

wanted to. You'll find these papers are like an onion that can be peeled away all you want but never get to a core. The prize at the

end of their rainbow is usually this: There have been hypocritical Christians, evil fools; therefore true Christianity is wicked !!

From Vol. 1 Der Lutheraner
Starting 28 Dec., 1444

Biography of Dr. Luther Translated by:

By Pr. G.W. Keyl

Rev. Joel R. Baseley

(Issues 9 - 11, 19 - 22, 26)

Dr. Luther, that chosen instrument of God through whom the Reformation of the church, that had seemed impossible from a human standpoint, finally had been established, and by whom many thousands of Christians were saved from the darkness of human doctrine, lethal to souls, and by whom the only saving Word of God was brought into the light, this precious Reformer, by whose name the rightly believing Church has been named now for three hundred years, whose whole life was a pure witness that the hand of the LORD was with him, who, even after his death, still lives on in the great deeds God performed through him, and whose fruit God has preserved even to our age, who even now still speaks to us in his countless writings – he certainly deserves, above thousands of others, to have his name preserved in blessed memory forever.

Now since, unfortunately, many who call themselves Lutheran don't know much more about the life of Luther than isolated little snippets, or only know him from accounts that often omit, distort, and even place the most important aspects under suspicion so that Luther is made to appear completely different than he really was, so in this Lutheran paper our reader will be given a brief but truthful report on the life of this precious man of God, Dr. Luther. It is, for the most part, taken from the biography written by the blessed Mathesius, which is considered one of the most reliable biographies since the author himself was not only obviously a truth-loving, true hearted man, but also had stood by our Luther's side in a close association for 17 years.

On November 10, in the year 1483, Luther was born in Eisleben and on the following day, as it was the day of the Feast of Bishop Martin, he received holy Baptism, and with it the name Martin. His parents were poor⁴⁰ but godfearing people of the working class, yet later, through the mining trade, by God's blessing they became much better off and benefitted greatly from pious preachers and school teachers. Their little son Martin was still quite small when they sent him or, rather, carried him to school in Mansfeld, their hometown. There he quickly and diligently learned the holy Ten Commandments, the three Articles of the Creed, the Our Father and Christian hymns. In his fourteenth year his father sent him to Magdeburg and in the following year to Eisenach into schools where he had to earn his bread by begging, through singing from door to door until, finally, he came to the home of a good woman named Cotta. She received little Luther at her table because his pious singing had charmed her heart. Through the gifts God had granted him as well as his hard work he distinguished himself above all this schoolmates so that already, in his eighteenth year, he could be enrolled at the University at Erfurt. Here, at first, he diligently studied philosophy (worldly wisdom) and then also Juris (Law) for a while, but he always held to his motto: Diligently prayed is half studied. As he once was in the library looking through the books, he found among them a Bible, and was quite astonished that much more was written therein than the common texts read in the church, and as he turned directly to the story of Hannah and her son, Samuel (1 Sam. 1-3), he read it quickly and

had a heartfelt desire and fervent wish God would someday grant him one of these books.

Now after he had studied so diligently that he himself was starting to be permitted to give lectures, at the end of the year 1505, his life's path took another sudden turn. As he was returning from a holiday visit with his parents, a storm overtook him near Erfurt, lightning struck near him and he himself was struck dumb to the ground. Another account also adds that the lightning had struck his friend Alexis right next to him. All this immediately filled Luther with dread before God's wrath and the final judgement, and in his fear therefore he was as much as forced to vow to become a monk in order to receive eternal salvation by the holiness of the cloister. This was in no way because of laziness or lack of talent or for the sake of an easy life. Yet Luther made this vow without the knowledge or consent of his father, who told him those noteworthy words: "God grant that you were not being deceived by some demonic apparition! – And have you never heard that you must obey your parents?" Such words of his father stuck in his mind during his whole fifteen years of his life in the cloister and squeezed many sighs out of his heart. Only after that time could he write to his father: "God, whose mercies are beyond counting and whose wisdom is without end, has wondrously created much greater good out of those errors and sins. But God had wanted (as I now see), that I should myself have my own experience of the high schools of wisdom and the holiness of the cloister, that is, to be led out of many sins and godless works, so those godless people who would be my future adversaries would not be able to look down on me as if I were condemning things I knew nothing about."

In the Augustinian Cloister in Erfurt Luther now studied the Bible (which he found here at the end of a chain) most arduously and, along with it, the writings of the church fathers, especially Augustine. With that he also most strictly observed all the rules of his order and led such a strict lifestyle that he later could openly confess: "If ever a monk could have gone up to heaven through monkery, it would be me. For I would have martyred myself to death (if it had not been prevented) with vigils, praying, reading and other labors." But with his doing all this, because he was anxiously striving to become holy, he still felt great fear for the sake of his sinfulness, sought peace for his heart in vain, and was very distraught. Every evil thought that arose in him – as he himself explains in his commentary on Galatians, he wanted to beat down by force. Fasting⁴¹ and praying, wrestling under the most severe self-deprivation would go on sometimes for days, locking himself in his cell; but despite that! – his angst returned again and again and worse than ever. Yet sometimes God's comforts satisfied his soul. So once his father confessor said to him: "It is not enough that you believe in general that God might

⁴⁰His mother - he said - had carried wood on her back and that's how she raised us kids. You had to work like a slave."

⁴¹ "But his habit – as Melancthon explains of him in *"The Life of Luther"* – was not to eat or drink much. I have seen him, when he was healthy, go at times for four whole days without eating or drinking anything. Other times I've often seen him being satisfied day after day with only a little bread and a herring, at times for many days in a row." This is news to some who always so unabashedly portray Luther to people as a glutton in order to keep people from reading his precious, Spirit filled writings. It is certainly true that Luther, besides his surpassing stature and self denial, was no lazy saint, much less a hypocrite. Thus when he fasted he anointed his head. Matthew 6.16 - 18. A.d. H.

forgive sins, for the devils also believe that, but rather you must believe that you, you, you are forgiven." By that Luther was, as he had later often exulted, richly comforted and brought nearer to understand the words of St. Paul in Romans 3. 23-26, that man is made righteous without earning it, through faith alone. The Provincial or Vicar General of the Augustinian Order, Johann von Staupitz was also helpful to Luther's learning this. He proved himself to be as a father to him. Once he replied to Luther's complaining to him how he was being tempted: "Aye, why do you want to be such a measly sinner when you have such a mighty Redeemer?"

In his 24th year (in the year 1507), Luther was ordained, or consecrated, by his consecrating Bishop as a priest, where the words would also have been addressed to him: "Receive the authority to sacrifice (the body and the blood of Christ) for the living and the dead." That is why Luther later writes of this: "That the earth did not then swallow us up was unjust (humanly speaking) and altogether of God's great patience." Yet despite every anti-Christian addition, Luther also later acknowledged the validity of his ordination. That was when he held his first Mass which he would do thereafter routinely for a number of years. Yet he explained that performing the Mass was the greatest sin of his life in that every time he did so "he had denied and desecrated the perfect sacrifice of JESUS Christ."

In the following year, 1508, he was, upon the recommendation of his superior named above, Dr. Staupitz, called as Professor of Philosophy at the recently established (1502) University of Wittenberg. Yet already in the next year (1509) he was allowed to trade his office, as a teacher of Philosophy, for Theology (he became a Bachelor of Divinity and indeed with the special distinction "*ad biblia*", to expound the Bible). So therefore not only by his preaching, but also through his lectures, whereby he, even then, laid the Holy Scripture as the foundation of everything, he made such an impression on the Rector of the University at that time, that the renowned Mellerstadt said of him: "This monk will turn all the doctors into heretics and produce a new doctrine, and reform the whole Roman Church, for he lays himself upon the Scriptures of the prophets and the apostles and stands upon the Word of JESUS Christ."

He garnered no less respect from his brothers in his order, the Augustinian monks, so that in the year 1510 they sent him to settle a dispute that had arisen among them, which assignment he carried out to the satisfaction of both parties. But he himself confessed the extent to which he was still given to papistic superstitions as he says: "I was also such a mad saint in Rome, running through all the churches and cloisters (grave sites of martyrs), since I believed all they had made up and peddled." Everything that he saw and heard there was very useful to him later, since he witnessed the abominations of the papacy so that he afterwards had often said that he would not take 1000 guildens to have missed seeing Rome. But the trip to Rome was also important to him in yet another respect. Even on the way, the Word of the Scripture: "The just will live by his faith" laid very heavily upon his mind, yet at that time he had not been able to understand it with due clarity. On the way to Rome he was willing to do everything that the Church would commend to him to take away his sins. But as he was now here, on his bared knees climbing up the so-called steps of Pilate, which were supposed to have come to Rome from the court house in Jerusalem, in order to receive the papal indulgence, the words struck his heart as a clap of thunder: "The just will live by his faith." (Rom. 1.17) Now this indeed took away all his comfort which he had sought here in his works and exertions, yet the comforting meaning of these Words was still hidden from his eyes.

After his return, Luther became (1511) a Doctor of holy Scriptures (*Doctor biblicus*) at Staupitz's constant urging and despite his resistance, and since such a promotion was attended

by costly formalities, his prince himself sponsored him. Staupitz pressured Luther to receive these honors with the words: "God the LORD now needs young, well armed doctors, for he has planned great things in heaven and on earth." This was in no way a mere formality, for Luther received through his doctorate the call to defend the doctrine of holy Scripture against all attacks. "There I have," he himself writes, "my compulsory promise and oath to truly and purely preach and teach my most beloved holy Scripture." He remembered and comforted himself with this public call and precious oath in many of his greatest battles.

Now since in the following year, 1512, he also became a Pastor in Wittenberg, from that time on he picked up the holy Scripture with even greater zeal than before, read through it most diligently, and become more and more at ease in his understanding of the same. He eagerly dove into the Hebrew, the original language of the Old Testament, as well as the Greek, in which the New was composed. His public lectures, especially on the epistles of St. Paul, and his sermons and, of course, also on the Catechism, as well as his scholarly disputations, where he bravely and masterfully defended his, at that time new, though actually old, apostolic doctrine against all sorts of opponents, bore witness to his ever expanding knowledge of the holy Scriptures. Besides that he wrote many comforting letters to all kinds of people of both spiritual and secular estates, who asked his counsel because of their most troubled consciences. In all these, his chief aim was always to show that man will be justified and saved through none of his own works, but through faith in JESUS Christ alone.

In these and other labors, which nearly buried him, in the year 1516 he visited forty Augustinian cloisters in Meissen and Thuringia that Staupitz commissioned him to carry out in his place. As difficult as this was, Luther carried out his charge with that much more faithfulness, restored the conditions in the schools, and admonished the brothers of the orders to diligently read the Bible and to a holy, peaceful and chaste life. Yet this activity of supervising the cloisters had been especially useful to Luther to advance him on the path of also observing with his own eyes the great ruin that was predominating and to enable him to learn to know its cause. Thus God prepared this precious man more and more for the work which should now suddenly commence, that is, to the great work of a universal reformation of the church...

