Biel could not so easily do without them. For him they show the kind of presence which Christ uses in the Eucharist. It is not a mediate presence. Zwingli could agree with this but certainly not Luther. *Lectio 46Q: Unio corporis Christi non est specialis ad species panis, non enim est alia quam angelis ad corpus cui assistit.* Oberman and Courtenay, p. 107. Here Luther is more Thomist than Nominalist. Cf. Leif Grane, *Contra Gabrielem* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1962), p. 76.

such a man who is supernaturally one person with God and outside of this man there is no God, it must follow that he also is and may be everywhere where God is according to the third supernatural way. . . . Where you can say, "Here is God," there you must also say, "Then Christ the man is also there." If you would point to a place where God is and not the man, then the person would already be divided. Then I could in truth say, "Here is God who is not man and never became man." None of that God for me please! From this it would follow that space and place sundered the two natures from one another and divided the person, which indeed death and all devils could not part or tear asunder. That would leave me a sorry Christ. . . . He has become one person and does not separate the humanity from himself.<sup>26</sup>

Only in this humanity is God graciously there for us, and this saving fact may never be put in doubt by any question of "how" which can think only of extension and circumscriptively. It is nonsense to talk of Christ as high up there or way down here,<sup>27</sup> as up and down or hither and thither,<sup>28</sup> or as small or big.<sup>29</sup> He is not subject to any such dimension, category, or criterion.<sup>30</sup> Luther repudiates the

<sup>26</sup> WA XXVI, 332, 12; see also trans. in AE 37, 218—19.

<sup>27</sup> WA XXIII, 115, 36; AE 37, 46 f.

<sup>28</sup> WA XXIII, 147, 25; XVIII, 206, 17; XIX, 489, 24; 492, 1; AE 37, 66.

Cf. Biel's exhaustive treatment of the question *utrum corpus Christi localiter mutetur*. Oberman and Courtenay, pp. 206—10; Damerau, pp. 193 f. He decides for a *mutatio localis* and against a *motus localis*. His general presuppositions are also those of Zwingli.

<sup>29</sup> WA XXIII, 137, 8; XXVI, 339, 33; AE 37, 59.

<sup>30</sup> WA XXIII, 137, 25; XXVI, 333, 22; AE 37, 60, 219.

imposition of these categories, which are the preoccupation of Occam, Biel, and Zwingli.

We need not follow the argument farther. Luther finds his opponents captive to their terms and categories in which they would confine Christ. This he will not allow, but is he not compromised by the way he puts the case against them? He cannot do without words, and some of the words he uses certainly do arouse suspicion. The critical question is whether they have more than a negative function for him.

The infinite attributes of omnipotence and omnipresence that he contends with against the Swiss are more theirs than his, more of the kingdom of power than the kingdom of grace. He fights desperately for them for the kingdom of grace, but Saul's armor does not make it easier for him, and one can only regret that he did not stay with the shepherd's lowly sling.

When Luther uses *potentia absoluta* against the Swiss, he is not sufficiently aware of his proximity then to the *deus absconditus*. There he is not at home, and the *potentia ordinata* has been clarified for him by the distinction between the Law and the Gospel. God's *potentia* is then no longer the ultimate reference that it is in Augustine and his disciples.<sup>31</sup> *Potentia ordinata* belongs rather under the heading of the Law and the *opus alienum*. The Gospel and *opus proprium* proclaim the

<sup>31</sup> Among whom was the young Luther. Cf. Erich Vogelsang, *Die Anfänge von Luthers Christologie nach der ersten Psalmenvorlesung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1929), p. 47, n. 2; Adolf Hamel, *Der junge Luther und Augustin* (Gütersloh: Evangelischer Verlag, 1934), I, 175, n. 5.

lowly Christ who suffers Himself to be rejected, there for us upon the arms of Mary and the cross and on the altar.<sup>32</sup>

This last Luther here passionately affirms, but this positive affirmation has to be seen through the dust of his negative attack upon Swiss obstructions. An alliance between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata* offers him doubtful advantage. For Biel they are in cordial entente.<sup>33</sup> For Luther, however, their equipment has changed. These terms are indeed not formally used here but their Nominalist content lies behind what Luther says in the passages where he speaks about "possibility." Yet what appears is not quite that content either, but that content transformed by his prior given understanding of Christ and the Gospel — a transformation that is here at times rather blurred.

In Luther's defense it must be acknowledged that he points out his excursions, but not always. A book or two would be needed to deal with this *potentia absoluta* and *ordinata* and also the Scotist-sounding voluntarism which enables Luther to assert the absurdity of Biel's multiple circumscriptive presence.<sup>34</sup> If the absurdity is God's, it must stand, but this is sheer speculation. The best that can be said for Luther is that this is an excursion to harass his opponents.

<sup>32</sup> WA IV, 649, 6; XXV, 107, 5; XXVIII, 136, 19; XXXIII, 160, 32; XXXVII, 42, 33; XL/1, 76, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Damerau, pp. 188, 90; Oberman, pp. 36 f.

<sup>34</sup> Oberman and Courtenay, pp. 196 ff., 206; Damerau, pp. 188, 190. See above, n. 23. Cf. Gordon Rupp, *The Righteousness of God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), pp. 88 to 93. Unfortunately Rupp's "grateful quotations" do not include the modes of presence.

The remarkable thing, however, is not that Luther used Occamist terms of presence against those whom he regarded as rationalists. At various points he makes the bluff confession that he is speculating. The terms are those for the problem of the quantity and extension of the body of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>35</sup> This was a preoccupation of his opponents. The really remarkable thing is that he uses this terminology in his repudiation of any such preoccupation. This does not rest on any Occamist theory about *substantia* and *quantitas*, but on the fact that Christ does what He says He does, and what He says and does is all of a piece with the sort of person He is.

So often when Luther sounds like an Occamist, closer examination reveals a radical difference. In this matter Occam's reasoning does not take him beyond possibility—Luther is aware of this.<sup>36</sup> It is integrally bound up with his (Occam's) distinction between *substantia*, *quantitas*, and *qualitas*. Without this it would collapse. Not so for Luther. The basis for definitive presence is supplied for him by instances of a noncircumscriptive presence of Christ, and for them it provides a label. Not the term or its philosophical presuppositions but these instances prove his point that Christ may not be restricted to a circumscriptive presence.

The presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine is also an instance that is not proved by any theoretical necessity but is affirmed on the basis of the contingent words of Christ. This affirmation does not rest on the validity of Oc-

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Iserloh, pp. 174—253.

<sup>36</sup> Iserloh, p. 77. WA XXVI, 337, 23; XXIII, 267, 29; AE 37, 225, 140.

cam's categories of definitive or repletive presence. In the Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles he has no use for them; nor in his final *Short Confession*. Much of the *uberflus* is indeed superfluous.

Luther's argument about divine possibilities does indeed sound rather Occamist, but its use is in getting at his opponents and is only of negative value. Omnipresence is not his point of departure and the one present in bread and wine is not first of all the omnipresent, majestic God but the gracious and incarnate God who appoints the place and means where He is there for us, bestowing His body and blood, forgiveness, life, and salvation. Words, wine, and bread give the location without which the God who is everywhere is as good as nowhere. Omnipresence as such fits better with the majestic God on a velvet cushion upon a golden throne, uninvolved with our condition.<sup>37</sup> Luther is not at home with the merely omnipresent God, for He is the dread *deus nudus*.<sup>38</sup> He insists on seeing the omni-

<sup>37</sup> WA XXIII, 131, 12; 155, 16; 705, 25; AE 37, 55 f., 70 f.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. WA XXV, 107, 2: *Neque enim coram Maiestate quisquam consistere potest, sed in solum Christum est respiciendum*. XXV, 106, 30; XL 1, 75, 9; 76, 9; 77, 11; XL 2, 330, 1; IV, 649, 6; VII, 369, 20; 371, 14; 358, 31; XVIII, 684, 37; 685, 6; L, 647, 6; 628, 16; XXIX, 669 ff. Theodosius Harnack, *Luthers Theologie* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1927), I, 41 ff. Somerlath, p. 326: "An den Anfang der Auseinandersetzung mit den "Schwärmern" fällt in zeitlichem Zusammentreffen die Abfassung seiner Schrift 'De servo arbitrio.'" Cf. Hellmut Bandt, *Luthers Lehre vom Verborgenen Gott* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1958), pp. 186—90. Alfred Adam seems to labor under the equation *revelatus=misericors*. "Der Begriff *Deus absconditus* bei Luther nach Herkunft und Bedeutung," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, XXX (1963), 105 f. Cf. Bandt, p. 191.

The above cited statements of Luther must

presence of God in Christ, and there he is at home. There it does not terrify, for there is God for us. The assertion of impossibility based on the incapacity and unfitness of words, wine, bread, and humanity Luther rejects with the statement of the *Verba*, and by allowing here nothing less than Christ, God and man. Nothing less may be confessed of Christ than we confess of God, for what we confess of God is above all given in Christ. Disparity here would disintegrate Christ and also the achievement and bestowal of salvation.<sup>39</sup>

Luther uses the scholastic terms, but they do not hold sway, and their content he finds in Scripture. What he strives to say with the borrowed and burst terms is connected with the heart of his understanding of Christ. He recoils from any God outside of Christ. Where God is, there is Christ, and He is inseparably God and man. Therefore this presence is not a ubiquity of spatial extension but simply and soteriologically "Where God is, there

control the weight we attach to such statements as the following adduced by Peters, who seems at times a little too philosophically allured by Metzke, p. 169: *Mibi est facile credere in pane esse, imo credo in corde omnium tyrannorum. Si est ubique et super omnes creaturas, ergo est in vino et pane.* WA XX, 383, 8. Here the logic actually moves from the less to the greater. The really staggering thing about God is not His omnipotence but His grace, as Luther knows very well.

<sup>39</sup> WA XXXIII, 160, 3; XL 1, 76, 13; XXVI, 420, 20; AE 37, 280. Cf. Georg Merz, "Zur Frage nach dem rechten Lutherverständnis," *Zwischen den Zeiten*, VI (1928), 439: "Dass in Christus und nur hier Gott nahe ist, darin liegt das Pathos der lutherischen Predigt." ("That in Christ and only here God is near: therein lies the *Pathos* [emotion, solemnity?] of Luther's preaching.")

He [Christ] must be also, otherwise our faith is false."<sup>40</sup>

The presence of Christ in bread and wine comes under definitive presence and not the repletive presence which is Christologically rather than sacramentally important.<sup>41</sup> This terminology is, however, incapable of conveying the magnitude of the issue at stake just as the failure of the Marburg Colloquy was more than a disagreement about the 15th point. There two theologies confronted each other.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> WA XXVI, 336, 18; AE 37, 223. Cf. Paul Gennrich, *Die Christologie Luthers im Abendmahlstreit 1524—1529* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1929), p. 61. But it is not for the joy of metaphysical speculation, nor for the sake of a secondary foundation for his doctrine of the Lord's Supper that Luther argued the God-manhood of Christ with the aid of scholastic categories; rather this followed necessarily from his religious interest in the unity and the separation of the two natures in Christ, which provide the foundation of salvation. This combined view of the two sides of the Redeemer is crucial; everything depends on the complete Christ.

<sup>41</sup> This tends to be undervalued by those who favor a Christological and systematic foundation for the doctrine of the Lord's Supper rather than an exegetical one. Cf. Hans Grass, *Die Abendmahllehre bei Luther und Calvin*, 2d edition (Gütersloh: C. Bertelmanns Verlag, 1934), pp. 60 f. Seeberg, pp. 427 f., makes a valid distinction (p. 479, n. 2) in opposition to Otto Ritschl, but this applies to the repletive presence as well as to the definitive, and so he does not touch Ritschl's assertion that the *esse repletive* is not the sacramental presence for Luther. Significant also is Seeberg's observation that "in, with, and under" are used of the definitive presence and not the repletive. The Nominalist line of argument leads to a circumscriptive presence of the body of Christ in the Sacrament. Cf. Damerau, p. 188.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Barth's famous dictum: "Luther would have said it quite differently from Zwingli, even if he had not found the problem-posing *est* in the Bible." "Ansatz und Absicht in Luthers

For the one the point of departure was the infinite attributes together with the philosophical incubus of restrictive finitude and its incapacities. For the other it was the lowly incarnate God there for us upon the arms of Mary and the cross and on the altar. The protagonists talked past each other, for the Swiss were quite happy with a detached, divine Christ and did not share Luther's insistence on no God apart from the whole Christ.<sup>43</sup>

Here then, we have no Occamist zest for spinning out divine possibilities.<sup>44</sup> Luther is first of all an exegetical theologian. What Christ says He does, He does. This is Luther's fortress. Although he makes excursions into alien waters, he never surrenders this rock. His line is not: God can, therefore He may or does. If he goes over to this in order to get at his opponents, his heart is not really in it, and to those who are expert at it he does not appear to do it. He is first of all an exegetical theologian. well. He promises not to speculate and to stay with the *Verba*. Yet to get to grips with his opponents he does not hesitate to dive in with them and splashes about so lustily that one cannot help wondering whether he does not get a little

Abendmahllehre," *Die Theologie und die Kirche, Gesammelte Vorträge* (Zurich: Zurich-Zollikon Verlag, 1928), II, 50. Cf. Otto Fricke, *Die Sakramente in der Protestantischen Kirche* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1929), p. 12; Werner Elert, "Luther in Marburg," *Zeitwende*, V (1929), 315—24; Sasse, pp. 187—294.

For the necessary qualification of Barth's dictum see Sommerlath, "Das Abendmahl bei Luther," *Vom Sakrament des Altars*, ed. H. Sasse (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1941), p. 101. Quoted and disagreed with by Peters, p. 164.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Peters, p. 69; "Zwingli's confidence rests ultimately in the divinity alone." The same could be said of Occam and Biel. See above, n. 23.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Oberman, p. 34, n. 16.

too carried away and does not return soon enough to his towel and *terra firma*.

To the extent that he is drawn into the ocean of the infinite attributes, he is pulled away from the heart of his theology. This holds the tension between the infinite God and His condescension to us in the earthly things of our humanity, words, wine, and bread. For him there is conjunction and identification here.<sup>45</sup> The finitude of the earthly things is not set against the infinite God and not allowed to set him bounds.<sup>46</sup> Seeing this conjunction threatened, Luther does not shrink

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Gennrich, p. 20. Iserloh, p. 74, points the contrast with Occam.

<sup>46</sup> Here Luther is with Occam. *Tanta est enim divina potentia quod de creaturis suis poterit facere quicquid sibi placuerit*. Birch, p. 220. Luther, however, does not propound a philosophical demonstration. His conclusion is that the fact which the words of Christ state is not impossible, while Occam concludes, "If He makes a cause of a natural object, He is not bound to make the effect." Iserloh finds Occam's demonstration fraught with unresolved difficulties. Pp. 207 ff.

Zwingli is with the Realists here. He shares his view of the Right Hand with the schoolmen. Their shared *theologia gloriae* cannot accept the lowly earthly element as capable of the conjunction. It must either be risen above or displaced. The *unitas finiti et infiniti* (WA XXXIX, 112, 9) is as abhorrent to most schoolmen as to the Swiss. Cf. Grass, pp. 58 f. Peters, pp. 90 f.: "A scholastic just as a reformed separation of the two components from each other would only endanger the mystery." *Contra* Erich Seeberg, *Luthers Theologie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1937), II, 346; "Der Gegensatz zwischen Zwingli, Schwenckfeld und Luther," *Reinhold Seeberg Festschrift*, ed. W. Koepf (Leipzig: Deichertsche Verlag, 1929), p. 80; Franz Hildebrandt, *Est, das lutherische Prinzip* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931), p. 83.

The magnitude of Luther's achievement can be seen against the background of what Heimsoeth says of the long regnant notion of finitude. Heinz Heimsoeth, *Die sechs grossen Themen der abendländischen Metaphysik und der Ausgang des Mittelalters*, 4th ed. (Darmstadt: Wissen-

from absurdity in its defense. The absurdity is born of the terms rather than the theology, and by it he would crack the terms to serve the *deus incarnatus*, who is graciously there for us according to the appointment and action of his words.

When Oecolampadius urged Luther to raise his thoughts away from the human to the divine Christ, Luther replied with the heart of his theology. He neither knows nor worships any other God than Him who became man. He would have no other apart from him, for there is no other who can save. Hence he could not bear that the humanity be treated as of so little worth and cast aside.<sup>47</sup>

Luther will have no God apart from Christ, no gap between God and Christ, no gap between his two natures, no gap between his body and the bread, no gap between Christ and us, or a part of us, and no gap between any of these and God's words.<sup>48</sup>

schaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1958), pp. 61 ff. "Where there are no limits, there there can be no all-embracing understanding." P. 68.

To the Wittenberg "Professor of the Old Testament" the living God is Lord of His creation in which He does wondrous things. This marveling recognition leads to a more glorious *dignificare naturam* than Vignaux dreams of when he sets a gloomy Luther in opposition to the Nominalists and their *dignificare naturam*. Paul Vignaux, *Philosophy of the Middle Ages* (London: Burns & Oates, 1958), pp. 211—13. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Luther's Works*, Companion Volume, *Luther the Expositor* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), pp. 45—47.

<sup>47</sup> WA XXX/3, 132, 23. Elert calls these the most important words Luther uttered in Marburg. *Luther in Marburg*, p. 317. WA XXVIII, 135, 15.

<sup>48</sup> WA XX, 603, 28; XXX 1, 53, 24; XXVI, 437-445; XXIII, 147, 24; 239, 8; XXVI, 317, 1; 420, 20; XXIII, 181, 36; AE 37, 294—303, 66, 121, 206, 280, 87 f.

This insistence of Luther's on wholeness—*Lasse das Sacrament gantz bleiben*<sup>49</sup>—applies also to Christ and to man. His understanding of these is also not informed by any philosophical principle but by Scripture. His theology breaks the bondage of philosophy. The analyzing and unifying philosophers and philosophical theologians are more available for his opponents' use than for his. Their labels will not stick to him. When he uses their weapons, it is for a negative purpose, and his use of them is rather left-handed.

The labels make a curious picture. The Nominalist sophists he cites held to a local "Right Hand" and had no joy in the lowly earthly element. Their empirical principle belongs rather with Luther's opponents. They also thought of higher and lower parts in Christ and in man, as did Biel.<sup>50</sup> Occam's inductive method is not at home with Luther here, and certainly not his comfortably held immediate presence.<sup>51</sup> Luther is more Thomist than Nominalist in his understanding of the role of the *Verba*.<sup>52</sup> He is more a Realist in the insistence on the identity of Christ at the Right Hand and in the Sacrament,<sup>53</sup> although he is innocent of their Realist basic, absolute universals. His rejection of these is not that of the Nominalists. He has no use for the distinctions of substance, quantity, and quality that are basic for distinguishing the modes of presence, nor for the philosophical definition of these. He throws them to his opponents

<sup>49</sup> WA XXX/1, 55, 19.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Oberman, pp. 58 f.; Grane, pp. 79 to 82, 363.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Iserloh, p. 197.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Damerau, pp. 196 f.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Damerau, p. 181.

as nuts on which to crack their rationalizing teeth. This, however, is not all. They are also put to break our narrow and rigid categories and to enlarge our wonder at Christ's gracious works and ways. As Peters puts it, they would "teach us to marvel."<sup>54</sup>

Labels of philosophical theology do not help us to the heart of the matter. That does business in an inflated currency while Luther is a doughty protagonist of the gold standard. His is not a theology of postulate, proof, and conclusion, but of the received data. If God does or says something, it is sheer impertinence to question its possibility or fitness or to prescribe its manner. Nor is there any need of proving it. When Luther speaks of "proof," this may not be understood as being contrary to the whole data character of his theology.

<sup>54</sup> Peters, p. 83. Cf. Rudolf Hermann, "Zu Luthers Lehre vom unfreien Willen," *Greifswalder Studien*, No. 4 (1931), p. 21: "An den in Christus offenbaren Gott glauben, heisst lernen Geheimnisse stehen zu lassen."

If God had done or said otherwise in any case, Luther would "prove" that, too.

The answer in the *Small Catechism* to the question "What is the Sacrament of the Altar" needs no dephilosophizing. It stands there in its data character with the same confidence as do the Words of Institution in the Large Catechism. They say what they say. The fact is confessed and the mystery revered. It is the attempts to modify, explain, and qualify that betray philosophical infiltration.

It is His will to make His gift to you through the humanity, through the word, and through the bread in the Communion. What an arrogant and ungrateful devil you are that dares to ask why He did not do it otherwise and not in this way! Would you decree and choose manner and measure for Him? You ought to leap for joy that He does it by whatever way He wishes. What matters is that you receive it.<sup>55</sup>

Cambridge, England

<sup>55</sup> WA XXIII, 269, 3; AE 37, 140.

#### CORRIGENDUM

David W. Lotz has called to our attention an editorial error in his article in the January 1968 (XXXIX) issue of this journal. We had changed to a question what had been an affirmative statement. The paragraph on page 32 should read:

Can the "historical problem" really be dismissed in such summary fashion? For one thing, why should faith be *in any sense* concerned with history? It is not logically absurd, for example, to hold that "authentic existence" is possible through confrontation with a fictional story. Put otherwise: how does faith in the crucified and risen Lord differ from faith in a mythical Christ, if what is primary is my existential involvement, my reception of a new self-understanding?

We apologize to Mr. Lotz for unintentionally changing his meaning.

# Luther and the War against the Turks

<http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/ForellLutherWarTurks.pdf>

## Concordia Theological Monthly

Continuing

LEHRE UND WEHRE

MAGAZIN FUER EV.-LUTH. HOMILETIK

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY-THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

Vol. XVII

September, 1946

No. 9

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Ein Prediger muss nicht allein *wei-*  
*den*, also dass er die Schafe unter-  
weise, wie sie rechte Christen sollen  
sein, sondern auch daneben den Woel-  
fen *wehren*, dass sie die Schafe nicht  
angreifen und mit falscher Lehre ver-  
fuehren und Irrtum einfuehren.  
*Luther*

Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute  
mehr bei der Kirche behaelt denn  
die gute Predigt. — *Apologie, Art. 24*

If the trumpet give an uncertain  
sound, who shall prepare himself to  
the battle? — *1 Cor. 14:8*

Published by the

Ev. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE, St. Louis 18, Mo.

PRINTED IN U. S. A.



ARCHIVES

# Luther and the War Against the Turks

By GEORGE W. FORELL,\* New York City

Modern psychoanalysis tells us that disease is the touchstone of the healthy mind. What is true in the realm of psychology is not less true in the realm of ethics. The most terrible disease in the realm of human relations is war, and so we can say that war is the touchstone of a healthy ethical system. In its attitude toward war the weakness of an ethical system is revealed. In the war situation an ethical system is revealed as basically unrealistic if it proves unwilling to face the actual situation and therefore uses the escape of absolute pacifism. It is revealed as basically immoral if it condones any war to such an extent that it loses sight of sin and injustice and makes of that war a holy war or a crusade.

Because the attitude toward war growing out of an ethical system has a peculiar significance, it is of considerable value

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\* This article originally appeared in *Church History*. It is here reprinted by permission.—ED. NOTE.

to study Luther's attitude toward the war against the Turks. His attitude as expressed here will throw some light upon his theological presuppositions and will serve to illustrate his ethical system.

However, little has been written in regard to Luther's position in the war against the Turks. There are few studies of the subject and not one in English.<sup>1</sup> Yet the war against the Turks formed the colorful background of the Reformation.

In the early years of the Reformation, the Turkish danger had constantly increased. Large parts of southeastern Europe were under Turkish rule. After the sudden death of Selim I, in 1520, Suleiman II became his successor. Some had hoped that he would rest on the laurels of his predecessor, but such hopes failed to materialize. On the contrary, while Selim I had fought his major battles against Egypt in Africa, Suleiman had his hands free to attack Hungary, the southeastern bulwark of Christendom. In 1521 he captured Belgrade, and in the battle of Mohacz in 1526 he routed the Hungarian army. King Louis II was killed, and all Europe lay open to the victorious armies of the Moslems.

Ferdinand of Austria suddenly realized that his country was the next objective of the advancing enemy. He tried to appease the Sultan with diplomacy. Sending ambassadors to the Turks, he offered peace and a "good neighbor policy." But the ambassadors returned with the disquieting message that Suleiman expected to discuss the matter personally with Archduke of Austria — and in Vienna.

Small wonder that not only Austria but Christian Europe in general was terror-stricken. It was at that time that Luther published his first major statement in regard to the Turkish danger. It appeared in 1529 under the title *On War Against the Turk*, and was written to counteract the prevalent opinion that Luther considered the war against the Turks a war against God. This impression of Luther's position had been fostered by the notorious papal bull *Exsurge Domine*, in which Pope Leo X had condemned Luther's theses as heretical. In his fifth thesis Luther had said that the Pope cannot remit any other punishments than those which he or canon law

<sup>1</sup> During the recent war a German, Helmut Lamparter, has examined Luther's position in the war against the Turks. He is especially interested to prove Luther's absolute disavowal of military crusades. Cf. H. Lamparter, *Luthers Stellung zum Tuerkenkrieg* (Muenchen, 1940).

had imposed.<sup>2</sup> He had claimed that the Pope cannot remit God's punishments. And in his defense of the Ninety-five Theses, of 1518, he had tried to make his point even more emphatic and had added that if the Pope was as well able to remit divine punishment as he claimed, he should stop the advance of the Turk. Luther said that he must indeed be a poor Christian who does not know that the Turks are a punishment from God, and invited the Pope to stop that punishment.<sup>3</sup>

The Pope had countered by condemning as heretical the following sentence of Luther: "To fight against the Turks is to fight against God's visitation upon our iniquities."<sup>4</sup> In this misleading form Luther's attitude toward the war against the Turks had been widely publicized. This had given the general impression that Luther considered a war against the Turks sinful and preferred the rule of the Turks to the rule of the Emperor.

Luther had to answer this accusation. He did that in a detailed reassertion of all the articles condemned by Leo X.<sup>5</sup> In regard to the Turks he said that unless the Pope were put in his place, all attempts to defeat the Turks would prove futile. The wrath of the Lord would continue to be upon all Christendom as long as Christian nations continued to honor those most Turkish of all Turks, even the Romanists.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Luthers Werke*, Weimar ed., I, 233, 18: "5. *Papa non vult nec potest ullas penas remittere nisi eas, quas arbitrio vel suo vel canonum imposuit.*" All quotations from Luther's works are from the Weimar edition.

<sup>3</sup> *Luthers Werke*, I, 535, 30: "*Alioqui si sacerdos ecclesiae sive summus sive infimus potest hanc poenam potestate clavium solvere: pellat ergo pestes, bella, seditiones, terremotus, incendia, caedes, latrocinia, item Turcas et Tartaros aliosque infideles, quos esse flagella et virgam dei nemo nisi parum christianus ignorat. Dicit enim Isa. X Ve Assur! virga furoris mei et baculus ipse est. In manu eius indignatio mea. Licet plurimi nunc et eidem magni in ecclesia nihil aliud somnient quam bella adversus Turcam, scilicet non contra iniquitates, sed contra virgam iniquitatis bellaturi deoque repugnaturi, qui per eam virgam sese visitare dicit iniquitates nostras, eo quod nos non visitamus eas.*"

<sup>4</sup> *Bulla Exsurge Domine*, June 15, 1520: "*Proelari adversus Turcas est repugnare Dei visitanti iniquitates nostras.*"

<sup>5</sup> *Luthers Werke*, VII, 94ff.: *Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per Bullam Leonis X novissimam damnatorum.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 141, 24: "*Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat et Bello Turchico abstineat, donec Papae nomen sub caelo valet.*"

Also VII, 141, 7: "*Et its omnibus non est aversus furor domini, nec dum intelligimus manum dei, percutientis nos in corpore et anima per hos Romanos Turcissimos Turcas.*"

But this answer merely showed that Luther's pronouncements in regard to the Turks were not a defense of the Turks but an attack against the Pope. It had not clarified his own attitude toward the increasing Turkish danger. Luther did not want the Pope to lead Christendom in a war against the Sultan, but did that mean that he felt that such a war in itself should not be waged? Such an attitude was not uncommon.<sup>7</sup> Was it also Luther's attitude?

Realizing the importance of Luther's position in this matter, friends had urged him for years to write somewhat extensively on the subject. Finally, in January of 1529, he published the above-mentioned book *On War Against the Turk*.<sup>8</sup> It could not have appeared at a more opportune moment. On October 9, 1528, Luther had written the introduction to the book and dedicated it to Philip, Landgrave of Hesse. Here he wrote the almost prophetic words "and now that the Turk is actually approaching." It was not half a year later, in May, 1529, that Suleiman actually left Constantinople. In the autumn of the same year the Turkish army reached the outskirts of Vienna and encircled the city. It seemed that Vienna was doomed. Luther heard of the siege of Vienna on his way home from the Marburg Colloquy. It was in Marburg that his attention had been called by Myconius to certain sayings of a Franciscan monk. This man, Johannes Hilten, had predicted the Turkish danger on the basis of certain prophecies in the book of Daniel.<sup>9</sup> Luther was impressed and worried. He now began to believe that the book of Daniel might throw some light on the contemporary trials of Christendom. It was under the impact of this information and of the siege of Vienna that he decided to write another book dealing with the Turkish danger. Before this plan could be executed, Luther heard with relief that Suleiman and his army had retreated from Vienna. Yet he felt that the repetition of a Moslem advance had to be avoided. In order to do his part in calling the attention of

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Briefe, V, 175, 7; No. 1492. Luther to Probst: "*Germania plena est proditoribus, qui Turcas favent.*"

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 107. "Vom Kriege widder die Tuercken"; cf. "On War Against the Turk," Philadelphia edition, V.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Briefe, V, 191; No. 1501. Friedrich Myconius to Luther.

all people to the Turkish danger, he wrote his *Call to War Against the Turk*.<sup>10</sup>

Besides these three major works, there are numerous references to the war against the Turks all through Luther's writings.<sup>11</sup> He was so concerned with the Turkish problem that in 1530 he wrote a preface to a little book by a Dominican monk who had spent more than twenty years in a Turkish prison. This book dealt with the religion and customs of the Moslems and was Luther's main source of information on the subject.<sup>12</sup>

All these writings of Luther indicate quite clearly his grave concern with the danger that threatened Christianity from the Moslem world. More than most of his contemporaries Luther realized what was involved in a war or in pacifistic nonresistance against the Turks.

This is the more remarkable in the light of the actual historical situation. Instead of fearing the Turks, Luther had every reason to be grateful to them. It was the constant danger of a Turkish invasion that had kept the emperor from taking severe measures against Luther's reformation. The Empire needed the help of the Evangelical princes in the war against the Turks and therefore had to postpone its plans to destroy Luther. From the point of view of realistic power politics, the safety of the Reformation depended upon the strength of the Turkish armies. From many points of view the Sultan and Luther might have been political allies.

That Luther was aware of this fact is best illustrated by a little episode reported in the *Table Talk*. At one time Luther was informed by a member of an imperial mission to the Turkish Sultan that Suleiman had been very much interested in Luther and his movement and had asked the ambassadors Luther's age. When they had told him that Luther was forty-eight years old, he had said, "I wish he were even younger; he would find in me a gracious protector." But hearing that report, Luther, not being a realistic politician, made the sign of the cross and said, "May God protect me from such a gracious protector."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 160. Eine Heerpredigt widder den Tuercken.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, LI, 577ff. Vermahnung zum Gebet widder den Tuercken.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 205. Vorwort zu dem *Libellus de ritu et moribus Turcorum*.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, T. II, 508, 17: "Egregius quidam vir nomine Schmaltz Hagonensis civis, qui fuit in legatione ad Turcam, Luthero retulit Turcarum

Although by all rules of strategy and power politics Luther and the Turks should have been allies, Luther urged war against the Turks. What was the reason?

### I. THE DANGER

Luther's position concerning the Turks was determined by study of the Bible. It was Luther's intention to instruct the consciences of Christians on the basis of a study of Scripture. He wanted them to learn "what we must know about the Turk and who he is according to Scripture."<sup>14</sup> According to Scripture, the Turks were dangerous. Luther's attitude was not based upon political speculation in regard to a balance of powers. It was not based upon his desire to preserve a so-called Christian civilization. He thought very little of the Christian civilization of his time. Luther's position in regard to the Turks was the result of a thorough study of Scripture and especially of those passages that seemed to point to the Turkish danger. Before Luther spoke about the Turks, he had first obediently listened to the Word of God.

What was the message of Scripture in regard to the Turks? First of all, they were the rod of punishment that God was sending. In his explanation and defense of the Ninety-five Theses, Luther had called the Turk the rod of punishment of the wrath of God. He had said that by means of the Turks, God was punishing Christendom for its contempt of the Gospel. Pope Leo and his courtiers had tried to use this statement to imply that Luther lacked patriotism and claimed divine sanction for the Turkish sword. In spite of this misrepresentation, Luther repeated in 1529 what he had said before: "Because Germany is so full of evil and blasphemy, nothing else can be expected. We must suffer punishment if we do not repent and stop the persecution of the Gospel."<sup>15</sup>

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*regem ipsum interrogasse de Martino Luthero, et quot annorum esset; qui cum eum annorum 48 aetatis esse dixisset, respondisse fertur: ich wolt, dass er noch junger were, dann er solt einen gnedigen herra an mir wissen. Respondit Martinus Lutherus facto crucis signo: Behut mich Gott vor diesen gnedigen herrn."*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 161, 31: "Das gewissen zu unterrichten dienet wol zur sachen, das man gewis sey, was der Tuercke sey und wofuer er zurhalten sey nach der schrift."

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 180, 19: "Denn ich hab droben gesagt, weil Deuschland so vol bosheit und Lesterung ist, das zu hoch uber macht ist und yn hymel schreyet, kans nicht anders werden, wo wir uns nicht bessern und ablassen von verfolgung und lesterung des Euangelij, wir muessen herhalten und eine staupe leiden."

And he reiterated that as long as the Christian world refuses to repent, it will not be successful in its wars, for the Lord fights against it.<sup>16</sup> Here Luther stood courageously in the prophetic tradition. With the Prophets, he realized that God can and does use heathen nations in order to punish the so-called Christian nations for their unfaithfulness.

But Luther looked at the Turks from still another point of view. For him they were not only the rod of punishment of the wrath of God, but also the servants and saints of the devil.<sup>17</sup> What did he mean by that? This combination of the rod of punishment of the wrath of God with the servants and saints of the devil throws some light upon Luther's peculiar conception of the devil. For Luther the devil was always God's devil, *i. e.*, in his attempt to counteract God he ultimately serves God. The Turks were the servants and saints of the devil. Why did Luther call them saints?

Luther had read a number of books concerning Mohammedanism, and he was aware of the fact that in many respects the Mohammedans lived a morally upright life. Luther thought that compared with the sincerity of Moslem life and Moslem asceticism, the Roman asceticism seemed ridiculous. And in this context he reminded his readers that "the devil also can make a sour face and fast and perform false miracles and present his servants with mystical raptures."<sup>18</sup> Such practices and experiences are the common property of all religions; they do not demonstrate a religion as true. Even the devil's own religion can be accompanied by such experiences and practices. In this sense the Turks are the saints and servants of the devil; their religious exercises

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, XLVI, 609, 2; cf. W. A. LI, 594, 29: "Wollen wir uns nu lassen helfen und raten, So lasst uns Busse thun und die boesen Stueck so droben erzelet bessern. Werden wir aber solches nicht thun, und wollen uns nicht lassen raten, so ist uns auch nicht zu helfen. Und wird vergeblich sein das wir viel schreien der Tuercke sey ein grausamer Tyran. Denn es hilfft nichts, das ein boese Kind schreiet uber die scharffe Ruten, Wo es fromm were, so were die Ruten nicht scharff, ja, sie were kein Rute."

<sup>17</sup> For this division cf. H. Lamparter, *Luthers Stellung zum Tuerckenkrieg*; *Luthers Werke*, LI, 617: "Denn der Tuercken heer ist eigentlich der Teuffel heer." *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 187: "Unter andern ergebnissen bey den Tuercken ist wol das fuernemste das yre priester odder geistlichen solch ein ernst, dapfer, strenge leben fueren, das man sie moecht fuer Engel und nicht fuer menschen ansehen, das mit allen unsern geistlichen und moenchen ym Bapstum ein schertz ist gegen sie."

<sup>18</sup> *Luthers Werke*, XXX, 2, 187, 10.

do not disprove it but rather prove it. Luther wanted all soldiers who had to fight the Turks to know their peculiar relationship to the powers of evil. He said: "If you go to war against the Turks, you can be sure that you are not fighting flesh and blood, *i. e.*, against men, for the army of the Turks is actually the army of the devil."<sup>19</sup>

The Turk's peculiar relationship to the realm of the devil explained for Luther the renewed vigor of the Moslem armies at the time of the Reformation. He felt that the devil was worried that the rediscovery of the Gospel might endanger his empire and therefore made these powerful attempts to conquer all Europe.

As saints of the devil the Turks were also destroyers of Christian faith and morals. The worth of their religion could not be measured by their religious exercises or their more or less moral legislation. Luther knew only one criterion by which all religion, and therefore also Mohammedanism, had to be judged. His all-important criterion for the truth of religion was its attitude toward Jesus Christ as the Son of God.<sup>20</sup> He applied this criterion to Mohammedanism and found it wanting.

Luther realized that measured by a purely moralistic standard, the religion of the Turks would come out fairly well. However, he considered such a criterion invalid. Only the faith expressed in the second article of the Apostles' Creed is a valid standard for the truth of religion. Luther had declared in the Smalcald articles: "From this article one cannot depart or give in, even if heaven and earth should fall. . . . And upon this article rests everything that we teach and live against Pope, devil, and the world. Therefore we must be absolutely certain and never doubt; otherwise everything is lost and Pope and devil and all our other enemies will be victorious."<sup>21</sup> Now he claimed against the Turkish religion: "Everything depends upon this second article; because of it we are called Christians and through the Gospel we have

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, LI, 617, 26.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 186, 15: "Und durch diesen artickel wird unser glaube gesondert von allen andern glauben auff erden, Denn die Jueden haben das nicht, die Tuercken und Sarracener auch nicht, dazu kein Papist noch falscher Christ noch kein ander ungleubiger, sondern allein die rechten Christen."

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, L, 199, 22.

been called to it and baptized upon it and have been counted as Christians. And through it we receive the Holy Spirit and forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. For this article makes us children of God and brothers of Christ, so that we may become eternally like Him and be His coheirs."<sup>22</sup> The second article of the Apostles' Creed judges all religion. It is the only valid criterion for Christians. It must be considered in judging the religion of the Turks and is far more important than any possible religious habits and experiences associated with Turkish religion. From this position Luther came to the conclusion that the Koran is a "foul book of blasphemy," "merely human reason, and without the Word of God and His Spirit."<sup>23</sup> Its teachings are collected together from Jewish, Christian, and heathen beliefs.<sup>24</sup> And since Mohammed denies that Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world, he must be considered an enemy and destroyer of the Lord Jesus and His kingdom. "For he who denies these parts of the Christian faith, namely, that Christ is the Son of God and that He died for us and lives now and rules at the right hand of the Father, what has he to do with Christ? Then Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Baptism, Sacrament, Gospel, faith, and Christian doctrine and life are destroyed."<sup>25</sup> Because of his denial of the deity of Jesus Christ the Turk is the destroyer and enemy of the Christian faith.