About this time (1516), that indulgence peddler, Tetzel (born in Leipzig), also arrived in the region of Wittenberg. The pope at that time, Leo X, had, of course, need of a lot of money to continue construction on that ornate church of St. Peter in Rome and he had issued a plenary indulgence and turned it over specifically to Elector Albert of Mainz, who was at the same time an archbishop, to have this indulgence preached in Germany. Tetzel was chosen for this project. He was an unscrupulous man. He had previously been convicted by the Emperor Maximilian for immorality and sentenced to be bound and drowned. But his being so unscrupulous made him all the better suited in the view of the forementioned archbishop to be an indulgence preacher. He also carried out his commission with great zeal, erected an indulgence cross wherever he went with the papal seal upon it, and told the people that this cross was able to do just as much as Christ's. It even removed the greatest sins, even ones that you still wanted to commit. As soon as the gold in the coffers sings, the soul into heaven springs. According to his fee schedule witchcraft cost 2 ducats, bigamy 3, murder 8, church robbery or perjury 9.

The horrible consequences of this preaching spilled into what Luther was seeing in the confessional booth. The number of his confessing children was continually waning and those who still came to him appealed to their having the indulgence and wanted nothing to do with any other penance. Luther now began, as he himself said, to preach sharply about this, that one could certainly

do better things that would be more certain than indulgences. So he fought at that time not against the indulgences themselves, but only against their being overly valued, and so he had nothing else in mind than to save face for the pope, whom he still held in high regard. He thought all this was happening against the pope's will, who only sought the salvation of souls in the indulgences. But now Tetzel and his adherents also called Luther out as an arch heretic. But this forced Luther to work out those ninety-five theses against the abuse of indulgences which he publicly nailed upon door of the Castle church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, with an invitation to those near and far, that anyone who wanted or could do so should offer his objections to the same orally or in writing. The first of these theses was: "When our LORD and Master JESUS Christ says: Repent, etc, he desires that the whole life of his believers on earth should be constant and ceaseless repentance." (See "The Lutheran" issue 5, p. 4)

Luther himself had no idea what a significant step he had taken with the publication of these theses and that they would be the beginning of the Reformation of the church. For in them, of course, he did not attack the papistic indulgence itself but only the coarsest abuses of the indulgence, and along with that he submitted to the judgement of the church. But without Luther knowing it at the time, he had already thereby seized the heart of the papacy in that he had asserted therein that a man "is a partaker of all the wealth of Christ and the church as God's gift, even without indulgences," that thus faith alone makes him righteous and saved before God. That was the teaching many thousands of anxious hearts that were tortured with doubt had longed after for such a long time. That's the reason that Luther's theses surged through Germany in 14 days and, after four to six weeks, they were being voraciously read throughout Europe. Yes, four years later a traveler even purchased them in Jerusalem.

At first the pope had ignored the whole matter and imagined the contention that was erupting over indulgences would quickly die out on its own. But as he saw that it was becoming a growing danger that threatened his prestige, in July 1518 he summoned Luther to personally appear in Rome within sixty days. Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony, nevertheless, made arrangements for Luther to be examined in Germany, and, indeed, in Augsburg, even where the imperial diet met, by Cardinal Cajetan, who ordered him to be silent in the name of the Church. Luther writes about this interview, among other things: "Then, if I only heard the name of the Church, I was afraid. And he commanded me to desist, so I even told the Cardinal I would henceforth be quiet, but bid him, with that, that he also command my accusers to do the same with their clamor and to keep still. But he not only dismissed my request, but rather threatened me. If I would not recant he would condemn all I had taught. Now I had already taught the Catechism to the benefit of many people, and I know well on that account that if I were to allow him to condemn that, I would then be denying Christ. So I was forced to dread a more dire danger than I could ever have expected." Now since Luther's friends feared evil plots against him by the Cardinal, they advised him to leave Augsburg without a sound after the Cardinal had declared: "I may no longer dispute with this beast, for he has deep eyes, and bewildering thoughts run through his head." So Luther took the advice of his friends, left Augsburg in the night and arrived on October 31 to a warm reception in Wittenberg. Now even though the Cardinal (full of wrath because of his useless attempt to make Luther recant) wrote the Elector that he should at least hunt Luther out of Saxony, he was counseled by others to do just the opposite. Of course that excellent Bishop at Wuerzburg wrote him: "Your grace would not want to let Luther be taken away, for he would not receive justice." Yes, even Emperor Maximilian sent word to the Elector that he should make every effort to protect the monk and then see how it must play out. As steadfast and immovable as Luther showed himself to be in

confessing the truth he learned in this affair, yet it must not be imagined that he had been propped up by some fleshly impertinence. He still always shuddered at the thought of opposing "the Holy Roman Church." His one sticking point was that what he had learned clearly and irrefutably from God's Word, by such a great and difficult struggle, had to remain. Therefore he wrote: "Who was I, a poor and despised brother, more a corpse than a man, to set himself against his majesty, the Pope, before whom not only the kings of the earth the world over, but even in heaven and hell must be terrified and must obey every wink of his eye, that I should correct him! What my heart had gone through and suffered in those first and second years, and endured in timid humility was not feigned but true to the point of desperation, as I hung there, which those haughty spirits who subsequently attacked the majesty of the pope with such great pride and presumption barely know."⁴²

As the pope saw that he could not dampen Dr. Luther's steadfast confession by force, he tried a gentler tact and in 1519 sent the Elector a consecrated golden rose by the Lord von Miltitz as a sign of his favor, but upon his receiving this gift he was only amused and made light of it. This papal emissary, as he himself conceded, could not be assured of being successful in his mission to bring Luther to Rome, even if he had 5000 armed men. "For – he said to him – I experienced on this trip that if one man was standing on the pope's side, there were probably three standing on the other side, against the pope." This Lord von Miltitz had been kind to Luther in a discussion he had with him previously in Altenburg, and said he was there to be an agent for peace, and promised, in addition, to even move the pope. Dr. Luther was glad to consent to this request, so long as he could do so in good conscience and without compromising the truth. The emissary even silenced that shameless crier, Tetzel, in his presence and commanded him to keep his indulgence selling to himself and aroused such terror in him that he died a short time thereafter. Everyone spurned this miserable fellow so he appeared to be abandoned by both God and man, except for Luther, who wrote him a consoling letter that even preached God's grace to him.

If human wisdom had been able to curtail what God had decided to bring about through Luther, without doubt, Miltitz would have been the man to do it. Luther himself had to say that if Miltitz' counsel would have been presented at the beginning of the matter, it could have been settled. But the only one responsible for this having caused such a great clamor was the Bishop of Mainz, who employed his wisdom and treachery in service to his goal to extinguish Luther's doctrine and to assure the uninterrupted selling of the indulgences. Of course, Luther did not in any way step up into the battle because he had recognized the anti-Christian nature of the Roman Papacy. In one letter which he had sent after this business with Miltitz concerning the pope, he therefore writes: "I bear witness before God and all creatures that I had no desire, nor do I desire today, to intentionally, in any way, set myself against the Roman Church and the eternally consecrated authority, or to cleverly split anything away from it. Yes, I freely confess that this church authority is over everything, and nothing in heaven nor on earth can displace it, for JESUS Christ alone is LORD over everything." So Christ with his pure Gospel alone is what Luther would not allow to be taken from him. But now as this is what he saw being threatened with the preaching of indulgences, he stood up for that reason. But it was in this battle Luther first learned to know the papacy and that's why he first

⁴²Would to God that a bit of this would be seen in Brambarbas, who in this free land has such a big mouth against the Pope and meanwhile insults Luther as a miserable priest and lackey of authority. Had Luther not "with great trembling and fear of conscience" through God's Word, as he himself confesses, first engaged and conquered the pope, probably many such heroes with their big mouths would, out of a different sort of fear altogether, be kissing the pope's chancel slippers in sniveling cowardice.
(Amended by publisher)

openly stepped out against the same, as it would become obvious to him that the Gospel of Christ could not remain with the papacy, and the papacy is the greatest foe of Christ. Here we see that the Lutheran Reformation was not begun and carried out according to a human plan and counsel, but it was a work of God. Therefore even his enemies, just by means of their opposition and their false wisdom, could do nothing but advance it.

The results of what happened in 1519 were also surpassingly important for Luther's preparation for bigger and greater battles. That is, after he had read the holy Scripture so voraciously for seven whole years, so he practically knew it by heart, and therefore had a very great yearning to understand St. Paul's epistle to the Romans rightly, yet a single Word still tripped him up, that is: The righteousness of God which St. Paul says (Rom. 1.17.) is revealed in the Gospel. Up until then he had understood that righteousness was that righteousness by which God punishes all sinners and the unrighteous. Now because God is revealing this righteousness not only in the Law, but also in the Gospel, the Gospel only thus intensifies the terror of the Law and thereby robs the sinner of all comfort. Dr. Luther often terrified himself in his erring conscience. But as he constantly meditated on this passage day and night, through God's grace he finally learned by the Words that are written with them: "The just lives by his faith," that the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel is none other than the righteousness that avails before God and that consists in this, that God out of grace and pure tender mercy justifies us through faith, or forgives us our sins. He himself writes of this: "Here I immediately felt as if I were utterly newly born and found myself entering Paradise, as through a wide opened door. I also saw the whole dear holy Scripture in a much different way than I had seen it before. – I began to regard that Word, God's righteousness, as my most beloved and cherished Word, precious and majestic, and in truth this same passage in St. Paul became to me the true door of Paradise."⁴³

Also among the noteworthy events in this year of Luther's life (1519) is the famous Leipzig Disputation. Duke George of Saxony, who sided with the pope, unsettled by the unheard of doctrine that was now emanating from Wittenberg, staged it, of course, so that Dr. Eck, an ambitious papistic professor at the University at Ingolstadt, should have a public debate with Luther and Carlstadt, Professor at Wittenberg at that time, over the contentions that had broken out. Eck had published theses for such a disputation that were in opposition to Luther's theses about indulgences. Luther was therefore obligated to appear. The most important aspect of this disputation was that Luther was, for the first time, challenged to expound before the world that the pope did not have a divine right to be head of the church. This principle, whose truth Luther was convinced of, even at that time, drew him ever deeper into the battle that had to be fought to its end according to God's plan.

In the year 1520, among other things, Luther wrote that important book, "On Christian Freedom" which he sent to the

pope and where he specifically proved that Christian freedom has its basis in holy Baptism, where every baptized person has pledged his obedience to the triune God alone in all matters pertaining to God and that, therefore, a baptized member of Christ is responsible to be obedient to no human ordinance which conflicts with the clear Word of God, and if he renders it nevertheless, he thereby forfeits his share of the heavenly kingdom...