But the Turks are also destroyers of Christian morals. In spite of all their ascetic rules and religious practices Luther considered them murderers<sup>26</sup> and whoremongers.<sup>27</sup> The

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 186, 8.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 121, 30: "Ich habe des Mahomets Alkoran etlich stueck, welchs auff deudsch noch predigt—oder lerebuch heissen, wie des Bapsts Decretal heist. Hab ich zeit so mus ichs ia verdeudschen, auf das yderman sehe welch ein faul schendlich buch es ist." Also XXX, 2, 168, 15: ". . . das ist des Mahomeths Alkoran odder gesetz damit er regirt, In welchem gesetz ist kein goettlich auge, sondern eitel menschliche vernunft on Gottes word und geist."

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 122, 29: "Also ists ein glaube zu samen geflickt aus der Juden, Christen und Heiden glauben."

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 122, 16.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 126, 10: "Weil denn nu des Mahometh Alkoran so ein mancfeltiger luegen geist ist, das er schier nichts lest bleiben der Christlichen wahrheit: wie sollt es anders folgen und ergehen, denn das er auch ein grosser mechtiger moerder wuerde und alle beides unter dem schein der warheit und gerechtigkeit?"

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 126, 21: "Das dritte stuecke ist, das des Mahomeths Alkoran den Ehestand nicht acht, sondern yderman zu gibt weiber

Turk does not fight wars from necessity or to protect his land. Like a highwayman, he seeks to rob and damage other lands whose people are doing and have done nothing to him. This he does because according to his religion it is a good work to attack and murder "unbelievers." Held in highest esteem are those Turks who are most diligent in increasing the Turkish kingdom through murder and robbery.

Furthermore, the Turk is the enemy of the institution of marriage. Luther knew that it was customary among the Turks for a man to have any number of wives. He had heard that Moslems bought and sold women like cattle. This made the Turks whoremongers and was contrary to all true Christian morality.

Luther saw in the Turks the punishment of God and the servants and saints of the devil. He discerned their odd combination of purity and depravity. He found them possessed by a spirit of lies and of murder. All this could lead Luther to only one conclusion: the Turk is the Antichrist.

Luthers' identification of the Turk with the Antichrist sounds confusing in view of his frequent claims that it is the Pope in Rome who is the real Antichrist. But for Luther two Antichrists presented no problem. He said: "The person of the Antichrist is at the same time the Pope and the Turk. Every person consists of a body and a soul. So the spirit of the Antichrist is the Pope, his flesh is the Turk. The one has infested the Church spiritually, the other bodily. However, both come from the same lord, even the devil."<sup>28</sup> This conclusion determined Luther's recommendations for the defense against this enemy.

## II. THE DEFENSE

It is not sufficient to state that Luther saw the danger that threatened Europe because of the advance of the Turks. He also realized that he had to suggest means for the defense of Christendom against the approaching danger. It would not have been very helpful if Luther had been satisfied merely to point out the evil confronting Christendom without adding suggestions for its removal. What could be done in the

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*zu nemen wie viel er wil. Und widderumb verlest und verkeufft welche er wil, das die weiber aus der massen unwerd und veracht ynn der Tuerkey sind, werden gekaufft und verkaufft wie das viehe."*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, T. III, 158, 31.

face of such a great peril? What was the duty of the Christian man in regard to the Turkish danger?

As usual, Luther separated the duties of a man as a Christian from the duties of a man as a citizen. He felt that as Christians all people were called to repentance and prayer. Luther was aware of the guilt of the so-called Christian nations. He knew also that sin and guilt were not limited to the German territories under the rule of Rome and of Roman Catholic princes. They were guilty of grave sins, for they had persecuted the Word of God openly.<sup>29</sup> But the Evangelicals also had lacked the necessary respect for the Word of God. Often they had used it to serve their own lusts and desires.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, both Romans and Evangelicals had deserved the punishment of God.

In his *Call to Prayer Against the Turk* Luther went into detail, enumerating the manifold sins and transgressions of the so-called Christian nations. It was because of this general depravity that one should not be surprised that God had sent the Turks to punish Germany. Luther felt that Germany received her deserts. In order, therefore, to assure a successful defense against the Turk it was necessary for all to

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, LI, 585, 13: "Man spricht, Wem nicht zu raten ist, dem ist nicht zu helfen. Wir Deudschen haben nu vil jar her das liebe wort Gottes gehoeert Da durch uns Gott der Vater alle barmhertzigkeit erleuchtet und von den grewlichen greweln der Bepstlichen finsternis und Abgoetterey geruffen in sein heiliges liecht und Reich. Aber wie dankbarlich und ehrlich wir das haben angenommen und gehalten ist schrecklich gnug zu sehen noch heutigen tages. Denn gerade als weren der vorigen Suende zu wenig da wir Gott mit Messen, Fegfeuer, Heiligendienst und andere mehr eigen Wercken und gerechtigkeit auff's hoechst (wie wol unwissend) erzuernet und alle winkel mit solchen grossen Abgoettereien erfuellet haben, und gemeinet, Gott darin sonderlich zu dienen, So faren wir darueber zu und verfolgen das liebe wort, so uns zur Busse von solchen greweln berufft, und verteidigen wissentlich und mutwilliglich solche Abgoetterey mit Fewr, Wasser, Strick, Schwert, Fluechen und lestern, das nicht wunder were, ob Gott nicht allein Tuerken, sondern eitel Teuffel uber Deutschland liesse oder lengst hette lassen schwemmen."

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, LI, 586, 29: "Uber das auff diesem teil wir, so das Evangelion angenommen und sich des worts rhuemen, erfuellen auch den spruch Rom. 2: 'Gottes Namen wird durch euch unter den Heiden gelestert'. Denn ausgenommen gar wenig, die es mit ernst meinen und dankbarlich annemen, So ist der andere hauffe so undanckbar, so mutwillig, so frech, und leben nicht anders, denn als hette Gott sein Wort darumb uns gegeben, und vom Bapstum sampt seinem Teuffelischen gefengnis erloeset, das wir moechten frey thun und lassen, was uns ghestet, Und also sein Wort nicht zu seinen ehren und unser seligkeit, sondern zu unserm mitwillen dienen muesste, So es doch seines lieben Sons Jhesu Christi unsers Herrn und Heilands, blut und tod gekostet hat, das uns solchs so reichlich gepredigt wuerde."

repent and to acknowledge their transgressions. Luther said, "This struggle has to be started with repentance, and we have to change our very being, otherwise we shall fight in vain."<sup>81</sup> And later: "If we want to receive help and counsel, we must first of all repent and change all the evil practices which I mentioned above. Princes and lords must preserve law and do justice, bring an end to money lending, and stop the greed of noblemen, burghers and peasants — but most of all honor the Word of God and care for the schools and churches and their ministers and teachers."<sup>82</sup>

Luther felt that the people needed to learn that only through faithful prayer could the Turkish danger be banished. He said, "Pray ye, because our hope rests not in weapons but in God. If anyone is able to defeat the Turk, it will be the poor little children praying the Lord's Prayer."<sup>83</sup>

But just as repentance and prayer are the tasks of all men as Christians, so these same Christian men have an additional task as citizens. And here again Luther presented the task of the Christian from two different aspects.<sup>84</sup> The Christian as ruler has the duty to resist the Turks.

After the amazing victories of the Turkish armies, many voices could be heard all over Germany proclaiming that the time for fighting the enemy had passed and that the time for appeasing him had come. What's the difference? they said, Germany is doomed; Mohammedanism is the wave of the future. Resistance is hopeless. Many people were resigned to become subjects of the Sultan. Some even hoped for an improvement of their position once the Turks should take over. Against these appeasers Luther said: "We must not despair. For just as God does not want us to be blown up in our conceited self-confidence, He does not want us to give up in despair."<sup>85</sup> Luther made it quite plain that it would

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 117, 21.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, LI, 594, 12.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, T. V., 127, 1.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Lamparter, *Luthers Stellung zum Tuerkenkrieg*, 68ff.

<sup>85</sup> *Luthers Werke*, LI, 593, 20: "*Hie sprichstu: Was sollen wir denn thun? Sollen wir verzweiveln, hende und fuesse gehen lassen, und dem Tuercken alles einreumen on allen widerstand und gegenwehre? Nein, bey leibe, Des habe ich keinen befelh zu raten, Sonerlich nicht, das man verzagen oder verzweivelen solle, denn gleich wie Gott nicht kan leiden den frechen frevel und mutwillen, davon ich droben gesagt, Also wil er auch nicht, das man verzagen oder verzweivelen solle.*"

show utter irresponsibility if the Emperor and the princes should give in to the Turk without a fight. It is the task of the princes and rulers to protect their citizens against all enemies. That is the reason that God has given them power. If they fail in their task, they sin against God.<sup>36</sup>

But the duty to fight the Turks in defense of Germany and Europe does not mean that the war against the Turk is a crusade or a holy war. Luther knew the desires of the Papacy to promote crusades. But he considered the very idea of a crusade utter blasphemy. The champions of crusades always implied that they were defending Christ against the devil. The spirit of the crusade was therefore a spirit of pride. Luther considered such a spirit contrary to Christ's spirit of humility and love. The war against the Turks could never be called a crusade of Christians against the enemies of Christ. Luther said: "Such a view is opposed to Christ's teaching and name. It is against His teachings since He said that Christians should not resist evil, should not quarrel and fight and should never seek revenge. It is against His name since in such an army there are hardly five real Christians and perhaps many people worse in the sight of God than the Turks. Yet they all want to go by the name of Christians. This is the worst of all sins, a sin that no Turk commits. For here Christ's name is used for sin and unrighteousness."<sup>37</sup>

Luther ridiculed the idea that the Emperor had to fight a war against the Turks as a protector of the Christian faith and the Christian Church. Only stupid pride and conceit could possibly produce such an idea. Luther said quite plainly, "The Emperor is not the head of Christendom or the defender of the Gospel and of faith. The Christian Church and the Christian faith need a far different protector than an emperor or a king. These men are generally the worst enemies of Christianity and of faith."<sup>38</sup>

Indeed, Luther said, we would be in a serious predicament if the Christian Church had no other protector than some

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 129, 17: "Der ander man so widder den Turcken zu streiten gebuert, ist Keyser Karol (odder wer der Keyser ist). Denn der Turcke greiffst seine unterthanen und sein Keysertum an, welcher schuldig ist die seinen zu verteidigen als eine ordentliche Obrigkeit von Gott gesetzt."

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 111, 13.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 130, 27.

worldly prince. No prince is sure of his own life for the space of even one hour. Therefore Luther considered the idea of a human defender of the faith an utterly stupid perversion of the truth. He said: "Here you can see how a poor mortal, a future victim of worms, like the Emperor, who is not sure of his life for even one moment, glorifies himself as the true protector of the Christian faith. Scripture says that Christian faith is a rock, too solid to be overthrown by the might of the devil, by death and all powers, that this faith is a divine power (Rom. 1:16). Such a power should be protected by a child of death who can be put to death by any kind of disease? Help us God, the world is crazy. . . . Well, soon we shall have a king or prince who will protect Christ and then somebody else will protect the Holy Ghost, and then of course, the Holy Trinity and Christ and faith will be in a fine shape!"<sup>39</sup>

It is not the task of the princes and of the Emperor to play the defender of the Holy Trinity and of the Christian faith, but it is their task to see to it that their subjects are safe from attack. The Emperor is not the protector of the Church and of the faith, but he is the protector of Germany and of its freedom. Let Him be satisfied with that and do his duty.

Now what of the duty of the subjects in the war against the Turks?<sup>40</sup> First of all, as citizens, they owe obedience to their rulers. They must help the ruler in his task of preserving law and order. Luther had explained before his position in regard to the powers that be. He had spoken of the duty of the citizen as soldier and assured his followers the duty of the citizen as soldier and assured his followers that the professional soldier could also be saved. But now he warned even the subject against participation in a crusade. He said: "If I were a soldier and should see as the flag of my army the colors of a cleric or a cross, even if it were a crucifix, I would run away as if the very devil himself were after me."<sup>41</sup> Luther felt that what was true for the rulers was no less true for the world. Crusades were not only useless but actually blasphemous. No Christian could possibly participate in a crusade. And in this connection Luther added

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, XV, 278, 1.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Lamparter, *Luthers Stellung zum Tuerkenkrieg*, 97 ff.

<sup>41</sup> *Luthers Werke*, XXX, 2, 115, 1.

that no one who serves as a soldier under an emperor or prince should ever let himself be used in a war against the Gospel, fought under the guise of a crusade but actually persecuting Christians. There is a limit to the obedience which the subject owes to the established order.

However, the soldier who fights for law and order and is a Christian can rest assured of his salvation.<sup>42</sup> The fact that he is a soldier does not exclude him from Christ, as some of the enthusiasts had held. For this soldier does not fight for his own pleasure but in the service of the ordinances of God. If he is aware of this fact, no one can harm him. Then the fear of death is overcome. If such a soldier dies, believing in Christ, then his death on the battlefield is merely the beginning of his eternal life. And Luther considered such a death on the battlefield preferable to the slow death on the sickbed.<sup>43</sup>

If war is fought in defense of law and order and of home and family, then a Christian ought to go to war unafraid. Luther said that the war against the Turks is not our business as Christians but it is very much our business as citizens. A Christian citizen we must face all dangers without flinching, for as Christians we know, "And who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?"<sup>44</sup>

Luther's attitude toward the war against the Turks is an integral part of his entire theology. It is especially important because of his persistent denial of the right to proclaim a

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 180, 7: "Denn der Tuerck ist ein feind und Tyrann nicht allein widder Christum, sondern auch widder den Keiser und unser oeberkeit. Foddert sie nu die oeberkeit, sollen sie ziehen und drein schmeissen wie gehorsam unterthanen. Werden sie darueber erschlagen, Wolan so sind sie nicht allein Christen, sondern auch gehorsame trewe unterthanen gewesen, die leib und gut ynn Gottes Gehorsam bey yhre oberherrn zugesetzt haben. Selig und heilig sind sie ewiglich wie der fromme Urias."

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 175, 28: "So weistu ia wol, das du dennoch ein mal sterben must und keinen tag noch stunde des todes sicher bist. Wie wenn denn solcher streit widder den Tuercken eben dein stuendlein sein solt und von Gott also verordent were? Solltestu nicht lieber, ia dazumit freuden, dich allda Gott ergeben ynn einen solchen ehrlichen heiligen todt, da du so viel Goettlicher ursachen, gebot und befehl hast und sicher bist, das du nicht ynn deinen sunden, sondern ynn Gottes gebot und gehorsam stirbest, vielleicht ynn einem augenblick aus allem iammer kommst und gen hymel zu Christo aufflegst, denn das du auff dem bette muetest liegen und dich lange mit deinen sunden, mit dem tod und teuffel reissen, beissen, kempffen und ringen ynn aller fahr und not, und dennoch solche herrliche Gottes befehl und gebot nicht haben?"

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 177, 2.

war, even a religious war, or a crusade. But we cannot fully understand Luther's position on the war against the Turks unless we realize that for Luther there was also an eschatological element involved in this war.

Luther had tried to understand the Turkish danger in the light of the Book of Daniel. On the basis of his exegesis of Daniel, the Turk was for him an indication of the proximity of the *parousia*. The raging of the Antichrist in Turk and Pope made Luther hope that the Day of the Lord was at hand. The troubles of his time represented the birthpangs of the coming Kingdom. This confident hope was the reason that Luther left the ultimate defeat of Turk and Pope to the day of Jesus Christ that was soon to dawn. He said: "Our self-confidence will not defeat Gog.<sup>45</sup> . . . But thunder and lightning and the fire of hell will defeat him, as it once happened to Sennacherib. That will be his judgment and his end. For this judgment Christians must work with humble prayer. . . . If they don't do it, no one else will."<sup>46</sup>

To encourage Christians in their prayers and devotions, the Gospel had appeared again in its clarity. This Gospel and prayer were the weapons in the hands of Christian people. The end was at hand. Soon Christ would bring His judgment upon both the Pope and the Turk, rid the world of the Antichrist, and save us all with His glorious future. And Luther added that for this Day of Christ we wait daily.<sup>47</sup>

Luther knew that finally Antichrist, in whatever form he might appear, would be judged. But he knew also that this judgment would be God's judgment.<sup>48</sup> It is our task to do what we can to hasten this day of Jesus Christ. We can do it only with repentance and prayer and a life according to His Word.

This is the core of Luther's teachings about the Turks. He was concerned with the Turkish danger most of his life.

<sup>45</sup> For Luther the Turk is Gog. He developed this idea in his preface to the 38th and 39th chapter of Ezekiel. Cf. *Luthers Werke*, XXX, 2, 223ff.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 226, 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 226, 7.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 2, 172, 9: "Eben wenn das selb stuedlin kommen wird, das er so viel noch thun will und trotzig und gyrig sein wird, Da wird Christus mit schwefel und feur uber yhn komen und fragen waruemb er seine heiligen, die yhm kein leid gethan, on alle ursache so grewlich verfolget und geplaget habe."

The Turks played a part in his first teachings as well as in his last. But with an amazing consistency Luther never changed his basic attitude. The Turks were God's punishment of a proud and sinful Germany in 1541 as in 1517. Never did the political exigencies of the time change Luther's statements concerning these enemies.

Because Luther knew that the hope of the Christian is based solely upon the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, he concluded his booklet *On War Against the Turks* with these words: "I know that this book will not make the Turk a gracious lord to me, if it comes before him; nevertheless, I have wished to tell my Germans the truth, so far as I know it, and give faithful counsel and service to the grateful and ungrateful alike. If it helps, it helps; if it helps not, then may our dear Lord Jesus Christ help, and come down from heaven with the Last Judgment and smite both Turk and Pope to the earth, together with all tyrants and all the godless, and deliver us from all sins and from all evil."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Works of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia), V, 123.



## The Diet of Augsburg

[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=4383](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=4383)

### The Reformation Defined – The Diet of Augsburg (1530)

The issues at stake in the religious schism were officially defined at the **Diet of Augsburg** (1530), the greatest Imperial assembly between 1495 and 1648. Charles V, recently crowned emperor by Pope Paul II, had returned to the Empire to settle, as he proposed, the schism through negotiations with the estates. He invited the Protestants to submit to him their articles of doctrine, to which his own theologians were then asked to respond. The Lutheran princes and cities submitted the Confession of Augsburg, which later became the definitive Lutheran statement of doctrine; two other (less regarded) statements came from **Zwingli** and a few South German cities. After much back and forth, the ensuing negotiations broke down, and the Diet dispersed, the parties having been hardened by the experience. A few months later, the Protestants decided to set aside the issues that divided them, and they agreed to form a defensive alliance. This led to the creation, in early 1531, of the Smalkaldic League, which offered protection to the Protestants until Charles defeated them on the field in 1547. Before the conclusion of the Diet of Augsburg, the emperor and the majority Catholic estates signed a document (a “Recess”) that included the Diet’s decisions. Dated November 19, 1530, the Recess makes clear, among other things, that the emperor, his advisors, and the Catholic princes, spiritual and temporal, fully understood what was at stake in the schism with respect to doctrine, sacramental practice, ecclesiastical authority, and church property. In this sense, a straight line can be drawn from **Charles’s exchange with Martin Luther at Worms in 1521** to the Recess of the Diet of Augsburg in 1530.

Augsburg, November 19, 1530

We, Charles V, [ . . . ] announce and make known to all the following. At Our first Imperial Diet, held at Worms [1521], before We departed from the Holy Roman Empire in order to preserve our kingdom and land from ongoing wars and feuds, as many of you know, We were obliged to establish, with the advice, will, and consent of Ours and the Empire’s electors, princes, and estates, a sound law to defend Our holy Christian faith and law and order in the Holy Empire to the honor, good, welfare, improvement, and nurture of the German Nation. Since then We have been hearing, for some time, the grievous news that Our Imperial edict, which We issued at Worms, about the dispute over Our holy Christian faith, which in Our absence has spread and rooted itself in many dangerous sects that give rise to no little confusion and schism in Our common German nation. [ . . . ] And so, having issued several laws for keeping the subjects of Our Spanish kingdom united and peaceful during Our absence, and in view of Our special love for and inclination to the German Nation and the Holy Roman Empire, We have left Our hereditary Spanish kingdom for Italy. We were able, praise be to God, to restore peace and order to our Italian lands. [ . . . ] We called an Imperial Diet to convene in Ours and the Holy Empire’s city of Augsburg on April 8, it being Our conviction, will, and opinion to deal with affairs of the Holy Empire, the whole of Christendom, and the German Nation. Specifically, We wished [to determine] how the dispute and errors concerning Our holy faith and the Christian religion [ . . . ] might be fruitfully dealt with and settled, and how the differences over the faith might be overcome; [we wished] to suppress enmity; to overcome the current misconceptions concerning Christ, Our sole Savior; to listen to, understand, and deal with every opinion and view with love and favor, and to bring each to and align each with Christian truth; to suppress everything that is incorrectly interpreted or taught by either side; to accept and stand by a true religion on behalf of us all. [ . . . ]

§ 1. Accordingly, We, together with Our electors, princes, prelates, counts, estates, and envoys, have taken in hand the disputed article about Our holy Christian faith [ . . . ] and have graciously offered to hear everyone who has something to bring forward concerning the religious dispute. This was done by Ours and the Holy Empire’s electors, princes, and cities: Duke John of Saxony, Landgrave in Thuringia, Margrave of Meissen, and the Holy Roman Empire’s hereditary Marshal and Elector; Margrave George of Brandenburg, Duke of Pomerania-Stettin and of

Cashubians and Wends, Burggrave of Nuremberg and Prince of Rügen; Dukes Ernest and Francis, brothers, of Brunswick-Lüneburg; Landgrave Philip of Hesse; Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt; and the envoys of the cities of Nuremberg, Reutlingen, Kempten, Heilbronn, Windsheim, and Weissenburg im Nordgau (1). They composed and submitted in writing their confession and opinion on the faith, which We graciously accepted from them and had read publicly in the presence of all electors, princes, and estates of the Holy Empire assembled here [on June 25, 1530].

And although, after solid advice from expert theologians and Biblical scholars from many nations, We refuted and rejected their confession on good grounds on the basis of the Holy Gospel and the Bible (2), this did not persuade them to agree in all articles with Us, the electors, princes, and other estates. Whereupon, for the health and welfare of the Holy Empire and the German Nation, and so that peace and unity may be maintained, We now present out of Imperial good will and special grace the following favorable Recess to the aforementioned electors, princes, and six cities, requesting them to accept the same with good grace. Namely, that between now and April 15 of next year, they shall consider whether they wish to confess and make peace concerning the disputed articles with the Christian Church, His Holiness, Us, and the other electors, princes, and estates of the Holy Roman Empire, and other Christian rulers and subjects of the common Christendom until a future Council shall meet. They shall apprise Us of their attitude under their seals before this date.

(1) The signatories to the Confession of Augsburg, the Lutheran statement of doctrine submitted to Charles at Augsburg – trans.

(2) Refers to the “Confutation” of the Confession of Augsburg, which a group of leading German Catholic theologians composed; a milder version was read in the emperor’s name on August 3 – trans.

§ 2. It is Our firm will, opinion, and command, that between now and the coming 15th day of April, the Elector of Saxony and his allies shall order that nothing new concerning the faith be printed, offered, or sold in their principalities, lands, and territories. Further, that all electors, princes, and estates of the Holy Empire shall meanwhile keep the peace and unity [of the Empire].

§ 3. Neither the Elector of Saxony, the five princes, the six cities, nor their subjects shall force their sect, as previously has happened, on Our subjects or those of the Holy Empire, or the other electors, princes, and estates. And if some subjects of the Elector of Saxony, the five princes, and the six cities, whatever status they may have, adhere to, or wish to adhere to, the old Christian faith, they shall not be disturbed in their churches and chapels or in their ceremonies and Masses, nor shall any further innovation be introduced in them. Nor shall the regular clergy, men or women, be in any way hindered from hearing the Mass, confessing their sins, or administering or receiving the blessed Sacrament (3).

§ 4. Furthermore, the aforementioned Elector of Saxony, the five princes, and six cities join Us and the other electors, princes, and estates against those who deny the blessed Sacrament (4). Further, rather than splitting away from Us, [ . . . ] they should advise, promote, and aid our actions against those people, just as, as mentioned above, all of Our electors, princes, and estates have, to the extent that they are involved, given us their approval and affirmation.

§ 5. Since no General Council has been held in the Christian Church for many years, although so many abuses and failings have afflicted Christendom for a long time, We, on the common advice [ . . . ] of Ours and the Holy Empire’s electors, [etc.], have decided [ . . . ] to arrange with His Holiness and with all Christian kings and rulers as follows. Within six months of the rising of this Diet, a General Christian Council shall be called to a suitable meeting place for the purpose of Christian reformation. [ . . . ]

§ 6. Furthermore, though the laws of God and of man, also the Gospel, We command that no one shall be deprived by force of what is his [ . . . ]. We are daily approached with complaints and pleas from expelled abbots and abbesses who seek help in recovering their properties. [ . . . ] It is therefore Our strict command that the Elector of Saxony and his allies immediately, and without delay, allow these expropriated monks and other clergy to reoccupy the monasteries and properties in their territories, from which the occupants have been expelled.

§ 7. The aforementioned Elector of Saxony and his allies have not wished to accept Our gracious Recess and have even rejected it in part (5).

[ . . . ]

(3) This expression, either “blessed Sacrament” or “blessed Sacrament of the altar,” always refers to the sacramental rite Catholics call “the Eucharist” and Protestants call “the Lord’s Supper” – trans.

(4) This mention of “sacramentarians” refers to the followers of Huldrych Zwingli of Zurich, who had been engaged in a dispute with Martin Luther about the chief sacrament since 1526 – trans.

(5) Refers to the first redaction of the Recess (September 22, 1530), which the Protestant estates refused to sign – trans.

§ 10. As Roman emperor and supreme steward of Christendom, it pertains to Our Imperial office to confess Our obligation to guard, protect, and maintain the holy Christian faith as it has been preserved until now and taught in an honorable and praiseworthy manner by the entire Holy Christian Church. Also to enforce Our Imperial edict, which We issued at Our first Diet at Worms [in 1521]. Therefore, We, together with Ours and the Holy Empire’s obedient electors, princes, and estates, have at last decided, and have agreed and promised for Ourselves and Our subjects, to firmly remain faithful to the old, true, traditional Christian faith and religion, and by the honorable, praiseworthy ceremonies and usages that have always been performed in all the churches. And We will allow no alteration to them to be made prior to the decision by a future General Council.

§ 11. Despite Our edict issued at Worms, and despite the Recesses of the Diets We called to Nuremberg [in 1522, 1522-23, and 1524] and Speyer [1526, 1529], many abuses and innovations against the Christian faith and religion have been introduced.

§ 12. In particular, some have taught, written, and preached that, in the blessed Sacrament of the altar, the Body and Blood of Christ are not essentially present under both forms of bread and wine, but only in a figurative and symbolic way – plus many other un-Christian details, additions, and interpretations.

§ 13. Some preach and teach that Christ’s command obliges every person to receive the blessed Sacrament of the altar under both forms [bread and wine]. And that those who administer or receive the Sacrament under one form, do so invalidly.

§ 14. Some have even suppressed the office of the Holy Mass and preached that the Masses are the worst form of blasphemy.

§ 15. Some have not entirely abolished the Masses but made changes to them to please themselves, which changes are against the long usage and the regulations and laws of all the Christian churches. The same is true of the singing of the Mass, the observance of the hours, other songs in praise of the Mother of God, the dear saints, and the holy Fathers, which are done to the honor of God and the edification of men, and which have been established and held in a common and uniform way in all the Christian churches. These have been abolished as blasphemous and un-Christian and replaced by other singing more to their taste.

§ 16. Some have taught that the Baptism of children is worthless, and that each person, when he arrives at the age of reason, ought to be baptized again. They do not regard Baptism as a sacrament, and some have abolished the good Christian ordinances honoring of the rite of Baptism and put others in their places.

§ 17. Some hold no prayers or ceremonies at all, and they do not permit their children to be baptized by a priest but by some lay person, man or woman, and they do this in plain [i.e., unblessed] well water.

§ 18. Some do not have their children confirmed nor do they have the sacrament of Extreme Unction administered to the dying.

§ 19. Some have in inhumanly savage ways destroyed or burned the images of Our Savior, Christ, His venerable mother, Mary, and the dear saints, who for ages have been held in Christian memory by all Christian peoples.

§ 20. Some have taught that there is no free will, but that everything happens as it must happen, and not otherwise, out of inexorable necessity, and that therefore God is the true author of evil.

§ 21. Some have taught that there is no authority among Christians, and that there should be none.

§ 22. Some have taught that mere faith alone, without love and good deeds, saves, and they have [accordingly] condemned all good works.

§ 23. Some have completely destroyed the monasteries, parish churches, and altars.

§ 24. Some have abolished or diminished the venerable Christian ceremonies and practices concerning the remembrance of the life, suffering, death, and accomplishment of Christ Our Savior, which have been performed until now in the monasteries, parish churches, and chapels for the admonition and edification of the Christian people. And they have established other, un-Christian ordinances according to their own will, ability, and taste.

[ . . . ]

§ 26. Some rulers have forbidden their subjects on pain of severe punishment to listen, either in their villages or elsewhere, to preachers of the old, correct, true faith, to attend sermons or worships, or to confess the old faith. If the people do not obey, they are always punished.

[ . . . ]

§ 28. Some have taken the properties of the monasteries, other foundations, and vacant benefices for their own purposes. [ . . . ]

§ 29. Some have expelled the provosts, confessors, preachers, and other Christian overseers from the women's convents, and have introduced their own seducing preachers, confessors, and teachers in their places.

[ . . . ]

§ 31. Some have allowed the disuse, complete or partial, of the men's and women's convents, foundations, and other benefices, including the Mass stipends for the dead, which were established by many of Our ancestors of holy and just reputation, including Roman emperors, kings, princes, and other eminent estates. The religious (6) are allowed to leave their houses if they wish, without permission from the officers of their orders, and to enter into what is alleged to be marriage or some other temporal estate. The abbots and abbesses are not permitted to prevent this. Some religious, both men and women, have been forced to renounce the monasteries and their properties permanently. They are also forced to confess that their monastic life was un-Christian and diabolical.

[ . . . ]

§ 33. Some orders have been forbidden to receive those who wish to join them or to receive vows of profession or obedience from such recruits.

§ 34. Some have removed their children and friends from the monasteries by force and against their will.

§ 35. Some have appointed priests to parishes and other benefices, or have taken them away, as and when they wished and without [in the case of appointments] presenting them to the bishops, who (by law) are to examine and invest them. [ . . . ] Moreover, pastors and preachers who interpret the godly Word and the Scripture according to their own pleasure and against all the Imperial Recesses are installed and tolerated. [ . . . ]

(6) The "religious" is medieval Catholic usage for regular clergy, that is, persons who live as members of religious orders in constituted communities – trans.

§ 36. Such actions lead them to express contempt for the traditional practices of the other churches of Christendom, to insult all rulers and honorable folk in their sermons, and to incite the pious simple folk against one another. All sorts of mischief arises from such actions, the seducing, rejected, and condemned teaching gains entry everywhere, many

wicked errors spread among the common people, all true devotion is annihilated, and Christian honor, discipline, virtue, law, fear of God, uprightness, and good, honest ways of living are entirely decayed.

§ 37. Such things are against not only the Holy Gospel and the Scripture but also the ancient, sound traditions and usages of the Christian churches and their ceremonies. [ . . . ] We have therefore unanimously decided that the aforementioned and all other innovations, which are against the entire Christian Church's faith, order, religion, ceremonies, and old and venerable prescriptions, and long established practices, as these have been laid down and instituted by the whole Christian Church and Councils held some centuries ago, shall be nullified and suppressed.

§ 38. It is therefore our command, intention, and desire that throughout the whole Roman Empire, it be strictly taught and preached that under the forms of bread and wine, the true Body and Blood of Christ Our Savior is essentially and truly present. [ . . . ] It also follows that the Christian Church, based on the promise of the Holy Spirit and sound reason, has most beneficially ordered and commanded that every Christian person, except for the celebrant of the Mass, be given the blessed Sacrament under the form of bread only, for it is truly received and taken under one form, not less or more than under both. We command that until a decision by a future Council shall be made, no innovation shall be introduced in this matter.

[ . . . ]

§ 42. The images of Christ, His dear mother, Mary, and the dear saints reinforce the memory of that which can be forgotten and move many to devotion. They were always permitted in all the Christian churches, and the iconoclasts were condemned by the whole Christian Church assembled in a number of Councils, and especially by our predecessor in the Empire, Emperor Charles I, the Great (7). Accordingly, We command that the said images not be removed, but that they shall be set up and maintained devoutly by all Christians. Also, where the altars and tabernacles have been removed, they shall be restored and preserved to the honor of God.

§ 43. Furthermore, some hold that there is no free will. Since this is an error, and since its corollaries are not human, but bestial, and blasphemous, they shall not be held, taught, or preached.

[ . . . ]

§ 45. It is clear from the Holy Scripture that mere faith alone, without love or good deeds, cannot make one just; also that God has prescribed good deeds for humans in many passages of the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, the aforementioned article, according to which mere faith alone suffices, and good deeds are rejected, shall be neither preached nor taught. In this matter, moderation and distinctions shall be maintained in accordance with the teachings of the whole Christian Church and the holy Fathers.

§ 46. Especially the seven holy Sacraments and their rites shall be maintained as in the Christian churches since ancient times, and as before this dispute, and all innovations shall be suppressed.

(7) Refers to the Council of Nicaea in 787, which had permitted the veneration of images, and to Charlemagne, who had ordered this decision overturned by the Synod of Frankfurt in 794 – trans.

§ 47. All greater and lesser religious foundations, monasteries, parishes, and chapels shall maintain their rules, ordinances, regulations, foundations, singing, reading, preaching, Masses, prayers, burials, and customary and venerable traditional Christian ceremonies, such as have always been observed in all churches.

§ 48. The vacant benefices shall be granted in the ordinary way to virtuous, suitable persons. The Masses for the dead shall be said, and the clergy shall not be hindered from conducting the proper visitations or from punishing the pastors, priests, and religious. Further, the regular and secular priests shall henceforth be wholly prevented from marrying.

§ 49. The priests who have allegedly married prior to this Recess shall from this moment be deprived of their spiritual benefices, jurisdictions, and offices, [ . . . ] [and] pastoral offices and other spiritual benefices shall be filled by their spiritual ruler or patron with other, suitable, unmarried priests.

[ . . . ]

§ 52. No ruler shall allow the clergy to live in open sin, especially with dishonorable, lewd women, or have such women around them, or wear non-clerical garb.

§ 53. Wherever the local clergy have been unjustly forced into servitude, protection, or treaties made with the laity, We declare that such [ . . . ] are null and void, despite any oath sworn or obligation assumed. Wherever monasteries and other ecclesiastical properties of any kind in the Holy Empire of the German Nation have been illegally sold, transferred, or converted to the use or possession of laymen, partly or wholly, such actions are not binding and are null and void, and from this moment on they are restored and released to their old status, and a fair compensation shall be paid for the purchased properties.

[ . . . ]

§ 55. We have agreed with the electors, princes, and estates on the following. We order, establish, and desire that henceforth no preacher anywhere shall be permitted to preach or be installed [in a preaching post] until he has been examined by the archbishop or bishop of his diocese, and until his life, doctrine, and suitability have been tested and found acceptable, and until he has been formally appointed to the preaching office. Such certified preachers, whether regulars or other sorts of priests, shall, without exception and despite any immunity, conform to this Recess in their preaching. Further, in their sermons they shall avoid anything that might give rise to a movement of the common man against the rulers or lead Christians into error or incite them against one another. In particular, they shall refrain [ . . . ] from saying that it is Our intention to wipe out the Gospel and the Holy Word of God, which was never intended or desired by Us or by the estates. Rather, We have been concerned, and are still of this Christian attitude, that the Holy Word of God be spread for the increase of Christian love, the fear of God, devotion, and good deeds, and that it be preserved in a Christian way of life. But not, as is the practice of the new teachers, to preach arbitrarily, selfishly, arrogantly, and with a desire to mislead the simple, common laity. It is rather Our will [ . . . ] that the preachers of the Gospel shall preach and teach according to the interpretation of the Holy Scripture and the teachings approved and accepted by the whole Christian Church, and that they shall refrain from preaching and teaching about what is under dispute, and [that they shall also refrain] from offering insults and ridicule, and await the decision of a Christian Council.

§ 56. These same preachers shall also refrain from dissuading the common Christian people from [attending] the office of the Holy Mass, prayers, and other good deeds, which has regrettably happened in many places. [ . . . ]

§ 57. Everyone, no matter what status, shall keep and obey Our ordinances, the laws, and the good traditional Christian usages, ceremonies, and everything else that the Christian churches have in the past laid down, commanded, and practiced with respect to Our holy Christian faith and worship. And they shall undertake no innovations on pain of punishment to body, life, and property, such as each ruler shall inflict on offenders according to the gravity of the offense. [ . . . ] We command that until a decision by a future General Council, these rules shall be obeyed in their entirety [ . . . ].

§ 58. Since much evil has been caused by irregular printing, We order [ . . . ] that each elector, prince, and estate of the Empire, spiritual or temporal, shall ensure that until the future Council, printers and booksellers shall produce or sell nothing new, and especially no polemical work, whether openly or secretly composed, unless it has been previously examined by persons appointed for this task by the spiritual or temporal authority. Every book shall contain the printer's surname and given name, and the city in which it was printed shall also be named. If anything is missing, the book shall not be printed or offered for sale. Polemics and similar works already printed shall not be offered for sale or sold. If the author, the printer, or the bookseller shall disobey this ordinance and command, the ruler of that place shall, where possible, punish him physically or take his property. Any ruler, whoever he may be, who is found lax in this matter shall be cited and proceeded against by Our Imperial Fiscal (8) and shall be punished, with the punishment to be determined by Our Imperial Chamber Court according to his status and the severity of his failure to enforce the law.

§ 59. Since We issued Our Imperial edict [of Worms], many bishoprics, higher and lesser ecclesiastical foundations, and monasteries have been illegally deprived of their autonomy and administration and laid waste. Bishops, prelates, pastors, monks, and nuns have been expelled without due legal proceedings; and their dioceses, monasteries, foundations, castles, properties, rents, dues, furniture, and treasures have been confiscated and partly sold, appropriated, and taken from them. Divine, ecclesiastical, Imperial law forbids anyone to deprive someone of what is his arbitrarily, improperly, or illegally, and it especially forbids the seizure and robbery of properties given to the

churches and to God, and even more the abolition or liquidation of the pious foundations donated for the glory of God. Therefore, We order that the bishoprics, foundations, and monasteries and their properties, which have been unjustly confiscated, whether by clerical or by lay persons, or were taken during the peasants' rebellion (9), shall be returned to their rightful owners. [ . . . ] All this by pain of the ban of outlawry established by Our Imperial public peace (10), about which more details are contained in Our mandate on the criminal law (11).