Upon the conclusion of the Leipzig Disputation, Dr. Eck was forced to depart in shame as Luther's bold stance against the papacy, far from causing any universal hostility against himself, was much rather winning Luther a huge number of devoted followers and compatriots throughout the Christian world among the high born and the lowly, those learned and the untaught. Ablaze with vindictiveness, Eck rushed off to Rome and saw to it that the Pope issued a Bull (decree) on the 15th of June, 1520, in which 41 theses of Luther's writings were condemned, his books were commanded to be burned, and if he didn't recant within 60 days he would be sentenced as a heretic under the ban, that is, he would be removed from fellowship with the Church. What this judgement elicited in Luther he himself describes to a friend in these words: "I don't have much hope, because I know for certain that the Pope has been publicly uncovered as the anti-Christ sitting on Satan's throne."

Eck triumphantly circulated the Bull of Excommunication throughout Germany, and especially in the ancestral lands of the emperor, requiring the burning of Luther's writings, yet in many regions, especially in Electoral Saxony, Eck was generally received with ridicule. Luther wrote those two famous writings: "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church" and "Against the Bull of the AntiChrist," at that time, where he more and more directly attacked and clearly uncovered the heresies of the papacy; like the false doctrine of the seven sacraments, of transubstantiation (transformation of bread in holy Communion) and more of the same. Because Luther further saw that he would be excluded forcibly from the Roman Church and the truth would be repressed, he decided to show all the world his thoughts on this ban by a public act. So on the 10th of November, 1520, early in the day, at about 9 a.m., he ceremoniously burned the Bull along with the whole papistic canon law in front of the Elster gate in Wittenberg, accompanied by many doctors and students. Luther himself threw them both into the flames with the words: "As you have disturbed the Lord's saints, eternal fire disturb and consume you." In a writing Luther subsequently produced, he himself explained to the world what had moved him to take this step, and pointed out the impious statements contained in the papistic cannon law. That is, it says therein, among other things: "Even if the pope were so wicked that he sent countless men *en masse* to the devil, no one is allowed to charge him with wrong doing for it."

Luther knew full well what he was risking here and what boundless repercussions he would get in return. But if all his friends might think about the consequences of this action with trembling, he himself daily grew in confidence and good cheer. As he writes to Staupitz: "I have burned the pope's bull and books, first trembling and imploring, but now I am happy with it, more than anything else I've done in my whole life, for those (books) are an even greater plague than I had imagined." This divine courage would also now prove itself shortly. For as in the following year, 1521, a diet should be held in Worms, Luther received an imperial summons to appear with a promise of safe passage to it and from it. When his prince asked him if he would present himself, Luther replied: "I am prepared in humble obedience . . . at the approaching diet at Worms . . . to come, and with the aid of the Almighty to present myself and give answer in full measure, that I should be found bravely in the truth, that to this

⁴³From this we observe how wrongly Luther has been portrayed in modern times. That is, now he is usually described as a man possessing outstanding natural courage and, therefore, he made known the abuses and superstitions of the papistic church and attacked pope, bishops, priests and monks without fear in his biting tomes, setting himself along with the people free by his fiery rhetoric, winning even those who were great on the earth through his heroic entrance and thus he won such a glorious victory over coarse superstition for all time and blazed the trail for those who now again praise ancient, heathen doctrine as the true enlightenment of men. Unfortunately that's what happens when the most strident unbelievers have even almost always praised Luther. A Lutheran reads their false hymns of praise with shame, as praise from the mouths of those who blaspheme the Most High is the greatest shame that our precious Luther can experience, even in the grave. God grant that even through this present portrayal that Luther's actions and intentions might become crystal clear to those mockers, that they not see Luther as their leader on their path to destruction, but as a humble, believing Christian. Yes, from now on, you mockers, just exclude Luther, as scurrilously as you can, from your unclean guild! Do it as scurrilously as you can. For by no other means will Luther be better purified from the stain of scandal from those who have wrapped him in the praise the enemies of God and Christ have doled out to him, no thanks to him or to us. (Amended by publisher.)

time I have not acted out of a frivolous or thoughtless or disorderly desire or for the sake of temporal, worldly glory and advantage, but rather all that I have written and taught was done intentionally according to my oath and duty, as a poor teacher of the holy Scripture, to the praise of God, for the good of the whole German nation, for the elimination of dangerous abuses and superstitions, and to rid all of holy Christendom of so many boundless. . . offenses and blasphemies that had been introduced and committed,” and he wrote to Spalatin that he would come to Worms even if he had to be carried out pummeled, for if the emperor was calling him, God was calling him. God was commanding this event. He was still living and in charge, who preserved the three men in the fiery furnace, and if he did not want to preserve him, then his death was no big deal. No one can know whether it's his life or his death that will advance, or be of greater benefit to the cause of the Gospel. “Here you have my counsel and plan – he goes on – expect anything from me except that I will flee or recant. I will not flee, much less will I recant, as truly as my LORD JESUS strengthens me. For I can do nothing to endanger the blessedness and the salvation of many.”

Friends emphatically reminded Luther of the great danger he would encounter if he went, and reminded him of Hus' being burned to death, but he answered them: “Even if his enemies made a fire all the way from Wittenberg to Worms reaching up to heaven, he would still appear in the Name of the LORD and walk between the great teeth in the behemoth's mouth, and confess Christ and let him rule.” “I never thought of fleeing – he wrote to Spalatin – so as not to endanger the Word but to confess it to the death, so long as Christ is gracious and stands by me.” He set out on his trip so confidently and gladly, accompanied by Justus Jonas and others, and on the way he preached in a number of places amidst the great demand of the people. And although Satan tried to hinder his progress through extra ordinary illness, even his foremost enemies, who feared his personal appearance in Worms, spared no effort, using extreme threats even to flattery, to keep him away from Worms, yet this precious hero of faith remained steadfast in his resolve. “Christ lives – he wrote in Frankfurt – and that's the reason we want to go on to Worms, to spite all the gates of hell and those who are ruling in the air.” Yet in Oppenheim he received a distressing note from Spalatin, who made him an urgent appeal not to go to Worms, since his enemies had already divulged that Luther, with all his followers, were already condemned by the emperor. “And if there were as many devils in Worms – was his reply – as tiles on the roofs, I would still want to go.”

So Dr. Luther entered Worms on the 16th of April in an open carriage dressed in his monk's habit under the escort of the imperial herald. More than 2000 men accompanied him to his quarters, where several princes and other men of high standing sought him out. Already on the second day, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, he was led by the Reich's Marshal through the houses and gardens and the thickest press of people in the streets who wanted to see the monk, as people even climbed up on the roofs, and even as he was entering the hall of the courtroom, an old General, George von Furnsberg, tapped him on the shoulder with the Words: “Dear little monk! You are walking a path the likes of which I nor many military leaders have not ever walked, even in our most dangerous killing fields. If you have good intentions and your cause is just, then go forth in God's Name and only be sure that God will not forsake you.” The doors were opened and Luther stood before emperor and diet. Present beside the emperor upon his throne were his brother, Arch Duke Ferdinand, 6 electors, 24 dukes, 8 margraves, 36 bishops, a papal and 5 royal emissaries and over 200 men of high standing. But in the outer room and at the windows were 5,000 men.

The first question addressed to Luther was if he acknowledged the books that were arranged on a table were his own, and if he

would recant what he had written in them. After the titles of the books were read aloud, he answered the first question in the affirmative. But in view of the second question upon which such importance lay, as they dealt with faith and salvation, he asked for more time to consider. This was granted him and on the following day the question would be decided in the assembly of the diet, when he, upon the question as to whether he wanted to defend all of his books or recant something from them, he fittingly and modestly, yet with great Christian gladness, gave an explanation of their various sorts of content and a few of the chief themes of his books, which was ultimately the witness to the pure Word of God. “Yet – he went on to say – because I am a man and not God, I cannot affirm my books nor defend them in any other way than my LORD and Savior has done with his doctrine, who. . . said: If I have spoken evil, then bear witness to what it is that is evil. Now if the LORD, who knows that he cannot err, did not refuse to hear witness against his doctrine, even from a poor, mean servant, how much less should I, who am dust and ashes and can easily err, yearn for and expect it if someone would want to bear witness against my doctrine. Therefore by the tender mercies of God, your graces, let the emperor, margraves, electors and princes, or whoever is able, whether he be of noble or mean estate, please bear witness and convince me by the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures that I have erred. For if I am convinced of this, I am more than willing and able to recant all my errors, and I will be the first to throw my books into the fire. But I am hesitant to do so, because I have sufficiently considered and pondered the apparent, clear and obvious threat and danger to me, and the nature of the division and what had to have been stirred up as a result of my doctrine, and I have been vividly and starkly reminded of this yesterday. Indeed, it is truly my most excellent desire and joy to see that division and disunity has arisen for the sake of God's Word, for that is the nature, course and blessing of God's Word. On that account it is good to bear in mind how wondrous God is in his counsels and judgements, so that we not turn away from the reality of this controversy and division, for it is out of our trust in our own might and wisdom that we might begin to persecute and blaspheme God's Word, leading to a horrible deluge of inevitable calamities. In this there must be a concern so that this most honored and gracious young Charles's government. . . not only have a tragic, sad beginning,⁴⁴ but rather that it also might win a good middle and end. – For it is God who captures the wise in their own wisdom and cleverness, and buries them under mountains before they know it. That is why it's necessary that God be feared.” – Luther said these things clearly and many other things, not stridently, but most deliberately, but with great happiness, and so he ended his speech that lasted almost two hours most eloquently. Yet the emperor neither rightly understood this clear speech, nor would he suffer it. Therefore he now demanded of Luther that he repeat the speech in Latin. “But – – as he himself recounts – I was sweating so much and was so heated because of the pressure, because I was standing under the prince. Then Friedrich von Thunau said: If you cannot do it, it is enough, Doctor. But I repeated all my words in Latin.” – But now a brief, round word was demanded, whether or not he would recant. Then Luther said: “Since their graces, the emperor, margraves, electors and princes desire a brief, simple, direct answer, so I will give one that will not have horns or teeth, that is: Unless I am overcome and convinced by the witness of the holy Scripture or with obvious, clear and apparent reasons and grounds, (for I believe neither popes nor councils on their own, for it is clear as day that they have often erred and have contradicted themselves), and as I am convinced by the passages that have

⁴⁴That is, in 1519, after Friedrich the Wise had been removed from his throne, the young king of Spain, Charles V, had been selected as emperor.

been used and quoted by me and my conscience is taken captive by God's Word, so I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor sane to do anything against conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other, God help me. Amen." The impressions which this powerful and faith filled speech had upon those in attendance were great, yet of various kinds. The papal minded were enraged that Luther had been given such great freedom to answer so extensively. These pressured the emperor to revoke the promised safe conduct for his return and immediately eradicate this arch heretic. He was reminded the heretic Hus did not retain his promised safe passage but was condemned and burned to death. Caraccioli, the papal emissary, Elector Joachim I from Brandenburg and the emperor's Spanish and Italian counselors especially gave this bloodthirsty advice. With these negotiations amongst the great lords, things elevated several times almost to the point of bloody conflict, yet others, especially the elector of Saxony and the Count of Palatine on the Rhein now supported Luther in every way. The elector had been pleased by what Luther said at the diet. So even that same evening he said to Spalatin with great delight: "O, how well Luther proved himself! And what a beautiful and, at the same time, clear speech he made in Latin before the emperor and the people of every station!" The old Duke Erich from Braunschweig give Luther a silver mug filled with Eimbecker beer in his lodging, by which he refreshed himself after his heated day. Luther replied: "As Duke Erich has remembered me today, so may our LORD Christ remember him in his final strife." (The duke remembered these words unto his final hour). The emperor's decision was: "What was promised should be kept, and even if no one in the world should be found faithful, he should still find the Emperor of Germany to be so." Therefore he did not revoke his safe conduct, yes this safe conduct would even be extended, by which the princes granted time for Luther, if perhaps they might still get him to recant. Every effort was in vain, as Luther proved the advice of Gamaliel: "If the counsel or the work is of men, then it will fail but if it is from God, you cannot put an end to it." Acts 5.38, 39.

So Luther was then granted his leave: "Then he, who had not heeded so many warnings, would not yield for the unity of the church, so the blessed emperor who had to consider himself an advocate for the Catholic faith commanded him thenceforth to be granted his protection under safe conduct for 21 days and to preach and publish nothing amongst the people."

Luther replied: "It has happened as it pleased the LORD, so blessed be the Name of the LORD." He now thanked the emperor and those of high standing in a most humble way, and explained once more that he had desired nothing other "than for a Reformation from out of the holy Scriptures, which he would so earnestly pray for, seek and engage...but apart from that he would gladly do and suffer everything for the sake of the emperor and kingdom: If life or death, glory or disgrace, nothing else mattered but this one thing; to freely confess God's Word and bear witness to it." So he departed on the 26th of April, 1521 under the escort of the imperial herald...

The Elector of Saxony had decided that at Luther's departure from Worms he would snatch him away to safety from his foes. Luther ultimately consented to his wise plan though he would have preferred to shed his blood in witness to the truth. So on his return trip, an armed party ambushed Luther's entourage near Eisenach and brought him to Wartburg Castle, where, assuming the name "Knight George," he dressed as a knight and was held for ten months. At first this was known only to his closest friends, while on the other hand, his enemies gleefully spread rumors that he was dead. He himself wrote to a friend: "I am a wondrous prisoner who not only sits here willingly but also unwillingly. Willingly because it's what the LORD wants, unwillingly because I would prefer to stand amongst the people with God's Word."

This brief residence in his Patmos (for that is what he calls the Wartburg, in accordance with Rev. 1.9.) abounded in significant experiences for Luther. For he not only suffered repeated bouts with extremely painful illnesses here, but also severe depressions in his mood. He complains about his spiritual dullness, about his lack of zeal in prayer, about weariness, sleeplessness and many other afflictions so that he almost arrived at the conclusion that God had completely turned away from him. Along with all that were also his extreme terrors, by which Satan sought to drive him to despair, but that Luther overcame through scorning the devil. His confession in this is noteworthy, that this cross and ones that are like it are far more difficult in solitude than if one bears it amongst friends who can comfort and restore us with God's Word.

Now one might believe that this man, being plagued in so many ways, would hardly be up to taking on any challenging projects, yet how astounding it is if one only makes a quick survey of his unparalleled productivity! He not only labored very diligently in the Hebrew and Greek languages, he not only preached heartily – some even say twice every day – to those in the household, he not only wrote a large number of rich spiritual letters to his friends, but there is also no other period in his whole life when, in such a few months, he completed so many important compositions for the church of God, than just during this residence at the Wartburg. Of course, he translated the entire New Testament from Greek into the German language, which appeared in print the following year and was distributed more and more rapidly through the whole of Germany, so that, as the papist writer, Cochlaeus, reports to his great consternation, even the manual laborers and the women were reading it so voraciously over and over again that they were starting to learn it by heart, and within a few short months they were disputing with the priests and others from out of the holy Scripture and were even able to refute them from it. Further, Luther completed the first portion of his church Postils, which are the sermons for the standard Gospels and Epistles, embracing the first Sunday of Advent to the feast of Epiphany, and in this way remedied a pressing need, in that there were absolutely no books of sermons which could be read to the people in church in times of need. Finally, he authored a piece on "The Spiritual Estate and Vows of the Cloistered" which he dedicated to his dear father. In it he proved foundationally from God's Word that all vows which are made without, yes, against God's command and are, then, impossible to keep cannot hold the Christian's conscience bound or imprisoned. He also showed that no baptized Christian who has made a vow with his baptism to the Triune God, and has pledged himself to the universal apostolic church, may swear or dedicate anything to anyone else in matters of religion and faith without forfeiting and severing this faith and vow. But if anyone would take that kind of impossible or unchristian vow out of ignorance or through being misled by someone else (as, for example, the vow of voluntary poverty, of obedience to papistic laws, to remain in disgraceful stations), then the eternal Son of God frees him from it and gladly receives him by grace when he returns to Christ and stays bound to those first vows in Baptism. Now as Luther himself, according to these Biblical principles, wasn't bound any longer by his previous unchristian oaths and vows, he can only be charged with perjury by those who themselves have, in their own way, pejoratively broken their own holy baptismal vows against the Triune God. So while many blaspheme Luther because of his writing on the vows of the cloister, so many others praise God with joy-filled lips that he thereby immediately freed them from the pains of conscience they had felt so long.

Many might naturally think that with all these many labors there would have been little time remaining to recuperate, yet he always left some time for even that in order to be revitalized so he could get back to new projects. He felt very uncomfortable in

taking part in the favorite pastime of the greater ruling class and people at leisure, which he called the hunt. Therefore he seldom took part in it. On the other hand he spent time visiting good friends in the region, to whom he was often unrecognized, dressing as a knight with a long beard and a sword at his side. Yes, once he even traveled in disguise to Wittenberg before he had moved back there for good.

The latter was initiated by the following: After all the obstacles Satan had erected to undermine the Gospel that was breaking forth, quite contrary to his intention, these had only served to spread it further. So now Satan pursued a different tact and he caused disruption and offense in Luther's own congregation. That is, while Luther was absent, but with his consent, the Augustinian monks had abolished the papistic Mass and introduced the true Christian Mass, or the holy LORD's Supper. Then Dr. Carlstad, in whose opinion the Reformation was progressing too slowly, introduced an offensive freedom by which he, with his adherents, right during the Feast of Christmas, threw the images and the crucifix out of the church, permitted the people themselves to take the holy LORD's Supper from off of the altar, and foisted many such similar absurdities upon them. As every means to stop this was futile, Luther's congregation recalled him with fervent pleas. He immediately rushed to Wittenberg in the beginning of March, 1522, despite the threats to his life from the papal ban and the emperor's decree. In eight sermons he preached daily for an entire week, he restored the ruined peace in the church. Even Carlstad, whom Luther handled as gently as possible, now outwardly restrained himself for several years even though inwardly he silently nursed bitter resentment against Luther. That sort of false brother commits much greater harm to the Gospel than even the manifest opponents of the same.

From that time on Luther remained in Wittenberg, and no one dared to touch him. In that year (1522), among other things, he wrote very pointedly against the godless ways of the unspiritual spiritual estate, he chastised them as much for their false doctrine as for their offensive lives and he admonished them to repent. But he also did not leave the kings and the authorities unscathed. For when the King of England, Henry VIII, opposed the writing of Luther, "On the Babylonian Captivity," by having another very hateful diatribe published, Luther finished off the proud and ignorant defender of the papistic abomination with as coarse a word as he deserved. Apparently a more learned man than the king, and indeed, according to Luther's speculations, the famous Erasmus had produced that writing.

Along with all the labor of Luther for God's church, by which he far overshadowed his compatriots, he never sought any temporal reward. His yearly stipend in the year 1523 in total amounted, according to our (1845) money, to no more than five dollars, and he nevertheless never wanted more, and if he did ask, it was only for the support of others, yes, he himself was, along with his poverty, so compassionate, that whatever others would give him he would generously distribute amongst the needy. Even for his numerous writings he took no royalty at all and he did this, as he himself explained, for the sake of his dear LORD JESUS Christ, who also had freely shed his blood for him. The more generously God himself blessed him through his labor, he also blessed many thousands with all sorts of spiritual blessings in heavenly wealth through Christ.

The year 1523 also abounded in those blessings. Space does not allow us to list all the writings from that year, so only three very important titles will be mentioned. These are: "Grounds and Reasons from the Scripture that a Christian Congregation has the Right and Authority to Judge all Doctrine, to Call and to Install and Depose Pastors;" further: "Letter to the Council and Congregations in Prague, How Servants of the Church Should be Elected and Installed." Finally: "On the Order of Divine Service in the Congregation," which writing Luther expanded and according to

which Divine Service in Wittenberg and then in many other places had been established, so that this writing is the foundation upon which all Lutheran agendas rest. Luther also, through his unsurpassable hymns, laid the foundation for the rich treasury of hymns which is such a noteworthy distinction of the Lutheran Church.

In the year 1524 the so-called heavenly prophets, also called the Anabaptists, caused Luther much labor and concern. They boasted of their immediate divine revelations, only ever spoke about the Spirit of the Scriptures, which they believed they alone possessed, and despised the written and preached Word of God as a dead letter. They rejected infant baptism and every sort of Christian order, and moreover abused freedom as a cover for evil, but all this under the blind excuse of wanting to more powerfully carry through to completion the Reformation that had such a weak beginning. Through this fanatic enthusiasm they incited the easily misled masses. Not a few fell completely away from the Word of God. Others at least viewed Luther's doctrine with suspicion. This mischief already spread from Zwickau to Wittenberg in the year 1521. More than the others, Thomas Muenzer preached this profane doctrine and later, from the year 1524 on, Carlstad started doing so anew, who even went further to once again bring to the forefront that soul-destroying heresy that Christ's body and blood are not substantially present in the LORD's Supper and therefore could not be received with the mouth. Now Luther sought to control this hellish mischief of the heavenly prophets with the Word of God. He preached to the people in several places and brought together those misled to discuss it. Not only was all this useless, but in Orlamond the rage of the people against Luther was so great that he had to hurriedly flee from the city, and some screamed curses after him: Get out in the name of a thousand devils so you break your neck before you get out of the city! Oh, how deeply troubled Luther must have been at this and similar fruits of the weeds that the foe had sown, while only the good seed of wholesome doctrine was still being sown by Luther! He nevertheless still maintained his confidence, yes he even continued working harder in his field and God gave his blessing to his planting and watering in many places, even in distant lands, for which he bears witness to his heart felt joy in various letters, and he faithfully encouraged the new confessors to be steadfast as well, as he also mightily comforted them in all that they must suffer for the Gospel. This was also the year (1524) in which Luther completely left the cloister, as all the monks had already done before him. Now he also laid aside the monk's robe he had worn for all of 18 years, and on the 20th Sunday after Trinity he stepped into the pulpit for the first time in a black priest's robe (as Lutheran preachers customarily dress to this day), for which his elector had provided the cloth.