§ 60. There is no doubt In Our Imperial mind that there are still many stalwart Christians who adhere to the old, true Christian faith and oppose the rebellious, seducing, and already condemned teachings. So that such people may maintain their honorable, firm attitude, as is proper, and are not deterred therefrom by any coercion, We [ . . . ] wish that those who reside in territories, cities, villages, and hamlets that have not accepted Our Recess, shall, so long as they maintain their Christian attitude and are obedient to this Recess, enjoy the Holy Empire's special protection and defense of themselves, their properties, wives, and children – just as Our and the Holy Empire's special wards do (12). Further, We decreed by virtue of Our Imperial authority that the same burghers, male and female, and residents who confess and hold to the old Christian faith shall, if need be, be allowed free emigration for themselves and their goods from such territories, cities, villages, and hamlets, and they shall not be burdened by any exit fine or payment.

(8) The Fiscal was the executive branch of the Imperial Chamber Court and was charged with the execution of the court's judgments – trans.

(9) An allusion to the Peasants' War of 1525 – trans.

(10) Refers to the Public Peace of 1495. The Imperial ban meant outlawry, the secular equivalent of excommunication. A banned person could be expropriated or killed by anyone with impunity – trans.

(11) Refers to the Imperial Criminal Code [*Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*] issued during this same Diet – trans.

(12) Refers to the groups who stood under special royal protection, such as the Jews and the Imperial monasteries – trans.

§ 61. Although in the holy Christian churches no General Council has been held for many years, it is highly necessary that one be held now, so that the aforementioned errors, abuses, and failings that afflict Our holy Faith shall be reformed and brought to a better condition and order. Another reason is that the enemy of the Christian faith, the Turk, has taken over many Christian kingdoms and will take over even more, if no prompt action is taken and the situation is not handled effectively as one of great emergency. Such a Council has been humbly requested and prayed for, without distinction, by Us and Ours and the Holy Empire's electors, princes, and estates and envoys gathered here at Augsburg, both by those who hold with Us Our ancient, true Christian faith as it has always been maintained by the holy Christian churches, and by those who have undertaken the aforementioned innovations. We [ . . . ] have decided to undertake a Christian reformation and reinforcement of the Christian faith and to ask His Holiness to call, within six months of the end of this Diet, a General Christian Council to a suitable meeting place.

§ 62. In many Imperial Recesses issued in the past, it is clearly expressed and provided, that interests, rents, dues, and tithes must be paid to those to whom there are owed, whether clergy or laity, without resistance or obstruction, and that they should not be hindered from collecting the tithes owed them. We have learned, however, that in some places these prescriptions have not been enforced. It pertains to Us, as behooves a Roman emperor, to see that no one is deprived of what is his illegally or by force. We therefore order and desire that every ruler, whether spiritual or temporal, and his subjects, both clerical and lay, shall retain their rents, dues, interests, tithes, rights, and prerogatives, and that no one shall deprive another of them or disturb or hinder their possession, but that each shall be paid and allowed to take possession of his inheritance, his perpetual and other interests, dues, tithes, rights, and other prerogatives.

[ . . . ]

§ 64. We [ . . . ] command that this, Our Recess, shall be fully obeyed and enforced in all of its stipulations, provisions, and conceptions regardless of earlier Recesses enacted by our previous Imperial Diets, insofar as these Recesses and ordinances may be detrimental to the faith. And We command it despite any objections, opposition, and appeals that have been or may be directed to a General Council, to Us, or to anyone else. [ . . . ]

Source of original German text: Ruth Kastner, ed., *Quellen zur Reformation 1517-1555*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994, pp. 501-20.

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## The Schmalkaldic League

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### **The Schmalkaldic League (1530/1 - 1547)**

#### **Part 1: Introduction and Creation**

The Reformation further divided a Europe already fragmented by cultural, economic and political differences. In the Holy Roman Empire, which covered much of central Europe, the newly Lutheran princes clashed with their Emperor: he was the secular head of the Catholic church and they were part of a heresy. These tensions produced the Schmalkaldic League, an alliance of Lutheran princes and cities that pledged to protect each other from any religiously motivated attack; it lasted for sixteen years.

#### **The League's Creation**

In the mid 1500's the Holy Roman Empire was a piecemeal grouping of over 300 territories, which varied from large dukedoms to single cities; although largely independent, they all owed some form of loyalty to the Emperor. After Luther ignited a massive religious debate in 1517, via the publication of his 95 Theses, many German territories adopted his ideas and converted away from the existing Catholic Church. However, the Empire was an intrinsically Catholic institution, and the Emperor was the secular head of a Catholic Church that now regarded Luther's ideas as heresy. In 1521 Emperor Charles V pledged to remove the Lutherans (this new branch of religion was not yet called Protestantism) from his kingdom, with force if necessary.

There was no immediate armed conflict. The Lutheran territories still owed allegiance to the Emperor, even though they were implicitly opposed to his role in the Catholic Church; he was, after all, the head of their empire. Likewise, although the Emperor was opposed to the Lutherans, he was hamstrung without them: the Empire had powerful resources, but these were split amongst hundreds of states. Throughout the 1520's Charles needed their support - militarily, politically and economically - and he was thus prevented from acting against them. Consequently, Lutheran ideas continued to spread amongst the German territories.

In 1530 the situation changed. Charles had renewed his peace with France in 1529, temporarily driven the Ottoman forces back, and settled matters in Spain; he wanted to use this hiatus to reunite his empire, so it was ready to face any renewed Ottoman threat. Additionally, he had just returned from Rome having been crowned Emperor by the Pope, and he wanted to end the heresy. With the Catholic majority in the Diet (or *Reichstag*) demanding a general church council, and the Pope preferring arms, Charles was prepared to compromise. He asked the Lutherans to present their beliefs at a Diet, to be held in Augsburg.

Philip Melanchthon prepared a statement defining the basic Lutheran ideas, which had now been refined by nearly two decades of debate and discussion. This was the Confession of Augsburg, and it was delivered in June 1530. However, for many Catholics there could be no compromise with this new heresy, and they presented a rejection of the Lutheran Confession entitled The Confutation of Augsburg. Despite it being very diplomatic - Melanchthon had avoided the most contentious issues and focused on areas of probable compromise - the Confession was rejected by Charles. He instead accepted the Confutation, consented to a renewal of the Edict of Worms (which banned Luther's ideas), and gave a limited period for the 'heretics' to reconvert. The Lutheran members of the Diet left, in a mood which historians have described as both disgust and alienation.

In a direct reaction to the events of Augsburg two leading Lutheran princes, Landgrave Philip of Hesse and Elector John of Saxony, arranged a meeting at Schmalkalden, in the December of 1530. Here, in 1531, eight princes and eleven cities agreed to form a defensive league: if one member were attacked because of their religion, all the others would unite and support them. The Confession of Augsburg was to be taken as their statement of faith, and a charter drawn up. Additionally, a commitment to provide troops was established, with a substantial military burden of 10,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry being split amongst the members.

The creation of leagues was common in the early modern Holy Roman Empire, especially during the Reformation. The League of Torgau had been formed by Lutherans in 1526, to oppose the Edict of Worms, and the 1520's also saw the Leagues of Speyer, Dessau and Regensburg; the latter two were Catholic. However, the Schmalkaldic League included a large military component, and for the first time a powerful group of princes and cities appeared to be both openly defiant of the Emperor, and ready to fight him.

## **Part 2: The Rise of the League**

Some historians have claimed that the events of 1530-31 made an armed conflict between the League and the Emperor inevitable, but this might not be the case.

The Lutheran princes were still respectful of their Emperor and many were reluctant to attack; indeed, the city of Nuremberg, which remained outside the League, was opposed to challenging him at all. Equally, many Catholic territories were loath to encourage a situation whereby the Emperor could restrict their rights or march against them, and a successful attack on the Lutherans could establish an unwanted precedent. Finally, Charles still wished to negotiate a compromise.

These are moots points however, because a large Ottoman army transformed the situation. Charles had already lost large parts of Hungary to them, and renewed attacks in the east prompted the Emperor to declare a religious truce with the Lutherans: the 'Peace of Nuremberg'. This cancelled certain legal cases and prevented any action being taken against the Protestants until a general church council had met, but no date was given; the Lutheran's could continue, and so would their military support. This set the tone for another fifteen years, as Ottoman - and later French - pressure forced Charles to call a series of truces, interspersed with declarations of heresy. The situation became one of intolerant theory, but tolerant practice. Without any unified or directed Catholic opposition, the Schmalkaldic League was able to grow in power.

One early Schmalkaldic triumph was the restoration of Duke Ulrich. A friend of Philip of Hesse, Ulrich had been expelled from his Duchy of Württemberg in 1519: his conquest of a previously independent city caused the powerful Swabian League to invade and eject him. The Duchy had since been sold to Charles, and the League used a combination of Bavarian support and Imperial need to force the Emperor to agree. This was seen as a major victory among the Lutheran territories, and the League's numbers grew. Hesse and his allies also courted foreign support, forming relationships with the French, English and Danish, who all pledged varying forms of aid. Crucially, the League did this while maintaining, at least an illusion of, their loyalty to the emperor.

The League acted to support cities and individuals who wished to convert to Lutheran beliefs, and harass any attempts to curb them. They were occasionally pro-active: in 1542 a League army attacked the Duchy of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, the remaining Catholic heartland in the north, and expelled its Duke, Henry. Although this action broke a truce between the League and the Emperor, Charles was too embroiled in a new conflict with France, and his brother with problems in Hungary, to react. By 1545 all of the northern Empire was Lutheran, and numbers were growing in the south. While the Schmalkaldic League never included all of the Lutheran territories - many cities and princes remained separate - it did form a core amongst them.

### **Part 3: Fall and Defeat**

The decline of the League began in the early 1540's. Philip of Hesse was revealed to be a bigamist, a crime punishable by death under the Empire's legal Code of 1532. Fearing for his life, Philip sought an Imperial pardon, and when Charles agreed Philip's political strength was shattered; the League lost an important leader. Additionally, external pressures were again pushing Charles to seek a resolution. The Ottoman threat was continuing, and almost all of Hungary was lost; Charles needed the power that only a united Empire would bring. Perhaps more importantly, the sheer extent of Lutheran conversions demanded Imperial action - three of the seven electors were now Protestant and another, the Archbishop of Cologne, appeared to be wavering. The possibility of a Lutheran empire, and maybe even a Protestant (although uncrowned) Emperor, was growing.

Charles's approach to the League had also changed. The failure of his frequent attempts at negotiation, although the 'fault' of both sides, had clarified the situation - only war or tolerance would work, and the latter was far from ideal. The Emperor began to seek allies amongst the Lutheran princes, exploiting their secular differences, and his two greatest coups were Maurice, the Duke of Saxony, and Albert, Duke of Bavaria. Maurice hated his cousin John, who was both the Elector of Saxony and a leading member of the Schmalkaldic League; Charles promised all of John's lands and titles as a reward. Albert was persuaded by an offer of marriage: his eldest son for the Emperor's niece. Charles also worked to end the League's foreign support, and in 1544 he signed the Peace of Crèpy with Francis I, whereby the French King agreed not to ally with Protestants from within the Empire. This included the Schmalkaldic League.

In 1546 Charles took advantage of a truce with the Ottomans and gathered an army, drawing troops from across the Empire. The Pope also sent support, in the form of a force led by his grandson. While the League was quick to muster, there was little attempt to defeat any of the smaller units before they had combined under Charles. Indeed, historians often take this indecisive activity as evidence that the League had a weak and ineffectual leadership. Certainly, many members distrusted each other, and several cities argued about their troop commitments. The League's only real unity was Lutheran belief, but they even varied in this; additionally, the cities tended to favour simple defence some princes wanted to attack.

The Schmalkaldic War was fought between 1546-7. The League may have had more troops, but they were dis-organised, and Maurice effectively split their forces when his invasion of Saxony drew John away. Ultimately, the League was beaten easily by Charles at the Battle of Mühlberg, where he crushed the Schmalkaldic army and captured many of its leaders. John and Philip of Hesse were imprisoned, the Emperor stripped 28 cities of their independent constitutions, and the League was finished.

Of course, victory on the field of battle doesn't translate directly into success elsewhere, and Charles swiftly lost control. Many of the conquered territories refused to reconvert, the papal armies withdrew to Rome, and the Emperor's Lutheran alliances swiftly fell apart. The Schmalkaldic League may have been powerful, but it was never the sole Protestant body in the Empire, and Charles's new attempt at religious compromise, the Augsburg Interim, displeased both sides greatly. The problems of the early 1530's reappeared, with some Catholics loathe to crush the Lutherans in case the Emperor gained too much power. During the years 1551-2 a new Protestant League was created, which included Maurice of Saxony; this replaced its Schmalkaldic predecessor as a protector of the Lutheran territories, and contributed to the Imperial acceptance of Lutheranism in 1555.

## **Part 4: Timeline**

### **A Timeline for the Schmalkaldic League**

**1517** - Luther begins a debate on his 95 Theses.

**1521** - The Edict of Worms bans Luther and his ideas from the Empire.

**1530 - June** - The Diet of Augsburg is held, and the Emperor rejects the Lutheran 'Confession'.

**1530 - December** - Philip of Hesse and John of Saxony call a meeting of Lutherans in Schmalkalden.

**1531** - The Schmalkaldic League is formed by a small group of Lutheran princes and cities, to defend themselves against attacks on their religion.

**1532** - External pressures force the Emperor to decree the 'Peace of Nuremberg'. Lutherans are to be temporarily tolerated.

**1534** - Restoration of Duke Ulrich to his Duchy by the League.

**1541** - Philip of Hesse is given an Imperial pardon for his bigamy, neutralising him as a political force. The Colloquy of Regensburg is called by Charles, but negotiations between Lutheran and Catholic theologians fail to reach a compromise.

**1542** - The League attacks the Duchy of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, expelling the Catholic Duke.

**1544** - Peace of Crèpy signed between the Empire and France; the League lose their French support.

**1546** - The Schmalkaldic War begins.

**1547** - The League is defeated at the Battle of Mühlberg, and its leaders are captured.

**1548** - Charles decrees the Augsburg Interim as a compromise; it fails.

**1551/2** - The Protestant League is created to defend the Lutheran territories.

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## The Smalcald Articles of Martin Luther

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### The Smalcald Articles of Martin Luther (1537)

*Articles of Christian Doctrine which were to have been presented on our part to the Council, if any had been assembled at Mantua or elsewhere, indicating what we could accept or yield, and what we could not.*

### **Preface of Dr. Martin Luther**

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Since Pope Paul III convoked a Council last year, to assemble at Mantua about Whitsuntide, and afterwards transferred it from Mantua, so that it is not yet known where he will or can fix it, and we on our part either had to expect that we would be summoned also to the Council or [to fear that we would] be condemned unsummoned, I was directed to compile and collect the articles of our doctrine [in order that it might be plain] in case of deliberation as to what and how far we would be both willing and able to yield to the Papists, and in what points we intended to persevere and abide to the end.

I have accordingly compiled these articles and presented them to our side. They have also been accepted and unanimously confessed by our side, and it has been resolved that, in case the Pope with his adherents should ever be so bold as seriously and in good faith, without lying and cheating, to hold a truly free [legitimate] Christian Council (as, indeed, he would be in duty bound to do), they be publicly delivered in order to set forth the Confession of our Faith.

But though the Romish court is so dreadfully afraid of a free Christian Council, and shuns the light so shamefully, that it has [entirely] removed, even from those who are on its side, the hope that it will ever permit a free Council, much less that it will itself hold one, whereat, as is just, they [many Papists] are greatly offended and have no little trouble on that account [are disgusted with this negligence of the Pope], since they notice thereby that the Pope would rather see all Christendom perish and all souls damned than suffer either himself or his adherents to be reformed even a little, and his [their] tyranny to be limited, nevertheless I have determined meanwhile to publish these articles in plain print, so that, should I die before there would be a Council (as I fully expect and hope, because the knaves who flee the light and shun the day take such wretched pains to delay and hinder the Council), those who live and remain after me may have my testimony and confession to produce, in addition to the Confession

which I have issued previously, whereby up to this time I have abided, and, by God's grace, will abide.

For what shall I say? How shall I complain? I am still living, writing, preaching, and lecturing daily; [and] yet there are found such spiteful men, not only among the adversaries, but also false brethren that profess to be on our side, as dare to cite my writings and doctrine directly against myself, and let me look on and listen, although they know well that I teach otherwise, and as wish to adorn their venom with my labor, and under my name to [deceive and] mislead the poor people. [Good God!] Alas! what first will happen when I am dead?

Indeed, I ought to reply to everything while I am still living. But, again, how can I alone stop all the mouths of the devil? especially of those (as they all are poisoned) who will not hear or notice what we write, but solely exercise themselves with all diligence how they may most shamefully pervert and corrupt our word in every letter. These I let the devil answer, or at last Gods wrath, as they deserve. I often think of the good Gerson who doubts whether anything good should be [written and] published. If it is not done, many souls are neglected who could be delivered: but if it is done, the devil is there with malignant, villainous tongues without number which envenom and pervert everything, so that nevertheless the fruit [the usefulness of the writings] is prevented. Yet what they gain thereby is manifest. For while they have lied so shamefully against us and by means of lies wished to retain the people, God has constantly advanced His work, and been making their following ever smaller and ours greater, and by their lies has caused and still causes them to be brought to shame.

I must tell a story. There was a doctor sent here to Wittenberg from France, who said publicly before us that his king was sure and more than sure, that among us there is no church, no magistrate, no married life, but all live promiscuously as cattle, and each one does as he pleases. Imagine now, how will those who by their writings have instilled such gross lies into the king and other countries as the pure truth, look at us on that day before the judgment-seat of Christ? Christ, the Lord and Judge of us all, knows well that they lie and have [always] lied, His sentence they in turn, must hear; that I know certainly. God convert to repentance those who can be converted! Regarding the rest it will be said, Woe, and, alas! eternally.

But to return to the subject. I verily desire to see a truly Christian Council [assembled some time], in order that many matters and persons might be helped. Not that we need It, for our churches are now, through God's grace, so enlightened and equipped with the pure Word and right use of the Sacraments, with knowledge of the various callings and of right works, that we on our part ask for no Council, and on such points have nothing better to hope or expect from a Council. But we see in the bishoprics everywhere so many parishes vacant and desolate that one's heart would break, and

yet neither the bishops nor canons care how the poor people live or die, for whom nevertheless Christ has died, and who are not permitted to hear Him speak with them as the true Shepherd with His sheep. This causes me to shudder and fear that at some time He may send a council of angels upon Germany utterly destroying us, like Sodom and Gomorrah, because we so wantonly mock Him with the Council.

Besides such necessary ecclesiastical affairs, there would be also in the political estate innumerable matters of great importance to improve. There is the disagreement between the princes and the states; usury and avarice have burst in like a flood, and have become lawful [are defended with a show of right]; wantonness, lewdness, extravagance in dress, gluttony, gambling, idle display, with all kinds of bad habits and wickedness, insubordination of subjects, of domestics and laborers of every trade, also the exactions [and most exorbitant selling prices] of the peasants (and who can enumerate all?) have so increased that they cannot be rectified by ten Councils and twenty Diets. If such chief matters of the spiritual and worldly estates as are contrary to God would be considered in the Council, they would have all hands so full that the child's play and absurdity of long gowns [official insignia], large tonsures, broad cinctures [or sashes], bishops' or cardinals' hats or maces, and like jugglery would in the mean time be forgotten. If we first had performed God's command and order in the spiritual and secular estate we would find time enough to reform food, clothing, tonsures, and surplices. But if we want to swallow such camels, and, instead, strain at gnats, let the beams stand and judge the motes, we also might indeed be satisfied with the Council.

Therefore I have presented few articles; for we have without this so many commands of God to observe in the Church, the state and the family that we can never fulfil them. What, then, is the use, or what does it profit that many decrees and statutes thereon are made in the Council, especially when these chief matters commanded of God are neither regarded nor observed? Just as though He were bound to honor our jugglery as a reward of our treading His solemn commandments under foot. But our sins weigh upon us and cause God not to be gracious to us; for we do not repent, and, besides, wish to defend every abomination.

O Lord Jesus Christ, do Thou Thyself convoke a Council, and deliver Thy servants by Thy glorious advent! The Pope and his adherents are done for; they will have none of Thee. Do Thou, then, help us, who are poor and needy, who sigh to Thee, and beseech Thee earnestly, according to the grace which Thou hast given us, through Thy Holy Ghost who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Father, blessed forever. Amen.

## **THE FIRST PART**

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Treats of the Sublime Articles Concerning the Divine Majesty, as:

I.

That Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three distinct persons in one divine essence and nature, are one God, who has created heaven and earth.

II.

That the Father is begotten of no one; the Son of the Father; the Holy Ghost proceeds from Father and Son.

III.

That not the Father nor the Holy Ghost but the Son became man.

IV.

That the Son became man in this manner, that He was conceived, without the cooperation of man, by the Holy Ghost, and was born of the pure, holy [and always] Virgin Mary. Afterwards He suffered, died, was buried, descended to hell, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, sits at the right hand of God, will come to judge the quick and the dead, etc. as the Creed of the Apostles, as well as that of St. Athanasius, and the Catechism in common use for children, teach.

Concerning these articles there is no contention or dispute, since we on both sides confess them. Therefore it is not necessary now to treat further of them.

## THE SECOND PART

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*Treats of the Articles which Refer to  
the Office and Work of Jesus Christ,  
or Our Redemption.*

The first and chief article is this,

That Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification, Rom. 4, 25.

And He alone is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, John 1, 29; and God has laid upon Him the iniquities of us all, Is. 53, 6.

Likewise: All have sinned and are justified without merit [freely, and without their own works or merits] by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood, Rom. 3, 23 f.

Now, since it is necessary to believe this, and it cannot be otherwise acquired or apprehended by any work, law, or merit, it is clear and certain that this faith alone justifies us as St. Paul says, Rom. 3, 28: For we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law. Likewise v. 26: That He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Christ.

Of this article nothing can be yielded or surrendered [nor can anything be granted or permitted contrary to the same], even though heaven and earth, and whatever will not abide, should sink to ruin. For there is none other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved, says Peter, Acts 4, 12. And with His stripes we are healed, Is. 53, 5. And upon this article all things depend which we teach and practice in opposition to the Pope, the devil, and the [whole] world. Therefore, we must be sure concerning this doctrine, and not doubt; for otherwise all is lost, and the Pope and devil and all things gain the victory and suit over us.

## **THE SECOND PART**

### **Article II: Of the Mass.**

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That the Mass in the Papacy must be the greatest and most horrible abomination, as it directly and powerfully conflicts with this chief article, and yet above and before all other popish idolatries it has been the chief and most specious. For it has been held that this sacrifice or work of the Mass, even though it be rendered by a wicked [and abandoned] scoundrel, frees men from sins, both in this life and also in purgatory, while only the Lamb of God shall and must do this, as has been said above. Of this article nothing is to be surrendered or conceded, because the first article does not allow it.

If, perchance, there were reasonable Papists we might speak moderately and in a friendly way, thus: first, why they so rigidly uphold the Mass. For it is but a pure invention of men, and has not been commanded by God; and every invention of man we may [safely] discard, as Christ declares, Matt. 15, 9: In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Secondly. It is an unnecessary thing, which can be omitted without sin and danger.

Thirdly. The Sacrament can be received in a better and more blessed way [more acceptable to God], (yea, the only blessed way), according to the institution of Christ. Why, then, do they drive the world to woe and [extreme] misery on account of a fictitious, unnecessary matter, which can be well obtained in another and more blessed way?

Let [care be taken that] it be publicly preached to the people that the Mass as men's twaddle [commentitious affair or human figment] can be omitted without sin, and that no one will be condemned who does not observe it, but that he can be saved in a better way without the Mass. I wager [Thus it will come to pass] that the Mass will then collapse of itself, not only among the insane [rude] common people, but also among all pious, Christian, reasonable, God-fearing hearts; and that the more, when they would hear that the Mass is a [very] dangerous thing, fabricated and invented without the will and Word of God.

Fourthly. Since such innumerable and unspeakable abuses have arisen in the whole world from the buying and selling of masses, the Mass should by right be relinquished, if for no other purpose than to prevent abuses, even though in itself it had something advantageous and good. How much more ought we to relinquish it, so as to prevent [escape] forever these horrible abuses, since it is altogether unnecessary, useless, and dangerous, and we can obtain everything by a more necessary, profitable, and certain way without the Mass.

Fifthly. But since the Mass is nothing else and can be nothing else (as the Canon and all books declare), than a work of men (even of wicked scoundrels), by which one attempts to reconcile himself and others to God, and to obtain and merit the remission of sins and grace (for thus the Mass is observed when it is observed at the very best; otherwise what purpose would it serve ?), for this very reason it must and should [certainly] be condemned and rejected. For this directly conflicts with the chief article, which says that it is not a wicked or a godly hiring of the Mass with his own work, but the Lamb of God and the Son of God, that taketh away our sins.

But if any one should advance the pretext that as an act of devotion he wishes to administer the Sacrament, or Communion, to himself, he is not in earnest [he would commit a great mistake, and would not be speaking seriously and sincerely]. For if he wishes to commune in sincerity, the surest and best way for him is in the Sacrament administered according to Christ's institution. But that one administer communion to himself is a human notion, uncertain, unnecessary, yea, even prohibited. And he does not know what he is doing, because without the Word of God he obeys a false human opinion and invention. So, too, it is not right (even though the matter were otherwise correct) for one to use the common Sacrament of [belonging to] the Church according to his own private devotion, and without God's Word and apart from the communion of the Church to trifle therewith.

This article concerning the Mass will be the whole business of the Council. [The Council will perspire most over, and be occupied with this article concerning the Mass.] For if it were [although it would be] possible for them to concede to us all the other articles, yet they could not concede this. As Campegius said at Augsburg that he

would be torn to pieces before he would relinquish the Mass, so, by the help of God, I, too, would suffer myself to be reduced to ashes before I would allow a hireling of the Mass, be he good or bad, to be made equal to Christ Jesus, my Lord and Savior, or to be exalted above Him. Thus we are and remain eternally separated and opposed to one another. They feel well enough that when the Mass falls, the Papacy lies in ruins. Before they will permit this to occur, they will put us all to death if they can.

In addition to all this, this dragon's tail, [I mean] the Mass, has begotten a numerous vermin-brood of manifold idolatries.

First, purgatory. Here they carried their trade into purgatory by masses for souls, and vigils, and weekly, monthly, and yearly celebrations of obsequies, and finally by the Common Week and All Souls Day, by soul-baths so that the Mass is used almost alone for the dead, although Christ has instituted the Sacrament alone for the living. Therefore purgatory, and every solemnity, rite, and commerce connected with it, is to be regarded as nothing but a specter of the devil. For it conflicts with the chief article [which teaches] that only Christ, and not the works of men, are to help [set free] souls. Not to mention the fact that nothing has been [divinely] commanded or enjoined upon us concerning the dead. Therefore all this may be safely omitted, even if it were no error and idolatry.

The Papists quote here Augustine and some of the Fathers who are said to have written concerning purgatory, and they think that we do not understand for what purpose and to what end they spoke as they did. St. Augustine does not write that there is a purgatory nor has he a testimony of Scripture to constrain him thereto, but he leaves it in doubt whether there is one, and says that his mother asked to be remembered at the altar or Sacrament. Now, all this is indeed nothing but the devotion of men, and that, too, of individuals, and does not establish an article of faith, which is the prerogative of God alone.

Our Papists, however, cite such statements [opinions] of men in order that men should believe in their horrible, blasphemous, and cursed traffic in masses for souls in purgatory [or in sacrifices for the dead and oblations], etc. But they will never prove these things from Augustine. Now, when they have abolished the traffic in masses for purgatory, of which Augustine never dreamt, we will then discuss with them whether the expressions of Augustine without Scripture [being without the warrant of the Word] are to be admitted, and whether the dead should be remembered at the Eucharist. For it will not do to frame articles of faith from the works or words of the holy Fathers; otherwise their kind of fare, of garments, of house, etc., would have to become an article of faith, as was done with relics. [We have, however, another rule, namely] The rule is: The Word of God shall establish articles of faith, and no one else, not even an angel.

Secondly. From this it has followed that evil spirits have perpetrated much knavery [exercised their malice] by appearing as the souls of the departed, and with unspeakable [horrible] lies and tricks demanded masses, vigils, pilgrimages, and other alms. All of which we had to receive as articles of faith, and to live accordingly; and the Pope confirmed these things, as also the Mass and all other abominations. Here, too, there is no [cannot and must not be any] yielding or surrendering.

Thirdly. [Hence arose] the pilgrimages. Here, too, masses, the remission of sins and the grace of God were sought, for the Mass controlled everything. Now it is indeed certain that such pilgrimages, without the Word of God, have not been commanded us, neither are they necessary, since we can have these things [the soul can be cared for] in a better way, and can omit these pilgrimages without any sin and danger. Why therefore do they leave at home [desert] their own parish [their called ministers, their parishes], the Word of God, wives, children, etc., who are ordained and [attention to whom is necessary and has been] commanded, and run after these unnecessary, uncertain, pernicious will-o'-the-wisps of the devil [and errors]? Unless the devil was riding [made insane] the Pope, causing him to praise and establish these practices, whereby the people again and again revolted from Christ to their own works, and became idolaters, which is worst of all; moreover, it is neither necessary nor commanded, but is senseless and doubtful, and besides harmful. Hence here, too, there can be no yielding or surrendering [to yield or concede anything here is not lawful], etc. And let this be preached, that such pilgrimages are not necessary, but dangerous; and then see what will become of them. [For thus they will perish of their own accord.]

Fourthly. Fraternities [or societies], in which cloisters, chapters, vicars have assigned and communicated (by a legal contract and sale) all masses and good works, etc., both for the living and the dead. This is not only altogether a human bauble, without the Word of God, entirely unnecessary and not commanded, but also contrary to the chief article, Of Redemption. Therefore it is in no way to be tolerated.

Fifthly. The relics, in which there are found so many falsehoods and tomfooleries concerning the bones of dogs and horses, that even the devil has laughed at such rascalities, ought long ago to have been condemned, even though there were some good in them; and so much the more because they are without the Word of God; being neither commanded nor counseled, they are an entirely unnecessary and useless thing. But the worst is that [they have imagined that] these relics had to work indulgence and the forgiveness of sins [and have revered them] as a good work and service of God, like the Mass, etc.

Sixthly. Here belong the precious indulgences granted (but only for money) both to the living and the dead, by which the miserable [sacrilegious and accursed] Judas, or

Pope, has sold the merit of Christ, together with the superfluous merits of all saints and of the entire Church, etc. All these things [and every single one of them] are not to be borne, and are not only without the Word of God, without necessity, not commanded, but are against the chief article. For the merit of Christ is [apprehended and] obtained not by our works or pence, but from grace through faith, without money and merit; and is offered [and presented] not through the power of the Pope, but through the preaching of God's Word.

### **Of the Invocation of Saints.**

The invocation of saints is also one of the abuses of Antichrist conflicting with the chief article, and destroys the knowledge of Christ. Neither is it commanded nor counseled, nor has it any example [or testimony] in Scripture, and even though it were a precious thing, as it is not [while, on the contrary, it is a most harmful thing], in Christ we have everything a thousandfold better [and surer, so that we are not in need of calling upon the saints] .

And although the angels in heaven pray for us (as Christ Himself also does), as also do the saints on earth, and perhaps also in heaven, yet it does not follow thence that we should invoke and adore the angels and saints, and fast, hold festivals, celebrate Mass in their honor, make offerings, and establish churches, altars, divine worship, and in still other ways serve them, and regard them as helpers in need [as patrons and intercessors], and divide among them all kinds of help, and ascribe to each one a particular form of assistance, as the Papists teach and do. For this is idolatry, and such honor belongs alone to God. For as a Christian and saint upon earth you can pray for me, not only in one, but in many necessities. But for this reason I am not obliged to adore and invoke you, and celebrate festivals, fast, make oblations, hold masses for your honor [and worship], and put my faith in you for my salvation. I can in other ways indeed honor, love, and thank you in Christ. If now such idolatrous honor were withdrawn from angels and departed saints, the remaining honor would be without harm and would quickly be forgotten. For when advantage and assistance, both bodily and spiritual, are no more to be expected, the saints will not be troubled [the worship of the saints will soon vanish], neither in their graves nor in heaven. For without a reward or out of pure love no one will much remember, or esteem, or honor them [bestow on them divine honor].

In short, the Mass itself and anything that proceeds from it, and anything that is attached to it, we cannot tolerate, but must condemn, in order that we may retain the holy Sacrament pure and certain, according to the institution of Christ, employed and received through faith.

**THE SECOND PART**  
**Article III: Of Chapters and Cloisters**

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That chapters and cloisters [colleges of canons and communistic dwellings], which were formerly founded with the good intention [of our forefathers] to educate learned men and chaste [and modest] women, ought again to be turned to such use, in order that pastors, preachers, and other ministers of the churches may be had, and likewise other necessary persons [fitted] for [the political administration of] the secular government [or for the commonwealth] in cities and countries, and well-educated, maidens for mothers and housekeepers, etc.

If they will not serve this purpose, it is better that they be abandoned or razed, rather than [continued and], with their blasphemous services invented by men, regarded as something better than the ordinary Christian life and the offices and callings ordained by God. For all this also is contrary to the first chief article concerning the redemption made through Jesus Christ. Add to this that (like all other human inventions) these have neither been commanded; they are needless and useless, and, besides, afford occasion for dangerous and vain labor [dangerous annoyances and fruitless worship], such services as the prophets call Aven, i.e., pain and labor.

**THE SECOND PART**  
**Article IV: Of the Papacy.**

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That the Pope is not, according to divine law or according to the Word of God the head of all Christendom (for this [name] belongs to One only, whose name is Jesus Christ), but is only the bishop and pastor of the Church at Rome, and of those who voluntarily or through a human creature (that is, a political magistrate) have attached themselves to him, to be Christians, not under him as a lord, but with him as brethren [colleagues] and comrades, as the ancient councils and the age of St. Cyprian show.

But to-day none of the bishops dare to address the Pope as brother as was done at that time [in the age of Cyprian]; but they must call him most gracious lord, even though they be kings or emperors. This [Such arrogance] we will not, cannot, must not take upon our conscience [with a good conscience approve]. Let him, however, who will do it, do so without us [at his own risk].

Hence it follows that all things which the Pope, from a power so false, mischievous, blasphemous, and arrogant, has done and undertaken. have been and still are purely diabolical affairs and transactions (with the exception of such things as pertain to the secular government, where God often permits much good to be effected for a people,

even through a tyrant and [faithless] scoundrel) for the ruin of the entire holy [catholic or] Christian Church (so far as it is in his power) and for the destruction of the first and chief article concerning the redemption made through Jesus Christ.

For all his bulls and books are extant, in which he roars like a lion (as the angel in Rev. 12 depicts him, [crying out] that no Christian can be saved unless he obeys him and is subject to him in all things that he wishes, that he says, and that he does. All of which amounts to nothing less than saying: Although you believe in Christ, and have in Him [alone] everything that is necessary to salvation, yet it is nothing and all in vain unless you regard [have and worship] me as your god, and be subject and obedient to me. And yet it is manifest that the holy Church has been without the Pope for at least more than five hundred years, and that even to the present day the churches of the Greeks and of many other languages neither have been nor are yet under the Pope. Besides, as often remarked, it is a human figment which is not commanded, and is unnecessary and useless; for the holy Christian [or catholic] Church can exist very well without such a head, and it would certainly have remained better [purer, and its career would have been more prosperous] if such a head had not been raised up by the devil. And the Papacy is also of no use in the Church, because it exercises no Christian office; and therefore it is necessary for the Church to continue and to exist without the Pope.

And supposing that the Pope would yield this point, so as not to be supreme by divine right or from Gods command, but that we must have [there must be elected] a [certain] head, to whom all the rest adhere [as their support] in order that the [concord and] unity of Christians may be preserved against sects and heretics, and that such a head were chosen by men, and that it were placed within the choice and power of men to change or remove this head, just as the Council of Constance adopted nearly this course with reference to the Popes, deposing three and electing a fourth; supposing, I say, that the Pope and See at Rome would yield and accept this (which, nevertheless, is impossible; for thus he would have to suffer his entire realm and estate to be overthrown and destroyed, with all his rights and books, a thing which, to speak in few words, he cannot do), nevertheless, even in this way Christianity would not be helped, but many more sects would arise than before.

For since men would have to be subject to this head, not from God's command, but from their personal good pleasure, it would easily and in a short time be despised, and at last retain no member; neither would it have to be forever confined to Rome or any other place, but it might be wherever and in whatever church God would grant a man fit for the [taking upon him such a great] office. Oh, the complicated and confused state of affairs [perplexity] that would result!

Therefore the Church can never be better governed and preserved than if we all live under one head, Christ, and all the bishops equal in office (although they be unequal in gifts), be diligently joined in unity of doctrine, faith, Sacraments, prayer, and works of love, etc., as St. Jerome writes that the priests at Alexandria together and in common governed the churches, as did also the apostles, and afterwards all bishops throughout all Christendom, until the Pope raised his head above all.

This teaching shows forcefully that the Pope is the very Antichrist, who has exalted himself above, and opposed himself against Christ because he will not permit Christians to be saved without his power, which, nevertheless, is nothing, and is neither ordained nor commanded by God. This is, properly speaking to exalt himself above all that is called God as Paul says, 2 Thess. 2, 4. Even the Turks or the Tartars, great enemies of Christians as they are, do not do this, but they allow whoever wishes to believe in Christ, and take bodily tribute and obedience from Christians.

The Pope, however, prohibits this faith, saying that to be saved a person must obey him. This we are unwilling to do, even though on this account we must die in God's name. This all proceeds from the fact that the Pope has wished to be called the supreme head of the Christian Church by divine right. Accordingly he had to make himself equal and superior to Christ, and had to cause himself to be proclaimed the head and then the lord of the Church, and finally of the whole world, and simply God on earth, until he has dared to issue commands even to the angels in heaven. And when we distinguish the Pope's teaching from, or measure and hold it against, Holy Scripture, it is found [it appears plainly] that the Pope's teaching, where it is best, has been taken from the imperial and heathen law and treats of political matters and decisions or rights, as the Decretals show; furthermore, it teaches of ceremonies concerning churches, garments, food, persons and [similar] puerile, theatrical and comical things without measure, but in all these things nothing at all of Christ, faith, and the commandments of God. Lastly, it is nothing else than the devil himself, because above and against God he urges [and disseminates] his [papal] falsehoods concerning masses, purgatory, the monastic life, one's own works and [fictitious] divine worship (for this is the very Papacy [upon each of which the Papacy is altogether founded and is standing]), and condemns, murders and tortures all Christians who do not exalt and honor these abominations [of the Pope] above all things. Therefore, just as little as we can worship the devil himself as Lord and God, we can endure his apostle, the Pope, or Antichrist, in his rule as head or lord. For to lie and to kill, and to destroy body and soul eternally, that is wherein his papal government really consists, as I have very clearly shown in many books.

In these four articles they will have enough to condemn in the Council. For they cannot and will not concede us even the least point in one of these articles. Of this we should be certain, and animate ourselves with [be forewarned and made firm in] the

hope that Christ, our Lord, has attacked His adversary, and he will press the attack home [pursue and destroy him] both by His Spirit and coming. Amen.