Only Satan thought up new means by which Luther's name would be sullied, his doctrine extinguished or disgraced. So as the heavenly prophets had abused Christian freedom as a shameful cloak for their churchly irresponsibility, now the rebellious farmers abused the same for civil liberties, yes, the latter was only a fruit of the former, for the leader of the heavenly prophets, Thomas Muenzer, called himself the knight of God with Gideon's sword. He knew how to embitter their minds to rebellion by their oppression through almost unsupportable allegations so that the peasant's rebellion broke out quickly in Schwabia in the year 1524 and the following year it spread like wild fire through France along the Rhein to Thuringia and to almost every region of Germany. In the beginning the peasants turned to Luther and elected him as the mediating judge. In this Luther proved himself neither a champion for the peasants nor for the princes, but as a champion for God. He indeed explained that many of the demands of the farmers were legitimate and just. The first article of complaint of the same was: "It is our desire and we want to have power and authority from now on for the whole congregation to itself elect a pastor and also that no one else have authority to depose the

same if he conducts his office unworthily." In this Luther issued, among other things, this judgement: "This article is legitimate. You cannot abolish the right to elect a pastor under any guise. – To the contrary, no authority can or should, yes, authority must not defend what everyone will teach and believe, whether it is the Gospel or lies. It is enough that they restrain people teaching rebellion and violence." (L. Works Halle. XVI. 64.84.). Yet Luther also showed the farmers that their resorting to violence was illegitimate. He writes to them: "Even if your intentions should be legitimate, if everyone would become the others' judge, then no authority of oversight, law or order would remain in the world, but pure murder and bloodshed. For as soon as he saw that someone had committed an injustice against him, he himself would go on to judge and punish him. Now if that is unfair and not to be allowed for an individual person, so it is also not allowed for any sect or group. – I am telling you these things, my dear friends, to faithfully warn you that in this matter you have placed yourselves beyond the limits of the name of Christian and of claiming your rights as a Christian. For you can claim your rights as much as you want, yet it is incumbent upon no Christian to claim rights, nor to turn to violence, but to suffer injustice and to endure evil. It's that and nothing else (1 Cor. 6.7.) – Because you yourself want to defend your case and not suffer either authority or injustice, you might be acting against and shunning God's own defending you now against this. But I say, then leave the name Christian behind, and do not use it as a shameful cloak for your impatient, violent, unchristian plans. – Christians do not fight for themselves with the sword, nor with rifles, but with the cross and suffering just as your Captain, Christ, did not use the sword but hung on the cross. Therefore you also do not wage your war with demands and domination and force, but with submission and gentleness. (2 Cor. 10.4.)."

That in this matter Luther did not show himself to be a fawning servant of the princes, clearly sheds light on how he wanted to be perceived by the princes in this same writing. He says in it: "First of all we have no one on earth to thank for this disorder and uproar more than you princes and lords, especially you bishops and insane priests and monks, who to this day are so stubborn that you never stop ranting and raging against the holy Gospel, even though you all know that it is right and cannot be refuted. Additionally, in your temporal government you do nothing more than flay and press to increase your wealth and pride until poor people cannot stand it any longer. You have a knife at your throat and yet you imagine you are sitting so firmly in the saddle that you can't be unseated. Such security and stubborn presumptuousness will break your necks. Just wait and see. As I have already declared to you many times, you had better beware of that passage in Ps. 107.40: "He poured out contempt upon the princes." You are striving after that and it will fall upon your heads, since you take no warning or admonition. Well then, since you are the reason for this wrath of God, this will, no doubt, befall you, if you do not improve with time. The signs in heaven and wonders on earth apply to you, dear lords. If you plan to act against goodness, nothing good will happen to you. – For you must know, dear lords, God is the one who makes it so that your rage cannot, will not, must not be tolerated for long. You must change and give way to God's Word. If you don't want to do that through gentle and mild wisdom then you must through forceful and ruinous chaos. If these peasants can't do it then others will have to, and if they should strike and you refuse to feel it, God will stir up others. For he wants to strike you and you will be stricken. It is not the farmers, dear lords, who set themselves against you. It is God himself, who sets himself against you to visit your outrage. – Had I desired to myself be the avenger, even now I could, in hidden glee sit back and watch the farmers, or even join in with them and help stir up the matter even more. But may God preserve me from doing so, as he has. So my dear lords, whether you be friends or

opponents, I pray submissively that you not despise my faithfulness, even if I am also a poor man. I pray you, do not ignore this uprising. I say this not because I think or fear that you might become too powerful, and also not that you should become so fearful of the people, but rather that you fear God, whose wrath you are observing. If he wants to punish you as you have deserved, as I fear is the case, he will punish you, and even if there were a hundred fold less farmers. He can certainly turn stones into farmers and back again. And through one peasant he could dispose of a hundred of you, against which all of your weapons and strength would be insufficient. – Don't start a fight with them. For you do not know how it might end. First seek to do what is right. – They have set forth 12 articles, among which there are some that are so fair and legitimate that in the presence of God and the world they are letting you have a peek at, and truly establishing the 40th verse of Psalm 107, their pouring out contempt upon princes. – In the first article they desire to hear the Gospel and the right to elect a pastor which you cannot get around no matter how you spin it. The other articles, that refer to physical hardships, to their physical welfare, taxation and the like, are also fair and legitimate. For authority is not established to seek that its needs and whims be carried out by its subjects, but to work along with the people for their needs and what is best for them. No it is not bearable for long for you to become rich and flay the people. What good is it if a farmer's field bore so much revenue as Solomon's mine, if the authorities would only take that much more to make their opulence that much more apparent, and to fritter away this good thing with clothing, eating, drinking, building programs and the like, as if it were water? That opulence needs to be curtailed and the spending stopped, so a poor man might yet keep something." (See "Luther's Admonition to Peace upon the Twelve Articles of the Farmers in Schwabia. 1525." L. Works. Halle. XVI. 58.)

But Luther didn't only try to allay the storm by his writings, but he also personally traveled to Thuringia and there sought through preaching to stop the outbreak of the threatening storm. But he only met with spotty success for a short time. The farmers themselves turned against him since he would not approve of all they did and were so enraged at him that twice his life was endangered. They would not allow themselves to be brought to their senses through any of his admonitions, but only continued to stir themselves up to every conceivable violent act. Wherever they gained enough strength they deposed the authority, robbed, plundered, destroyed by fire, wherever they went they destroyed convents and many cloisters, over 200 of them. Now Luther issued his most extreme warning in writing: "Against the Marauding and Murderous Peasants," and he commended the matter to God. The princes, whose bids for peace were all useless, and whom the popular outrage incited by Muenzer had finally united, directed their armed forces against the erupting violence. So then of the whole host of revolting peasants, 8000 men strong, some were slaughtered, some arrested, and Muenzer himself was quickly beheaded. Even though Luther had imagined this outcome, yet he bears no guilt for the atrocities committed by either side against the other and of the blood that was shed. For the rebellion had not stemmed from Luther's doctrine, but from Muenzer's, not in Lutheran, but in papistic territories, not so much from religious oppression but from civil oppression. And initially Luther had generously given counsel to both parties alike, and freely attributed blame to each. Luther here also proved himself to be God's knight by the Word of truth, in the power of God, through weapons of righteousness to the left and right, through honor and dishonor, through evil and good opinions, as one who deceives and yet is truthful. 2 Cor. 6.7-8....

On the very day the peasants' rebellion came to an end, the 5th of May, 1525, Luther, with the whole Lutheran church, was beset

in deepest mourning through the death of the pious Elector of Saxony, Friedrich the Wise, who blessedly departed from this world in the confession of Christ in his 63rd year, and at whose burial Luther delivered two outstanding funeral sermons on the resurrection of the flesh in 1 Thess. 4.13-18. John the Steadfast now became the Elector, who even more deliberately and zealously embraced the work of the Reformation and also held Luther in highest regard.

Luther had already by that time written many outstanding works on the nobility and had shown that it was a divine institution and is worthy to be honored by all, that, on the other hand, cloister vows were only human and he censured them as being impotent fetters. He had also successfully counseled others not to be afraid to break them. Now he suddenly determined he would do so himself. In his 42nd year he married Miss Catharine Von Boren (she was 26 years old), who had left the convent two years prior when she had been convinced of the legitimacy of taking that step by reading Luther's writings.

Luther was especially urged to be married by his aged, pious father, and also in order to confirm his doctrine with his actions, since he discovered along with that great light of the Gospel the timidity of his human heart. He himself bore witness that God had all at once and, while this was the furthest thing from his mind, wondrously led him into the estate of marriage. For, he writes, I feel neither fleshly love nor passion, but I have a good desire and pleasure in the station of marriage as God's institution and order. Luther could well foresee that his opponents would make hay out of his marriage by their poisonous slander, yes, he didn't even escape his best friends' unjustly judging his intentions at first but, nevertheless, even to spite the world and the devil, he carried out what he long ago explained was approved. He would confidently enter into the estate of marriage and he would be faithful to his marriage unto his death bed. Even if his friends might have thought it would have been better for Luther to remain unmarried, since just by this his foes would be given their best opening for their greatest blasphemy against the work of the Reformation, Luther thought better of it: To him it was more important to strengthen those who were weak in faith and to affirm Christian freedom and the truth of the Gospel with his actions than to avoid offending the blind and hardened hypocrisy of his foes, according to Gal. 2.4-5. He writes: "I have also taken a nun in marriage. Although I need not declare to anyone any special reason for my doing so but that I have done it to spite the devil and those he dwells in, the great clowns, the princes and bishops, who will want to go crazy over the fact that someone of the spiritual estate should be free. I would be glad to cause an even greater uproar if only I knew of anything else that would be more pleasing God and disturbing to them. – But if a few weak people are also offended by this, we who defend the Gospel are not to blame, but the tyrants if it doesn't result in the weak being instructed. So it is for their sakes that we give an answer. Even if it has the result that Christian and divine freedom will become quenched or brought to disgrace, then it is necessary to affirm the same for no one else more than for the weak. For more depends upon God's Word than upon all the world." (L. Works. Halle. X. 963 – 64.)

Luther thought none of the scandalous, mocking writings occasioned by his marriage worthy of his response. It was enough for him that he had a legitimate reason and a good conscience. In this matter, Luther's new found detractors only joined in singing the old tunes or attached new lies to them, for to the unclean and the unbelievers, nothing is pure, but their mind and their conscience are defiled. Tit. 1.15. But the oft repeated, cynical assertion that Luther had only been a reformer because he wanted to be married is just ridiculous. Now really, that's a pretty hard sell, considering that he could have had that and foregone all of the battles that we have presented so far. For if the Pope had previously bought him off with some rich diocese and a great sum

of money for his silence, under those conditions he could have illicitly had his marriage to a poor nun with no more adieu.

To conclude this installment we would like to take a brief glimpse into Luther's station in his marriage and household. Here he diligently strove to practice what he had taught from God's Word orally and in print, so that as a bishop he managed his household well. 1 Tim. 3.4. He and his wife deeply loved and honored each other. In this marriage God gave them six children, Johann, Elizabeth, Magdalena, Martin, Paul, Margaret; so, three sons and three daughters. These children gave their father, with his many labors and concerns about affairs in the church, many happy hours. He loved them most tenderly, faithfully raised them in the fear and admonition of the LORD, and of course, daily prayed with them the Ten Commandments, the Christian Creed and the LORD's Prayer. But he also often kindly joked with them and was a child with the children. We cannot omit adding as an aside a letter which Luther wrote to his four year old Johann. He writes as follows:

"Grace and peace in Christ, my beloved little son. I am glad to see that you are learning so well and you like to pray. Keep doing that, my son, and keep growing. When I come home I will bring you to a nice little fair. I know of a lovely, beautiful garden, where many children go, wearing little golden robes, and where beautiful apples lay under the trees and berries, cherries, pears and plums, where they sing and jump and have fun. They also have beautiful little ponies with golden reins and silver saddles. So I asked the man, whose garden this was and whose children they were. So he said: These are the children who like to pray and to learn and who are good. So I said, good sir, I also have a little son named Hansy Luther, might he not also come to the garden, that he might also eat such nice apples and berries and ride such fine ponies and play with the children? So the man said, If he likes to pray and to learn and is good, he should also come into the garden, Betsy and Joicey, too, and if they all come together, then they will also have flutes, drums, lutes and all sorts of stringed instruments and they will also dance and fire little crossbows. And he showed me a fine meadow there in the garden, just made for dancing, where pure gold flutes, drums and fine silver crossbows were hanging. But it was as yet too early for the children to have eaten. So I could not wait for their dancing and I said to the man: I will have to go write to my dear little son, Hansy, about all this, so he will certainly be quick to pray and to learn and to be good, so that he might also come into this garden. But he has a little 'Auntie Lehna' whom he must also bring along. So the man said: That's all right, go ahead and write to him about it.

So, my dear little Hansy-son, keep on learning and praying in that assurance, and also tell Betsy and Joicey, so they also pray and learn, so you will come with each other to that garden. Here by the command of the Almighty God, and greet "Auntie Lehna" and give her a kiss for me. 1530 AD.

Your loving father
Martinus Luther."

But as kindly and gently as Luther treated his little Hansy during his tender childhood, even so seriously Luther later saw to his upbringing and let nothing evil in him go unpunished. Among other things it is related that as Johann had turned twelve years of age and had broken something, Luther had nothing to do with him for three days, even after he had begged his pardon in a humble letter, his mother, Dr. Jonas and Dr. Creuziger even having interceded on his behalf. Luther replied to them that he would rather have a dead son than a disobedient son. For according to St. Paul, a bishop must administer his own house well and hold his children in obedience if he wants to care for the congregation of God. He makes this addition: "God has lifted us up and because

of that we must set a good example for all. Apart from anything else, those children acting out in that way are an offense, and, as wicked fools, they want to abuse our freedom.” (See L. Works. Halle. XXIV, 157.)

Very often Luther had numerous guests at his table at mealtime, that were occasions for many useful and happy conversations and instruction, as can be seen in the “Table Talks” that have been recorded. Luther’s demeanor towards his friends and guests in his family circle, and they towards Luther, was as far from any monkish severity as from those desolate and wild wastelands of the world. Much rather, for all the turmoil, it was in line with the admonition of St. Paul in Phil. 4:8: “Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is chaste, whatever is lovely and pure, if anything is virtuous, if anything is praiseworthy, think of these things!” Hypocrites often act all offended about the obvious ruination of their age, but there’s no trace of that in Luther’s Table Talks.

Yet that was also missing in the circle of Luther’s home and family. Apart from the plague, and what every Christian faced every day, there also came times of especially severe troubles. Luther’s faithful wife was at one time sick unto death, yet God heard Luther’s intercession for her. But amidst many tears he saw two of his beloved daughters taken from this life, Elizabeth in her first year and Magdalena in her fourteenth year. For the latter, he himself composed the following epitaph.

Here sleeps little Lena, Dr. Luther’s daughter fine,
At peace with all God’s saints in this little bed of mine.
Since I was as a sinner born
Eternally I’d been forlorn;
But now I live, have all that’s good
LORD Christ redeem’d me by his blood....

In the years 1526 and ‘27, for the most part, Dr. Luther had the Sacramentarians to deal with. For after Carlstadt, at Luther’s urging, had received a release from the elector and became a farmer, Ulrich Zwingli arose against Luther’s doctrine on the LORD’S Supper in Switzerland and asserted that the Words “this is” meant only so much as “this represents.” Oecolampadius and a few others joined him. When the poison of this false doctrine began to sneak its way into many hearts, Dr. Luther very seriously taught and pointedly wrote against it, for a nasty wound requires a sharp knife. In this, two writings are especially noteworthy: “That the Words Still Stand Fast: This is my Body” and his “Great Confession of the LORD’S Supper” to which he attaches his confession of all the chief articles of faith so that no one could say after he had died that if Luther were still alive he would teach differently about this article or that. To the accusation that it was his rigidity over the Sacrament that was, of course, responsible for the division between the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, this is his reply: “Obviously everyone throughout Germany knows well that in the beginning the Gospel was attacked by the papists alone. But those who at the time received the doctrine of the Gospel were united in all articles of that subject, and remained in that unity up until when the fanatics cooked up their opinions, not only about the Sacraments, but also in other articles of faith. They, first of all, confused the Christian congregations and then shattered their unity. For since that time the fanatics have had one schism after another. For when one error is introduced, others also follow, till the truth is completely abandoned. From this, then, it follows that the unity of hearts over the articles of faith is severed, so each will make of it what he can and decide what seems good and right for himself. So they unjustly lay on us the great responsibility for having severed Christian unity. It occasions great regret when an innocent person must bear the retribution for what others have done, especially in such a high and significant matter.” (L.W. VIII. 2784 ff)

In the year 1527 Elector John in Saxony instituted a general church visitation, in which Luther was also very involved. Public worship was purified from papistic abuses in every location of the land through real Christian preaching and by instruction in the Catechism, as well as restoring to its purity thereby the ancient Biblically regulated administration of Baptism and the LORD’S Supper, and also by introducing the use of good hymns and useful ceremonies. The instruction of youth was also improved through the establishment of German and Latin schools. Care was also taken that teachers in the church and school would receive their on-going support by the congregations. Through these very effective Church visitations Luther carried out a great service not only to Saxony, but also for many others lands and cities inasmuch as they followed the wise counsel of Luther and his co-workers.

But before Luther had completed this great work, he was cast into a severe spiritual depression which was accompanied by a deadly illness. With this, as he prayed often and with great zeal, he took great comfort in the absolution which had been shared with him by his father confessor, he clung fast to the Word of God and especially to the declaration of Christ: “Come unto me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.” In the face of death he bore witness that in all the articles of the Christian faith he had taught rightly and that he did not regret having so forcefully attacked his opponents. He spoke of the impending troubles of the church and said: “O how the enthusiasts, blasphemers of the Sacrament, Anabaptists and other sects will wreak their horrible havoc after my death! Yet I take comfort in Christ’s being stronger than the devil and his lackies, yes, he is the LORD.” He asked for his little son and when he was brought to him, he laughed at seeing his father, so he said: “Oh you good little boy! Now I commend my most beloved Katie and you, my poor little orphan to my beloved, good and faithful God. You have nothing. But God who is the Father of the widow and the orphan will provide and care for you well.” His sorrowing house wife revealed in this great trouble what rich fruits the Word of God had quietly brought forth in her. She said: “My dear lord Doctor, if it is God’s will, I would rather know that you are with our dear LORD God than with me. My concern is not so much for the sake of me and my child, but for the many pious Christian people who still need you. You don’t need to worry, my most beloved lord, for my sake. I commend you to his good will. But I hope and trust in God, that he will graciously preserve you.” And behold, just then Dr. Luther said: God be praised! I feel better! Then he went on to say: The LORD puts to death and brings to life, for he is the lord of the living and the dead. To him be thanks and glory and praise in eternity. Amen!

In the following year (1528) the plague pressed into Wittenberg and even into Luther’s house. The university was relocated in Jena and whoever could flee fled, but not Luther. He remained, and with tireless, freely offered love he comforted the sick and dying by the encouragement of God’s Word.

His experience of the many areas of the great ignorance of the people which he had observed as a visitor to the churches compelled him to produce his Small and Large Catechisms that year, in which he explained all the chief parts of Christian doctrine and, indeed, in such a brief but thorough manner that Matthesius is fully justified in saying of them: “Even if Luther had done nothing else beyond having completed both of these Catechisms, the world could never sufficiently thank Luther for it.” And the Lutheran Church has shown how highly she prizes them by having included the same in the list of her Christian confessional writings. In that great danger into which Germany had fallen through the incursion of the Turks in the Eastern kingdom Dr. Luther also published several encouraging writings in which he admonished as much to honest repentance and diligent prayer, as he also

faithfully warned against their devilish and lying religion, as well as their counterpart in the idolatry of the papacy.

Now since the arrival of Emperor Charles V and with the expectation of a new tribunal for the religious controversy, many wished that the split over the holy LORD's Supper might be resolved prior to this. With this objective, Landgrave Philip of Hesse, the originator of all such union attempts, invited Luther and other theologians to a colloquy at Marburg. Luther replied that he would, indeed, appear, that he desired peace, only he could not foresee any good outcome for the matter. For he believed the Zwinglians had some hidden agenda in mind. The colloquy itself lasted several days, and even though the Swiss, or the Reformed theologians, deferred to the Lutherans in every contested article and recanted their previous positions in writing, they would not do that in the article of the holy LORD's Supper, and they wanted to defer further discussion of it to a later time. Luther proved himself to be cordial to the Reformed and extended his hand to them, but he could not and would not consent to their desire that they acknowledge each other as brothers in faith so that no one could imagine he justified and approved of their false doctrine. As little as they were worthy to be called Christian brothers, and as correctly as Luther had seen through their treachery, hypocrisy and deceit, the witnesses wrote lies about it which they publicly disseminated, saying they had, of course, won Luther over at Marburg. So now as Satan in this manner sought to extinguish Luther's doctrine through lies, he also tried to do so openly through force. For the pope's prefect at the Council of Speier in the year 1529 decided that in every place the Lutheran doctrine had not yet been introduced, it would not be permitted in the future, and where this doctrine was now being confessed, nevertheless, the public observance of the holy LORD's Supper would not be permitted. Against this godless suppression of Luther's doctrine, the Elector of Saxony and with him other princes and cities, among whom a few of the Reformed minded were included, protested and thereby received the name "Protestants." The hostile reception of the emperor towards their emissaries occasioned further debate over the question of whether they should make a treaty amongst themselves and take up arms if a religious war broke out. But Luther talked the princes out of that with the full weight of his words in the writing, "Pursuing a Defense," by which you see what an outrageous injustice it is to make Luther the founder of the religious war that would later erupt.