For in the Council we will stand not before the Emperor or the political magistrate, as at Augsburg (where the Emperor published a most gracious edict, and caused matters to be heard kindly [and dispassionately]), but [we will appear] before the Pope and devil himself, who intends to listen to nothing, but merely [when the case has been publicly announced] to condemn, to murder and to force us to idolatry. Therefore we ought not here to kiss his feet, or to say: Thou art my gracious lord, but as the angel in Zechariah 3, 2 said to Satan: The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.

### **THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**

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Concerning the following articles we may [will be able to] treat with learned and reasonable men, or among ourselves. The Pope and his [the Papal] government do not care much about these. For with them conscience is nothing, but money, [glory] honors, power are [to them] everything.

#### **I. Of Sin.**

Here we must confess, as Paul says in Rom. 5, 11, that sin originated [and entered the world] from one man Adam, by whose disobedience all men were made sinners, [and] subject to death and the devil. This is called original or capital sin.

The fruits of this sin are afterwards the evil deeds which are forbidden in the Ten Commandments, such as [distrust] unbelief, false faith, idolatry, to be without the fear of God, presumption [recklessness], despair, blindness [or complete loss of sight], and, in short not to know or regard God; furthermore to lie, to swear by [to abuse] God's name [to swear falsely], not to pray, not to call upon God, not to regard [to despise or neglect] God's Word, to be disobedient to parents, to murder, to be unchaste, to steal, to deceive, etc.

This hereditary sin is so deep and [horrible] a corruption of nature that no reason can understand it, but it must be [learned and] believed from the revelation of Scriptures, Ps. 51, 5; Rom. 6, 12 ff.; Ex. 33, 3; Gen. 3, 7 ff. Hence, it is nothing but error and blindness in regard to this article what the scholastic doctors have taught, namely:

That since the fall of Adam the natural powers of man have remained entire and incorrupt, and that man by nature has a right reason and a good will; which things the philosophers teach.

Again that man has a free will to do good and omit evil, and, conversely, to omit good and do evil.

Again, that man by his natural powers can observe and keep [do] all the commands of God.

Again, that, by his natural powers, man can love God above all things and his neighbor as himself.

Again, if a man does as much as is in him, God certainly grants him His grace.

Again, if he wishes to go to the Sacrament, there is no need of a good intention to do good, but it is sufficient if he has not a wicked purpose to commit sin; so entirely good is his nature and so efficacious the Sacrament.

[Again,] that it is not founded upon Scripture that for a good work the Holy Ghost with His grace is necessary.

Such and many similar things have arisen from want of understanding and ignorance as regards both this sin and Christ, our Savior and they are truly heathen dogmas, which we cannot endure. For if this teaching were right [approved], then Christ has died in vain, since there is in man no defect nor sin for which he should have died; or He would have died only for the body, not for the soul, inasmuch as the soul is [entirely] sound, and the body only is subject to death.

## **THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**

### **Article II: Of the Law**

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Here we hold that the Law was given by God, first, to restrain sin by threats and the dread of punishment, and by the promise and offer of grace and benefit. But all this miscarried on account of the wickedness which sin has wrought in man. For thereby a part [some] were rendered worse, those, namely, who are hostile to [hate] the Law, because it forbids what they like to do, and enjoins what they do not like to do.

Therefore, wherever they can escape [if they were not restrained by] punishment, they [would] do more against the Law than before. These, then, are the rude and wicked [unbridled and secure] men, who do evil wherever they [notice that they] have the opportunity.

The rest become blind and arrogant [are smitten with arrogance and blindness], and [insolently] conceive the opinion that they observe and can observe the Law by their

own powers, as has been said above concerning the scholastic theologians; thence come the hypocrites and [self-righteous or] false saints.

But the chief office or force of the Law is that it reveal original sin with all its fruits, and show man how very low his nature has fallen, and has become [fundamentally and] utterly corrupted; as the Law must tell man that he has no God nor regards [cares for] God, and worships other gods, a matter which before and without the Law he would not have believed. In this way he becomes terrified, is humbled, desponds, despairs, and anxiously desires aid, but sees no escape; he begins to be an enemy of [enraged at] God, and to murmur, etc. This is what Paul says, Rom. 4, 15: The Law worketh wrath. And Rom. 5, 20: Sin is increased by the Law. [The Law entered that the offense might abound.]

### **THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**

#### **Article III: Repentance.**

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This office [of the Law] the New Testament retains and urges, as St. Paul, Rom. 1, 18 does, saying: The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Again, 3, 19: All the world is guilty before God. No man is righteous before Him. And Christ says, John 16, 8: The Holy Ghost will reprove the world of sin.

This, then, is the thunderbolt of God by which He strikes in a heap [hurls to the ground] both manifest sinners and false saints [hypocrites], and suffers no one to be in the right [declares no one righteous], but drives them all together to terror and despair. This is the hammer, as Jeremiah says, 23, 29: Is not My Word like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? This is not *activa contritio* or manufactured repentance, but *passiva contritio* [torture of conscience], true sorrow of heart, suffering and sensation of death.

This, then, is what it means to begin true repentance; and here man must hear such a sentence as this: You are all of no account, whether you be manifest sinners or saints [in your own opinion]; you all must become different and do otherwise than you now are and are doing [no matter what sort of people you are], whether you are as great, wise, powerful, and holy as you may. Here no one is [righteous, holy], godly, etc.

But to this office the New Testament immediately adds the consolatory promise of grace through the Gospel, which must be believed, as Christ declares, Mark 1,15: Repent and believe the Gospel, i.e., become different and do otherwise, and believe My promise. And John, preceding Him, is called a preacher of repentance, however, for the remission of sins, i.e., John was to accuse all, and convict them of being

sinners, that they might know what they were before God, and might acknowledge that they were lost men, and might thus be prepared for the Lord, to receive grace, and to expect and accept from Him the remission of sins. Thus also Christ Himself says, Luke 24, 47: Repentance and remission of sins must be preached in My name among all nations.

But whenever the Law alone, without the Gospel being added exercises this its office there is [nothing else than] death and hell, and man must despair, like Saul and Judas; as St. Paul, Rom. 7, 10, says: Through sin the Law killeth. On the other hand, the Gospel brings consolation and remission not only in one way, but through the word and Sacraments, and the like, as we shall hear afterward in order that [thus] there is with the Lord plenteous redemption, as Ps. 130, 7 says against the dreadful captivity of sin.

However, we must now contrast the false repentance of the sophists with true repentance, in order that both may be the better understood.

### **Of the False Repentance of the Papists.**

It was impossible that they should teach correctly concerning repentance, since they did not [rightly] know the real sins [the real sin]. For, as has been shown above, they do not believe aright concerning original sin, but say that the natural powers of man have remained [entirely] unimpaired and incorrupt; that reason can teach aright, and the will can in accordance therewith do aright [perform those things which are taught], that God certainly bestows His grace when a man does as much as is in him, according to his free will.

It had to follow thence [from this dogma] that they did [must do] penance only for actual sins such as wicked thoughts to which a person yields (for wicked emotion [concupiscence, vicious feelings, and inclinations], lust and improper dispositions [according to them] are not sins ), and for wicked words and wicked deeds, which free will could readily have omitted.

And of such repentance they fix three parts contrition, confession, and satisfaction, with this [magnificent] consolation and promise added: If man truly repent, [feel remorse,] confess, render satisfaction, he thereby would have merited forgiveness, and paid for his sins before God [atoned for his sins and obtained a plenary redemption]. Thus in repentance they instructed men to repose confidence in their own works. Hence the expression originated, which was employed in the pulpit when public absolution was announced to the people: Prolong O God, my life, until I shall make satisfaction for my sins and amend my life.

There was here [profound silence and] no mention of Christ nor faith; but men hoped by their own works to overcome and blot out sins before God. And with this intention we became priests and monks, that we might array ourselves against sin.

As to contrition, this is the way it was done: Since no one could remember all his sins (especially as committed through an entire year), they inserted this provision, namely, that if an unknown sin should be remembered later [if the remembrance of a concealed sin should perhaps return], this also must be repented of and confessed etc. Meanwhile they were [the person was] commended to the grace of God.

Moreover, since no one could know how great the contrition ought to be in order to be sufficient before God, they gave this consolation: He who could not have contrition, at least ought to have attrition, which I may call half a contrition or the beginning of contrition, for they have themselves understood neither of these terms nor do they understand them now, as little as I. Such attrition was reckoned as contrition when a person went to confession.

And when it happened that any one said that he could not have contrition nor lament his sins (as might have occurred in illicit love or the desire for revenge, etc.), they asked whether he did not wish or desire to have contrition [lament]. When one would reply Yes (for who, save the devil himself, would here say No?), they accepted this as contrition, and forgave him his sins on account of this good work of his [which they adorned with the name of contrition]. Here they cited the example of St. Bernard, etc.

Here we see how blind reason, in matters pertaining to God, gropes about, and, according to its own imagination, seeks for consolation in its own works, and cannot think of [entirely forgets] Christ and faith. But if it be [clearly] viewed in the light, this contrition is a manufactured and fictitious thought [or imagination], derived from man's own powers, without faith and without the knowledge of Christ. And in it the poor sinner, when he reflected upon his own lust and desire for revenge, would sometimes [perhaps] have laughed rather than wept [either laughed or wept, rather than to think of something else], except such as either had been truly struck by [the lightning of] the Law, or had been vainly vexed by the devil with a sorrowful spirit. Otherwise [with the exception of these persons] such contrition was certainly mere hypocrisy, and did not mortify the lust for sins [flames of sin]; for they had to grieve, while they would rather have continued to sin, if it had been free to them.

As regards confession, the procedure was this: Every one had [was enjoined] to enumerate all his sins (which is an impossible thing). This was a great torment. From such as he had forgotten [But if any one had forgotten some sins] he would be absolved on the condition that, if they would occur to him, he must still confess them. In this way he could never know whether he had made a sufficiently pure confession

[perfectly and correctly], or when confessing would ever have an end. Yet he was pointed to his own works, and comforted thus: The more fully [sincerely and frankly] one confesses, and the more he humiliates himself and debases himself before the priest, the sooner and better he renders satisfaction for his sins; for such humility certainly would earn grace before God.

Here, too, there was no faith nor Christ, and the virtue of the absolution was not declared to him, but upon his enumeration of sins and his self-abasement depended his consolation. What torture, rascality, and idolatry such confession has produced is more than can be related.

As to satisfaction, this is by far the most involved [perplexing] part of all. For no man could know how much to render for a single sin, not to say how much for all. Here they have resorted to the device of imposing a small satisfaction, which could indeed be rendered, as five Paternosters, a day's fast, etc.; for the rest [that was lacking] of the [in their] repentance they were directed to purgatory.

Here, too, there was nothing but anguish and [extreme] misery. [For] some thought that they would never get out of purgatory, because, according to the old canons seven years' repentance is required for a single mortal sin. Nevertheless, confidence was placed upon our work of satisfaction, and if the satisfaction could have been perfect, confidence would have been placed in it entirely, and neither faith nor Christ would have been of use. But this confidence was impossible. For although any one had done penance in that way for a hundred years, he would still not have known whether he had finished his penance. That meant forever to do penance and never to come to repentance.

Here now the Holy See at Rome, coming to the aid of the poor Church, invented indulgences, whereby it forgave and remitted [expiation or] satisfaction, first, for a single instance, for seven years, for a hundred years and distributed them among the cardinals and bishops, so that one could grant indulgence for a hundred years and another for a hundred days. But he reserved to himself alone the power to remit the entire satisfaction.

Now, since this began to yield money, and the traffic in bulls became profitable he devised the golden jubilee year [a truly goldbearing year], and fixed it at Rome. He called this the remission of all punishment and guilt. Then the people came running, because every one would fain have been freed from this grievous, unbearable burden. This meant to find [dig up] and raise the treasures of the earth. Immediately the Pope pressed still further, and multiplied the golden years one upon another. But the more he devoured money, the wider grew his maw.

Later, therefore, he issued them [those golden years of his] by his legates [everywhere] to the countries, until all churches and houses were full of the Golden Year. At last he also made an inroad into purgatory among the dead, first, by founding masses and vigils, afterwards, by indulgences and the Golden Year, and finally souls became so cheap that he released one for a farthing.

But all this, too, was of no avail. For although the Pope taught men to depend upon, and trust in, these indulgences [for salvation], yet he rendered the [whole] matter again uncertain. For in his bulls he declares: Whoever would share in the indulgences or a Golden Year must be contrite, and have confessed, and pay money. Now, we have heard above that this contrition and confession are with them uncertain and hypocrisy. Likewise, also no one knew what soul was in purgatory, and if some were therein, no one knew which had properly repented and confessed. Thus he took the precious money [the Pope snatched up the holy pence], and comforted them meanwhile with [led them to confidence in] his power and indulgence, and [then again led them away from that and] directed them again to their uncertain work.

If, now [although], there were some who did not believe [acknowledge] themselves guilty of such actual sins in [committed by] thoughts, words, and works, -- as I, and such as I, in monasteries and chapters [fraternities or colleges of priests], wished to be monks and priests, and by fasting, watching, praying, saying Mass, coarse garments, and hard beds, etc., fought against [strove to resist] evil thoughts, and in full earnest and with force wanted to be holy, and yet the hereditary, inborn evil sometimes did in sleep what it is wont to do (as also St. Augustine and Jerome among others confess), - still each one held the other in esteem, so that some, according to our teaching, were regarded as holy, without sin and full of good works, so much so that with this mind we would communicate and sell our good works to others, as being superfluous to us for heaven. This is indeed true, and seals, letters, and instances [that this happened] are at hand.

[When there were such, I say] These did not need repentance. For of what would they repent, since they had not indulged wicked thoughts? What would they confess [concerning words not uttered], since they had avoided words? For what should they render satisfaction, since they were so guiltless of any deed that they could even sell their superfluous righteousness to other poor sinners? Such saints were also the Pharisees and scribes in the time of Christ.

Here comes the fiery angel, St. John [Rev. 10], the true preacher of [true] repentance, and with one [thunderclap and] bolt hurls both [those selling and those buying works] on one heap, and says: Repent! Matt. 3, 2. Now, the former [the poor wretches] imagine: Why, we have repented! The latter [the rest] say: We need no repentance. John says: Repent ye, both of you, for ye are false penitents; so are these [the rest]

false saints [or hypocrites], and all of you on either side need the forgiveness of sins, because neither of you know what true sin is not to say anything about your duty to repent of it and shun it. For no one of you is good; you are full of unbelief, stupidity, and ignorance of God and God's will. For here He is present of whose fulness have all we received, and grace for grace, John 1, 16, and without Him no man can be just before God. Therefore, if you wish to repent, repent aright- your penance will not accomplish anything [is nothing]. And you hypocrites, who do not need repentance, you serpents' brood, who has assured you that you will escape the wrath to come? etc. Matt. 3, 7; Luke 3, 7.

In the same way Paul also preaches, Rom. 3, 10-12: There is none righteous, there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God, there is none that doeth good, no not one; they are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable. And Acts 17, 30: God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. "All men," he says; no one excepted who is a man. This repentance teaches us to discern sin, namely, that we are altogether lost, and that there is nothing good in us from head to foot [both within and without], and that we must absolutely become new and other men.

This repentance is not piecemeal [partial] and beggarly [fragmentary], like that which does penance for actual sins, nor is it uncertain like that. For it does not debate what is or is not sin, but hurls everything on a heap, and says: All in us is nothing but sin [affirms that, with respect to us, all is simply sin (and there is nothing in us that is not sin and guilt)]. What is the use of [For why do we wish] investigating, dividing, or distinguishing a long time? For this reason, too, this contrition is not [doubtful or] uncertain. For there is nothing left with which we can think of any good thing to pay for sin, but there is only a sure despairing concerning all that we are, think, speak, or do [all hope must be cast aside in respect of everything], etc.

In like manner confession, too, cannot be false, uncertain, or piecemeal [mutilated or fragmentary]. For he who confesses that all in him is nothing but sin comprehends all sins excludes none, forgets none. Neither can the satisfaction be uncertain, because it is not our uncertain, sinful work, but it is the suffering and blood of the [spotless and] innocent Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

Of this repentance John preaches, and afterwards Christ in the Gospel, and we also. By this [preaching of] repentance we dash to the ground the Pope and everything that is built upon our good works. For all is built upon a rotten and vain foundation, which is called a good work or law, even though no good work is there, but only wicked works, and no one does the Law (as Christ, John 7, 19, says), but all transgress it. Therefore the building [that is raised upon it] is nothing but falsehood and hypocrisy, even [in the part] where it is most holy and beautiful.

And in Christians this repentance continues until death, because, through the entire life it contends with sin remaining in the flesh, as Paul, Rom. 7, 14-25, [shows] testifies that he wars with the law in his members, etc.; and that, not by his own powers, but by the gift of the Holy Ghost that follows the remission of sins. This gift daily cleanses and sweeps out the remaining sins, and works so as to render man truly pure and holy.

The Pope, the theologians, the jurists, and every other man know nothing of this [from their own reason], but it is a doctrine from heaven, revealed through the Gospel, and must suffer to be called heresy by the godless saints [or hypocrites].

On the other hand, if certain sectarists would arise, some of whom are perhaps already extant, and in the time of the insurrection [of the peasants] came to my own view, holding that all those who had once received the Spirit or the forgiveness of sins, or had become believers, even though they should afterwards sin, would still remain in the faith, and such sin would not harm them, and [hence] crying thus: "Do whatever you please; if you believe, it all amounts to nothing; faith blots out all sins," etc. -- they say, besides, that if any one sins after he has received faith and the Spirit, he never truly had the Spirit and faith: I have had before me [seen and heard] many such insane men, and I fear that in some such a devil is still remaining [hiding and dwelling].

It is, accordingly, necessary to know and to teach that when holy men, still having and feeling original sin, also daily repenting of and striving with it, happen to fall into manifest sins, as David into adultery, murder, and blasphemy, that then faith and the Holy Ghost has departed from them [they cast out faith and the Holy Ghost]. For the Holy Ghost does not permit sin to have dominion, to gain the upper hand so as to be accomplished, but represses and restrains it so that it must not do what it wishes. But if it does what it wishes, the Holy Ghost and faith are [certainly] not present. For St. John says, 1 Ep. 3, 9: Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,... and he cannot sin. And yet it is also the truth when the same St. John says, 1 Ep. 1, 8: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

## **THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**

### **Article IV: Of the Gospel.**

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We will now return to the Gospel, which not merely in one way gives us counsel and aid against sin; for God is superabundantly rich [and liberal] in His grace [and goodness]. First, through the spoken Word by which the forgiveness of sins is preached [He commands to be preached] in the whole world; which is the peculiar office of the Gospel. Secondly, through Baptism. Thirdly, through the holy Sacrament

of the Altar. Fourthly, through the power of the keys, and also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren, Matt. 18, 20: Where two or three are gathered together, etc.

### **THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**

#### **Article V: Of Baptism.**

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Baptism is nothing else than the Word of God in the water, commanded by His institution, or, as Paul says, a washing in the Word; as also Augustine says: Let the Word come to the element, and it becomes a Sacrament. And for this reason we do not hold with Thomas and the monastic preachers [or Dominicans] who forget the Word (God's institution) and say that God has imparted to the water a spiritual power, which through the water washes away sin. Nor [do we agree] with Scotus and the Barefooted monks [Minorites or Franciscan monks], who teach that, by the assistance of the divine will, Baptism washes away sins, and that this ablution occurs only through the will of God, and by no means through the Word or water. Of the baptism of children we hold that children ought to be baptized. For they belong to the promised redemption made through Christ, and the Church should administer it [Baptism and the announcement of that promise] to them.

### **THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**

#### **Article VI: Of the Sacrament of the Altar.**

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Of the Sacrament of the Altar we hold that bread and wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ, and are given and received not only by the godly, but also by wicked Christians.

And that not only one form is to be given. [For] we do not need that high art [specious wisdom] which is to teach us that under the one form there is as much as under both, as the sophists and the Council of Constance teach. For even if it were true that there is as much under one as under both, yet the one form only is not the entire ordinance and institution [made] ordained and commanded by Christ. And we especially condemn and in God's name execrate those who not only omit both forms but also quite autocratically [tyrannically] prohibit, condemn, and blaspheme them as heresy, and so exalt themselves against and above Christ, our Lord and God [opposing and placing themselves ahead of Christ], etc.

As regards transubstantiation, we care nothing about the sophistical subtlety by which they teach that bread and wine leave or lose their own natural substance, and that there remain only the appearance and color of bread, and not true bread. For it is in perfect

agreement with Holy Scriptures that there is, and remains, bread, as Paul himself calls it, 1 Cor. 10, 16: The bread which we break. And 1 Cor. 11, 28: Let him so eat of that bread.

### **THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**

#### **Article VII: Of the Keys.**

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The keys are an office and power given by Christ to the Church for binding and loosing sin, not only the gross and well-known sins, but also the subtle, hidden, which are known only to God, as it is written in Ps. 19, 13: Who can understand his errors? And in Rom. 7, 25 St. Paul himself complains that with the flesh he serves the law of sin. For it is not in our power, but belongs to God alone, to judge which, how great, and how many the sins are, as it is written in Ps. 143, 2: Enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. And Paul, 1 Cor. 4, 4, says: For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified.

### **THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**

#### **Article VIII: Of Confession.**

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Since Absolution or the Power of the Keys is also an aid and consolation against sin and a bad conscience, ordained by Christ [Himself] in the Gospel, Confession or Absolution ought by no means to be abolished in the Church, especially on account of [tender and] timid consciences and on account of the untrained [and capricious] young people, in order that they may be examined, and instructed in the Christian doctrine.

But the enumeration of sins ought to be free to every one, as to what he wishes to enumerate or not to enumerate. For as long as we are in the flesh, we shall not lie when we say: "I am a poor man [I acknowledge that I am a miserable sinner], full of sin." Rom. 7, 23: I see another law in my members, etc. For since private absolution originates in the Office of the Keys, it should not be despised [neglected], but greatly and highly esteemed [of the greatest worth], as [also] all other offices of the Christian Church.

And in those things which concern the spoken, outward Word, we must firmly hold that God grants His Spirit or grace to no one, except through or with the preceding outward Word, in order that we may [thus] be protected against the enthusiasts, i.e., spirits who boast that they have the Spirit without and before the Word, and accordingly judge Scripture or the spoken Word, and explain and stretch it at their pleasure, as Muenzer did, and many still do at the present day, who wish to be acute judges between the Spirit and the letter, and yet know not what they say or declare.

For [indeed] the Papacy also is nothing but sheer enthusiasm, by which the Pope boasts that all rights exist in the shrine of his heart, and whatever he decides and commands with [in] his church is spirit and right, even though it is above and contrary to Scripture and the spoken Word.

All this is the old devil and old serpent, who also converted Adam and Eve into enthusiasts, and led them from the outward Word of God to spiritualizing and self-conceit, and nevertheless he accomplished this through other outward words. Just as also our enthusiasts [at the present day] condemn the outward Word, and nevertheless they themselves are not silent, but they fill the world with their pratings and writings, as though, indeed, the Spirit could not come through the writings and spoken word of the apostles, but [first] through their writings and words he must come. Why [then] do not they also omit their own sermons and writings, until the Spirit Himself come to men, without their writings and before them, as they boast that Me has come into them without the preaching of the Scriptures? But of these matters there is not time now to dispute at greater length; we have elsewhere sufficiently urged this subject.

For even those who believe before Baptism, or become believing in Baptism, believe through the preceding outward Word, as the adults, who have come to reason, must first have heard: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, even though they are at first unbelieving, and receive the Spirit and Baptism ten years afterwards. Cornelius, Acts 10, 1 ff., had heard long before among the Jews of the coming Messiah, through whom he was righteous before God, and in such faith his prayers and alms were acceptable to God (as Luke calls him devout and God-fearing), and without such preceding Word and hearing could not have believed or been righteous. But St. Peter had to reveal to him that the Messiah (in whom, as one that was to come, he had hitherto believed) now had come, lest his faith concerning the coming Messiah hold him captive among the hardened and unbelieving Jews, but know that he was now to be saved by the present Messiah, and must not, with the [rabble of the] Jews deny nor persecute Him.

In a word, enthusiasm inheres in Adam and his children from the beginning [from the first fall] to the end of the world, [its poison] having been implanted and infused into them by the old dragon, and is the origin, power [life], and strength of all heresy, especially of that of the Papacy and Mahomet. Therefore we ought and must constantly maintain this point, that God does not wish to deal with us otherwise than through the spoken Word and the Sacraments. It is the devil himself whatsoever is extolled as Spirit without the Word and Sacraments. For God wished to appear even to Moses through the burning bush and spoken Word; and no prophet neither Elijah nor Elisha, received the Spirit without the Ten Commandments [or spoken Word]. Neither was John the Baptist conceived without the preceding word of Gabriel, nor did he leap in his mother's womb without the voice of Mary. And Peter says, 2. Ep. 1,

21: The prophecy came not by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Without the outward Word, however, they were not holy, much less would the Holy Ghost have moved them to speak when they still were unholy [or profane]; for they were holy, says he, since the Holy Ghost spake through them.

### **THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**

#### **Article IX: Excommunication.**

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The greater excommunication, as the Pope calls it, we regard only as a civil penalty, and it does not concern us ministers of the Church. But the lesser, that is, the true Christian excommunication, consists in this, that manifest and obstinate sinners are not admitted to the Sacrament and other communion of the Church until they amend their lives and avoid sin. And ministers ought not to mingle secular punishments with this ecclesiastical punishment, or excommunication.

### **THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**

#### **Article X: Of Ordination and the Call**

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If the bishops would be true bishops [would rightly discharge their office], and would devote themselves to the Church and the Gospel, it might be granted to them for the sake of love and unity, but not from necessity, to ordain and confirm us and our preachers; omitting, however, all comedies and spectacular display [deceptions, absurdities, and appearances] of unchristian [heathenish] parade and pomp. But because they neither are, nor wish to be, true bishops, but worldly lords and princes, who will neither preach, nor teach, nor baptize, nor administer the Lord's Supper, nor perform any work or office of the Church, and, moreover, persecute and condemn those who discharge these functions, having been called to do so, the Church ought not on their account to remain without ministers [to be forsaken by or deprived of ministers].

Therefore, as the ancient examples of the Church and the Fathers teach us, we ourselves will and ought to ordain suitable persons to this office; and, even according to their own laws, they have not the right to forbid or prevent us. For their laws say that those ordained even by heretics should be declared [truly] ordained and stay ordained [and that such ordination must not be changed], as St. Jerome writes of the Church at Alexandria, that at first it was governed in common by priests and preachers, without bishops.

**THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**  
**Article XI: Of the Marriage of Priests.**

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To prohibit marriage, and to burden the divine order of priests with perpetual celibacy, they have had neither authority nor right [they have done out of malice, without any honest reason], but have acted like antichristian, tyrannical, desperate scoundrels [have performed the work of antichrist, of tyrants and the worst knaves], and have thereby caused all kinds of horrible, abominable, innumerable sins of unchastity [depraved lusts], in which they still wallow. Now, as little as we or they have been given the power to make a woman out of a man or a man out of a woman, or to nullify either sex, so little have they had the power to [sunder and] separate such creatures of God, or to forbid them from living [and cohabiting] honestly in marriage with one another. Therefore we are unwilling to assent to their abominable celibacy, nor will we [even] tolerate it, but we wish to have marriage free as God has instituted [and ordained] it, and we wish neither to rescind nor hinder His work; for Paul says, 1 Tim. 4, 1 ff., that this [prohibition of marriage] is a doctrine of devils.

**THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**  
**Article XII: Of the Church**

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We do not concede to them that they are the Church, and [in truth] they are not [the Church]; nor will we listen to those things which, under the name of Church, they enjoin or forbid. For, thank God, [to-day] a child seven years old knows what the Church is, namely, the holy believers and lambs who hear the voice of their Shepherd. For the children pray thus: I believe in one holy [catholic or] Christian Church. This holiness does not consist in albs, tonsures, long gowns, and other of their ceremonies devised by them beyond Holy Scripture, but in the Word of God and true faith.

**THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**  
**Article XIII: How One is Justified before God,  
and of Good Works**

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What I have hitherto and constantly taught concerning this I know not how to change in the least, namely, that by faith, as St. Peter says, we acquire a new and clean heart, and God will and does account us entirely righteous and holy for the sake of Christ, our Mediator. And although sin in the flesh has not yet been altogether removed or become dead, yet He will not punish or remember it.

And such faith, renewal, and forgiveness of sins is followed by good works. And what there is still sinful or imperfect also in them shall not be accounted as sin or defect, even [and that, too] for Christ's sake; but the entire man, both as to his person and his works, is to be called and to be righteous and holy from pure grace and mercy, shed upon us [unfolded] and spread over us in Christ. Therefore we cannot boast of many merits and works, if they are viewed apart from grace and mercy, but as it is written, 1 Cor. 1, 31: He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord, namely, that he has a gracious God. For thus all is well. We say, besides, that if good works do not follow, faith is false and not true.

### **THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**

#### **Article XIV: Of Monastic Vows.**

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As monastic vows directly conflict with the first chief article, they must be absolutely abolished. For it is of them that Christ says, Matt. 24, 5. 23 ff.: I am Christ, etc. For he who makes a vow to live as a monk believes that he will enter upon a mode of life holier than ordinary Christians lead, and wishes to earn heaven by his own works not only for himself, but also for others; this is to deny Christ. And they boast from their St. Thomas that a monastic vow is equal to Baptism. This is blasphemy [against God].

### **THE THIRD PART OF THE ARTICLES**

#### **Article XV: Of Human Traditions.**

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The declaration of the Papists that human traditions serve for the remission of sins, or merit salvation, is [altogether] unchristian and condemned, as Christ says Matt. 15, 9: In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Again, Titus 1, 14: That turn from the truth. Again, when they declare that it is a mortal sin if one breaks these ordinances [does not keep these statutes], this, too, is not right.

These are the articles on which I must stand, and, God willing, shall stand even to my death; and I do not know how to change or to yield anything in them. If any one wishes to yield anything, let him do it at the peril of his conscience.

Lastly, there still remains the Pope's bag of impostures concerning foolish and childish articles, as, the dedication of churches, the baptism of bells, the baptism of the altarstone, and the inviting of sponsors to these rites, who would make donations towards them. Such baptizing is a reproach and mockery of Holy Baptism, hence should not be tolerated. Furthermore, concerning the consecration of wax-tapers, palm-branches, cakes, oats, [herbs,] spices, etc., which indeed, cannot be called consecrations, but are sheer mockery and fraud. And such deceptions there are

without number, which we commend for adoration to their god and to themselves, until they weary of it. We will [ought to] have nothing to do with them.

### **Subscribers**

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**Dr. Martin Luther** subscribed.

**Dr. Justus Jonas, Rector**, subscribed with his own hand.

**Dr. John Bugenhagen, Pomeranus**, subscribed.

**Dr. Caspar Creutziger** subscribed.

**Nicholas Amsdorf of Magdeburg** subscribed.

**George Spalatin of Altenburg** subscribed.

*I, Philip Melanchthon, also regard [approve] the above articles as right and Christian. But regarding the Pope I hold that, if he would allow the Gospel, his superiority over the bishops which he has otherwise, is conceded to him by human right also by us, for the sake of the peace and general unity of those Christians who are also under him, and may be under him hereafter.*

**John Agricola of Eisleben** subscribed.

**Gabriel Didymus** subscribed.

*I, Dr. Urban Rhegius, Superintendent of the churches in the Duchy of Lueneburg, subscribe in my own name and in the name of my brethren, and of the Church of Hanover.*

*I, Stephen Agricola, Minister at Hof, subscribe.*

*Also I, John Draconites, Professor and Minister at Marburg, subscribe.*

*I, Conrad Figenbotz, for the glory of God subscribe that I have thus believed, and am still preaching and firmly believing as above.*

*I, Andrew Osiander of Nuernberg, subscribe.*

*I, Magister Veit Dieterich, Minister at Nuernberg, subscribe.*

*I, Erhard Schnepf, Preacher at Stuttgart, subscribe.*

**Conrad Oettinger, Preacher of Duke Ulrich at Pforzheim.**

**Simon Schneeweiss, Pastor of the Church at Crailsheim.**

*I, John Schlagenhafen, Pastor of the Church at Koethen, subscribe.*

**The Reverend Magister George Helt of Forchheim.**

**The Reverend Magister Adam of Fulda, Preacher in Hesse.**

**The Reverend Magister Anthony Corvinus, Preacher in Hesse.**

*I, Doctor John Bugenhagen, Pomeranus, again subscribe in the name of Magister John Brentz, as on departing from Smalcald he directed me orally and by a letter, which I have shown to these brethren who have subscribed.*

*I, Dionysius Melander, subscribe to the Confession, the Apology, and the Concordia on the subject of the Eucharist.*

**Paul Rhodius, Superintendent of Stettin.**

**Gerard Oemcken, Superintendent of the Church at Minden.**

*I, Brixius Northanus, Minister of the Church of Christ which is at Soest, subscribe to the Articles of the Reverend Father Martin Luther, and confess that hitherto I have thus believed and taught, and by the Spirit of Christ I shall continue thus to believe and teach.*

**Michael Caelius, Preacher at Mansfeld, subscribed.**

**The Reverend Magister Peter Geltner Preacher at Frankfort, subscribed.**

**Wendal Faber, Pastor of Seeburg in Mansfeld.**

*I, **John Aepinus**, subscribe.*

*Likewise, I, **John Amsterdam** of Bremen.*

*I, **Frederick Myconius**, Pastor of the Church at Gotha in Thuringia, subscribe in my own name and in that of Justus Menius of Eisenach.*

*I, **Doctor John Lang**, Preacher of the Church at Erfurt, subscribe with my own hand in my own name, and in that of my other coworkers in the Gospel, namely:*

**The Reverend Licentiate Ludwig Platz of Melsungen.**

**The Reverend Magister Sigismund Kirchner,**

**The Reverend Wolfgang Kiswetter,**

**The Reverend Melchior Weitmann**

**The Reverend John Thall.**

**The Reverend John Kilian.**

**The Reverend Nicholas Faber.**

**The Reverend Andrew Menser.**

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## Politics and Religion in the Smalcald League

<http://media.ctsfw.edu/Video/ViewDetails/800>

STUDENT: How did it happen that secular authorities such as a political alliance of princes and cities -- I'm speaking of the Smalcald League -- take up the theological questions of what to say at a church council?

DR. CHARLES P. ARAND: If you recall, the entire Luther question has also been a political question from the very beginning. We've highlighted this a number of times. Particularly as we talked about the various imperial diets of political assemblies that convened and deliberated over the issues, especially as related to the edict of worms throughout the 1520s. Also the edict of worms being an imperial edict did imply the threatened use of force. So all through the 1520s, there is hanging over the heads you might say of German princes the possibility of war and hence, the possibility of having to resist the emperor by force or not resist him. This became increasingly acute at the second Diet of Spire in 1529 as you recall, that's where the Lutherans issued their "*protestation*", their appeal to the majority decision which basically annulled the recess of the first Adam Spire in 1526. Already then they began to grow increasingly concerned about the emperor's reaction and whether or not he would seek to use force to bring other things back line. So immediately following that diet, they began exploring the possibility of forming a political alliance sort of a defense league like NATO, among the Protestant princes. But because they worked on the same assumption of Charles, that any political alliance presupposed a unity of faith, a unit of con investigation, the commercial of theologians to draw up a series of articles as a possible basis for the alliance. And out of that came from Luther the -- what are known as the \*Shawaba Articles. One of the source documents for the Augsburg Confession itself. Well, that served Saxon politics well enough. Phillip of \*Hesay -- however, Lange Phillip of \*Hesay further to the south was very desirous to somehow bring the Swiss into the alliance if at all possible. Now, the Swiss are led primarily by their former \*Ullrich Schweney. And he and Luther had clashed quite harshly over the Lord's Supper in 1528. Luther's great Confession of 1528 is pretty much written against Schweney's doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Well, in an attempt to bring them together he, in fact, managed to convene a meeting held in \*Marburg in October 1529 when both Schweney and Luther sat at the same table together. And there they hammered out what were known as the March Berg articles unfortunately Luther and Schweney were unable to come to an agreement on the Lord's Supper. Luther recognized already that there was a different spirit about Schweney that it wasn't simply an issue of this one teaching but it was an entire world view an entire scripture. If I have to put it somewhat crassly, I think Luther sniffed out a latent neoplatonic approach to scriptures whereas Luther tended to approach them with more of um bray I can world view steep as he was in the Old Testament. So as a result the Swiss did not come on board and plans for a broad Protestant alliance had to be suspended, particularly because when the emperor's summons to the diet of Augsburg came in Jan of 1530, it caught everyone off guard and by surprise. Moreover the tone of the summons was incredibly conciliatory with the result that optimism arose that "Well, maybe we can hammer things out. It appears as if the emperor wants to work things out and is wanting to find some kind of a compromise or some kind of a solution." So plans for a Smalcald League were put on hold if you will. Then we have the diet of Augsburg, cardinal cam pens you'll urging the use of armed force, the use of iron and fire to bring the Lutherans to line. We have the very harsh recess of Augsburg threatening military, you know, force against the Lutherans should they not adopt the confrontation by April 15th, 1531. So immediately following the diet, discussions resume about the feasibility and the theological justification for resisting the emperor militarily should it come to that. And the Smalcald League comes into existence as a defense alliance, if you will. And remains intact throughout the 1530s. So when the emperor -- I'm sorry; when the Pope, Pope Paul, issues or announces that he was going to convene a council, it is both a theological issue as well as a political issue. One might say why is it you have a Pope that have a church summoning christians and theologians and pastors to a council. Well, it's not quite as simple as that because while it is a theological issue and it's to be a church council, the princes were

responsible for the church's within their territory. There is a union between the government and the churches. I suppose in our language today, we can't imagine a governor asking theologians to draw up a Confession of faith. Maybe a better analogy, however, is to think of the princes of this time as the leading members of the church. Maybe an analogous to the way in which we in our own congregation who are those laymen who often become the president of the congregation or a Chairman of the Board of elders. As a rule I suspect they tend to be leading the members in the community as well as leading members within the church. Those who have leadership abilities, those who tend to be well educated and the like. But in its inner fashion I think that's the role that the princes had here, as well. At any rate, the Pope has announced the plans to convene a council in \*Matwa. Now the question arises for the Lutherans, do you go or do you not go. Now, think about this. They have been wanting a council for almost 18 years. Now they got one. And should you go or should you not? Now, here we have a divided opinion. The princess and the politicians were disinclined toward attending the council. And the rulers, including Luther's own pins, elector John Fredrick. Why? Because the princes were pretty astute politically and they saw the paper council as a legal snare that was going to be set in order to capture the Protestants. Now, what kind of a legal snare? Well, probably on a couple of counts. But I'm going to focus on one particularly. Elector John Fredrick, according to Mark Edwards in his book "Luther's Last Battles" feared that by receiving the \*papalegiat brings the invitation or the summons to attend a council at least diplomatically by receiving him and receiving that invitation -- I should start that over. Receiving that summons in command to attend the council, that that very action would be a task I can acknowledgement that the Pope is head of the Christian church by divine right. In other words, that you are, in fact, a subject of the Pope obedient to the Pope, and there by obligated to attend. So they saw the invitation of the summons to attend it as an attempt to divide the Protestants as well in terms of the debate about attending or not attending. Moreover and this is another aspect of that legal snare -- once the Protestants agreed to participate in a council, would they not be obligated to support and -- or to support the decisions and the conclusions of that council? Because remember, for 18 years now -- now, they didn't say they would attend the council. They said they would abide by the decisions of the council. Now, the princes being astute politicians were able to count. And they were well aware that any council that was being convened by Pope Paul would be dominated by a Catholic majority. And that they would dominate the council and determine its outcome. Moreover, they suspected that a lady would have no vote something for which the Lutherans had been advocated the princes in particular, but that they would not have a voice much less a vote within a council. So by attending a council then, Lutherans or the Protestants would lose their right to an appeal following a council. So those were the concerns of the princes. On the other hand, the theologians led by Luther disagreed. They didn't expect anything good to come from a paper council for sure. On that point they were agreeing with their princes. Nevertheless, they urged their princes not to refuse the invitation because in large part for the theologians, it was a matter of what shall I say? A matter of appearances. A matter of good faith. In other words, we've been wanting a council. We've been asking for one every year and now that we get one we say no thank you I don't think we'll come. It wouldn't look too good upon the reformation movement. Moreover, spiritually and theologically, they felt that it would be a demonstration that they lacked faith and trust in God's ability to protect them or that it might express an unwittingness to suffer martyrdom should it come to that is to Luther was more than willing insisting that we ought to go to the council and let the chips fall where they may. It's God's church. At least the word of God would have a chance to be heard within the council. Well, in this debate and struggle between the rulers and theologians, who do you think won out? The princes did. And they then gave the task to the theologians of justifying the non-attendance of the Protestants. In other words, the task that fell to the theologians of discrediting the council that was to be convened. And it's a task that Luther then threw himself into with any number of writings, especially in 1537, 1538 culminating with his great treatise on the councils and the church. Now, theologically, one has to admit that Luther in his cause for a council had a very different conception of a council than his opponents did in terms of the composition of a council, in terms of the basis on which the decisions of the council would be convened and so forth. So he would have two very different approaches to a council. Well, Luther is going to adopt several strategies in discrediting the

council that was to be convened. One is intended I suppose for the masses, the common man on the street. And that was through the use of sarcasm and wit. The other was through the use of his rhetorical argument. And it's probably in these years that Luther spends more time doing intense historical work on past councils and their actions and their activities than he ever did so before. And in some ways both of these approaches come together in his writings I'm going to give you a couple of examples that Mark Edwards cites in his book. The first one is -- has to do with the council of constants that had met 100 years earlier. You may remember that this is the council of which the reformer John Huss was burned at the stake. Well, in one writing Luther rebaptized the council of constants with a different name. He calls it the with standing council or the resisting council. Why? Because as he looked into the deliberations and proceedings, one of the debates that took place was over the Communion in both kinds, that is getting both the bread and the wine, the body and the blood of Christ to laypeople. And he discovered in the council's findings or midst, that they did acknowledge that the Lord had instituted supper in both kinds and that the disciples received it in both kinds. But then it had the phrase nonetheless, this notwithstanding we are going to give Communion in one kind only, that is the bread or the host. So Luther says they have to acknowledge what the script says themselves say but deliberately consciously reject it with that phrase "Nevertheless this notwithstanding", this being the words of Christ's institution. So Luther goes on into a fairly heated discussion about the council actually rejecting the clear words of scripture. In fact, one of his approaches through all of this was to demonstrate that just like popes, councils can err or make mistakes when not guided by the word of God. Well, I'll conclude this particular answer to the question with what we might regard as a little more lighthearted story that Luther told for popular consumption. But one which he felt had been used by the papacies through the centuries to support its authority not to mention the authority of the council. This has to do with the legend of Saint John Christison. Saint John Christison in the early church was renowned as a preacher. In fact, very often icons of Christ proper portray him with a golden wing around his mouth for his golden tongue, for his fierce speech, his rhetoric and his preaching. One, particular legend of Saint John Christison retitles the Legend of Saint John Christison, the \*Ligend instead of legend. I'm going to read it as it is laid out in Mark Edwards book. It goes as follows. It's pretty spectacular when you think about it. "Before Christison's birth a soul suffering the agonies of purgatory informs the hope that he will be released only when Christison has sung 16 masses. Once Christison is born, he is raised by the Pope. Originally a very inept student, he acquires not only marvelous learning by Christ kissing the lips of the portrait of the virgin but also the gold ring about his lips, hence his name Christison, golden mouse. After celebrating his first mass at the age of 16, he flees into the wild where he lives as a hermit. The emperor's daughter is then conveyed to his hermitage by a great wind after a period of chaste cohabitation the couple prompted by the devil make love both are stricken with guilt and Christison to remove temptation from his sight pushes the princess off a cliff. In penance for this heinous crime, he begins to walk around on all fours and turns into a hideous animal. After many years, the emperor has another child. But the baby refuses to be baptized by the Pope insisting that Christison should perform the rite. Meanwhile, a hunter has captured Christison and thinking he has captured some rare beast has brought him to the emperor. When the beast is presented to the Court, the baby recognizes him to be Christison and and the saint has done sufficient penance. Christison regains the form of a young man. The princess is found to have miraculously survived her fall and to have been preserved by God through all of the intervening years and Christison finally performs 15 more masses and releases the soul from purgatory." Well, like I say the sensationalism in the tract was very popular and printed frequently throughout Germany. And while obviously Luther calls it a lie, it does for Luther contain certain key points regarding authority and particularly the role of masses, the \*exoprato character of masses and their ability to spring souls from purgatory, in other words, stories of legends such as this, in fact, perpetuated promoted and supported what Luther considered to be devilish errors, spiritual poison, undermining faith in Jesus Christ. So through a series of popular tracts, as well as more academic treatises and books, Luther, as others, went about calling into question the value of accounts so as composed and convened by the Pope in its present form. As a result, as we all know, though the Smalcald Articles in the treatise and power and the premise of the Pope were prepared Lutherans did not, in fact, attend the council. For

that matter the council was not convened in 1547 or 1548. Instead it was put on hold either with issues of where to hold it, issues of location, and the council has now finally convened until it is brought into session in the town of Trent following an the heels of Luther's death in 1546.

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**A History of the Life and Actions of the Very Reverend Dr. Martin Luther**  
**Part 1**

<http://www.projectwittenberg.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/melan/lifea-01.txt>;

A HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND ACTIONS

OF THE VERY REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER,

FAITHFULLY WRITTEN BY PHILIP MELANCTHON.

WITTEMBURG. 1549. (sic)

DR. MARTIN LUTHER.

That venerable man, Martin Luther, whilst he was yet with us, gave us reason to hope that he might himself, narrate the story of his life, with the circumstances of' conflict attending it; and this he would undoubtedly have accomplished, had he not been

so soon called out of this mortal existence, onto the eternal fellowship of God, and of his children in heaven.

Profitable indeed, would have been the contemplation of his private life, clearly set forth, for it was full of examples calculated to confirm in after

times. the piety of the wise-hearted; and profitable also would have been the

recital of events which might tend largely to the information of posterity. Such a work would also have refuted the calumnies of those who profess that Luther, incited by the principal men of the day, or possibly by others, to seek the downfall of episcopal power and dignity, or inflamed by personal ambition, had become the instrument in loosing the bands of monastic thraldom.

Much advantage would have been derived from a copious and complete notice of these incidents, illustrated and recorded by himself; and although malevolent

persons may object, that self-praise is an unworthy theme for a man to choose,

yet we well know the character of Luther to have been of such solidity, that he would have written, even his own history, with the utmost good faith. We may also assert, that many excellent and intelligent men are yet living, to whom he could not but be aware, that the series of these events was well known; it would then have been great folly, if as is sometimes done in works of imagination, he had fabricated any other narrative; but since his lamented

death has deprived the world of his autobiography, we shall now, with fidelity, relate those things connected with it which we have heard from his own lips, and those to which we have ourselves been eyewitnesses.

The name of Luther is widely spread throughout the ramifications of an ancient

family within the Lordship of the illustrious Counts of Mansfield, but the parents of Martin Luther originally resided in the town of Eisleben, where he

was born, subsequently they removed to Mansfield, where his father, John

Luther, filled the office of magistrate, and for his integrity of character, was valued and beloved by all good men. In his mother, Margaret Luther, was found a fair assemblage of domestic virtues; and a peculiar delicacy of mind was conspicuous in her character, accompanied by the fear of God and the spirit of prayer, so that many excellent women found in her a bright example of Christian virtues. Her reply to questions which I have occasionally put to

her, respecting the time of her son's birth, was, that she clearly remembered

the day and the hour, but that she was doubtful as to the year; she said, however, that he was born on the 10th of November, after eleven o'clock at night; and that the name of Martin was given to the infant, because the following day on which, by baptism, he was initiated into the church of God, was dedicated to Saint Martin. But his brother James, a man of uprightness and integrity, was accustomed to say, that the opinion of the family, respecting Luther's age was, that he was born in the year of our Lord 1483.

When he had attained an age at which he was capable of receiving instruction,

his parents diligently accustomed their son Martin to the service and fear of

God, in connection with the performance of social and family duties; and, as

is usual with good persons, they took care that he should receive literary instruction, so that whilst yet quite young his education was entrusted to the

care of the father of George Emilius, who, as he is still living, can bear witness to the truth of this relation. At that time the grammar-schools of Saxony were not in a flourishing condition, and on this account, when Martin had entered his fourteenth year, he was sent to Magdeburg, accompanied by John

Reinecke, whose character was afterwards of a shining order, and the influence

which he obtained in that neighbourhood consequently great. The affection which subsisted between Luther and Reinecke, whether arising from a natural accordance of mind, or from their companionship in youthful studies, was both

ardent and lasting. Luther, however, did not remain at Magdeburg longer than

twelve months.

During four succeeding years, passed in the school of Eisenach, he had an opportunity of hearing a preceptor who illustrated grammatical studies with greater accuracy and ability than he could have met with elsewhere; for I remember to have heard his talents commended by Luther, who was sent to this town from the circumstance of his mother's descent from an ancient and honorable family in those parts.. Here he completed his grammatical studies. The powers of his intellect being of a gigantic order and peculiarly adapted to the science of eloquence, he speedily surpassed his contemporaries, both in

the copiousness of his language as a public speaker, and in prose composition;

whilst in poetry, he with ease excelled his competitors in the course of learning.

Having thus tasted the sweets of literature, the soul of Luther ardently

thirsted for deeper draughts; and with this feeling he sought the University, as being the fountain head of learning. The scope of so great a mind might easily have embraced all the arts in succession, had it found teachers competent to the work; and it is indeed possible that the calmer pursuits of philosophy combined with oratory, would have proved advantageous in moderating the impetuosity of his natural temperament. But at Erfurt, he was subjected to the subtle dialectics prevalent at that time; these he readily embraced, since by the acuteness of his understanding, he perceived with more facility than other men, the causes and designs of those studies.

His spirit thus thirsting for knowledge, continually sought a more abundant and better supply. He read many of the works of the ancient Latin authors, as Cicero, Virgil, Livy and others; these he perused, not as schoolboys commonly do, merely by gathering together a vocabulary of words, but for solid instruction, and as mirrors of human life, by which means he gained a full perception of the views and opinions of these writers, and as his memory was both accurate and tenacious, much of what he read and heard was clearly placed before his mental vision. Hence it was remarkable that even in his youth, the talents of Luther were the admiration of the whole University.

Having attained the degree of Master in Philosophy, Luther now in his twentieth year applied himself to the study of the law; and this he did by the advice of his friends, who deemed that a mind of such large endowment, and of such fertility in thought and diction ought by no means to be kept in the shade, but to be called out for the benefit of the state. Soon afterwards however, and when he had entered his one and twentieth year, suddenly, and in a manner unexpected by his parents and other relatives, he went to the College of Augustine monks, at Erfurt, and requested to be received into it. On his entrance there, he not only applied with the closest diligence to ecclesiastical studies; but also, with the greatest severity of discipline, he exercised the government of himself, and far surpassed all others in the comprehensive range of reading and disputation with a zealous observance of fasting and prayer. He possessed a constitution at which I have often marvelled, being of no small bodily stature, nor of a weekly (sic) habit though very abstemious; I have seen him during four days successively, when in perfect health, literally abstain from both meat and drink; at other times for many days together, he has been satisfied with a small allowance of bread and herring.

But the occasion of his entering on this course of life which he considered more particularly adapted to the attainment of piety and the knowledge of God, as he himself has related, and as many are already aware, was the following;

often when contemplating the wrath of God, as exhibited in striking instances of His avenging hand, suddenly such terrors have overwhelmed his mind, as almost to deprive him of consciousness; and I myself have seen him whilst engaged in some doctrinal discussion, involuntarily affected in this manner, when he has thrown himself on a bed in an adjoining room, and repeatedly mingled with his prayers the following passage "God has concluded them all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all." These terrors he experienced either for the first time, or in the most acute manner, during the year in which he was deprived of a favorite friend, who lost his life by some accident of which I am ignorant.

It was not therefore poverty, but religious zeal that led him to this kind of monastic life, in which although he daily made himself acquainted with the doctrine then taught in the schools, read "the Sententiaries," and in public disputations, ably elucidated to admiring audiences, labyrinths of science, inexplicable to others: yet, as in this course of life he sought, not the fame of intellect, but an accession to his piety, he pursued these studies as a recreation, and thus mastered with ease the systems of the schools. Meanwhile he drank with avidity from those fountains of celestial wisdom, the prophetic and apostolic scriptures, that he might acquaint himself with the will of God, and that he might by the surest testimonies, increase his filial fear and confirm his faith whilst the force of his mental anguish impelled him to pursue with greater intensity, these devotional exercises.

He has often said that he was strengthened about this time by the discourses of a certain aged man, in the college of Augustines at Erfurth, who, when he disclosed to him the conflicts of his spirit, introduced his mind to new views on the subject of faith; and he has told me that he led him to that article in the creed, in which it is said " I believe in the remission of sins," which he thus interpreted, "that it is necessary not only to believe in general terms, that sins are remitted to some, as the devils also believe that they were remitted to David or to Peter in particular, but that it is the command of God that each individual man should realize the behest that his sins are forgiven him." Luther said that this interpretation of his friend was confirmed by the testimony of Bernardus, and that a passage in the discourse on the Annunciation, has these words ; "but add, that then believe this also, that by Him thy sins are forgiven thee." Such is the testimony which the Holy Ghost speaketh in thine heart, saying, "thy sins are remitted unto thee;" and this is in accordance with apostolic writ, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Luther was also established

in these opinions, not only by the above conversations, but also by the whole tenor of the writings of the Apostle Paul, who uniformly inculcates the doctrine that we are justified by faith. And when afterwards, he placed the expositions of various authors on this subject, in comparison with the preceding conversations, and with his own consoling experience of the work of the Spirit, he evidently perceived the fallacy of the tenets supported by these writers; and as he read and compared the precepts and examples recorded by the Prophets and Apostles, and prayed daily for the establishment of his faith, a clearer light by degrees, shone upon his way.

He now first directed his attention to the pages of Augustine, where both in "The Interpretation of the Psalms," and in "The Treatise on the Letter and the Spirit," he found many perspicuous sentiments which confirmed this doctrine of faith, and fanned the flame of hope that had been kindled in his breast; nor did he altogether relinquish the "Sententiaries." He could recite *Gabrielis* and *Cameracensis*, almost verbatim; for a long time also, he applied closely to the writings of Occam, the acumen of which author, he preferred to Thomas and Scotus. He also read Gerson with diligence; but all the works of Augustine were frequently read by him, and well stored in his memory. This rigid course of application he commenced at Erfurt, in which town, at the Augustine College, he remained four years.

At this time, in the year 1508 the Venerable Stupicius (sic) who had favored the opening of the University at Wittenburg, and who was desirous of promoting the study of Theology in that College, when he became acquainted with the talent and erudition of Luther, then in the twenty-sixth year of his age, invited him to that place, and there amid the daily literary exercises in the schools, his intellectual powers gained still increasing brilliancy.

Luther was attentively listened to by men of high attainments, Doctor Martin Mellerstadius and others; and Doctor M. has often said, that so great were the energies of his mind, as to give clear evidence that he would one day, effect the overthrow of the theories of learning which were then taught in the schools. He now first expounded the Physics and Dialectics of Aristotle; at the same time not forgetting his own favorite study, that of Theology.

After three years he went to Rome, on account of a monkish controversy, and returning within a year, he was according to the custom of the schools, presented to the Elector, Frederic, Grand Duke of Saxony, and dignified with the degree of Doctor; for the Elector had heard him speak in public, and much admired his lofty genius, his convincing eloquence, and the happy mode in which he illustrated subjects brought forward in the assembly: but to form a just estimate of his we should remember that the degree of Doctor was

conferred on Luther when only in the thirtieth year of his age. He has himself told us, that when he strenuously declined accepting the degree, he received a charge from Stupicius not to reject the honour conferred on him, adding in pleasantry, that God had much work to be done in the church, for which purpose at some future time, his labours would be called into action ; this although uttered in jest, was realized in the event; as a host of presages often indicates the approaching convulsions.

Luther now began his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans; then, that on the Psalms; and he illustrated these writings in such a manner that, in the opinion of the wise and good, the light of truth first dawned upon them after a long night of darkness. He here shewed the distinction between the law and the gospel; he refuted the error then reigning in the schools and councils, which taught that men deserve the remission of their sins on account of their own works, and the dogma of the Pharisees, that men are in themselves just before God. In this manner Luther led the minds of men to the Saviour, and, like John the Baptist, he pointed out "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world".; he allowed that sins are freely remitted through the Son of God, and that we must all receive this blessing by faith; these, with other points of Christian doctrine, be set forth to them in a clear light.

A career of usefulness thus nobly begun, invested with no common authority, a teacher whose practice so beautifully harmonized with his precepts, that his appeals evidently arose, not from the lips only, but also from the heart. The charm of so admirable a character won the affections of his hearers, as according to the old proverb, "manner has more weight than words;" so that when he afterwards effected a change in some of the established modes of worship, men of rank who knew him well, were the less vehemently opposed to him, on account of the ascendancy which he had gained over the public mind by his elucidation of important theories, as well as by the sanctity of his life; and united with him in lamenting the prevalence of opinions by which they saw that the world was distracted.

Luther did not at this time make any alteration in the ceremonies of the church; on the contrary, he still maintained a severe course of discipline amongst his disciples, nor did he mingle therewith any of his own formidable sentiments, but he explained to them, with renewed earnestness, the universal and all-important doctrines of repentance, of the remission of sins, of faith, and of the true consolation of the cross.

With so admirable a theology, the religious world was much captivated; and to

the learned also, it was not unwelcome, for they beheld, as it were, Christ, the prophets and apostles brought out of darkness, the prison, and the prison house; they perceived the distinction between the law and the gospel, between the promises of the law and those of the gospel, and between philosophy and the gospel; distinctions which certainly are not recognized in Thomas, Scotus, and others of their school; he thus contrasted, spiritual Holiness with the moral law.

At this time, the attention of the pupils in the university was directed to the writings of Erasmus, as studies in the Latin and Greek languages; and thus a more genial philosophy being exhibited to them, many who possessed sound and liberal understandings, for the first time conceived a horror at the barbarous sophistry of the monks.

Luther now began to devote himself more particularly to the acquirement of Greek and Hebrew, in order that having made himself acquainted with the properties and peculiarities of languages, and having drunk at the well-springs of knowledge, he might attain a greater maturity of judgment.

When he entered on this course, venal indulgences were promulgated by Tetzel, a friar of the Dominican order and a most audacious sycophant; at the same time, Luther, who was ardent in the pursuit of holiness, being irritated by his impious and nefarious harangues, published his own propositions on the subject of indulgences, which are to be found in the first volume of his works; these he affixed to the church contiguous to the castle of Wittenburg, on the day before the festival of Allsaints, (sic) in the year 1517. Upon this, Tetzel, acting by no means inconsistently with his character, and hoping to ingratiate himself with the Roman Pontiff, called together, as his council, certain monks and theologians imbued more or less with his own sophistry; these men he directed to compose something against Luther, in the mean time, that he might not appear to be silenced, he hurled not only declamations as before, but thundering accusations against Luther, and vociferated on all sides that this heretic would be destroyed by fire. His propositions also, and his protest, were publicly consigned to the flames. These ravings of Tetzel and his satellites, imposed on Luther the necessity of a more ample discussion of these subjects, and a further vindication of the truth.

Such was the origin of a controversy, in which Luther, not as yet suspecting or imagining the future overthrow of rites and ceremonies, forcibly enjoined moderation, for he did not at that time himself entirely reject the indulgences. He was, therefore, basely calumniated by those who said that he had made a plausible beginning with an intention eventually, to overturn the government, and this, by seeking power, either for himself or for others; so little truth was there in the accusation of his having been suborned or incited by courtiers, as the Duke of Brunswick expressed in writing, that even

the Elector Frederic was grieved by the report of these contests, foreseeing as he did, that although they originated in a popular cause, yet that this flame would gradually spread far and wide, as is said of the strife in Homer, \_

"Soon grows the pigmy to gigantic size."

As Frederic, one of the greatest princes of our times, was particularly anxious for the preservation of public tranquility, he was accustomed to refer

matters of debate which affected the common weal, to the States of the empire,

so that by many evidences, it was clear that he neither instigated nor approved the proceedings of Luther, but he frequently manifested his regret at

the existing state of things, as he was apprehensive of stir greater disturbances.

Frederic being a wise prince, and uninfluenced by that worldly policy which hastens to extinguish every appearance of reform, and adhering in his councils

to the divine law, which commands its to listen to the voice of the Gospel, which forbids us to resist acknowledged truth, and which calls that a blasphemy under the awful condemnation of God, which pertinaciously withstands

it; he followed the course which many wise and learned men have done, he yielded up the cause to God. He also carefully read the polemic writings of the day, and those which appeared to be on the side of truth he was unwilling to reject.

I know, indeed, that Frederic often inquired the opinion of scholars concerning these matters, and, that in the convention held at Cologne, by the

Emperor Charles the fifth, after his coronation, he asked Erasmus, of Rotterdam, in a friendly manner, whether he considered that Luther was in the

wrong, in those controversies which then engaged so much of his attention; to

this Erasmus candidly replied, that he was of opinion that Luther was in the right, but that he was wanting in gentleness of spirit; respecting which the Duke Frederic afterwards writing seriously to Luther, exhorted him to moderate

the asperity of his style.

It appears also, that Luther made a promise to Cardinal Cajetan, that he would

maintain silence if his opponents would enter into a similar agreement; from which we may clearly perceive, that at that time he had no intention of stirring up further commotions, but that he was desirous of peace: by degrees,

however, his attention was drawn to other subjects, as he was attacked on every hand, by illiterate adversaries.

Then followed disputations on "The Distinction between Laws Human and Divine,"

and, on "the Disgraceful Profanation of the Lord's Supper, by making a common sale of it, and its perversion in other ways," herein the whole design of sacrifices was explained, and the use of sacraments set forth; and when, now, the pious in monasteries found that the worship of images was to be relinquished, they began to decline from such an unhallowed devotion, Luther added to his "Explications of' the Doctrine of Repentance," of the Remission of Sins," of "Faith" and "Indulgences," these additional subjects, "The Distinction between laws Human and Divine," "The Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," with other sacraments, and also that "of Vows;" these were the main points of the controversy. Eccius at this time instituted an inquiry into the extent of power possessed by the Bishop of Rome, for no other purpose than to excite the hatred of the Pope and of crowned heads against Luther.

Luther, however, retained unaltered the Apostles, the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds; but he explained in many of his writings to what extent, and on what grounds, a change must needs be effected in human rites and traditions; what form of doctrine he wished to retain, and what administration of the sacraments he most approved, were obvious from a confession which the Elector-John, Duke of Saxony, and Prince Philip Landgrave of Hesse, &c. presented to the Emperor Charles the Fifth, at an imperial diet, in the year 1530, and are apparent both from the rites of the church in that city, and from the doctrine with which our church now resounds, the chief of which is clearly comprehended in the confession.

I relate these circumstances, not only for the information of pious men as to the errors which Luther attacked and the idols which he removed, but to convince them that he embraced every important doctrine of the Church, restored purity to its ritual, and exhibited models of reform such as is desirable in Christian churches; and it is well that posterity should be made acquainted with the views held by Luther.

I here feel reluctant to mention those who first administered the Lord's supper in both kinds, those who first omitted private masses, and also what monasteries were first deserted, for Luther disputed but little on these points before the convention which was held at Worms in the year 1521. He himself made no change in the ceremonies, but during his absence Carolostadius and others did; and as he and his party caused some disturbance, Luther on his return, by a plain declaration of his sentiments, testified what he approved and what he disapproved.

We know that statesmen are usually much prejudiced against innovations of all kinds, and must confess that discords often arise even in the discussion of important topics, as amid the sad confusion of human things some evil will ever intervene. But nevertheless, in the church, it is imperative that we esteem the commands of God before all worldly considerations. The eternal Father spake thus concerning His Son, "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." And

he threatens with eternal wrath blasphemers, that is to say, those who endeavour to destroy acknowledged truth, for which reason it became the incumbent and Christian duty of Luther, to censure those pernicious errors which men of the Epicurean school. shamelessly augmented, and his auditors were necessarily compelled to agree with so correct a teacher.

If a total change be odious, if dissensions commonly prove injurious, as we now perceive with sorrow to be the case, then those who first propagated error, are as much in fault as those who now with diabolical pertinacity maintain it.

I have dwelt on these subjects not for the purpose of defending Luther, but that pious minds both now and in after generations, may comprehend what is, and ever will be the government of the true church: how from among this mass of iniquity, that is, the abominations of mankind, God by the voice of His Gospel, "which shines as a light in a dark place," gathers the everlasting church unto Himself. For example in the times of the Pharisees, Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary and many others, were guardians of the oracles of God: again, before that time, there were many who offered prayer acceptably unto Him; some with more, others with less clearness, holding the doctrines of the Gospel; and such was that aged man of whom I have spoken, as supporting Luther under his deep conflicts, and who was to him in some degree a preacher of the true faith.

Thus, that God may henceforward preserve this light in the hearts of many, let us ardently pray, as Isaiah did for his hearers, "Seal the law among my disciples." Finally, it appears by this recital, that vain superstitions are not enduring, but that they shall be rooted up by an Almighty hand: these being the origin of dissensions, care is necessary lest errors should be taught in the church.

But to return to Luther; as he first entered on this cause, uninfluenced by private ambition, so, although he was of an ardent and choleric temperament, yet, being ever mindful of his calling, he contended by argument alone, and forbade recourse to arms; thus he knew how to make a distinction .between functions of opposite characters, between that of a bishop teaching in the church of God, and that of the magistrate who, in his proper office, restrains the people by the power of the sword.

And as Satan ever studies to distract the church by scandal, and to affix disgrace on the cause of God, whilst he rejoices in iniquity and delights in the transgressions and ruin of miserable man; so on that occasion, he excited the instigators of seditious tumults, as Monitarius and others of the same opinions; these Luther severely condemned, but he lent his own influence to honor and confirm all the bonds of social life. When I reflect however, that high ecclesiastics have often been deceived on this question, I unhesitatingly conclude that a mind which so constantly abode within the bounds of its proper calling, must not only have been governed by human wisdom, but guided also by light from above.

Thus then he dissented widely from the seditious teachers of this age, Monitarius and the Anabaptists, also from those Romish Bishops who most audaciously and shamelessly affirmed that in connection with the gift of the ministry, committed to Peter by secret decrees, political power also was vested in him.

In fine, he exhorted all to "render unto God the things which be God's, and unto Caesar, the things which be, Caesar's;" that is, that in true repentance, in the acknowledgment and promulgation of sound doctrine, in sincere prayer and in the maintenance of a good conscience, they should worship God, and that every man should in the performance of his civil duties, submit himself unto Him. These were Luther's true principles, and to them he adhered, he rendered to God the things that be God's, he taught correctly, he prayed earnestly, and he possessed all the other graces essential in the man who is acceptable to God. Lastly, in political society he ever avoided seditious counsels; and these virtues I regard with the greater admiration, as they cannot in this life be surpassed.

Although the name of Luther is deservedly of good report, since he reverently occupied his talent, above all must we render thanks unto God for that by this his servant, He has restored to us the light of His Gospel; let us then retain the remembrance of his ministry, and spread his doctrines abroad. Unmoved as I am by the clamours of Epicureans and hypocrites who either deride or condemn the plain truth, it is my decided opinion, that the catholic church accords in receiving the doctrine sounded forth in our temples, as the voice of God, and that it is incumbent on us, that a due recognition of it should pervade our devotions as well as our entire lives: in short, that this is the very doctrine, of which the Son of God says, "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." I here speak of that profound doctrine as it is understood and explained in our churches by pious and learned men, for although some may expound it more aptly than others, or one may sometimes speak with greater asperity than another, yet on the whole there is a general agreement among the wise and good, on subjects of this character.

Whilst I have reflected much and frequently on the subject of doctrine, in times least, up to the days of the Apostles, I have plainly perceived that after the first reign of purity had passed away, four remarkable changes in doctrine, followed. During the age of Origen, although there were some who thought correctly, amongst whom I would place Methodius, for he discouraged the fantasies of Origen, yet in the minds of the people, he made the Gospel bend to Philosophy, that is to say, he encouraged the opinion that the just exercise of reason, merits the remission of sins, and, that this is the

justice of which it is said, "The just shall live by faith." At this time the distinction between the law and the gospel, with the remembrance of apostolic truths, was entirely lost sight of; nor did the words Letter, Spirit, Justice and Faith retain their original signification. Thus the proper use of words which are the signs of ideas, being lost, it became necessary that something should be devised in their place. From these germs arose the Pelagian error, which was widely spread, so that although the Apostles had taught holy doctrine, drawn from the pure and salutary fountains of gospel truth, Origen mingled therewith much impurity.

That the errors of this age might be corrected, at least in some degree, God raised up Augustine; he partially cleansed the sources, nor do I doubt that if he could pass a judgment on the controversies of the present time, he would cast in his vote with us: certainly on the subjects of the Free Remission of Sins, Justification by Faith, the Use of the Sacraments, and other points of less importance, he does think with us. For although in some parts of his writings, he expresses himself more distinctly than in others, yet, if his reader will exercise reason and candour in judging him, he will perceive that his sentiments agree with our own; and, although our adversaries sometimes quote passages taken from his writings, against us, and appeal loudly to the Fathers, they do it not from any regard for truth or antiquity, but like sycophants, they invest images of the present day, with the authority of the ancients, to whom these images were unknown.

Nevertheless, the seeds of superstition appear to have existed even in the ages of the Fathers; thus Augustine established certain regulations respecting vows, although he treats the subject with less austerity than others have done. The contamination of their own times always in some degree, affects even good men, because as we naturally favour the existing customs of the country in which we have been nurtured; that expression of Euripedes is found to be true, "Every thing from the companion of our childhood is sweet." But I could desire that all who boast of being followers of Augustine, would revert to his standing, opinions to the very genius of his mind, if I may so speak, and not maliciously pervert mutilated expressions to their own views. And now light being revived through the writings of this author, he became a blessing to posterity, for after him, Prosper, Maximus, Hugo, and others of a similar class, who were leading men in the schools, down to the time of Bernardus, closely followed the institutes of Augustine. Meanwhile, however, the power and wealth of the Bishops increasing, there followed, as it were, an age of giants; unholy and unlearned men reigned in the Church, of whom, some were accomplished in forensic learning, and in the arts of the Vatican.

Then arose the Dominicans and the Franciscans, who, when they beheld the pomp and luxury of the Bishops, whose dissolute manners had become obnoxious to

them, formed to themselves a more correct mode of life; and for the sake of discipline, they incarcerated themselves in Monasteries. Ignorance at first fostered superstition; but when they afterwards saw that the studies in the schools were directed only to forensic learning since in Rome, at this time, the practice of the law augmented the influence and wealth of many, they endeavoured to call public attention to the study of theology.

But their wisdom failed them in this attempt. Albertus and his followers, who

had embraced the opinions of Aristotle, began to convert the doctrines of the

Church into philosophy; and this fourth age was not only impure, but absolutely polluted; that is to say, it infused manifest idolatry into the fountains of Gospel Truth. And such labyrinths of false sentiment are to be found in Thomas, Scotus, and similar writers, that wiser theologians have always felt the need of a more simple and a purer doctrine.

Nor can it be said without glaring effrontery, that such a reform was uncalled

for; since it is evident that many of the sophisms contained in these disputations, were not intelligible even to those who were conversant with such arguments. Hence it is plainly proved, that they are blindly devoted to

idolatry who teach the virtue of sacrifices as contained in works, who sanction the use of image worship, who deny the forgiveness of sin by grace through faith, and who in human ceremonies, make a sacrifice of conscience; and there are truly other things yet more degrading, which cannot be told, and

at which the whole frame shudders.

Let us therefore give thanks unto God, the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been pleased by the ministry of Martin Luther, again to purify

the sources of Evangelic Truth, and to restore sound doctrine to the Church. Whilst contemplating this theme, it behoves all pious men the world over to mingle their prayers and their sighs, and to supplicate in fervency of spirit,

that God will strengthen the work which He has begun in us, because of His Holy Temple.

"O Thou, the living and true God, the Eternal Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

the Author of all things and of Thy Church, Thine is the word and the promise,

'For my name's sake I will do it, that they may not blaspheme.' To Thee I pray

with my whole heart, for the sake of Thine own glory and that of Thy Son, that

by the voice of Thy Gospel, Thou wilt ever gather the Eternal Church unto Thyself; And for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified for us,

and rose again, our Mediator and Intercessor, may it please Thee to reign in our hearts and minds by the Holy Ghost, that we may in sincerity offer up our

prayers, and render service acceptable unto Thee. Deign also to bless the pursuits of Philosophy, and direct and support those principles and that

discipline which are the guardians of wisdom and the protection of Thy Church.

When Thou shalt have so built up the human race, that Thou shalt be universally acknowledged and adored; for which purpose Thou least made Thyself

known by such clear testimonies, oh, grant that this fold, in which Thy true doctrine is heard, may not be brought to desolation; and since Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ, when about to endure his agony, prayed for us, 'Father, sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth,' so, to the prayer of this

our Great High Priest, we join our supplications, that the light of Thy truth may for ever shine in the sons of men, to guide and govern them."

In prayer for these blessings, we have heard Luther daily engaged, and amid these devotions, his spirit was gently called from its mortal tenement, when he was in the sixty-third year of his age.

Posterity possesses many of Luther's works, doctrinal and devotional. He published [Greek] (((((((((( or dialectic writings, which contain doctrine wholesome and necessary to man, calculated also to enlighten sincere minds on

the subjects of "Repentance," "Faith with its genuine fruits," (the use of the

Sacraments," "the distinction between the Law and the Gospel," and "between the Gospel and Philosophy," "on the dignity of political rank," and lastly, "on the most important articles which are essential to the Church." He then added [Greek] (((((((((( in which he refuted many pernicious errors; he also published [Greek] ((((((((((; these are "enlarged illustrations of the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures," in which class even his enemies confess, that he has excelled all previous commentators.

The value of these writings is appreciated by the religious world; but certainly in usefulness and laborious research, they do not surpass another work of his, "the interpretation of the Old and New Testaments," the perspicuity of which is so great that his German version may serve as a commentary; nor is this publication a commentary only, for it has very learned

annotations, with a synopsis of the several parts subjoined; both of which exhibit a summary of heavenly doctrine, and inform the reader on the subjects

of the discourse so, that from these sources, the children of God may draw sure evidences of the truth.

Luther himself, wished that none should linger amid the products of his own mind, but was anxious to lead the attention of all, to the fountain-head of divine wisdom: he wished that we might hear the voice of God, that it might in

the minds of many, awaken the true faith, and prayer, that God might be truly glorified, and that many might be made heirs of eternal life. .

And now it becomes us to acknowledge these desires and these more abundant labors, and to remember them as an example also, that each study according to

his talents, how he may best adorn the Church of Christ; for to these two

great ends, our whole life with all its purposes and designs, should be referred; in the first place, that we may show forth the glory of God, and in

the next, that we may benefit His church: in allusion to the former, Paul says

"Do all to the glory of God;" and the latter is referred to in Psalm cxxii.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem;" with a sweet promise added in the same verse, "They shall prosper that love Thee." These heavenly commands and these

promises invite all to an enlightened knowledge of Christian doctrines: they call upon us, to love the ministers of the Gospel, and those who teach it in its purity; whilst they direct our studies and our labors to the propagation of sound doctrine, and to the maintenance of harmony in the Church of Christ.

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**A History of the Life and Actions of the Very Reverend Dr. Martin Luther**  
**Part 2**

<http://www.projectwittenberg.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/melan/lifea-02.txt>

PART TWO

Philip Melancthon,  
to the Students in The University of Wittenburg,  
on the death of Luther, 1546

On our assembling to hear the Epistle  
of  
Paul to the Romans, at nine o'clock in the forenoon, Dr. Philip Melancthon  
publicly recited to us the following address; saying at the same time, that  
he  
was induced to do so by the suggestion of some learned professors, and that  
we  
being in possession of the true state of things, might be prepared to reject  
any incorrect statements which he foresaw would be in circulation after  
Luther's death.

Most Noble Youths,

We have undertaken as you know, to deliver a critical exposition of the  
Epistle to the Romans, wherein is contained the true doctrine of the Son of  
God, which our Heavenly Father has in peculiar mercy, laid open to us, at  
this  
time, through our revered Father and Preceptor, Dr. Martin Luther.

But now alas! so deep a shade of sorrow is cast over these writings, which  
but  
augment my grief, that I know not whether I shall be able hereafter to  
pursue  
the study of them in our college. I am anxious however, at the request of my  
friends of the University, and that you may have a right understanding of  
the  
circumstances of Luther's death, to communicate to you the following  
particulars, in order that you may not even entertain, much less circulate,  
reports which, as is so often the case, will probably now be current in  
society.

On the 17th of February, our Master and Teacher, a little before supper, was  
attacked by his usual complaint to which I remember he had occasionally been  
subject. After supper a recurrence of the disorder took place, under the  
influence of which he requested permission to withdraw into an adjoining  
room,  
where he lay for nearly two hours, until his sufferings increased. Doctor  
Jonas sleeping in the same room with him, Doctor Martin called him hastily,  
requesting him to rise and give orders that Ambrosius, the servant who  
attended on the children, should make his private apartment warm: and having  
retired into it, Albert, the illustrious Count of Mansfield, with his  
Countess, and many others, entered, the names of whom for brevity's sake, we  
omit. At length when he found that the close of his life was approaching,  
before four o'clock on the following day, the 18th of February, he commended  
himself to God in the following prayer:-

(Following given in German)

"My heavenly Father, eternal and merciful God ! Thou has revealed unto me Thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom I have learned--whom I have proclaimed to be my Lord--whom I love and whom I honour, as my precious Saviour and Redeemer,--whom the ungodly persecute, dishonour, and blaspheme; take Thou my soul unto Thyself.'" Three times he expressed these words.

(Following in Latin)

"Into Thy hands I commit my spirit, Thou hast redeemed me, O God of Truth !"

(Following in German)

"And God so loved the world," &C.

Amid these prayers occasionally repeated, he was called to the one eternal assembly and to everlasting bliss, in which he is now enjoying the presence of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, with that of all the Prophets and Apostles.

Alas, for the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof! Our Elijah is no more, he who guided and governed the Church in this decrepitude of the world.