At this time Dr. Luther complained that on the one side the papists were raging with fire, sword and every devil's might against the Gospel, while on the other side a flood of fanatical spirits and lusty, shallow hearts were flying and swarming around them with all the cunning of the devil, and also added: "besides that, the ingratitude and indifference of those among us ourselves." (L.W. XIV. 184.) Luther was inflamed in such zeal about this that he held forth a powerful sermon of repentance in the beginning of the year 1530 to his Wittenbergers, and publicly declared that he would no longer preach, and he also actually did not preach again for some time. His chief complaint from then on, which he kept repeating more often and more forcefully, was that most places where the pure divine Word was being most richly sown showed all too little fruit for it. Luke 8. But he also said: "If Christ, the Son of God, the most holy preacher, met with so much opposition, it is no wonder that John the Baptizer, the apostles, and we in our day also meet so much opposition!" (L. W. XVIII. 488.) When it is seen that wherever the Word of God is taught in its purity not many live as God's children as a consequence, one must certainly guard himself from the blasphemy of accounting the blame to God and his Word or the true doctrine. When the Word of God remains without fruit, it's because people refuse to believe and be saved. –

With the impending Diet at Augsburg, an attempt would be made once more to settle the religious disputes that arose with the papists. The elector of Saxony presented himself accompanied by Melanchthon and Dr. Jonas. But, for good reason, he left Luther behind at his castle in Coberg. As requested, Melanchthon composed the famous Augsburg Confession which consists of 28 Articles containing the most essential articles of the Christian doctrine, of course, in opposition to the papists. With this opportunity Melanchthon not only made 17 articles composed by Luther his foundation but, at the express command of the Elector, submitted them to Dr. Luther for approval, who testified to his complete agreement with them. His only notation he made besides that was to say he could not have walked so gently and deftly as Melanchthon. He also added: "Christ, our LORD, grant that they bring forth great and abundant fruits, as we hope and pray. Amen!" That's just what happened. For this confession was presented to the emperor at a public convening of the diet, in the presence of all stations of Roman government and in the name of the Lutheran princes and authorities. After it was first read and received, it was then later distributed in printed form in many lands. Many first received a legitimate introduction to Lutheran doctrine in that way and learned that it was in complete agreement with the holy Scripture and the doctrine of the ancient church. They also happily embraced it as their own. So Mathesius also most fittingly says of its significance: "No greater or higher work or more glorious confession has taken place since the time of the apostles 'til now, than this event in Augsburg in the presence of the whole Roman government." This confession, along with its apology, or defense and further explanation, composed by Melanchthon, has, ever since that time to the present, been claimed as one of her public, confessional writings. She acknowledges no one as one of her own who will not subscribe with no reservations to all the articles of this unaltered Augsburg Confession and its Apology. The Reformed would also hypocritically subscribe to these confessions. They assented to them while still not recanting their false confession of the LORD's Supper. That's why they also produced a separate confession where they publicly bore witness, even at this decisive event, to false doctrine in various articles they published therein, as a witness to their schism with the Lutheran Church.

While all this was taking place in Augsburg, Luther, in his "wilderness," as he called Coberg Castle, was not idle, but played an active role in everything. He gave good, Christian council, rich comfort and strong encouragement. He prayed three times each day there and daily sang his battle hymn: *A Mighty Fortress is our God*. He completed both his words, inspired by the 46th Psalm, as well as the tune at this time. He often also received absolution and the LORD's Supper. So Luther always maintained his confidence, even as he was constantly facing no small peril from his enemies. Along with all that, he had to be afflicted by the devil with all sorts of spiritual and physical maladies, as he had nine years before at the Wartburg. Even under these circumstances he worked on several other important projects, that is, he translated the Prophet Ezekiel into German and wrote an outstanding commentary on the 118th Psalm, which he called his *Confitemini* and his favorite psalm, because it had served him so well in his many afflictions. He comforted himself by writing verse 17 on all the walls, "I will not die but live and proclaim the works of the LORD," so that he never let this verse leave his sight.

At the conclusion of the diet, the Elector recalled Luther from Coberg again and accompanied him to Wittenberg. Now the question was repeatedly debated whether the Lutheran princes and rulers should enter into a religious alliance in case there should be trouble. Luther did not think it wise, since people's always putting their trust in human beings was the very reason that the prophets in the Old Testament vigorously opposed such treaties.

In the year 1531 Luther issued his warning to his beloved Germany so that she might not add fuel to the fire in the attack against the Gospel with those trying to quell the pure doctrine of the Gospel. That writing made such an impression, even on the emperor, that in the year 1533 a universal peace agreement was established, to which the good elector John contributed greatly. But the Lutheran Church was plunged into mourning once again at John's death which followed soon after. He fell asleep with Luther at his side and in the confession of Christ which he had presented two years before in Wittenberg. Luther spoke of this and of his many other virtues in the two funeral sermons he preached in the presence of many attentive witnesses.

Luther steadfastly stayed his course to promote God's Word, and published many beautiful works that year. Among others he wrote his useful commentaries on the Psalms, and, indeed, with unbelievable speed. He completed the whole project in less than 16 hours. He shows that he was a great warrior of Christ in his sermon on Eph. 6 "On the Christian's Armor and Weapons." But he also eloquently praised the pre-eminence of love as witnessed in his writing on 1 John 4.

When it was reported to Luther that the pastors in Frankfurt on the Main taught as Zwinglians did on the Sacrament (with the pretense that there was no difference between this and Luther's doctrine) and that they also rejected confession, in the year 1533 he wrote the powerful and compelling "Warning Letter to the Citizens of Frankfurt, That They Protect themselves from Zwingli and His Doctrine." He states the following in his conclusion, where he is giving instructions on confession: "Even if I had a thousand or a million worlds, I would rather lose them all than let the slightest move be made to remove confession from the church."

Luther sent several encouraging letters to Lutherans being harshly oppressed and persecuted by Duke George at that time. When he was condemned by George as a rebel who had perjured his vows, he gave a stout answer with the zeal of an Elijah.

In the year 1534, amidst God's extraordinary support, Dr. Luther completed the great work of translating the entire Bible into the German language, which he had begun in the year 1517 with the translation of the seven penitential Psalms, and on which he had expended much time and effort for 17 whole years. The difficulties he had to overcome in this great labor far surpass anyone's ability to put into words. That is, in the Old Testament, he often had to debate with himself over a single word for four weeks as he wanted to translate a Hebrew word into German, often being at a loss as to how to decide. Matthesius is quite right in saying, therefore, in describing this translation of the Bible as one of the greatest miraculous works that God performed through Doctor Luther. For that Bible makes an impression upon the attentive reader as if the Holy Ghost had spoken through the mouths of the prophets and the apostles in our German language. Therefore this translation not only surpasses earlier attempts, which were so awkward and almost completely incomprehensible, but also all the translations that followed, even to most recent times. So even in this, Luther still remains the master. His labor retains the prize. God has also crowned this work with his blessing, for through the millions of publications of this translation, the Word of God has not only spread through all of Germany, but also into many other lands through its further translation into many other languages. Along with that, a rich treasury of language was developed through this translation, from which the unique and powerful vocabulary of the church is taken, as found, above all, in Luther's writings, and out of which a foundation was thoroughly laid for the completion of the German language.

In the year 1535 the Anabaptists invented new blasphemies and misled many people. They rejected the written Word of God and

the holy Preaching Office. Blasphemously, they opposed the holy LORD's Supper and declared nothing is distributed in it but bread and wine. They disdained authority and led wild and crazed lives. They especially strove towards their own undoing in the city of Muenster, until they would finally defend their fanaticism with the force of arms. But against these foes of the Christian church Luther also mightily took up the sword of the Spirit, that is, the Word of God, in several writings. He faithfully warned against their heresies as well as against their raising up dishonest and itinerant preachers as teachers, along with those who put themselves forward as teachers without an orderly call through men.

At the end of that year a papal emissary, by the name of Paul Vergerius, came to German to announce a free church council which had long been promised. He also came with a great entourage to Wittenberg and summoned Luther. Now when it came to discussing the council, Luther explained that his opponents weren't serious about it, and even if it came about, then typically nothing of importance is seriously dealt with, not to mention what impacts faith and justification and legitimate unity in spirit and faith. At this Vergerius turned to those with him and said, "that really is the main point in the whole matter." But Luther added to this: "By the Holy Ghost we are certain about all these things. We don't need a council at all, but other poor people, who are so oppressed in tyranny do. For you people don't know what you believe. So go ahead and do what you want, and I will, God willing, come, even if I learn that you want burn me at the stake." This Vergerius became a committed Lutheran ten years later. For as he was hoping to become a Cardinal, he read Luther's writings most carefully in order to refute them, but by doing so, he became so convinced of the truth that he suddenly started writing, not against Luther, but against the papacy.

Among the many writings Luther produced that year, especially worthy of note is: *A Simple Way of Praying, for a Good Friend*. This is a short but magnificent instruction of how the first three chief parts of the Catechism should be used in prayer.

Luther's great desire and wish to unite with the Reformed and to extend his hand to them, yet without violating true doctrine, is seen once more at the so-called Wittenberg Concord. That is, in the year 1536, just before Pentecost, a few Reformed theologians, including Bucer, were sent to Wittenberg in order to once again discuss with Luther and the other theologians the articles of the holy LORD's Supper. In a preliminary discourse Luther showed why, up until that time, he had reason to be dubious about how honest the opponents were in pursuing this goal. He stated, especially to Bucer, that if he did not honestly intend to completely give up his ideas for the sake of a Concord so that the breach would be healed, then the evil situation would not only be made worse but their children would have to groan because of their sham. Now as Bucer was a bit taken aback, he assured him of his honest intentions, and sought to make amends for what had happened. So Luther demanded that they must recant and publicly renounce their previously advanced doctrine on the holy LORD's Supper as unchristian, since they desired to accept and embrace its true doctrine with the Lutheran Church. They must purely declare that in the Sacrament Christ's body and blood are substantially present in the bread and wine, even if those who receive it might be unworthy. This and other points were to be summarized by Melancthon and jointly signed by the Reformed and Lutheran theologians and read publicly from the lectern.

A portion of the Reformed bore witness of their joy at this Concord, but the Swiss did not want to accept the same, but produced new writings to oppose it. Only Bucer also quickly began to waver again, as did even Melancthon and others, who retained the Concord with him, but secretly acted in many ways to further bring a retreat from the true doctrine. They thereby introduced great harm which caused Luther great sorrow in the last years of his life. – ...

In the year 1537 the Lutheran princes convened an assembly at Smalcald, where they composed articles demanded of the Lutherans, to which they could all subscribe as their planned approach to the anticipated general Church council. The Lutheran Church has also received these Smalcald Articles in her list of public confessions. Luther was among those who traveled to Smalcald and he himself preached several significant sermons concerning the three articles of the Christian Creed and on Mt. 4.1f. There he presents a brief summary of the whole history of the church. He shows what the church of Christ and every single Christian must suffer from the devil, even as had Christ himself, her head. As the black devil, he tempted Christianity to fall away from Christ under external tyranny in the first three centuries. Since this was not successful, he attacked her as the white devil, with false appeals to the holy Scripture, through all sorts of heresies, especially that of Arius. Finally, as the divine devil in the papacy, he appointed worship of himself through self-chosen works and worship. But through the Word of God at the time of the Reformation that mask of divinity was finally torn from his face and his authority over all who believed this Word was taken away from him.