Human sagacity could not have discovered the doctrines of the Remission of Sins, and of Faith in the Son of God; but He has been pleased to reveal them to us through the medium of this, His servant, whom also we see that God has taken unto himself.

Let us therefore cherish his memory with that of the peculiar doctrine which he delivered to us, and let us be the more humbled in our spirits when we contemplate the great calamities and the mighty revolutions which will probably follow this event.

I beseech Thee, O Son of God! Thou who wast crucified for us, and art now the risen Emmanuel, that Thou wilt govern, preserve, and defend Thy Church. Amen.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH  
OF THE REV. MARTIN LUTHER, D.D.,  
FROM THE LATIN OF  
PHILIP MELANCTHON.

Since Luther is no more, his cherished name  
Shall from our hearts, a deathless tribute claim.  
We hailed him minister of Christ, the Lord,  
Jesus he preached, with faith, and taught his word.  
Luther is dead! and now the church in tears  
A mourner clothed in saddest garb appears.  
She weeps her loved preceptor now no more,

Honoured and dear, a father's name he bore.  
Fallen on the field the mighty chieftain lies,  
And Israel's voice proclaims his obsequies.  
Then let us bathe In tears the muse's lay  
And publish forth our sorrows to the day  
It thus becomes us well-to weep and mourn  
Whilst, orphans in our grief, we dress affection's urn.

A FUNERAL ORATION  
ON THE REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER,

PRONOUNCED AT Wittenberg,  
by Philip Melancthon

Although amid this universal grief, my voice is impeded by sorrow and by tears, yet since in so large an assembly, we are called upon for some expression of our feelings; let it not be after the manner of the heathen, a declamation in praise of the departed one, but rather a commemoration in the audience of those now present of the wonderful pilotage of the church in all her perils; that we may call to mind on what account it behooves us to mourn, what purposes we should ourselves most diligently pursue, and in what manner we should order our lives. For although irreligious men conceive that the interests of this world are borne along in a giddy tide of confusion and uncertainty, yet, reassured as we are by the many indubitable testimonies of God, we make a wide distinction between

the church and the profane multitude, and we believe that she is indeed governed and upheld by the power of God: we clearly discern his polity, we acknowledge the true helmsmen, and we watch their course, we choose also for ourselves, befitting leaders and teachers whom we devotedly follow and revere.

On these so weighty matters, it is necessary both to think and to speak, as often as mention is made of that revered man Dr. Martin Luther, our beloved father and teacher; and whilst he has been the object of most cruel hatred to many, let us who know that he was a divinely inspired minister of the gospel, regard his memory with love and esteem, and let us gather such testimonies as prove that his teaching was by no means a blind dissemination of seditious opinions, as the Epicureans give out, but a demonstration of the will and of the true worship of God, an unfolding of the sacred records and a declaration of the word of God, that is of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In orations such as the present, much is usually said of the individual excellencies of those whom we wish to commend; passing however, in silence over this part of my theme, it is my design to dwell principally on that main point, the call to gospel ministry; and here we may unite in opinion with all just thinkers, that if Luther has illustrated a wholesome and necessary doctrine in the church, we ought to return thanks unto God, that He has been pleased to raise him up to this work, whilst his personal labours, his faith,

his constancy, and his other virtues are to be commended, and his memory to be held most dear by all good men. Let this therefore be the beginning, of our oration.

The Son of God, as Paul says, sits on the right hand of the Eternal Father, and gives gifts unto men; these gifts are the voice of the Gospel and of the Holy Spirit, with which, as He imparts them, He inspires Prophets, Apostles, Pastors and Teachers, and selects them from this our assembly, that is to say,

from those who are yet in the rudiments of divine knowledge, who read, who hear, and who love the prophetic and apostolic writings; nor does he often call to this warfare those who are in the exercise of established power, but it even pleases him to wage war on these very men through leaders chosen from

other ranks. It is cheering and instructive to take a retrospect of the church

throughout all past ages, and to contemplate the goodness of God who has sent

out from its bosom gifted ministers in so unbroken a series, that as the first

of these have passed away, others have pressed closely in their footsteps.

The line of the first fathers is well worthy of our consideration. Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methusalem, Noe, Sem, and Abraham, who was raised up to be a fellow-helper of Sem and his associate in the all-important work of spreading

true religion; and although at this time Sem was still dwelling in the neighbourhood of Sodom, the people had lost the recollection both of his precepts and those of Noe, and were altogether abandoned to the worship of idols. To Abraham succeeded law and Jacob; next Joseph\_who kindled the light

of truth throughout all Egypt, at that time the most flourishing kingdom in the world. After these, we read of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and David; then Elisha, of whose ministry the prophet Isaiah was a partaker; then Esdras, Onias, and in succession the Maccabees, Simeon, Zacharias, and John the Baptist: and lastly, Christ and His Apostles. It is delightful to behold this

unbroken chain, which is a clear testimony to the presence of God in his church.

After the Apostles followed a band, which although somewhat weaker, was nevertheless honoured with the blessing of God. Polycarp, Irenaeus, Gregory the Niocaesarien, Basilius, Augustinus, Prosper, Maximus, Hugo, Bernardus, Taulerus, and others; and although this later age has become more corrupt, yet

God has always preserved a remnant of the faithful, whilst it is evident that

the light of the gospel has now been peculiarly manifested through the preaching of Luther.

He is therefore to be numbered with that blessed company, the excellent of the

earth, whom God has sent forth for the gathering together and the building up

of his church, and whom we truly recognize as ornaments of the human race.

Solon, Themistocles, Scipio, Augustus, and others were indeed great men, who founded, states, or ruled over vast empires; yet do they rank far below our spiritual leaders, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Paul and Luther.

It is also well that we should regard the grand disputations which have existed in the church, and in connection with this subject let us look at those themes of deep and high import which have been brought to light by Luther, and which evince that the tenor of his life was worthy of our highest

approbation. It is true that many exclaim "the church is in confusion," saying that inextricable controversies are engendered in it; to these I answer, such is the mode of divine Government, for when the Holy Spirit convicts the world, dissensions arise through the pertinacity of the wicked; and the guilt is on those who refuse to listen to the Son of God, and of whom our Heavenly Father says, "Hear Him."

That Luther illustrated the essential truths of the Gospel is manifest, as the

deepest shades had previously veiled its doctrines, in dispersing these he clearly proved to us the nature of sincere repentance, he showed us in whom we

must seek refuge, and what is the sure consolation of the mind that trembles under a sense of the wrath of God. He elucidated the doctrine of Paul which says, that man is justified by faith; he showed the difference between the Law

and the Gospel, between Spiritual righteousness and the Moral law; he pointed

out the nature of true prayer, and he called back the church universal from that heathen madness which teaches that God, is to be invoked even when the mind, oppressed with metaphysical doubts, is flying far from Him: he enforced

on us the conviction that prayer is to be made in faith, and in a good conscience, and he led us to the one Mediator, the Son of God sitting at the right hand of the Eternal Father, and interceding for us; not to those images

and departed mortals, to whom the ungodly world, with awful infatuation, is wont to perform its devotions. He also pointed out other sacred duties which are acceptable to God, whilst he was himself careful to adorn and to preserve

inviolable the institutions of civil life as no preceding writers had done; he

also drew a line of distinction between works necessary to be performed, and the puerile observances of human ceremonies, including their rights and established laws which impede the offering of the heart to God. In order that

this heavenly teaching might be transmitted unimpaired to posterity, he translated the prophetic and apostolic writings into German, which work he executed with such perspicuity, that this version alone imparts more light to

the mind of the reader, than the perusal of many commentaries would do. To this he added various expositions which, as Erasmus was accustomed to say, were far superior to any others then extant; and as it is related of the builders of Jerusalem, that they wrought with one hand and held the sword in the other, so was he at the same time contending with the enemies of truth, and composing expositions fraught with divine philosophy; whilst by his pious

counsels he strengthened the minds of many.

Since the mystery of godliness lies far beyond the reach of human vision, as for instance, the doctrines of Faith, and of the Remission of Sins, we are constrained to acknowledge that Luther was taught of God; and how many of us have witnessed there wrestlings in which he was himself instructed, and by which we must be convinced that through faith alone we also can be heard and accepted of God. Therefore shall His people to all eternity celebrate the blessings which He has conferred on the church by this His servant: first they

will offer up thanksgivings to God, then they will acknowledge that they owe much to the labours of this our friend and brother; although the irreligious who deride the church in general, say that these good deeds are but idle pastime or intoxicating madness.

Let it not be said that endless disputations have been raised, or that the apple of discord has been thrown by the church, as some falsely assert; nor have the enigmas of the Sphynx been propounded by her, for to men of sense and

piety who can give a candid judgment, it is by no means difficult on comparing

opinions, to distinguish those which accord from those which do not accord with heavenly doctrine; and indeed there is no doubt that in these controversies we discover the revelation of Himself. For since it has

pleased

God to manifest Himself and His holy will in prophetic and apostolic writ, in

which he has revealed himself, we cannot suppose that His word is ambiguous like the leaves of the Sybil, \_

"Which flit abroad, the sport of playful winds."

Others however, without any evil design, have complained that Luther was unduly severe; I do not myself offer an opinion on this subject, but answer

I

them in the words of Erasmus: "God has administered to us of the present age,

a bitter draught, on account of our abounding infirmities." But when he is pleased to raise up such an instrument against the shameless and insolent enemies of truth, as when the Lord said to Jeremiah, "Behold I have given my words into thy mouth, that thou shouldest destroy and build up," and when it is His pleasure to set as it were, His Gorgons in array against them, then

it

is a vain thing that they should expostulate with Him; for He governs His church not by human counsels, neither truly are His ways our ways. It is however, no uncommon thing for minds of limited scope to undervalue the more powerful energies with which others may be endowed, whether directed to good or evil purposes; thus it was with emotion that Aristides beheld

Themistocles

undertaking and bringing to a happy issue, vast enterprises; and although he rejoiced in the felicity of the state, he was earnest to arrest that ardent spirit in its career.

Nor do I deny that strong and lively impulse often leads astray, since none who are subject to the infirmities of our nature, are without fault. If however, there be any living of whom we may say as the ancients did of Hercules, Cimon and others, 'Unadorned indeed, but in all important points a

good man,' then was Luther a just man, and his name of good report; for in the church, if, as the apostle Paul says, "he war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience," then he pleases God and is to be revered by us. And such we know Luther to have been, for whilst he steadfastly maintained sound doctrine he preserved the integrity of his own conscience: and who that has known him can be ignorant with what large benevolence he was endowed, or forget his suavity in the intercourse of private life, and how far removed he was from contention and strife, whilst to all his actions lie imparted the gravity that became his character, as is depicted in the following passage; "His manner was dignified, and his discourse familiar;" or rather, all with him was in accordance with the language of Paul, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are of good report;" so that the asperity of which we have spoken, appears to have arisen from the love of truth, not from a factious spirit, or from bitterness of feeling: of these things both we and many others have been witnesses. But if I were to undertake an eulogium on the remaining points of Luther's life, a life which until the age of 63 was absorbed in subjects of the highest interest, and was passed in the pursuit of piety and of all that is noble and good, in what lofty strains of eloquence might I not indulge. His was a mind in which we never traced the inroads of wandering lusts; no seditious counsels held their seat there, on the contrary he rather advocated the laying down of arms, as he was unwilling to mingle with the interests of the church, schemes for the aggrandizement either of himself or his friends. Indeed, I esteem his wisdom and his virtue at so high a price as to feel assured that human efforts alone could never have attained to them. Thus it is essential that spirits bold, lofty, and ardent, such as every thing proves Luther's to have been, should be restrained by a power from on high.

And now what shall I say of his other virtues? I have myself often surprised him, when with weeping he has been engaged in offering up prayers for the whole church. He devoted almost daily, a portion of time to the repetition of certain psalms with which amid his sighs and tears, he mingled his prayers; and he often said that he felt indignant against those who through slothfulness of spirit, or on account of wordly occupations, say that the prayer of a single sigh is enough. He considered therefore, that forms of prayer are prescribed to us by divine counsel, and that a perusal of them animates our minds even as our voices acknowledge the God whom we worship.

And often when weighty deliberations have arisen on the danger of the state, we have seen him endowed with a mighty potency of soul, unmoved by fear and unsubdued by terror, for lie leaned on that sacred anchor which is the power of God; nor did he allow his faith therein to be shaken.

He was also distinguished for the acuteness of his perceptions, as by his own independent judgment lie could readily perceive the course to be pursued in cases of difficulty. Nor was he as many think, negligent of the public weal,

or inadvertent to the interests of others; on the contrary he could fully appreciate the welfare of the community, whilst he most sagaciously perceived

the sentiments and wishes of those with whom he mingled in social life. And although the genius of his mind was of a lively order, he read with avidity ecclesiastical writings as well as history in general, from which, with a peculiar dexterity, he derived precedents adapted to the present occasion.

Of his eloquence we possess enduring monuments, for in this science he undoubtedly equalled those to whom the highest palm in oratory has been conceded. We do then for our own sakes, justly mourn that such a man, endowed

with the loftiest grade of intellect, instructed in wisdom, matured by long experience, adorned with many excellent and heroic virtues, and chosen by God

for the building up of his church; that he who has embraced us all with a father's love, should have been thus called away from our earthly fellowship.

For we are like orphans deprived of an excellent and faithful parent; but whilst we bow to the will of God, let us not in the memory of our friend allow

his virtues, and the benefits which we have derived from his society to perish

from amongst us. Let us rather bid him joy that he is now participating in sweet and unrestrained communion with God, and with his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the Prophets and Apostles; which fellowship he ever sought and waited for through faith in the Son of God. In that blessed state he now

receives the approval of God on the labours which he here sustained in the propagation of the gospel, with the testimony also of the Church universal in

heaven; there, set free from the shackles of mortality as from a prison, and having joined that company which is perfected in wisdom, he now sees, not as in a glass darkly, the essential character of God, the union of the two natures in His Son, and the whole assembly of the gathered and redeemed church; whilst those divine real ties which he here knew but in part, which he

briefly demonstrated, and which in faith he contemplated, he now beholds with

open face, and moved with ecstatic joy, in all the ardour of his soul he gives

God thanks for his unspeakable gift. He learns why the Son of God is called the Word, and the likeness of the Eternal Father; and in what way Holy Spirit

is the bond of mutual love, not only between the Eternal Father and the Son, but also between them and the Church. He had learned whilst here on earth which be the first principles of the oracles of God and often did he most wisely and weightily descant on these highest themes; on the distinction between true and false prayer, and on the knowledge of God and of divine manifestations; also on distinguishing the true God from false deities.

There are many in this assembly, who in times past, have heard him thus express himself, "You shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and [de]scending upon the Son of Man." Thus he delighted first to instill into the minds of his hearers this most full consolation, which declares that heaven is opened, that is to say, that there is a way made for us to God, that the barrier of divine wrath is removed as we flee for refuge

to his Son; that God holds near communion with us, and that those who seek him in prayer are received, governed and kept by him. Luther admonished us that this divine promise, which infidels declare to be fabulous, is and must be opposed to human doubts, and to those fears which deter diffident minds from venturing to call upon God, or to put their trust in him; for he said that the angels ascending and descending on the body of Christ, are the ministers of the gospel who with Christ for their leader, first ascend to God and receive from him the gifts of the Gospel, and of the Holy Spirit, and afterwards descend, that is to fulfill their duty of teaching amongst men. He also added this interpretation, that those heavenly spirits themselves, whom we usually call angels, beholding the Son are enabled to comprehend and to rejoice in the mysterious union of the two natures, and as they are soldiers of their Lord in defense of His Church, so are they guided and governed as by the signal of His hand. Now is our departed friend himself a spectator of these most sublime visions, and as he once among the ministers of the Gospel, ascended and descended with Christ for his leader, so now he describes angels sent on embassies by their Lord, and enjoys in common with them, the absorbing contemplation of divine wisdom and of the works of God.

Let us call to mind with what delight he has recited to us the polity, the purposes, the dangers, and the deliverances of the prophets, and with what erudition he was wont to trace the history of the church in all ages; thus it is evident that his heart glowed with no common emotion when speaking of those favoured servants of the Lord. The spirits of these he now embraces, with delight he listens to their living words, and with them he speaks face to face, whilst they with transport hail him as their fellow, and with one heart and one voice give thanks unto God for having thus gathered and preserved his church.

Therefore we doubt not that Luther is happy: we do indeed, mourn our bereavement, and whilst we bow to the fiat which has called him hence, we know it to be the will of God that we retain in our memories the virtues and the benefactions of this his servant.

Let us now be faithful to our trust. We must acknowledge that he was a hallowed instrument of God. Let us then devotedly embrace his doctrines, and strive to resemble him in those graces which are essential to our more humble walk, the fear of God, faith and fervency in prayer, soundness in ministry, purity, vigilance in avoiding seditious counsels, and an ardent thirst for knowledge. And as we are called upon to turn our thoughts with intentness and frequency towards those leaders in the church whose histories have been transmitted to us, as Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and Paul, so let us often

dwell on the doctrine and experience of Luther. Let us now add the tribute  
of  
 thanksgiving and prayers which are due from this assembly, and let us all  
 unite in this devotion.

"We give thanks unto Thee, oh omnipotent God! the eternal Father of our Lord  
 Jesus Christ and Founder of Thy church, with Thy co-eternal Son our Lord  
 Jesus

Christ and the Holy Spirit, wise, good, merciful, a true Judge, powerful and  
 uncontrolled; in that Thou art by Thy dear Son, gathering unto Thyself an  
 inheritance from amongst the human race, and art preserving the ministry of  
 Thy gospel, for which Thou hast at this time raised up Luther. We beseech  
 Thee

that thou wilt henceforth sustain and govern thy church, and that thou wilt  
 seal in us the true doctrine, as Isaiah prayed for his disciples. Deign Thou  
 to quicken our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may offer prayer  
 acceptably  
 unto Thee, and that we may order our lives in Thy fear."

In conclusion, as we are aware that the loss from amongst us of those who  
 have

directed us in our earthly course, often proves to survivors, the watchword  
 of  
 impending calamities: I would myself, with all to whom is committed the gift  
 of teaching, implore you to consider to what the world now stands exposed.

On  
 the one hand the Turks are ravaging, on the other contending parties  
 threaten

us with a civil war; every where indeed, we trace the empire of misrule; and  
 now that the enemies of the church no longer fear the power of Luther, they  
 will doubtless with the greater daring, lay waste the doctrine which has  
 been  
 delivered to us by divine authority.

That God may avert these evils, let us be more diligent in regulating our  
 lives and directing our pursuits, and let us ever hold this sentiment fixed  
 in

our minds, so that whilst we retain, hear, learn, and love the pure truths  
 of  
 the Gospel, we may ourselves constitute the house and church of God: as the  
 Son of God himself says, "If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my  
 Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with  
 him."

Encouraged by this cheering promise of our blessed Lord, let us incite one  
 another to the acquiring of heavenly wisdom, and let us not forget that  
 human  
 interests and human institutions are to be respected for the sake of his  
 church. Let us realize to our minds, that future eternity to which God has  
 called us, who indeed has not in vain revealed Himself to us by such  
 illustrious testimonies, neither has he sent his Son in vain, but He truly  
 loves and preserves those who magnify His grace.

Amen.

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Luther's Last Battles

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# Luther's Last Battles

Mark U. Edwards, Jr.

Martin Luther<sup>1</sup> was thirty-four years old when his Ninety-five Theses swept the German nation. He was thirtyseven when he was excommunicated by the Roman Catholic church, forty-one when he married the former nun Katharine von Bora, and forty-six when the Augsburg Confession was read to the Imperial Diet. On 10 November 1530 he turned forty-seven, and already behind him were his "breakthrough" to Reformation theology, his rejection of the Roman Catholic church, the Peasants' War, the major battles of the Sacramentarian controversy, and the submission of the Augsburg Confession. Although the vast majority of historical studies on Luther deal exclusively with the events through 1530, Luther did not die at the closing of the Imperial Diet of Augsburg. On the contrary, he lived another fifteen years, dying of heart failure on 18 February 1546, at the age of sixty-two.

It may seem puzzling that biographers and historians neglect the older Luther, for we are extraordinarily well informed about his activities in these later years.<sup>2</sup> In his home Luther was the center of attention and surrounded by children, students, friends, and guests. At meals, various students and guests assiduously copied down all Luther's utterances, preserving a vast wealth of obiter dicta for posterity. From these remarks, and from his voluminous correspondence and the observations of friends and guests, there emerges a picture of Luther as a devoted, often tender-hearted father, a loving, teasing, and sometimes irritable husband, a man of strong friendships, and a compassionate pastor and counselor.

Luther also continued his labors at the University of Wittenberg. In 1531 he presented a series of lectures on Galatians. From time to time he lectured on selected Psalms. Beginning in 1535, he undertook to expound the book of Genesis, a labor that occupied him until 1545. He also participated in the reform of the theological faculty in 1533 and in the reorganization of the university curriculum in 1536. He frequently took part in disputations. In 1535 he became dean of the university, a position

he held for the rest of his life. Many hours were spent in training students for the ministry and placing them in parishes. He also served his university and community as pastor and preacher. For years Luther and his coworkers had labored on a German translation of the Old Testament, publishing their efforts a part at a time. In 1531 they completed a revision of the Psalms, in 1532 a German edition of all the Prophets, and in 1533 various other books. Finally, in 1534, the full German Bible appeared. After Luther's death, a revision of the translation, begun in 1539, appeared in the year 1546.

Clearly, the older Luther remained intensely involved in academic, pastoral, and familial activities. But Luther was also very much concerned in these later years with affairs beyond Wittenberg. Through written opinions and published treatises he participated fully in several bitter controversies. It is this activity, and especially his published polemics, that historians find most difficult to explain and integrate into their overall view of Luther. In some of the treatises, Luther apparently retreated from positions of principle established earlier in his career. In others, he contributed to disputes that seem so petty or mundane as to be unworthy of a man of his religious stature. And some of the later polemics were so violent and vulgar that they offended contemporaries and remain offensive to this day. In the last five or six years of his life, for example, Luther published violent attacks on Catholics, Turks, Jews, and other Protestants. The most notorious of these polemics are his attacks on the Jews, especially his *On the Jews and Their Lies* and his *On the Ineffable Name* and *On Christ's Lineage*, both of 1543. These treatises contain considerable exegesis of the Old Testament, but this is overshadowed by the pervasive vulgarity of Luther's language and by the incredibly harsh recommendations he offered for the treatment of contemporary Jews. Their synagogues and schools should be burned, their homes destroyed, their books seized, their rabbis forbidden to teach, and their money taken away from them. They should be put to work in the fields or, better yet, expelled from Germany. Even contemporary Protestants were shocked by these writings. Rivaling his anti-Jewish treatises for vulgarity and violence of

expression is *Against Hanswurst* of 1541. Luther outdid even the violence and vulgarity of *Against Hanswurst* in his 1545 *Against the Papacy at Rome, Founded by the Devil*. On the heels of these treatises he published a series of scatological and violent woodcuts that, in most graphic terms, suggested how good Christians should treat the papacy. In these and other treatises, Luther bestialized his opponents, **most frequently**  
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likening them to pigs or asses, or called them liars, murderers, and hypocrites. They were all minions of the devil. He directed the devil to his ass, he renamed the papal decretals "decraptals" [*Drecketalen*] and the Farnese pope "Fart-ass" (*farlz Esel*) and "Her Sodomitical Hellishness Pope Paula 111," and he threw around words for excrement with great abandon. In the woodcuts by Lucas Cranach that Luther commissioned at the end of his life, he had the papal church depicted as being expelled from the anus of an enormous she-devil and suggested, once again in picture, that the pope, cardinals, and bishops should be hung from gallows with their tongues nailed alongside.

Not all of his later polemics were vulgar; many had strong political overtones, and so raise the question whether religious principle was occasionally being subordinated to politics. By the late 1520's, most of the leaders of the Protestant estates were prepared to use armed force to defend their faith, even against an imperially led attack. In *Warning to His Dear German People (1531)* and *Concerning the Three Hierarchies (1539)*, Luther appeasu stain the ruler's decision, even though in earlier years he had most adamantly rejected armed resistance to the emperor in defense of faith. In the 1530's the Protestant rulers also decided to reject out of hand a papal invitation to a general council of the church, although for years they and Luther had called for a council. Although Luther disagreed with their decision, he was given the task of discrediting the council called by the pope and justifying the Protestant refusal to participate in it. He was also given the task of justifying in print the seizure of the bishopric of Naumburg by Elector Johann Friedrich, and he defended and applauded the two offensives of the League of Schmalkalden against Braunschweig-Wolfenbittel. He was

much criticized at the time for many of these activities and publications, which have cast a shadow over the older Luther's reputation to this day.

It is not the historian's job to save Luther's reputation on matters where he deserves censure. But the historian must insist that those who wish to dispense praise and blame first understand what they are judging. At the heart of this paper rests the conviction that in both popular and scholarly works the older Luther is being judged without a full understanding of the circumstances he faced. It is only as we enlarge our view to consider the changed character of the Reformation movement by the late **1520**'~, the new pressures impinging on Luther, and the severely limited alternatives that he faced, that we can fairly judge the polemics of his later years. To view Luther as entangled within his net of time and circumstances is to transcend the need to accuse or to excuse.

#### Illness and Anger

It is sometimes argued that the polemical excesses of the older Luther are attributable to his age and poor health—he was violent, abusive, vulgar, and overly verbose because he was a sick, irascible, and slightly senile old man. It is true that throughout his career as a reformer Luther was often not well.<sup>3</sup> At one time or another he suffered from constipation, diarrhea, frequent headaches, dizziness, an open ulcer on his leg, severe and recurring uric acid stone attacks, probable arthritis, and severe angina, among other afflictions. Spasms caused by stone attacks are among the most painful experiences that one can have. It seems unlikely that these medical problems would have failed to contribute to Luther's infamous irascibility. His generally poor health, and especially his probable arteriosclerosis with its usual circulation impairment, raises the question of possible senility, or at least of reduced intellectual acuity, in his later years. Renal damage may have been caused by extended retention of urine during the acute stone attacks of **1537**.<sup>4</sup> Each condition may have exacerbated the other conditions. Finally, it has been argued by some that Luther, especially the older Luther, was mentally ill, a manic-depressive. That Luther suffered from severe illnesses and depression

cannot be denied. That he was mentally ill, a manic-depressive, is another matter altogether, and has been hotly disputed.~ Although it seems highly unlikely that illness played no role in shaping some of the later polemics, it is, as we shall see in a moment, difficult to discern a pattern of influence.

Luther's repeated complaint that his illnesses kept him from his work suggests at least one way to test for the effects of illness and age: how productive was Luther during these later years?

This is not, actually, an easy question to answer, as there are many confounding factors; but statistics on publications are suggestive. '

To begin with, it must be remembered that by almost any standard, Luther was enormously productive throughout his life. In 1531 he was sick for six months and still produced **180** sermons, wrote at least 100 letters and 15 treatises, lectured on Galatians, and worked on his translation of the Old Testament.

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And in 1537, when he suffered his most severe and debilitating stone attack, he preached some 90 sermons, lectured, wrote at least 55 letters, and produced some 25 treatises. Many of the treatises of this year were written during his convalescence from the stone attack. By themselves these statistics represent truly remarkable productivity. Only when such figures are compared with Luther's earlier years can the effects of illness and age be assessed.

~f attention is turned to 1530 as a plausible dividing line between the younger and the older Luther, it is seen that two-thirds of his first editions issued from the press during the period 1516-1530. In the remaining fifteen years of his life, the period **1 53 1 - 1546**, Luther produced the remaining third of his original works. The decrease in Luther's publishing activity is even more dramatic than these figures suggest, since nearly thirty percent of the original publications during the later period are short forewords to the works of others. Only about eleven percent of his original publications in the earlier period are forewords. As large as this decline was, it must be understood in relation to the prodigious productivity of the earlier period. Excluding Bible translations, some 360 of Luther's original works were printed in the period 15 16-1 530. The latter period saw only 184 original

works, yet this is still a staggering number by any measure. It must be stressed that the major decline in Luther's productivity came in the late 1520's, years before his most severe illnesses; 1523 witnessed the greatest number of first editions of Luther's works. The real decrease in publication did not come until after 1525. The most significant decline in first editions occurs between the period 1521-1525 and the period 1526-1530: 192 first editions in the earlier period and only 95 in the following period. Given its timing and character, this sharp decline in the second half of the 1520's may be more plausibly explained by the development of the Reformation beyond Martin Luther, by effects of the Peasants' War, or by changes in the printing industry rather than by changes in Luther's health?

The decline in the number of original publications during the last fifteen years of Luther's life was very gradual, with no sharp discontinuity in, for example, 1537, that might point to the effects of renal failure or the onset of acute senility or manic-depressive psychosis. From 1531 to 1535, some 74 original works appeared, from 1536 to 1540 the figure dropped to 61, and in the last five years, 1541 to early 1546, there appeared 49 original works.

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It seems likely that aging and ill health played some role in the gradual decline during the last fifteen years of Luther's life. The quantitative evidence does not allow us to go beyond this bland conclusion. The evidence does not support any hypothesis positing a sharp discontinuity in the late 1530's indicating the onset of senility or mental illness.

What about a qualitative decline? It is true that his most infamous polemics, his most vulgar and violent attacks, occur during the last five or six years of his life. But once again the pattern is not clear, and a precipitating cause, or causes, is difficult to discern. Luther continued to produce lucid, well-reasoned argument and exegesis up to his death. For example, his masterwork *On the Councils and the Church* (1539) was composed after his major stroke in 1537; he continued to lecture on Genesis until 1545; and massive and important revisions of his Bible translation occurred during this period.

Every polemic Luther produced during these later years contained

sections devoted to clear and persuasive exposition of doctrine and exegesis of Scripture. One may take, for example, *Against Hanswurst* (1541), a politically inspired treatise, and one of the coarsest Luther ever produced. Fully two-thirds of the treatise is given over to violent, uninhibited attacks on Duke Heinrich and his Catholic allies. Yet the treatise is remarkable for the great eloquence of its insults and for the injection of some theological considerations into an otherwise largely secular debate. Sandwiched between the invective and abuse is a lucid discussion of the characteristics of the true and false church and a briefer comment on the distinction between person and office. The independent worth of this section on the true and false church was attested to by its later publication in combination with the "Schmalkadic Articles."

Luther's notorious vulgarity and violence of expression shows no clear pattern that demonstrates the influence of mental or physical illness. Throughout his later years, Luther produced both violent and temperate polemics. For example, Luther's violent and abusive *Against Hanswurst* was followed four years later by the moderate *To the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse Concerning the Captured Heinrich of Braunschweig* (1545). The differences between these two treatises can best be explained not by changes in Luther's physical or mental health but by changes in external circumstances.

The abuse and coarseness found in the earlier treatise was a **Luther's Last Battles 131**

deliberate polemical tactic, and it was in keeping with the general tenor of the dispute. In the later treatise Luther sought to dissuade the landgrave from releasing Duke Heinrich, who had been recently captured by the Protestants. This goal called for a calm, reasoned argument, which Luther easily produced. The Struggle Between the True and False Church

The polemics of the old Luther cannot be adequately explained by pathology, nor can they be fully explained by reference to Luther's Augustinian view of history or his apocalyptic expectations, although both these factors were probably more influential than his ill health. Early in his career as a reformer, Luther's reading of the Bible had convinced him that practically from the beginning of the world there had been a perpetual, unchanging

struggle between the true and false church. He saw this struggle involving a recurrent contest between true and false prophets and apostles. Believing that mankind did not change and that the devil never slept, he saw the struggles that went on in the days of the prophets and the apostles as being no different from the struggles going on in his own time. Their experiences established a paradigm of the dynamics of all sacred history. Within this paradigm, the papacy was the antichrist; the Turks were Gog; contemporary Jewry was the remnant of a rejected people suffering under God's wrath; and his Protestant opponents were contemporary false prophets and apostles. They were all members of the false church; behind them loomed the figure of the devil, the father of lies. More often than not, Luther directed his polemical attack at the devil he saw behind his opponents rather than at the opponents themselves. Furthermore, since Luther was always drawing comparisons and parallels between these opponents and the opponents of the prophets and apostles, it was only natural that he would see the true prophets and apostles as having provided a precedent for the way in which one should deal with such opponents. As a result, he could explain and justify his polemics and his stubbornness on points of doctrine by pointing to the example set by these men of God.

Luther's view of history and of his own role in it can help explain some of the polemics of the old Luther. It can help us understand how Luther could recommend such harsh and inhumane treatment of Jews and supporters of the papacy. He thought he was attacking the devil himself. Some of Luther's

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language may also be attributed to this biblically-based view of the struggle. When, for example, he rebuked his age for its failings, it was a prophet like Jeremiah from whom he often borrowed his style, his tone, even the language itself. And when he blasted the papacy as a wanton whore, he was borrowing polemics from Hosea and Ezekiel.

But this explanation, also, is insufficient. Luther's view of the world and his role in the struggle between the true and false church develops early and is fully formed by 1531. It cannot

fully account for the peculiar polemics of the last years. Luther's apocalyptic expectations must also be considered. It cannot be denied that the passion of Luther's polemics was increased by his conviction that he was living in the last times. In his writings and in his prayers, he was torn between bewailing these signs of his time and hailing them as a certain prelude to the Last Judgment. However, as important as his apocalyptic beliefs were for his later polemics, this apocalyptic dimension does not account for a change. An apocalyptic mood suffuses nearly all of the older Luther's polemics. One may consider, for example, some of his most overtly apocalyptic writings: "*On War Against the Turks* and *The Army Sermon Against the Turks* (1529), *Admonition to Prayer Against the Turks* (1541), and *Admonition to the Pastors in the Superintendency of the Church of Wittenburg*, co-authored with Johann Bugenhagen (1543). In all these writings the true antichrist for Luther was the Pope, but the Turks were seen as the devil incarnate, Gog, and the little horn in the Book of Daniel. The only striking difference between the earlier writings and the later ones, however, is the greater pessimism about the likelihood of imperial success against the Turks. Not only was there the intervening record of constant defeat to sour Luther's expectations, but there was also what he viewed as an increasing ingratitude of the Germans toward the renewed gospel and an ever-expanding worldliness and sinfulness at all social levels.

This last point suggests certain personal factors that may have compounded Luther's general apocalyptic expectations. The older Luther was sorely disappointed with the course of events from the mid-1520's onward. Such disappointment is often adduced to explain how Luther could pen the tolerant and sympathetic *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* in 1523 and then display such total intolerance, and make such inhumane and violent recommendations concerning the Jews, in the anti-Jewish treatises of his last years.

## **Luther's apocalyptic mood**

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may also have been reinforced by his fears for the fate of the Reformation movement after his own death. These fears were shared by others. Elector Johann Friedrich commissioned the

"Schmalkaldic Articles" partly to serve as Luther's "last testament" both against Catholics and against deviants within the Lutheran ranks. Luther himself seems to have viewed as his last testament against these different opponents his anti-Jewish treatises of 1543, his *Short Confession on the Supper* (1544), and *Against the Papacy at Rome, Founded by the Devil* (1545) along with the associated cartoons. When asked why he had published the cartoons, Luther replied that he realized that he did not have long to live and yet he still had much which ought to be revealed about the papacy and its kingdom. For this reason he had published the pictures, each a whole book's worth of what ought to be written about the papacy. It was, he stated, his testament.

I freely concede that Luther's health, world-view, apocalyptic expectations, and fears for the Reformation movement after his own demise are all significant for an understanding of his later polemics. But I would add that the external circumstances and challenges that he and his movement faced in these later years may be even more significant for an understanding of Luther's polemics.

From Movement to Church

The Peasants' War of 1525, the visitations of 1527 and 1528, the threatening recesses of the diets of 1529 and 1530, the formation of the Protestant League of Schmalkalden in 1531-these and similar events in the late 1520's and early 1530's were both cause and effect of a transition from a revolutionary movement consisting primarily of ideologically committed individuals to a more conservative movement led by rulers of territories and city-states.

This transition was unavoidable if the Reformation was to endure. It is one thing to initiate a revolution; it is quite another to pass it on to your descendants. The former may be accomplished with belief and individual effort; the latter requires institutions and bureaucracy. But these new circumstances imposed **new** and difficult requirements on Luther. They called for a willingness to compromise, to accommodate belief to political necessity, to take sides publicly in disputes where no great prin-

ciples were at stake and where ideological conviction found itself leagued with political self-interest. Too great a readiness to compromise or reach accommodation would have opened him to the charge of hypocrisy and insincerity, accusations fatal to his authority. Too great a rigidity and dedication to complete consistency and purity would have deprived him of influence over crucial events. Principles had to bend to necessity.

The years after 1530 saw a shift in Luther's correspondence and his published polemics that reflected the change in the character of the Reformation movement itself. A much larger percentage of his total correspondence in these later years was directed to secular authorities. ' A similar change occurred with his polemics. The polemics of the previous decade or so included a significant number of treatises that were directed towards the unconverted, open-minded Catholics and dedicated to the exposition of the Protestant faith. In contrast, the polemics of these later years were largely works of exhortation, aimed at the converted and designed to deepen beliefs already held; these were often politically inspired and of direct political significance.

This shift in the character of Luther's polemics and their intended audience is manifested also in the locations where the works were printed and reprinted.<sup>14</sup> In contrast to the earlier years where a number of printing centers throughout Germany accounted for a substantial percentage of works by Luther, the later years saw most of the printings and reprintings being done in Wittenberg, supplemented by the production of a few staunchly Lutheran cities in central and northern Germany.

Luther, statistics suggest, had become the publicist for an established, territorially defined ideology.

Of course, the greatly heightened role of politics and the accompanying shift in the character and audience of Luther's

polemics come a good decade before the 1540's. For example, in the matter of armed resistance to the emperor for the sake of the Gospel, Luther, under pressure from Landgrave Philipp, from the elector, and especially from the jurists and political advisors, grudgingly "allowed" the Protestant estates in 1530 to adopt a positive legal justification for such resistance." This

stance left him profoundly uncomfortable. In fact, the tension he felt seems to have spilled over into the polemics he wrote on this issue. Despite his own theological **reservations**, in **Warning to His Dear Germans (1531)**, Luther encouraged the Protestants **Luther's Last Battles 135**

to resist a Catholic attack on the basis of practical considerations, even if the attack was led by the emperor. With its impassioned language, abusive characterizations of Opponents, and almost summary discussions of the theological issues involved, it was obviously intended to be a treatise of exhortation rather than it may have deepened convictions already held, but it was unlikely to convert anyone from outside the Protestant ranks. In short, its intended audience was Protestant, not Catholic or any third party. And its intended purpose was to rally Protestants to the defense of their faith, not to convince them to resist passively an unjust attack by the Catholic emperor. It was a political polemic, and it was written at the request of Landgrave Philipp. It and **Concerning the Three Hierarchies (1539)**, which justified resistance to the emperor when he was acting as a servant of the papacy, served the interests of the League of Schmalkalden and were reprinted whenever there was a threat of Catholic attack.

Many of the polemics of Luther's last six years were similarly political and written at the express request of Luther's elector. The issues on which they were written were normally not of Luther's choosing. On a number of occasions, Elector Johann Friedrich quite deliberately used Luther's rhetorical skills in political matters. Luther's participation in the dispute with Duke Heinrich of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel and his justification of the electoral seizure of the bishopric of Naumburg are the two more prominent examples, but not the only ones.<sup>16</sup> In fact, except for **Against the Bishop of Magdeburg, Cardinal Albrecht (1539)**, all the major anti-Catholic and anti-Turkish polemics of his last years were written at the instigation of the elector. Even **Against the Papacy at Rome (1545)**, the most violent and vulgar treatise to issue from Luther's pen, was written at the behest of Elector Johann Friedrich. In short, the elector was using Luther's extraordinary polemical abilities as one

more weapon in the ongoing struggle between Protestant and Catholic forces. Luther's task was to exhort Protestants to stand fast in the face of the Catholic and Turkish threat and to reassure them that God was on their side. The elector encouraged and commended her's vehemence and even vulgarity, not only for the work that he himself had commissioned, but also for works which attacked the Jews and the Sacramentarians. The vulgarity and violence of the treatises of the old Luther may be partly attributable to Luther's ill-health, world-view and beliefs, but some of the responsibility must be apportioned but

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to the changed, more political circumstances in which the Reformer found himself, and to the encouragement he received from Landgrave Philipp and Elector Johann Friedrich. But like earlier explanations, this one is only partial, and potentially misleading if not qualified. The old Luther was not a docile obedient publicist for the League of Schmalkalden or the elector of Saxony. When his conscience demanded it, he defied even a direct electoral prohibition and refused to count the political costs of his action. As he saw it, if he did not respond to public attacks on his teachings, it was equivalent to denying and forsaking them. So when the Catholic Duke Georg of Saxony publicly attacked the *Warning to His Dear German People* and *Glosses on the Alleged Imperial Edict* (1531), Luther replied, ignoring his elector's command that he not publish an attack on the duke. In the negotiations that followed the public dispute, Luther stated the limits of his obedience. He would refrain in the future from anti-Catholic polemics, but only "to the extent that it is possible in respect to my conscience and the [Protestant] teachings." Some years later, in his public dispute with Cardinal Albrecht over the death of Hans Schonitz, Luther once again followed his conscience rather than the dictates of political wisdom. Unable in good conscience to remain silent in the face of the Cardinal's wrongdoing, Luther did what he could to minimize possible adverse effects on the Protestant cause, but he published his attack nonetheless. Finally he forced the elector to abandon plans to attack the city of Halle and refused to countenance publicly Landgrave Philipp's bigamy despite threats that the landgrave would defect to the

Catholics or attack him in print.

An examination of Luther's last battles reveals a man who saw the world engaged in a metaphysical struggle between good and evil. He was a man gripped by apocalyptic hopes and fears; a man who had given his name to a movement that had taken, from his perspective, a painful and frustrating direction. He was a man deeply involved in the politics of his time-as an advisor to his prince and coreligionists, as an indirect participant in colloquies between Protestants and Catholics, as a worried observer of wars and threats of war, and as the most influential publicist within Protestantism. Through compromise and accommodation to political realities, he tried to maintain his influence in order to preserve his central insights into Christian faith. But opponents and circumstances disappointed his hopes

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and marred his efforts. He often found himself mired in petty disputes that brought neither him nor the movement any credit. He was misunderstood and held responsible for actions that he himself deplored. As his own death neared, bringing with it both promised relief and fear for the fate of the movement, he became ever more pessimistic, praying not only for his own release but for the end of the world.

Luther remained involved and productive to his death. Sustained by his faith, his trust in God as the author of history, and his robust sense of humor, he continued to learn and grow, especially in his study of history. He was vulgar and abusive when he wished to be, moderate and calmly persuasive when it suited his purposes. But, most importantly, all the treatises of his old age, even the most crude and abusive, contained some exposition of the Protestant faith. Luther could never just attack; he always had to profess and confess as well.

#### FOOTNOTES

**1.** This essay is drawn from my *Luther's Last Battles: Politics and Polemics, 1531-46* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983), where the various issues are discussed in detail with appropriate references. [Ed. This book is available through the seminary bookstore.]

**2.** The most thorough and authoritative study of the older Luther is the study by Julius Kostlin, revised in **1903** by Gustav Kawerau (*Martin Luther, Sein Leben und Seine Schrifren*, fifth edition (Berlin, 1903); volume two deals with the older Luther). A two-volume collection of

essays on the older Luther was recently edited and published by Helmar Junghans, *Leben und Werk Martin Luthers von 1526 bis 1546* (Göttingen, 1983). H. G. Haile, *Luther: An Experiment in Biography* (New York, 1980) offers a fine, sprightly overview that focuses on the older Luther.

**3.** There is considerable literature on Luther's physical and mental health. Among the best is Annemarie Halder, *Das Hornsteinleiden Martin Luthers* (Munich, 1969). See also Friedrich Kuchenmeister, *Dr. Martin Luthers Krankengeschichte* (Leipzig, 1881); Wilhelm Ebstein, *D. Martin Luthers Krankheiten und deren Einfluss auf seinen körperlichen und geistigen Zustand* (Stuttgart, 1908); Erwin Mulhaupt, "Luthers **Kampf** mit der Krankheit," *Luther* 29(1958): 15-23; and Ethel Bacchus and H. Kenneth Scattiff, eds., "Martin Luther: A Panel Postmortem," *Chicago Medicine* 69(1966): 107-16.

**4.** This is suggested by H. G. Haile, *Luther An Experiment in Biography*, pp. 220-221.

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**5.** Four of the more prominent, and notorious, diagnoses are Heinrich Deinfle, *Luther und Luthertum in der ersten Entwicklung* (Mainz, 1904); Albert Maria Weiss, *Lutherpsychologie als Schlüssel zur Lutherlegende: Ergänzungen zu Briefen Luther und Luthertum* (Mainz, 1906); Hartmann Grisar, *Luther*, 3 vols. (Freiburg, 1911-12); and Paul J. Reiter, *Martin Luthers Umwelt, Character und Psychose*, vol. 2 (Copenhagen, 1941). Drawing heavily on these Catholic works is Erik Erikson, *Young Man Luther* (New York, 1958). Erikson's book, in turn, has generated considerable secondary literature. For a bibliography and several of the best articles on the subject, see Roger Johnson, ed., *Psychohistory and Religion: The Case of Young Man Luther* (Philadelphia, 1977).

**6.** For several replies to the works cited in the previous note, see Gustav Kawerau, *Luther in katholischer Beleuchtung: Glossen zu H. Grhars Luther* (Leipzig, 1911); Heinrich Boehmer, *Luther im Lichte der neueren Forschung*, fifth ed. (Leipzig, 1918); and Eberhard Grossmann, *Beiträge zur psychologischen Analyse der Reformatoren Luther and Calvin* (Basel, 1958).

**7.** On Luther's productivity, see Alfred Dieck, "Luthers Schaffenskraft," *Luther* 27(1956):35-39, for a year-by-year summary of Luther's productivity. In chapter one and the appendix of *Luther's Last Battles*, my own statistical survey of Luther's publication is discussed, which is partly summarized here.

**h.** The older Marxist argument that the Peasants' War marked the end of the popular Reformation was challenged by Franz Lau's classic article "Der Bauernkrieg und das angebliche Ende der lutherischen Reformation als spontaner Volksbewegung," *Luther Jahrbuch* 26(1959):109-34. The debate is far from over, however. (The best recent work on the Peasants' War, now translated into English, is Peter

Blickle, *The Revolution of 1525: The German Peasants' War from a New Perspective*, translated by Thomas A. Brady, Jr. and H. C. Erik Midelfort (Baltimore, 1981). The editors have provided a useful bibliography of relevant English publications). On the face of it, this decline in publication would appear to support those who see an end to the popular Reformation in these years. Miriam Chrisman, however, has shown in the case of Strasbourg that all types of printing declined at this time, and not merely religious materials. So this decline may reflect economic changes rather than a waning of interest in Luther's works (Cf. Miriam Chrisman, *Lay Culture, Learned Culture: Books and Social Change in Strasbourg, 1480-1599* [New Haven, 1982]).

9. The literature on these issues is immense, See Mark U. Edwards Jr., *Luther and the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, 1969); Scott ~endrixE, *clesia in Via: Ecclesiological Developments in the Medieval Psalms Ex Luther's Last Battles* 139

*egesis and [he Djcfata super Psalteriutn (1513-ljlS) of Martin Luther* (Leiden, 1974); Ernst Schafer, *Luther UIS Kirchenhbtoriker* (Gu tersloh, 1897); john M. Hcadley, *Luther's View of Church History* (New Haven, 1963); Hans von Campenhausen, "Reformatorisches Selbstbewusstsein und reformatorishes ~eschichtsbewusstsein bei Luther, 1517-1522," *Archiv jkr Refonnafigionsgeschichfe* 37 ( 1 940) : 1 28-49; Wolfgang Gunter, "Die geschichtstheologischen Voraussetzungen von Luthers Selbstverstandnis," in *Von Konstanz nach Trient. Beitrage zur Kirchengeschichte von den Reformkonzilien bis un Tridentinurn. Fesrgabe fir August Franten.* ed. R. Bawner (Paderborn, 1972). pp. 379-94; Wolfgang Hohne, *Luthers Anschauungen uber die Kontinuitat der Kirche* (Berlin-Hamburg, 1963). pp. 124-56; and Ulrich Asendorf, *Eschutologie bei Luther* (Gottigen, 1967), pp. 214-21.

10. This aspect is heavily stressed by Heiko Oberman in *Luther Mensch zwischen Gott und Teufel* (Berlin, 1981) (This volume will soon appear in English translation, published by Yale University Press).

11. On the Turks and on Luther's writings against the Turks, see John W. Bohnstedt, *The Infidel Scourge of God: The Turkish Menace as Seen by German Pamphleteers of the Reformation Era*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 56, part 9 (Philadelphia, 1%8); George W. Forell, "Luther and the War Against the Turks," *Church History* 14(1945):256-7 1 ; Stephen A. Fischer-Galati, *Otroman Imperialism and German Protestantism, 1521A1555* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959); H. Lamparter, *Luther Stellirng rum Turkenkrieg* (Munich, 1940); Harvey Buchanan, "Luther and the Turks, 1519'1529," ARG 47(1956): 145-59; Egil Grisliis, "Luther and the Turks," *Muslim World* 64(1974):180-93, 275-91; and chapter five, *Luther's Last Battles*.

12. The literature on Luther's relation to the Jews is so vast that a monograph recently appeared on the liturature itself (Johannes Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung zu den Juden im Spiegel seiner In ferpreten. Interpretation und Rezeption von Luthers Schrifien und Ausserungen*

zum Judentum **im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert vor allem in deutschsprachigen Raum** [Munich, 1972]. See also Kurt Meier, "Zur Interpretation von Luthers Judenschriften," in *Vierhundertfünfzig*

*Jahre lutherische Reformation, 1517 - 1967* (Berlin-Göttingen, 1967), pp. 233-52; C. Bernd Sucher, *Luthers Stellung zu den Juden. Eine Interpretation aus germanistischer Sicht* (Nieuwkoop, 1977), pp. 125-99.

For detailed examination of this issue, see especially Wilhelm Maurer, "Die Zeit der Reformation," in *Kirche und Synagoge*, edited by Karl-Heinrich Rengstorff and Siegfried von Kortzfleisch (Stuttgart,

**1968**, 1 : 363-452; **Heiko A. Oberman, *Wurzeln des Antisemitismus:***

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*mation* (Berlin, 1981) (soon to appear in English translation, published by Fortress Press); and chapter 6, *Luther's Last Battles*.

13 See Karl Trudinger, *Luthers Briefe und Gutachten an weltliche Obrigkeiten zur Durchführung der Reformation* (Münster, 1975), 8-10.

14. Cf. *Luther's Last Battles*, chapter 12.

15. The literature on Luther and resistance is vast, especially if the many pieces on Luther's two kingdoms doctrine are considered. For a general overview of the recent literature, see Rudolf Ohlig, *Die*

*Zwei Reiche* + *Lehre Luthers in der Auslegung der deutschen lutherischen Theologie der Gegenwart seit 1945* (Bern, 1974); and the bibliography in Heinz Scheible, ed., *Das Widerstandsrecht als*

*Probleme des deutschen Protestantentums* (Gutersloh, 1969). Very useful is

the older work by Karl Müller, *Luthers Äußerungen über das Recht des bewaffneten Widerstands gegen den Kaiser* (Munich, 1915). Two recent

works are also useful: Hermann Kunst, *Evangelischer Glaube und*

*politische Verantwortung: Martin Luther als politischer Berater seiner Landesherrn und seine Teilnahme an den Fragen des öffentlichen*

*Lebens* (Stuttgart, 1976); and Eike Wolgast, *Die Wittenberger Theologie und die Politik der evangelischen Stände* (Gutersloh, 1977).

Wolgast's discussion is by far the best recent consideration of the matter, and should be consulted by those interested in all the legal and

theological details. In English one might consult Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1978);

W. D. J. Cargill Thompson, "Luther and the Right of Resistance to the Emperor," in C. W. Dugmore, ed. *Studies in the Reformation: Luther to Hooker* (London, 1980); and chapter 2, *Luther's Last Battles*.

16 *Luther's Last Battles*, chapters 7 and 8.

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## Martin Luther's Last Days and Final Thoughts

<http://marccortez.com/2012/02/18/martin-luthers-last-days-and-final-thoughts/>

### Martin Luther's Last Days and Final Thoughts

February 18, 2012

On February 18, 1546 Martin Luther lived his last hours. Although he'd been struggling with old age and ill health for a while, Luther spent the end of 1545 trying to resolve an inheritance dispute in the town of Eisleben. On January 17, 1546 he preached his final sermon in Wittenberg, and then he traveled back to Eisleben with his three sons to continue working on that conflict. I find it striking that for a person with a reputation for controversy and polemics, he spent his last days working toward harmony and reconciliation. Arriving in Eisleben, though still in ill health, Luther preached four more sermons – his last.

Continuing a life-long tendency to downplay his own importance, two days before his death, Luther said,

*If I make it home to Wittenberg, I will lay myself in my coffin to let maggots feast on the stout Doctor.*

The words that are famously known as Luther's last were probably penned on February 16. These would apparently be Luther's last written statements.

*Virgil's shepherd poems cannot be understood, except by one who has been a shepherd for five years. Virgil's poetry about agriculture cannot be understood, except by one who has been a farmhand for five years. Cicero's letters cannot be understood, except by one who has participated and lived within a large community for 25 years. The Holy Scriptures do not have a satisfactory taste for me or anyone else, unless he has*



*spent 100 years ruling a community as the prophets Elijah and Elisha, John the Baptist, Christ and the Apostles.*

*We are beggars. This is true.*

On his final evening, Luther ate dinner with family and friends, spent time in prayer as usual, and went to bed. Waking up in pain shortly after midnight, Luther apparently recognized that the end was near. According to witnesses, he spent his last hour in pain but with friends and doctors nearby, praying and reciting scripture.

Just before his death, Michael Coelius asked him if he was dying in the name of Christ. And Luther answered with a simple, "Yes."

Then, he died.

A complex and complicated man, Luther left an incredible legacy. And he died a faithful death.

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## Luther's Last Written Words

<http://www.projectwittenberg.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/beggars.txt>

The Last Written Words of Luther:

Holy Ponderings of the Reverend Father Doctor Martin Luther  
16 February 1546

Dr. Martin Luthers Werke,  
(Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1909),  
Band 85 (TR 5), pp. 317-318.

Translated by James A. Kellerman

1. No one can understand Vergil's Bucolics unless he has been a shepherd for five years. No one can understand Vergil's Georgics, unless he has been a farmer for five years.

2. No one can understand Cicero's Letters (or so I teach), unless he has busied himself in the affairs of some prominent state for twenty years.

3. Know that no one can have indulged in the Holy Writers sufficiently, unless he has governed churches for a hundred years with the prophets, such as Elijah and Elisha, John the Baptist, Christ and the apostles.

Do not assail this divine Aeneid; nay, rather prostrate revere the ground that it treads.

We are beggars: this is true.

Notes:

1. This is a translation of WA, TR 5:168 (no. 5468) of a scrap of paper that Johannes Aurifaber (a.k.a. Johann Goldschmied) found when Luther died. Aurifaber wrote: "Luther ... wrote these words in Latin on a slip of paper and put them on his table. I, Johannes Aurifaber, wrote them down and Dr. Justus Jonas, Superintendent of Halle, who was at Halle at the same time, took the slip of paper with him." Unfortunately, this slip of paper has long since disappeared.

2. I have followed the account of the document as told by Aurifaber. There are, however, divergent accounts of what was on that scrap of paper. Since the original slip of paper has been lost, it is impossible to ascertain what Luther actually wrote. For other accounts, see WA 48:241 and TR 5:317 (no.5677). Although the wording differs slightly, the sentiment is the same.

3. The line in praise of Vergil's Aeneid is composed of nine feet of dactylic hexameter, the meter in which the Aeneid is written. It is most likely an adaptation or misquotation of two lines near the end of Statius' The Aeneid (12:816f), a poem also written in dactylic hexameter and profoundly influenced by Vergil's epic:

Nee tu divinam Aendeida tempta,  
Sed Ionge sequere et vestigia semper adora.

Luther wrote:

Hanc tu ne divinam Aeneida tenta,  
Sed vestigia pronus adora.

4. "We are beggars" is written in German; the rest of the document, in Latin.

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## **How Dr. Martin Luther Died**

<http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/HoyerHowDrMartinLutherDied.pdf>

# *Concordia*

## *Theological Monthly*

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Vol. XVII

FEBRUARY, 1946

No. 2

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### How Dr. Martin Luther Died

By THEO. HOYER

Since 1883 Lutherans, and generally all Protestants, have observed the 400th anniversary of the chief events in the life of the great Reformer: Luther's birth; the posting of the Ninety-five Theses; the Diet of Worms; the publication of Luther's two Catechisms; the Diet of Augsburg; the preparation of the Smalcald Articles. This year we reach the end; the 18th of February marks the 400th return of the day of Luther's death. Judging by past experience, notice of this anniversary will be taken in most church periodicals. Not all of it will be friendly; old legends will be warmed up, old suspicions and insinuations repeated. It is well that we recall to memory what is known of Luther's last days.

In preparation for the 400th anniversary of the Reformation (1917) Dr. W. H. T. Dau published a little brochure under the title *Luther Examined and Re-examined*. It is not as widely known as it deserves to be. We reprint one of the last chapters in the book.

#### LUTHER ANNOUNCES HIS DEATH

Mark Twain awoke one morning to find himself reported dead. He did not accept the invitation suggested in the report, but wired to his friends: "Reports of my death grossly exaggerated." Luther was placed in a similar predicament by Catholics, who were deeply interested in the question how long he was to continue to live. One day in the early part of March, 1545, he was handed a printed letter in Italian which contained the news of his demise under curious circumstances.

He thought that he ought not to withhold this interesting information from the world: he had a German translation made of the document, which he published with his remarks as follows:

*“Copy of a Letter of the Ambassador of the Most Christian King Regarding a Horrible Sign Which Occurred in the Shameful Death of Martin Luther.*

“A horrible and unheard-of miracle which the blessed God has wrought in the shameful death of Martin Luther, who went to hell, soul and body, as may be clearly seen from a chapter of the letter of the ambassador of the Most Christian King, to the praise and glory of Jesus Christ and the confirmation and comfort of the faithful.

“COPY OF THE LETTER

“1. Martin Luther, having been taken ill, desired the holy Sacrament of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. He died immediately upon receiving it. When he saw that his sickness was very violent and he was near death, he prayed that his body might be placed on an altar and worshiped as God. But the goodness and providence of God had resolved to put an end to his great error and to silence him forever. Accordingly, God did not omit to work this great miracle, which was very much needed, to cause the people to desist from the great, destructive, and ruinous error which the said Luther has caused in the world. As soon as his body had been placed in the grave, an awful rumbling and noise was heard, as if hell and the devils were collapsing. All present were seized with a great fright, terror, and fear, and when they raised their eyes to heaven, they plainly saw the most holy host of our Lord Jesus Christ which this unworthy man was permitted to receive unworthily. I affirm that all who were present saw the most holy host visibly floating in the air. They took the most holy host very devoutly and with great reverence and gave it a decent place in the sanctuary.

“2. When this had been done, no such tumult and hellish rumbling was heard any more that day. However, during the following night, at the place where Martin Luther’s corpse had been buried, there was heard by everybody in the community a much greater confusion than the first time. The people arose and flocked together in great fear and terror.

At daybreak they went to open the grave where the wicked body of Luther had been placed. When the grave was opened, you could clearly see that there was no body, neither flesh nor bone, nor any clothes. But such a sulphuric stench rose from the grave that all who were standing around the grave turned sick. On account of this miracle many have reformed their lives by returning to the holy Christian faith, to the honor, praise, and glory of Jesus Christ, and to the strengthening and confirmation of His holy Christian Church, which is a pillar of truth."

Luther appended the following comment to this pious document:

"And I, Martinus Luther, D., do by these indentures acknowledge and testify that I have received this angry fiction concerning my death on the twenty-first day of March, and that I have read it with considerable pleasure and joy, except the blasphemous portion of the document in which this lie is attributed to the exalted majesty of God. Otherwise I felt quite tickled on my knee-cap and under my left heel at this evidence how cordially the devil and his minions, the Pope and the papists, hate me. May God turn them from the devil!

"However, if it is decreed that theirs is a sin unto death and that my prayer is in vain, then may God grant that they fill up their measure and write nothing else but such books for their comfort and joy. Let them run their course; they are on the right track; they want to have it so. Meanwhile I want to know how they are going to be saved and how they will atone for, and revoke, all their lies and blasphemies with which they have filled the world." (XXI b, 3376 f.)

Similar even more grotesque tales have been served the faithful by Catholic writers. The star production of this kind was published years ago in the *Ohio-Waisenfreund*. It related that horrible and uncanny signs had accompanied Luther's death. Weird shrieks and noises were heard; devils were flying about in the air; the heavens were shrouded in a pall of gloom. When the funeral cortege started from Eisleben, a vast flock of ravens had gathered and accompanied the corpse, croaking incessantly and uttering dismal cries all the way to Wittenberg, etc., etc.

These crude stories have now been censored out of existence. Catholics nowadays prefer to lie in a more refined

and cultured manner about Luther's death: Luther committed suicide; he was found hanging from his bedpost one morning.

Comment is unnecessary.

Luther died peacefully in the presence of friends, confessing Christ and asserting with his last breath his firm allegiance to the faith he had proclaimed. The probable cause of his death was a stroke of paralysis. Luther began to feel pains in the chest late in the afternoon of February 17, 1546. He bore up manfully and continued working at his business for the Count of Mansfeld who had called him to Eisleben. After a light evening meal he sat chatting in a cheerful mood with his companions, and retired early, as was his custom in his declining years. The pains in the chest became worse, and he began to feel chilly. Medicaments were administered, and after a while he fell into a slumber, which lasted an hour. He awoke with increased pain and a feeling of great congestion, which caused the death perspiration to break out. He was rapidly turning cold. All this time he was praying and reciting portions from the Psalms and other texts. Three times in succession he repeated his favorite text, John 3:16. Gradually he became peaceful, and his end was so gentle that the bystanders were in doubt whether he had expired or was only in a swoon. They worked with him, trying to rouse him, until they were convinced that he had breathed his last. The Catholic apothecary John Landau, who had been called in while Luther was thought to be in a swoon, helped to establish the fact of his death.

So far Dr. Dau's chapter. We add some explanations and later findings.

Forty-three years after Luther's death the Italian Oratorian Thomas Bozius published the first account of Luther's "suicide." Fifteen years later the Franciscan Sedulius, the same man whose brain hatched the fantastic brood of ravens resurrected in the *Ohio-Waisenfreund*, repeated the story, which an anonymous servant of Luther had allegedly told to an anonymous "pious man," who told it to an unknown "trustworthy man," from whom (through how many additional mouths deponent sayeth not) it came to Sedulius. The tale was taken up by the Jesuit Gottlieb<sup>1</sup> in 1883, who, however,

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<sup>1</sup> Gottlieb, *Hamburger Briefe*, Berlin, 1883.

stated that he personally did not credit the story. Not so P. Majunke,<sup>2</sup> former editor of the Roman Catholic *Germania*, then priest in Hochkirch at Gross-Glogau. He claimed to have found a new document attesting the fact of Luther's suicide; it was, however, nothing but that tale told by Bozius together with hair-raising accounts of the death of Oecolampadius, Bucer, Calvin, and Zwingli.<sup>3</sup>

The circumstances surrounding Luther's death were again investigated by D. Th. Kolde, Professor of Historic Theology in Erlangen, Prof. D. Wilhelm Walther of Rostock, and others.

These are the results. Sixteen persons were eyewitnesses of Luther's death: Michael Coelius; Justus Jonas; two of Luther's sons, Paul and Martin; his Wittenberg servant Ambrosius; his host in Eisleben, the secretary of the city, Hans Albrecht; two doctors of Eisleben, Doctor Ludwig and Magister Simon Wilde; Count Albrecht of Mansfeld; Count Henry of Schwarzburg and his wife; Johann Aurifaber; three more Counts of Mansfeld: Philip, Hans Georg, and Vollrath; and Prince Wolf of Anhalt. Within a few hours five of them wrote letters with an account of Luther's departure which are extant: Justus Jonas (to the Elector of Saxony), Albrecht of Mansfeld, Wolf of Anhalt (also to John Frederick of Saxony), Johann Aurifaber (to Michael Gutt in Halle), and Hans Georg of Mansfeld (to Duke Maurice of Saxony). Then Jonas, Coelius, and Aurifaber wrote a detailed *Historia* of Luther's death, with this concluding sentence: "Wir . . . zeugen dies vor Gott und auf unsere eigene letzte Hinfahrt und Gewissen, dass wir dieses nicht anders gehoert und gesehen . . . und dass wir es nicht anders erzaehlen, denn wie es allenthalben ergangen und geschehen." All of these accounts agree; the brief statement of Dr. Dau above is fact.<sup>4</sup>

Over and above this we have the report of a Catholic eyewitness, a *Mansfelder Buerger*, published by Luther's bitter enemy Joh. Cochlaeus, separately at first, then as part of his biography of Luther. The Catholic N. Paulus has convincingly demonstrated that this *Mansfelder Buerger* was none

<sup>2</sup> *Luthers Lebensende*. Eine historische Untersuchung von Paul Majunke, Mainz, 1890.

<sup>3</sup> The accounts of Bozius and of Sedulius quoted by Kolde, *Luthers Selbstmord*, p. 26 f. and p. 41 f.

<sup>4</sup> Kolde, *Luthers Selbstmord*, p. 11 ff. — W. Walther, *Fuer Luther wider Rom*, p. 193.

other than the Catholic apothecary in Eisleben, Johann Landau, who was called in to revive Luther.<sup>5</sup> This is his report: "Feria quarta in coena rursus valde laetus fuit et faceciis fabulisque recitandis dicax omnibus mouens risum. Ad circiter horam Octavam conquestus est, se aliquantum male habere sicut Epistola (the letter of Jonas) de eo scripta refert. Post medium noctis repente vocati sunt ad eum duo Medici, quorum alter Doctor alter Magister erat: Qui ubi advenerunt non reppererunt in eo ullum amplius pulsum. Scripserunt tamen mox receptum quoddam pro emittendo Clisterio seu Enemate" etc. (The procedure is then described, and he continues:) "Quandoquidem et antea aliquoties pro mortuo habitus fuerat, sine motu et sensu vitae aliquandiu iacens id quod Smalcaldiae quoque eidem acciderat, quando calculo excruciatum esset. . . . Idcirco iussus est Apothecarius odorifera aqua illa ungeri ac fricare corpus mortui. Qui sane sedulo ac impigre iussa peragens applicuit aquam illam multis fricationibus aliquamdiu naribus, ori, fronti, pulsui ac mammae sinistrae."<sup>6</sup>

In Majunke's reference to that premature announcement of Luther's death we catch a glimpse of history writing as it should not be. He asserts that Luther himself manufactured and spread that story, so that later it could be said: "That's nothing new; a year before his death that tall tale was told" — as though Luther expected the devil to get him and prepared for that emergency. The Reformer, Majunke says, often acted on the principle: The end justifies the means; his conviction was "ad papatum decipiendum omnia licere." He gave no reference for this citation; but the phrase already had a history; Joh. Janssen had cited it (*Deutsche Geschichte*, II:107) and translated: "Wir halten dafuer, dass uns zur Hintergehung und zum Verderben desselben (des Papsttums) um des Heiles der Seelen willen alles erlaubt ist." No reference; but Walther (*Luther im neuesten roemischen Gericht*, Heft II, p. 2) charged him with giving a wrong translation of Luther's words. Answering his friend Joh. Lang, who had objected to Luther's strong language in his *Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, Luther admitted having written sharply,

<sup>5</sup> N. Paulus, *Luthers Lebensende*, p. 67 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cited from Cochleus de actis et scriptis Lutheri, in Kolde, *Luthers Selbstmord*, p. 18.

but continued: "Nos hic persuasi sumus papatum esse veri et germani illius Antichristi sedem, in cuius deceptionem et nequitiam ob salutem animarum nobis omnia licere arbitramur."<sup>7</sup> Janssen in later editions changed his translation; but Majunke promptly changed the original to justify his rendering; he cited Luther as saying: "*ad* cuius deceptionem," etc. In the second edition he silently omitted this; neither he nor Janssen ever confessed the error in the first edition; and this had gone out, to be quoted to this day. Against the charge that Luther himself had written and spread the false report of his death it was pointed out that it was originally written in Italian; moreover there is extant the letter of Philip of Hesse to Luther telling how the document came to him; Philip's letter to the Elector in which he asks that the Italian document be sent to Luther and encloses the letter of the man in Augsburg who had sent it to Philip, stating that the document had been printed in Naples. And Majunke must have known all this; for he quoted a note of Seckendorf's *Commentarius historicus* in which occurs a reference to that premature report and those who even then spread the rumor that Luther had written it; and on the same page Seckendorf names the letters which tell how Luther received it.

The facts of Luther's death are as well attested as any event in history, and Catholic historians who value their reputation acknowledge it. Grisar<sup>8</sup> gives a correct and detailed account, which is based, he states, on letters of eyewitnesses, the report of Landau, and the *Historia* of Jonas, Coelius, and Aurifaber; and though he thinks that the *Historia* contains "palpable exaggerations concerning the pious aphorisms and prayers of Luther," he adds: "There is, however, no adequate warrant for impugning the substantial credibility of this and other accounts, as has been done in recent times. . . . The fable of Luther's alleged suicide, which some writers (notably P. Majunke) have exploited in recent years, is based on an apocryphal letter, attributed to an alleged servant of Luther, whose name is not mentioned. . . . The fable belongs to a

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<sup>7</sup> De Wette, *Luthers Briefe*, I, 478. Enders, *Luthers Briefwechsel*, II, 461.

<sup>8</sup> *Martin Luther, His Life and Work*. By Hartmann Grisar, S. J. St. Louis, 1935, pp. 575, 576, 578. — The book carries the *Nihil Obstat* of Joannes Rothensteiner, Censor Librorum, and the Imprimatur of Archbishop Glennon.

category of inventions, quite common at the time, devised for the purpose of imputing a disgraceful death to an opponent, especially if he happened to be an ecclesiastic. Many prominent men were made to die in despair and impenitence, or to terminate their lives by suicide." And at the end of a long list of such fables he concludes: "These tales merely prove how greatly the Catholics had been horrified at Luther's conduct"; which is obviously an admission that Catholics invented them. Joseph Clayton<sup>9</sup> closes the account: "Jonas of Wittenberg and another friend, Coelius, the court preacher to the Count of Mansfeld, were with him when the stroke came and, pressing the dying man for an answer to their question whether he died faithful to the doctrine of Christ which he preached, received a whispered 'Yes' for the reply they sought. So died Martin Luther, and many fantastic legends sprang up concerning his death as friend or foe sought to glorify or defame this extraordinary man. Not so died the movement which he, and he alone, had created."

The *Historia* records Luther's last prayer (Walch, *Luthers Werke*, Vol. XXI, Nachlese, p. 287): "O mein himmlischer Vater, ein Gott und Vater unsers Herrn Jesu Christi, du Gott alles Trostes! Ich danke dir, dass du mir deinen lieben Sohn Jesum Christum geoffenbart hast, an den ich glaube, den ich gepredigt und bekannt habe, den ich geliebet und gelobet habe, welchen der leidige Papst und alle Gottlosen schaenden, verfolgen und laestern. Ich bitte dich, mein Herr Jesu Christe, lass dir mein Seelichen befohlen sein. O himmlischer Vater, ob ich schon diesen Leib lassen und aus diesem Leben hinweggerissen werden muss, so weiss ich doch gewiss, dass ich bei dir ewig bleiben und aus deinen Haenden mich niemand reissen kann."

St. Louis, Mo.

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<sup>9</sup> *Luther and His Work*. Milwaukee, 1937, p.189. Published as a number of the "Science and Culture Series," of which Joseph Husslein, S. J., of St. Louis University, is general editor. Nihil Obstat: H. B. Ries, Censor Librorum. Imprimatur: Samuel A. Stritch, Archbishop of Milwaukee.



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**Funeral Sermon by Justas Jonas**

<http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/JonasFuneralSermon.pdf>

FUNERAL SERMON

BY

JUSTAS JONAS D. D.

AT THE DEATH OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER

delivered at Eisleben 19 February 1546;

repeated seven weeks later at Halle in Saxony.

Printed in Christliches Ehren Bedächtniss . . .

Herrn. Doct. Martine Luther, pp 1-22

Compiled by J. M. Koch, Theol. Stud.

Printed in Eisenach by John Adolph Lotius 1718

A free translation by

O. F. Hinrichs

Red Wing, Mn.

Epiphany 1975

Text 1 Thess. 4:13ff.

Dear friends: ^

It is fitting and proper that there be a sermon today with respect to the death and departure of our father Dr. Martin. He served all Christendom and all the churches of the German nation with great earnestness and faithfulness. He had a special regard for you people here at Halle. A large part of the world was converted through him. Dr. Luther fell asleep in Christ seven weeks ago at about 3 a.m. in his native Eisleben. A day after his departure from this world I delivered a sermon amid many tears in St. Andreas church, Eisleben. I am repeating the sermon on this occasion to remind Christian people what a treasure they had in this man and what they have lost in him. The sermon has three parts.

First I spoke of the person of Dr. M. Luther, of his extraordinary gifts and talents, of his deep spiritual insight and how for more than a year he prepared himself diligently for a blessed departure.

Secondly, on the basis of the text from St. Paul I spoke of the resurrection of the dead and showed that on the last day when we are in everlasting joy and blessedness we shall again see and hear the man Luther who for 29 years wrote, fought and contended against the satanic lies of the pope and his abominable monks, and against the kingdom of satan.

Thirdly I pointed to <sup>the</sup> probably <sup>e</sup> after effects of his death and predicted that the death of Dr. Luther, like the death of the prophets, would certainly exert a powerful influence on the godless, hardened and deluded papists and others.

I.

## I.

In speaking of the person and of the splendid endowments of Dr. Luther and how he so piously prepared himself for his departure (which is such a comfort to all Christians who know about it), I wish--and the wish is very much worthwhile, that all of you present here had lately read the book of Genesis which Dr. Luther so richly and beautifully expounded for us. I also wish that in the New Testament you had read and had fresh in your memory John 14, 15, 16, 17 because all this would help you appreciate the nature of this man and what a treasure you have lost in him; also the epistle to the Galatians, the Psalms, the proverbs of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, all of which he translated into the German language--something which no other doctors in Paris, K~~ö~~ln or in any other city, no, not even all the papists put together, could duplicate. These and other books reveal what a man Dr. Luther was, of what deep spirituality, how faithfully and diligently he worked in the Scripture. All this would impress on us what kind of a man we have lost.

Speaking of his person there is so much to say that much must remain unsaid. Therefore we will say nothing of his ingenuity, of the discernment he displayed even as a youth. People who knew him as a youth of eighteen and nineteen say they never knew of a greater genius. Among them are Dr. Lang and Dr. Staupitz, his collaborators in Erfurt. Dr. M~~e~~llerstadt, the rector of the University at Wittenberg, said: "Take special notice of the young monk, Martin Luther, who possesses a sagacity and a penetration such as I have not seen in any other. Surely he will become a great man." This also came to pass.

Dr. Luther possessed many gifts and talents. He was an eloquent speaker and an able translator of the whole Bible. Many learned to speak and to

write a correct German from him because he created a correct German as many will testify. While his ability as a speaker and a writer is seen even in the letters he wrote dealing with simple, ordinary things, it is especially evident in his books and other writings of which there are so many. The work praises its master. I will forego speaking of these natural gifts and simply refer all pious Christians to his books, postils, and commentaries. There they will discover that in him they had an excellent orator and preacher and a real bishop. Would to God Germany had many such people and bishops.

In Dr. Luther there dwelt a rich measure of God's grace, a great light of the Holy Spirit and a true knowledge of God and Christ which was not diminished but greatly increased by daily diligent reading and study of the Scriptures over a period of forty years so that he read the Scriptures through many times and was thoroughly familiar with it. Beginning at the age of twenty-four this great man continued this practice until age sixty-three when he died.

I want to call your attention to two particular sayings of Luther which reflect the state of his heart as Jesus says Mr. 12:34: Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. First are his words: I wish with all my heart I could understand at least in a small measure the first article of the Christian creed: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. However, I will gladly remain an a b c student of this article. I maintain that very few people even among the great have understood this article except perhaps Adam, Noah, Abraham, and David. Isaiah, Jeremiah and other patriarchs and prophets also understood some of it but they continued to study and remained students.

The other word of Luther to which I call attention is his expressed desire that the article of redemption, that God sent His Son into the world to redeem mankind, would be regarded as the highest theology as do Paul and the other apostles. He saw and understood that the article: God sent His Son into the world, is so excellent that no one could fathom it even after a lifetime of study although theological schools at Paris and at Köln devote but little time to it but rather oppose it with human reason. More of this later.

At this point I would like to comment on how Dr. Luther prepared himself for his departure from this life for one whole year before the end came. When he reached his 63rd year he often spoke words so precious that they might have come from the mouth of Noah who also lived in an evil day. Dr. Luther complained that the world loves lies such as the fables of the pope, the monks and others. And in spite of the bright light of the Gospel the people of the world live in sins and vices, in blasphemy against God, in idleness, obstinacy, conscious perseverance in depravity; no one admits to being a sinner, none will humble himself before God. Surely punishment will strike.

In his preparation for death the deceased showed a special grace and knowledge of God. In his Psalter and his prayer book which were his constant companions he wrote more than twenty entries as though he would say: When my last hour comes I will with the help of God grasp one of these passages and so be prepared against Satan and all the gates of hell. These entries reveal that he was by no means a novice but a real master in spiritual warfare.

The first passage he chose for protection and comfort is 1 Peter 5:7, CAST ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM FOR HE CARES FOR YOU, as though he would say:

Gather all your cares and anxieties into a bundle. . . cast them on Christ, entrust them to Him. He cares for you. In obedience to this passage the venerable Dr. Luther did cast all his cares on the Lord Jesus in the hour of his death and he was not concerned about where his soul would be. He let God care for it as One who does care for and preserves it. At the time of death all men are concerned about their soul, what its fate shall be. But we are assured that as God cares for us throughout our life so He will also care for us in the hour of our greatest need.---It would not have occurred to me to use this passage from Peter as a reference to the last hour. But this illustrates what kind of a man Dr. Luther was and how diligently he weighed the words of the apostles.

With reference to this same passage Dr. Luther also expressed the sentiment: Our dear faithful God who called me into the office of the ministry will certainly care for me and preserve my soul and so I confidently and gladly commit my soul into his hands because He will know where it should abide since He has loved it so dearly and cared for it so much that He gave His life and soul to redeem it. Certainly He is the most noble and best Shepherd and Bishop of all who believe in Him. Praise be to Him in all eternity! His caring did not begin with me nor did He practice on me how He should provide for believing souls. I know I shall not be the first on whom He learns how to preserve and protect those who believe in Christ. Saint Lorenz on the funeral fire committed his soul saying: Christ cared for it and will preserve it. St. Stephen, Acts 7, did likewise and amid the stones commended his soul saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. His soul was taken from him and preserved unto eternal life. And there were other martyrs so that I am by no means the first to commend my soul to Him and to have my soul preserved by Him.

Luther often said: I am glad the welfare of my soul does not rest in my hands. If it did, satan would long ago have possessed it in a moment like a hawk swooping down on a chick or a bird. But no one, no devil or anyone else, will tear my soul out of the hand of Christ to whom I have committed it for He says John 10: The sheep who hear my voice and follow me no one will tear out of my Father's hand or out of mine.

In his Psalter our father Luther also wrote words which St. Ambrose spoke to his brethren: I hope my life among you has not been such that I must fear to belong among you for we have a good and faithful Lord and I know of no friend who has been more concerned about me than the Lord and hence I am not afraid to die.

With these words of St. Ambrose Our dear Dr. Luther wished to indicate that he felt no apprehension of staying here longer because he had lived in such a manner that he was not ashamed of his conduct and had no fear of dying if it be God's will because he knew Christ had prepared a mansion for him in heaven.

He also wrote into his Psalter the words of a true spiritual bishop, one similar to St. Ambrose and one who was deeply grieved by the wickedness of the world and could hardly endure it. Christ said to him in his last hour: Why do you howl and cry? Has the world been so kind to you that you do not wish to part from it? You can't endure the wickedness of the world and yet you do not wish to leave it? These words must have had great meaning for Luther. How much sorrow and sadness he endured because of his enemies! His heart was grieved because of the godlessness in the world, because it was so steeped in greed, usury, in contempt and ingratitude toward God's word, in jealousy, hatred and in the poison of the

I want to depart. I want to keep God's commandments. I want to leave this evil world and go to a better country. On the night before his death he said: I have endured (vertragen) my dear landgraves, the counts of Mansfeld here at Eisleben but now I want to go home. I want to lie in my casket and surrender my body to the worms. --Such words show that his thoughts were occupied with death and dying and that he had no fear of death. All such words reveal what a rich measure of God's Spirit this man possessed and that he was a man such as the world has not had for some time. So much I said in the first part about the person of Dr. M. Luther.

## II.

In the second part of my sermon I spoke of the resurrection of the dead and pointed out that on the last day we shall see again our dear father, the venerable Dr. Luther, now deceased. St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says expressly that Christ will bring with Him those who sleep in Him. These words are most comforting to a Christian and let no one think he is a Christian if he does not find them to be comforting. This text contains a comfort so rich that no amount of gold could purchase it. A Christian clings to it, puts his confidence in it and firmly believes that on the last day he will rise again with all Christians.

A godless person, an Epicurian sow, finds no comfort in these words of St. Paul. His confidence is in money, possessions, usury, greed. He doesn't know or believe that he will rise on the last day and that he will see those who lived before and after him. However, Paul declares: The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout etc. As the Lord Himself is great so His triumph and his glory must be great also. While an epicure

remains indifferent to these words they are a pearl and a treasure to all believers.

St. Paul also says that he is telling a great secret about the resurrection of which the people of the world know nothing and says: Comfort one another with these words, as though he would say: I am revealing a heavenly secret namely that the world and all the people which you now see in it, they young and old, the poor and rich, must all go down to the earth, i. e. must die and be buried, believers and unbelievers alike, but on the last day all will rise again in their body, in flesh and blood, in spite of the fact that in the earth they decompose and are eaten by worms. They will rise with glorified bodies as St. Paul says 1 Cor. 15: It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory.

Therefore when a good friend dies we should comfort ourselves with the assurance that we will see him again on the last day. Thus St. Paul while in Rome and facing the prospect of being murdered by the tyrant Nero comforted himself that he and all men would rise again on the last day. Likewise all children who are born and those yet to be born (the name of this life is being born, living, dieing) shall rise in their bodies. Then will follow that happy and blessed day which Christ in Luke 21 calls "the day of redemption". . . . Then there will be no more marrying or giving in marriage, no child bearing. No one will be lame, blind or ill. And there will be no more death. Mortality will cease and an immortal, everlasting life will begin.

This is a most comforting text for Christians and we should cling to it

all our life. St. Paul says the Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, that we shall rise from the dead and be with our Lord eternally. Of all this the world knows nothing and finds neither joy or comfort in it. It turns instead to money and goods. In these words St. Paul is saying: You, dear Christians, if you lose me as your bishop, pastor and shepherd in Christ, I shall rise again and I shall certainly see you, my parishioners, again in yonder world and you shall see me.

St. Paul also says that the shout and the voice at Christ's return will be so loud that the dead will awake and those who fell asleep in the true faith in Christ will rise first and then those still living will be taken up to meet Christ in the air as He says John 5:28: The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. Together with them our venerable father Luther will also rise and have the same body, face, hands and feet which he had here and he will have the same blessed mouth which for 29 years preached God's word in its truth and purity to the German nation although that body will be glorified and will shine like the sun as Christ says Matt. 13:43 : Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father; and Daniel says (12:13) They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever. Since Dr. Luther was a great teacher and brought many to righteousness he will no doubt have a bright shining halo and we will see it if it so please God.

Job also writes in the 19th chapter: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. It is indeed a

a great comfort to Christians to be assured that their bodies shall rise again and that they shall see God in their flesh. This statement of Job agrees perfectly with what Paul says in our text. Accordingly we will see again that dear man whom we have now lost, and not only will we see him but he will be with us to whom he preached God's word and through whose ministry we were converted. He will speak to us and to the whole heavenly host of patriarchs and prophets about his battles and warfare against satan and his temptations to which he was subjected for 29 years. Dr. Luther was waging great battles against satan when dealing with Karlstadt, at the time of the Diet at Augsburg, when contending for the sacrament of the Altar, when opposing the Anabaptists, the Antinomians and others. Dr. Luther often confided: I will never reveal to anyone now what I am and have suffered because of the pure Gospel which God has restored to the world. But it will be made public on the last day. On that last day we will hear him tell what he would not tell us here of the great victories the Son of God won through him against sin, devil, papists, false brethren and others. To our great astonishment he will also tell what glorious revelations were given to him after he began to preach the Gospel and we will praise God for all the victories gained as Ps. 84:17 says: They go from strength to strength.--Of all such things the devilish monks, the obstinate pope don't know one word and even when they read it in Scripture they don't believe it.

The resurrection of the dead will take place suddenly. First those who fall asleep in Christ, then those who are still alive will meet the Lord in the air and be with Him forever.---Would to God such a day of the Lord would come soon so we would be taken to meet him before we sit down to eat the next meal; that He would deliver us from the misery and

distress which we must endure here and that He would make an end to the faithless world, its insatiable usury, avarice, jealousy, slander, pride, and pomp and other vices, its frightful blasphemy, reviling, persecution, murder, bloodshed, the idolatry of the despairing unbelieving papists, priests, monks and nuns. They do these things to excess.

We should constantly pray for such a day because it will be such a blessed, joyful, comforting day. There we will know each other even better than we do now. The wife will know her husband, the husband his wife; children will know their parents and pastors will know their parishioners and without interruption they will be speaking to one another and together they will praise and glorify God in that great assembly (generali synodo), in that eternal church, together with the dear angels forever and ever.

St. Paul suggests that the Thessalonians may hesitate to believe what he has written because it is indeed a precious article of faith that though we decay or are consumed by fire we will rise again, know each other, and together glorify God. This teaching is repugnant to reason which cannot understand how a body once consumed by worms or reduced to powder and ashes can rise again and live. The world ridicules such preaching about the resurrection of the dead and considers it sheer folly as is seen from Acts 17:18. When Paul preached in Athens about the resurrection of the dead some asked: What will this babbling say? So also when Paul preached to king Agrippa about the resurrection of the dead Festus called out loudly: Paul, you are beside yourself. Much learning has made you mad. (Acts 26:24.) This shows what the world thinks about the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Those who preach it are called babblers and madmen just as the pope with his bishops and cardinals calls us Germans lunatics and fools because we preach, believe, and confidently affirm that

on the last day we will rise in our body and see God.

The mystery about the resurrection is revealed to us by our dear God in His precious word and Gospel. The world ridicules it but the true church and Christendom treasures it as an eternal, living comfort. A Christian ought to comfort himself with this doctrine every morning when he rises and say to himself: I know a day will come in which God will raise all who fell asleep in Christ and that our bodies will rise and that those of us who believe in Christ and have done good will enter eternal life. A Christian should always think about and meditate on the blessed day of the coming of Christ and then he will be more patient in his suffering, cross bearing and temptations.

The hardhearted, blind and miserable papists know nothing of this. They blaspheme and persecute the holy Gospel which reveals this mystery of the resurrection on which our salvation depends. Anyone who does not believe this article listens to preaching which is in vain; his faith is in vain; he remains in his sins and is lost as St. Paul teaches in 1 Cor. 15. One should shun and avoid and have nothing to do with people who blaspheme the Gospel, reject it, will not hear or believe it. Such people should be avoided as one flees from the devil himself because a hardened, stubborn papist is the devil himself who has no faith . . . (und glauben zum Fenster ein and zur Tür hinaus.)

In summary Paul would say to the Thessalonians: I have revealed to you the mystery of how it shall be with the resurrection of the body. I have taught you this diligently from the Word of God. However, I will not always be with you to be your preacher. Nero is planning to kill me and my preaching will end. But then, if the world in its rage against me takes my life I know that I shall rise again on the last day together with you

all. These words were a great comfort to those Christians.

And our father Martin Luther, prophet and preacher of Germany, also comforted himself with these words and found great joy in them. He shared the sentiments of Paul and though he died, was buried, and was torn away from us, his parishioners, he would rise again on the last day to everlasting bliss and happiness. Thus we also should be comforted and rejoice at the promise that we shall see and hear our dear father and pastor in the eternal life to come. God grant this for Jesus' sake. Amen. This must suffice for the second part.

### III.

In the third part of this sermon I predict that the death of Dr. Luther will no doubt have far reaching after effects which will become evident within two years. Especially the papists, priests, monks, and nuns who are now rejoicing in his passing will in a few years wish he were still alive so they could become his followers. They will wish, if such a thing were possible, that he would come back from the grave. However, they have tarried too long. If they had heeded his warnings and listened to his advice during his lifetime it would have been of great benefit to them in body and in soul.

We read in the Scriptures that the greatest and best prophets and men of God appeared on the scene when conditions were at their very worst. Before the flood there was Noah. Before the destruction of Sodom there was Lot. Later came Elijah and Elisha. But after the death of each of these there followed a great punishment. Thus we read in Judges 8:23ff: It came to pass as soon as Gideon was dead that the children of Israel

turned again and went a whoring after Baalim and made Baalberith their god. But when they did this God's punishment soon followed. -And certainly now, after Dr. Luther's death a great and terrible judgment of God will come on Germany unless there is improvement. And there is no doubt that the punishment will strike especially the godless, hardened, despairing papists, monks, priests, and nuns.

History records that St. Augustin died at the age of 70, almost ten years older than Dr. Luther and that he was a preacher for 40 years, ten years longer than Luther. Before his death St. Augustin had a premonition that Africa, his native country, would be greatly troubled and would suffer some great catastrophe. Naturally this was a great grief and a burden on his heart. Similarly we can take for granted that after the passing of the great light Germany also will be troubled. Augustin's chief concern was a fear that after his death Africa would lose the Gospel. However, because of fervent prayer God preserved His pure word in Africa for another 200 years. Recognizing that we too might lose the Gospel let us live a life of repentance and let us fervently beseech God to preserve His Word among us also after Luther's death as He preserved it in Africa after the death of Augustin. God grant us this for Christ's sake. Amen.

How often Dr. Luther called Germany to repentance and warned the people e.g. in his House Postil in a sermon on The Destruction of Jerusalem, Luke 19 and in Ps. 110. In his letter to the spiritual leaders at Augsburg and in an admonition to his dear German people he sounded an alarm that if there was no improvement, if they did not avoid idolatry and those who practiced it (as he also admonished you here at Halle) such as the papistic monks and nuns, God would punish them and take His Word

away and allow all manner of error to prevail. Certainly the admonition of such a man should be taken to heart. Idolatry should be avoided. The old leaven should be swept out. One should not become a partaker of the idolatry of the papists that God's word may not be lost.

Especially the papists should be warned because the threatened punishment will surely come on them if they do not show improvement. At the time of his fiery death John Huss predicted that after 100 years a swan would appear on the scene who would not be fried. That man was Dr. Luther. He preached to pope, bishops, cardinals, priests, monks and fearlessly proclaimed the truth before the whole world. They did not fry him or kill him although many desired to do so. They failed. He fell asleep in God in Eisleben in his native land.

Just as John Huss' prediction was fulfilled so Luther also repeatedly, when speaking of the papists, spoke on this order: Just hold your peace and wait. After my death the monks and papists will be scattered like chaff before the wind because they will not be instructed in the word of God; they will not desist from their error but are determined to persist in their idolatry and in their godless life. They are not benefitted by admonition, instruction and warning as David says Ps. 36:3: He has left off to be wise and to do good. (cf German text). This is the way the papists are and hence it shall be with them as it says in Ps. 37:35ff: I have seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he is not. Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

So it is with the papists. They are defiant and if they have a little breath they become proud and act as if they would devour us, and that

especially now that Luther is dead and they are glad. It would be far better for them if they had accepted his advice and repented. Then there would be help and counsel for them, for body and soul. However, if they will not do so God's eternal judgment and punishment, eternal fire and damnation will strike them. Anyone who does not repent will perish as Christ says in the Gospel.

Dr. Luther also wrote an epitaph and a prophecy for himself which reads: Pestis eram vivens, moriens ero mors tua Papa. Therefore let the papists take heed and repent because for 20 years they have blasphemed, shamed and persecuted the Gospel, condemned it as a doctrine of devils and as heresy and thereby have scattered, murdered, drowned and hanged Christians. May they now begin to believe the Gospel and accept it and help us spread it. If not, then as Luther was a pestis to them during his lifetime and with his preaching and writing pressured and scared them, so he will after his death be a death to them and an eventual end to their monkery, idolatry, and abominations. God grant that they listen, that they be converted, and together with us believe and accept the word of God and be eternally saved. Amen.

Epiphany 1975

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**Funeral Sermon by Wittenberg Pastor Johann Bugenhagen**

[http://beck.library.emory.edu/luther/luther\\_site/luther\\_text.html](http://beck.library.emory.edu/luther/luther_site/luther_text.html)

A Christian sermon over the body and at the  
funeral of the venerable Dr. Martin Luther,  
preached by Mr. Johann Bugenhagen  
Pomeranus, doctor and pastor  
of the churches  
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Printed in Wittenberg  
by Georg Rhau,  
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Paul, the holy apostle, says in I Thessalonians 4:

We do not want to hold back, dear brothers, concerning those who are asleep so that you may not be sorrowful as the others who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus has died and risen, even so, God will bring those with Him who have fallen asleep through Jesus.

Dear friends, I am now supposed to preach a sermon at the funeral of our dearly beloved father, blessed Dr. Martin, and gladly do so. But what shall I say and how shall I speak, since I probably will not be able to utter a word because of my tears? And who shall comfort you if I, your pastor and preacher, cannot speak? Where can I turn from you? I will, no doubt, cause more crying and mourning with my sermon. For how should we not all mourn heartily, since God has sent us this sorrow and has

taken from us the noble and dear man, the venerable Dr. Martin Luther? Through him God has rendered inexpressible gifts and grace to all of us and to all the churches of Christ in Germany, as well as to many in foreign countries. Through him God has also triumphed gloriously over the kingdom of Satan and against so much shameful idolatry and human ordinance, indeed, as Paul says, against the devil's teachings throughout the world, and has revealed to us in the Gospel the sublime, great heavenly secret, his dear Son Jesus Christ (as Paul also says in Ephesians and Colossians). Through him, our dear father, Christ has defended his Gospel against the grievous pope and various rabble and tyrants, indeed, against all the portals of hell. He gave to this dear man the spirit of power and strength so that he is afraid of no one, however great and mighty he may be. He held so boldly to the Gospel and to pure doctrine that the world often believed that he was too sharp and too excessive with his rebuking and scolding, just as the Jews and Pharisees, the bitter and poisonous vipers, accused Christ, for it hurt them severely and caused them pain that they were chastised by means of the pure truth. However, they did not accept the salutary teaching.

God has taken away from us this great teacher, prophet, and divinely sent reformer of the church. Oh, how can we cease mourning and crying? How can we, after all, obey the dear Paul here when he says: "You should not grieve because of those who are asleep?" But he adds immediately: "Like the others who have no hope." We who believe know that those who have fallen asleep in Christ will be awakened again to a better life where we will meet them again and be together with them eternally.

However, the world was not worthy to have this dear man of God any longer, to continue to slander and persecute him. Albeit, that same, ungrateful world received much good through this great man, especially that it has been freed from a variety of oppression and tyranny of the loathsome papacy. Therefore, many of the adversaries (who still have some wisdom and understanding) would have preferred that the dear man had continued to live for a long time.

This I have said initially, that we truly have great cause to mourn heartily since we have lost such a great and dear man. And truly (since this may help a bit) Christian kings, princes, and cities and all who have recognized the Gospel of truth mourn with

us. Therefore, we do not mourn alone, but many thousands in Christendom mourn with us from time to time. It was not fitting that the current, grievous pope, the Cardinal of Mainz, or Duke Henry (all of whom he enraged mightily with the truth) should ever delight in the death of this man. And I hope that the adversaries will not delight in his death for long. For the person has indeed died in Christ, but the mighty, blessed, godly doctrine of this precious man still lives most powerfully.

For he was without doubt the angel concerning whom it is written in Revelation 14, who flew through the midst of heaven and had an eternal Gospel, etc., as the text says:

And I saw an angel flying through the midst of heaven. He had an eternal Gospel to proclaim to those who sit and dwell on earth, to all heathen and races and languages and nations. And he said with a loud voice: Fear God and give him honor, for the time of his judgment has come. Worship the one who has made heaven and earth, the seas and the springs of water. And another angel followed and said: "She has fallen, she has fallen, Babylon, the great city, for she has made drunk all the heathen with the wine of her harlotry."

This angel who says, "Fear God and give him the honor," was Dr. Martin Luther. And what is written here, "Fear God and give him the honor," are the two parts of Dr. Martin Luther's doctrine, the Law and the Gospel, through which all of Scripture is unlocked and Christ, our righteousness and eternal life, is recognized. To these two he has also added this passage ("the time of his judgment has come") and has taught regarding proper prayer and invocation of God the heavenly Father in Spirit and in truth. As the angel also says in Revelation 14: "Worship the one who has made heaven and earth, etc."

For after the teaching of this angel, another angel will follow, who will proclaim comfort to the sorrowful and persecuted church and the lightning and thunder of eternal judgment and condemnation against the adversaries, as, after all, the other angel said: "She has fallen; she has fallen, Babylon, the great city." Therefore, the adversaries will not rejoice long over our sorrow, as Christ also says in John 16: "Your sorrow shall turn to joy." For according to Revelation, the aforementioned fourteenth

chapter, we see that this has happened before and still happens. If Revelation has some validity, then the other will, without doubt, follow.

But, oh, how do I ramble on so with my sermon in this time of our crying and sorrow? This is enough said about our rightful mourning, for we mourn justly that such a dear man, a proper bishop and shepherd of souls, has departed from us. But in this sorrow we should also rightly recognize God's grace and mercy to us and thank God that he has awakened for us through his Spirit this dear Dr. Martin Luther against the antichristian doctrines of the abominable, satanic pope and against the devil's doctrines only one hundred years after the death of the holy John Hus (who was killed for the sake of the truth in the year 1415), just as John Hus himself prophesied before his death about a future swan. Hus means "goose" in the Bohemian language. "You are now roasting a goose," (says John Hus), "but God will awaken a swan whom you will not burn or roast." And as they shouted much against him, which he could not answer, he supposedly said: "After one hundred years I will answer you." He has done that uprightly through our dear father, Dr. Luther, and has begun it precisely in the one-hundred-and-first year. Yes, we should thank God that he preserved this dear man for us and his churches in the violent disputes, in so many difficult conflicts, and that through him Christ has triumphed so often now for almost thirty years. To the Lord Christ be praise and honor in eternity. Amen.

But we should also rejoice with our dear father Luther that he left and departed from us to the Lord Christ in the highest apostolic and prophetic office in which he faithfully accomplished what he was commanded. For with Christ are the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and many to whom he preached the Gospel, all the holy angels, Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham, that is, in the eternal joy of all believers. We will experience what this interim period until the Day of Judgment is like, as Paul says in Philippians 1:

"I desire to depart and to be with Christ; and as Stephen also says in Acts: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"; and Jesus to the thief: "Today you will be with me in paradise."

For there is no doubt, just as the spirit of Christ was in the hands of the Father until the resurrection on Easter, since he said: "Father, into your hands I commend my

spirit, etc.," so will our spirits be in the hands of Christ until our resurrection. For that is the meaning of the words of Lazarus: "But now he is comforted while you are tormented."

What kind of peace or comfort the believers have and what kind of anxiety or torment the unbelievers have in the meantime, until the day of judgment, we cannot say so precisely on the basis of Scripture. Scripture says that they are asleep, as Paul says in Thessalonians, "concerning those who are asleep." However, just as in natural sleep the healthy rest in a sweet sleep and are thereby refreshed and become stronger and healthier, while the sick or the sorrowing and especially those who are in the terror or fear of death sleep with difficulty, with horrible dreams, and restlessly so that sleep is not rest for them but a more frightful, more desolate unrest than being awake, in the same way there is a difference between the sleep of the believers and the godless. But about this we cannot speak further or infer other than what the words of Scripture say.

Our dear father Dr. Martin Luther has now attained what he often desired. And if he were to return to us again now, he would reprimand our mourning and faint-heartedness with the word of Christ from John 16: "If you loved me you would rejoice because I go to the Father, and you would not begrudge me this eternal rest and joy." Christ has conquered death for us. Why, then, are we afraid? The death of the body is for us a beginning of life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord, who has become for us a noble, precious sacrifice.

I still remember that when our honorable, dear father, Dr. Martin Luther, saw several depart sweetly in the confession of Christ, he said: "May God grant me that I may also depart so sweetly in the bosom of Christ and that the body may not be tormented with lengthy pains of death. But may God's will be done."

Master Ambrosius Bernardus von Goterboch, my dear brother and a truly pious man who loved Christ, was here with us in Wittenberg at the university. For several days before his end he lay very weak and sick unto death, and yet God took from him the feeling of his sickness as if he were already in another life. He spoke with us how he wanted to come to us and be joyous with us. He did not know at all that he was so ill

and had to die. He certainly did not see death. Therefore, he could not be afraid of death. Indeed, he was no longer in this life except when one spoke of Christ. Then he confessed freely from his heart the great grace and bliss that has been given to us by the heavenly Father in Christ, for he loved Christ and was in the habit of praying gladly and of calling on God the Father in Spirit and truth. If one then wanted to tell him soon thereafter (as one who had come to his senses) about his beloved wife, children, house, money, debt, etc., he was soon out of his senses again and as if in another world, (although he recognized us all and called us by name), spoke joyously, with laughter and charming jest, concerning other matters in such a manner that one, who was unaware of his delirium, might think that he was wholly well and had to lie in bed because of boredom, etc. But our dear Lord Jesus Christ took him out of this life to himself in this state of delirium and yet in the good confession of the Christian faith. Thus he was already dead to this world for several days before he died, for he knew nothing on this earth of which he needed to be concerned. Indeed, he was relieved of everything so that he also did not experience his sickness and was not concerned about his death. Indeed, he also did not see death. How, then, could he be afraid of sin and death?

Thus we saw in him plainly the word of Christ from John 8 which every believer experiences: "If someone keeps my word, that person will never see death." For even if they do not all die so easily as this Ambrosius, but with great pain, as the Son of God himself died on the cross, yet when the dear hour comes, they see life and not death and all of them say: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." In this way our Lord Jesus Christ took our dearly beloved father, Dr. Martin, to himself with such a blessed parting from this vale of tears. To God be praise and thanks eternally.

During the illness of Master Ambrosius, when I saw that he also did not sleep, I asked two medical doctors that they prepare a strong drink to help him sleep. They responded that this would be dangerous and that they might be given blame if something went wrong. I said: "I will be responsible even if he were to die. Give it to him in God's name as a desperate act. Who knows, it might help." The doctors gave him such a drink, but not as strong as I desired, for they were somewhat concerned. Then he fell into a mighty sleep so that he slept almost two hours. However, when he awoke he felt his pain and complained about it and spoke intelligibly to his wife about

all sorts of urgent matters. But soon thereafter, after about an hour-and-a-half, he was again in his happy condition, as before. He was no longer aware of this world until he gave up his spirit to Christ a few days later.

I have now gladly recounted this blessed and joyous story about Master Ambrosius, our dear brother, for two reasons. First of all, that I might stop you dear ones a bit from your howling and crying, which have now rightly overtaken us. God has made us sad. May his grace comfort us again.

Secondly, so that this story may be of help to us in the matter concerning which we are now speaking.

For this Master Ambrosius was Dr. Martin's brother-in-law. Therefore, Dr. Martin visited him so much in his illness, and when he spoke with him about Christ, then Ambrosius also spoke about Christ according to the dear Gospel, as we have said. But when he wanted to speak to him about his wife, children, and goods, etc., Ambrosius knew nothing about such things but soon fantasized happily with unrelated words, as we have said before. He especially said to the Doctor with laughter and thanksgiving: "Sir Doctor, thank you for visiting me. I will visit you again some evening. At that time we will have a good supper together, and I will then speak with you about many joyous matters." Indeed, they may both be accomplishing this in the life eternal to which they have both traveled. In this life they were unable to meet in this way.

After Dr. Martin left him, the Doctor said to me: "He is gone and does not recognize death. When we want to counsel him how he should put his things in order, he no longer knows anything about this world and this life. Rather, he is happy, laughs, and proposes other things in his joyous delirium. He even mocks us with such words, as if he wanted to say: 'I no longer know what to set in order or attend to on earth. May God also give me soon such a peaceful and blessed hour of death. What more should I accomplish on earth?'"

After Master Ambrosius was buried in the harsh winter of January, 1542, Dr. Martin went to the grave with me not long thereafter. Then he pointed to the grave with his hand and said: "He did not know that he was sick. He also did not know that he was dying and yet was not without a confession of Christ. Here he lies and still does not

know that he is dead. Dear Lord Jesus, Christ, take me also in similar fashion out of this vale of tears to you, etc."

I often had to hear such things from my dear father, and when he noticed my annoyance, at times probably also from my words, he said to me: "Implore our dear Lord God that He may soon take me to Himself from here. I can do nothing more on earth. I am no longer of use to you. Help me with your prayer. Do not ask that I live longer." Now, everyone can, no doubt, imagine how I responded to such words of my dear father, our dearly beloved Doctor. All of this indicates how eagerly he desired, in his last days, to be rid of this miserable life and to be with Christ. Thereby he also sang his consummatum est and commended his spirit into the heavenly Father's hands.

There were also advance indications that our dear father, Dr. Martin, would wander into a better life, for throughout this whole year he often said to us that he desired to go to another place. He also traveled more in this year before his death than he had done in many years, namely to his homeland in Mansfeld, to the Bishop of Zeitz, to Merseburg, to Halle. These were an indication and prophecy that he would undertake this blessed journey into a better life. Therefore, it also happened that he departed and left this life while he was with the noble and honorable Counts of Mansfeld in the city of Eisleben, where he was born and baptized. This was as he had desired, except that he would have preferred to be with us at that time, with his wife and children. But God ordained it otherwise.

Dear friends, so that you might also have a short report about our dearly beloved father, Dr. Martin's, blessed parting, I will give it. When he noticed that his hour had come, he prayed thusly:

O my heavenly Father, one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God of all comfort, I thank you that you have revealed to me your dear Son, Jesus Christ, in whom I believe, whom I have preached and confessed, whom I have loved and praised, whom the loathsome pope and all the godless revile, persecute, and blaspheme. I implore you, my Lord Jesus Christ, let my little soul be commended to you. O heavenly Father, although I must leave this body and be snatched away from

this life, I am, nevertheless, certain that I will remain with you eternally and that no one can tear me out of your hands.

And then he said three times:

Into your hands I commend my spirit. You have redeemed me, you faithful God.

Also John 3:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son so that all who believe in him will not be lost but have eternal life.

Then he folded his hands and gave up his spirit to Christ in grand silence. Therefore we should also justly rejoice with him, as much as we are able to do so in our grief.

Here I must remember the holy Bishop, St. Martin, concerning whom history says that all heretics turned pale and faded at the mention of his name. Furthermore, there was a great crying and mourning on the part of all believing and true Christians at the death of St. Martin. Furthermore, a dispute and quarrel arose among several cities and territories about who should retain the body of St. Martin and where he should be buried. All of this happened in similar fashion with this holy apostle and prophet of Christ, our preacher and evangelist in the German territories, Dr. Martin. But about this I do not want to speak at length. God himself now holds him precious and beloved and sustains him in his bosom who in this life dearly loved us and the churches of Christ. May God requite it to our dearly beloved father in the life to come, where we all also hope to join him.

May God grant that the Spirit of God may also be spoken of doubly with regard to the descendants and in the churches planted by the dear father than was spoken of by the lofty, dear man, as the prophet Elisha petitioned from Elijah, who was taken from Elisha in a storm.

But if we fear or imagine that God has taken away the precious man because of our sin and ingratitude, then we should improve our life, petition God our heavenly

Father through Christ that we remain in the blessed, pure teaching concerning faith and be protected through Christ from the rabble and tyrants and against all the portals of hell. Protect your poor Christendom, Lord Christ, that it may praise you eternally. Help us God our Savior and rescue us for the honor of your name and have mercy on our sins for the sake of your holy name. Preserve in your church faithful and good preachers. Give them power and strength through the Holy Spirit, as Psalm 68 says: "The Lord gives the Word with large numbers of evangelists. "

The impudent, atrocious, great blasphemies of the adversaries and the obdurate priests and monks and, in addition, our ingratitude may now well be the cause of great misfortune and God's punishment in the world. But we should petition God the Father in the name of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, that for his name's sake he may accomplish, fulfill, and bring about the epitaph and prophecy that our dear father, Dr. Martin, himself made to him:

Pestis eram vivus, moriens tua mors ero Papa.

That is in German: "Pope, pope, when I lived I was your pestilence. When I die I will be your bitter death." God be praised eternally through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us pray, etc.

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## Funeral Sermon by Philip Melanchthon

<http://www.bartleby.com/268/7/9.html>

### On the Death of Luther

Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560)

(1546)

Born in 1497, died in 1560; Professor of Greek at Wittenberg in 1518; revised the Augsburg Confession in 1530; drew up the “Apology” in 1530; active as a collaborator with Luther, taking part in various Protestant conferences with the Roman Catholics.

GOD has always preserved a proportion of His servants upon the earth, and now, through Martin <sup>1</sup> Luther, a more splendid period of light and truth has appeared. Solon, Themistocles, Scipio, Augustus, and others, who either established or ruled over mighty empires, were indeed truly great men, but far, far inferior to our illustrious leaders, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Paul, Augustine, and Luther, and it becomes us to study this distinction. What, then, are those great and important things which Luther has disclosed to our view, and which render his life so remarkable; for many are exclaiming against him as a disturber of the Church and a promoter of inexplicable controversies? Luther explained the true and important doctrine of penitence, which was involved in the profoundest darkness. He showed in what it consists and where refuge and consolation could be obtained under a sense of divine displeasure. He illustrated the statements of Paul respecting justification by faith, and showed the distinction between the law and the Gospel, civil and spiritual justification. He pointed out the true principle of prayer, and exterminated that heathenish absurdity from the Church that God was not to be invoked if the mind entertained the least doubt upon an academic question. He admonished men to pray, in the exercise of faith and a good conscience, to the only Mediator and Son of God, who is seated at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for us, and not to images or deceased saints according to the shocking practise of the ignorant multitude. He also pointed out other services acceptable to God, was singularly exemplary himself in all the duties of life, and separated the puerilities of human rites and ceremonies—which prevent instead of promoting genuine worship—from those services which are essential to obedience.

In order that heavenly light might be transmitted to posterity he translated the prophetic and apostolic writings into the German language with so much accuracy that his version of itself places Scripture in a more perspicuous light than most commentaries. But he published also various expositions upon the sacred writings which in the judgment of Erasmus by far excelled all others; and as it is recorded respecting those who rebuilt Jerusalem, "with one hand they laid the stones and with the other they held the sword," so, while he composed annotations on Scripture replete with heavenly instruction, and consoled afflicted consciences by his pious counsels, he was necessitated at the same time to wage incessant war with the adversaries of evangelical truth. When it is recollected that this truth, especially the doctrine of faith and the remission of sins, is not discoverable by the merely human eye, it must be acknowledged he was taught of God, and many of us have witnessed his anxious solicitude to impress the great principle of acceptance by faith. Multitudes of the saints will therefore praise God to all eternity for the benefits which have accrued to the Church by the labors of Luther. <sup>2</sup>

Some by no means evil-minded persons, however, express a suspicion that Luther manifested too much asperity. I will not affirm the reverse, but only quote the language of Erasmus, "God has sent in this latter age a violent physician on account of the magnitude of the existing disorders," fulfilling by such a dispensation the divine message to Jeremiah, "Behold I have put My words in thy mouth. See I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out and pull down, and to destroy and throw down, to build and to plant." Nor does God govern His church according to the counsels of men, nor choose to employ instruments like theirs to promote His purposes. But it is usual for inferior minds to dislike those of a more ardent character. <sup>3</sup>

When Aristides observed the mighty affairs which Themistocles, by the impulse of a superior genius, undertook and happily accomplished, altho he congratulated the State on the advantage it possessed in such a man, he studied every means to divert his zealous mind from its pursuits. I do not deny that ardent spirits are sometimes betrayed into undue impetuosity, for no one is totally exempt from the weaknesses incident to human nature, but they often merit the praise assigned by the ancient proverb to Hercules, Cimon, and other illustrious characters, "rough, indeed, but distinguished by the best principles." So in the Christian Church the apostle Paul mentions such as "war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience," and who are both pleasing to God and estimable among pious men. Such a one was Luther, who, while he constantly defended the pure doctrines of Christianity, maintained a conscientious integrity of character. No vain licentiousness was ever detected in him, no seditious counsels, but, on the contrary, he often urged the most pacific measures; and never, never did he blend political articles for the augmentation of power with ecclesiastical affairs. Such wisdom and such virtue I am persuaded do not result from mere human skill or diligence, but the mind must be divinely influenced, especially when it is of the more rough, elevated, and ardent cast, like that of Luther. <sup>4</sup>

What shall I say of his other virtues? Often have I myself gone to him unawares and found him dissolved in tears and prayers for the Church of Christ. He devoted a certain portion of almost every day to the solemn reading of some of the Psalms of David, with which he mingled his own supplications amid sighs and tears; and he has frequently declared how indignant he felt against those who hastened over devotional exercises through sloth or the pretense of other occupations. On this account, said he, divine wisdom has prescribed some formularies of prayer, that our minds may be inflamed with devotion by reading them, to which, in his opinion, reading aloud very much conduced. 5

When a variety of great and important deliberations respecting public dangers have been pending, we have witnessed his prodigious vigor of mind, his fearless and unshaken courage. Faith was his sheet-anchor, and by the help of God he was resolved never to be driven from it. Such was his penetration that he perceived at once what was to be done in the most perplexing conjunctures; nor was he, as some supposed, negligent of the public good or disregarding of the wishes of others, but he was well acquainted with the interests of the State, and preeminently sagacious in discovering the capacity and dispositions of all about him. And altho he possessed such extraordinary acuteness of intellect, he read both ancient and modern ecclesiastical writings with the utmost avidity, and histories of every kind, applying the examples they furnished to existing circumstances with remarkable dexterity. The undecaying monuments of his eloquence remain, and in my opinion he equaled any of those who have been most celebrated for their resplendent oratorical powers. 6

The removal of such a character from among us, of one who was endowed with the greatest intellectual capacity, well instructed and long experienced in the knowledge of Christian truth, adorned with numerous excellences and with virtues of the most heroic cast, chosen by divine Providence to reform the Church of God, and cherishing for all of us a truly paternal affection,—the removal, I say, of such a man demands and justifies our tears. We resemble orphans bereft of an excellent and faithful father; but, while it is necessary to submit to the will of Heaven, let us not permit the memory of his virtues and his good offices to perish. 7

He was an important instrument, in the hands of God, of public utility; let us diligently study the truth he taught, imitating in our humble situations his fear of God, his faith, the intensity of his devotions, the integrity of his ministerial character, his purity, his careful avoidance of seditious counsel, his ardent thirst of knowledge. And as we frequently meditate upon the pious examples of those illustrious guides of the Church, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and Paul, whose histories are transmitted to us, so let us frequently reflect upon the doctrine and course of life which distinguished our departed friend. 8

**Note 1.** From the funeral oration, pronounced after the death of Luther, in February, 1546.

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## What Would Luther Say

<http://www.projectwittenberg.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/luther-quoting.txt>

What Would Martin Luther Say?

An Excerpt From Martin Luther's Spiritual Last Will & Testament  
CONFESSION CONCERNING CHRIST'S SUPPER (1528), Part 3  
by Martin Luther, 1483-1546  
Translation by Rev. Robert E. Smith  
From the German text in:  
DR. MARTIN LUTHERS WERKE: KRITISCHE GESAMTAUSGABE.  
(Weimar: Herman Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1909), pp.499-500.

Because I see that the mobs are always growing, the number of errors are always increasing and Satan's rage and ruin have no end, I wish to confess with this work my faith before God and the whole world, point by point. I am doing this, lest certain people cite me or my writings, while I am alive or after I am dead, to support their errors, as those fanatics, the Sacramentarians and the Anabaptists, have begun to do. I will remain in this confession until my death (God help me!), will depart from this world in it, and appear before the Judgment Seat of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So that no one will say after my death, ``If Luther was alive, he would teach and believe this article differently, because he did not think it through sufficiently,`` I state the following, once and for all: I, by God's grace, I have diligently examined these articles in the light of passages throughout the Scriptures. I have worked on them repeatedly and you can be sure that I want to defend them, in the same way that I have just defended the Sacrament of the Altar.

No, I'm not drunk or impulsive. I know what I am saying and understand fully what this will mean for me as I stand before the Lord Jesus Christ on the Last Day. No one should think that I am joking or rambling. I'm serious! By God's grace, I know Satan very well. If Satan can turn God's Word upside down and pervert the Scriptures, what will he do with my words -- or the words of others?

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