Yet while in Smalcald, Luther suffered a most painful attack of kidney stones, so that he himself and others thought they were watching him die. All the princes and lords who were present visited him and, as his pious elector approached his sick bed, Luther told him in prophetic spirit that after his death there would be a split in the University in Wittenberg. His doctrine would be changed: For even at that time Melancthon aroused suspicion that he could easily depart from the strictness of the truth for a false love of peace. The elector, in whom these words of Luther aroused great concern, testified to him steadfastly and decisively that if he knew of a certainty that the University would buy into Melancthon's departures, for all his scholarship and fame, he would rather lose him than allow departure from the truth, lest the University also be misled by it. Then he comforted the languishing Luther with these words: "Our dear LORD God will be gracious to us for the sake of his Word and Name, and he will, dear father, preserve your life." This said, he turned away, his eyes overflowing.

But as the pain kept getting worse, Luther wanted to return to Wittenberg. At the elector's insistence, his own carriage was lent for the trip, and he would be accompanied by an entourage equipped with every available resource to attend to the precious patient. Two princes' doctors were also commanded to employ all their skills for his recovery. As he departed from Smalcald, he commended himself to the prayers of the church and made his brief Christian confession: He would remain with the LORD Christ and his Word, and he knew no other righteousness in his heart than the precious blood of JESUS Christ, that purifies him and all who believe from all sins out of pure grace, as his books freely confess this, as well as the Augsburg Confession. At his parting he beckoned his friends: "May God fill you with hatred against the pope," that is, they should not only not become entangled with the pope's doctrine, but also be and remain steadfast, public enemies against his idolatries until their end. So, already upon mounting the carriage, he had made his testament and, should his LORD Christ come to take him, he was ready to receive him with joy. But behold, the LORD suddenly delivered him to total health after eleven painful days. This happened in Tambach, a little village in the Thuringian forest. Therefore, filled with thanks and praise, he wrote there: "This is my Peniel. The LORD himself has appeared to me," as back when he had wrestled, blessed and reconciled the Patriarch Jacob (Gen. 32.30). When he was asked the means by which he had been helped from his stones, he answered: "Prayer." For he said, in all the Christian congregations they have prayed for me, according to the command in James, Chapter 5.14,15.

In Gotha, representatives of the Reformed Churches of the overlords, Bucer and Lycosthenes, responding to the summons of the previous year for concordia, should have traveled to Smalcald. Although Luther was apparently in a weakened condition, he still invited them to meet with him and spoke with them in a cordial manner. Among other things, he told them the best thing for the matter would be for them to be silent and to teach what is right and, from then on, to confess purely and roundly like this: Dear friends, God has let us fall and we have erred, let us now be wary and learn what is right. For errant thoughts are worthless and a raw conscience will not be quieted by straying so. God will also demand of us a strict accounting for the doctrine, therefore since our office is from God we are not permitted to surrender a thing. From this whole discussion, as well as the associated letters of Luther, it is clearly seen that the suggestion of the Reformed that he had acceded to their doctrine, is utterly baseless. For while he extended every possible hospitality and kept his hopes alive for the best, as he had in the beginning, yet in doctrine he wouldn't retreat from his earlier confession a hair's breadth.

In Wittenberg, after Luther recovered his health, he resumed his fervent prayer, study, lecturing and preaching. Of course, he lectured his exposition on the farewell address of Christ according to John Chapters 14-16, which Dr. Creutziger copied down and then submitted for publication. Luther himself declared this work to be the best book he had produced, but added to that with great humility: "though I did not do it, Dr. Creuziger has proven his great understanding and ample abilities in this work."

Now while Luther apparently had peace from his external enemies and saw with joy that for all of their bristling and defiance they did not accomplish much and, to the contrary, more and more cities and countries were receiving the Gospel, yet in the year 1538 a secret schism arose amidst his own students, which deeply troubled Luther. For false teachers arose, who banned the doctrines of both the law and of good works from the Church, and wanted to bring the people to repentance only through the preaching of Christ crucified, which is why they were called assailants of the law, or antinomians.

Now when, to no avail, Luther confronted the instigator, John Agricola, to publicly take responsibility for the writings he had published anonymously, Luther saw that it was necessary to personally oppose this dangerous heresy in his own writings and disputations. At the time he said to his faithful student, Mathesius, at table: "You will see just who will be stirred up against this school and church (in Wittenberg) and will write against her so long as our people remain in pure doctrine. They will be all the greatest heretics and most shameful enthusiasts."

At this time Luther issued the three chief Creeds (the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian, which form the basis for the Book of Concord) in a German translation along with a beautiful exposition, in which he briefly and succinctly treats the article of the holy Trinity and, especially the deity of JESUS Christ. He also composed an extensive exposition on the 51st Psalm and based the doctrine of repentance, and all it embraces, upon it in such a compelling and comforting manner that among the many similar masterpieces of Luther, this one especially stands out.

In the year 1539 Luther had to see how the people who had been freed from the oppression of the papacy were abusing their freedom as they were becoming ever wilder and secure, despising the servants of the church and refusing to be admonished by them. Then Luther bore vocal and public witness that God would rage against that rank ingratitude directed against his holy Word through corporal punishments, and through powerful heresies after his death, which also actually took place. Luther also had to hear the same old complaints over the lives of many of the preachers who, indeed, had left their cloisters but would not abandon the sins of the same.

In April of the year 1539 a grim foe of Luther's doctrine, George, Duke of Saxony, died. His death had been precipitated by the

sudden death of both heirs to his throne. So the possession of this portion of Saxony fell to his brother, Duke Henry, who had already introduced the Reformation into his territory and now, along with most of his subjects, immediately desired that the Gospel, which had been suppressed so long, be proclaimed. This happened first in Leipzig at the holy festival of Pentecost, where especially Luther preached in the presence of the duke. Thus was fulfilled what he had foretold long before: "I see that Duke George never ceases to persecute the preaching of God's Word and the poor Lutherans, yes, he becomes ever more wrathful, but I will live to see the day when his whole lineage will be removed by God and I will yet preach God's Word in Leipzig."

Now even though this precious Luther was feeling the increasing infirmities of age, yet he tirelessly carried on his teaching of the divine Word. He wrote a most exhaustive commentary on the 110th Psalm, as well as some others, and showed therein the nature of the kingdom of Christ, that is, that Christ is our eternal King and High Priest, and all Christians that have faith in him are lords over all their foes, and are spiritual priests. He did this being filled abundantly by the Spirit. In this same year, in that most instructive writing, "Of the Church and Councils," Luther most eloquently reports from history that the general Christian Councils never produced new articles of faith, but had only defended the ancient faith against heretical innovations.

In the year 1540 God heeded Luther's prayer in an extraordinary, wondrous manner. That is, Melanchthon had become fatally ill in Wiemar as a consequence of his having severely lost his nerve. The elector immediately sent his carriage to fetch Luther. As he arrived, Melanchthon was laying in the throes of death. Luther was violently jarred at this, but immediately turned to his God in fervent prayer and held before him all his promises from his holy Scripture to hear prayer. He took Melanchthon by the hand and said: "Take courage, Philip, you will not die." And since he knew the reason for this lethal illness, he said: "Even if God has reason to kill, yet he does not desire the death of the sinner, but that he repent and live, he desires life and not death, and since God has called and received the greatest sinners that have ever lived upon the earth, that is, Adam and Eve, into his grace, much less will he reject you, Philip, or give up on you, or abandon you to your sins and melancholy. Therefore do not give place to this spirit of sorrow and do not be the cause of your own death, but commit yourself to the LORD, who can kill and make alive." Philip himself confessed, "I would have died, if I had not been ripped away from the midst of death at Luther's coming." Luther experienced a similar heeding of his prayer on two other occasions so that he could say: "I prayed our Philip, and my Katie, and Myconium away from death."

In the fall of the year 1540 Melanchthon traveled with several theologians to Worms to a religious discussion with the papists. Luther did not accompany them, but said: "God has granted many good, learned people, who understand his Word and have grown into the fullness of the Head." At their parting he blessed them and spoke many powerful words to them, including the following: "Go there in the Name of God, as those who are sent by JESUS Christ, and hold fast to the simple Word, and surrender nothing that is our LORD JESUS Christ's, as you also have no authority to do so." Since at this discussion the adversaries could not produce anything against Melanchthon's foundations, they delayed the continuation of the same until the approaching diet at Regensburg in the year 1541. At this diet the papists presented a paper, commonly called the Regensburg Interim, which should serve as a bases for discussion between the two sides and also, where possible, a basis for unification. When he was asked for his counsel on the matter, Luther alone clearly demonstrated that the opponents' plan, especially concerning the article of justification, would do nothing but put a new patch on an old cloth, by which the division would only be aggravated (Mt. 9.16). But in hope that

Luther might still be forced into making a compromise, several of the opposing princes, with the foreknowledge of the emperor, decided to send a friendly group of emissaries to Luther. This took place and upon the oral presentation of the emissaries, Luther responded orally, but then also gave a written reply to its content: If the first four articles, especially the one on justification, will be purely and clearly preached and regarded as Christian, then they will remove the poison in the ten other articles, and through the clear report of the four first articles and through their being applied by means of legitimate preaching, the last ten will also be brought into agreement with them. In his unsurpassable history of Lutheranism, Baron von Seckendorf boasts with respect to the decisiveness in Luther's writing style, as well as his wisdom in his handling the opposition, but especially with respect to the steadfastness he evidenced here, that this reply of Luther, in this application of the Reformation, was one of the most important. For as all of the threats of Cajatan in Augsburg and of the emperor in Worms had not been able to scare Luther, so here not even the flattery of such amiable emissaries was capable of seducing him into sinful concessions. Only the opposing party would not even consider this response of Luther and again differed the whole matter to the impending general council. If shortly after Luther's death the princes and theologians had not been able to emulate Luther's reply, to cobble together a response to the Interim, they never would have been up to the task.

Around this time this most worthy Luther had been visited by God with many sorts of physical maladies and afflictions, which is why he constantly had his death on his mind and called upon God for a blessed time of death. He was also thereby severely hindered in his work and was forced several times to vacate his pulpit before the end of his sermon. Often he could not start reading a letter without having to stop 2 or 3 times. But despite this, he published several glorious writings. Besides the beautiful commentary on the songs of the exalted choir (Ps. 120-135), he published two sermons on the Baptism of Christ and of the Christian based on Mt. 3, which he preached in Dessau at the Baptism of a prince. He issued a very serious admonition to the pastors to preach forcefully against usury, which he was convinced was already so prevalent that he didn't dare hope for things to improve. He also published that excellent exposition of the 90th Psalm which was so improved from the original publication that one does well to distinguish between the two.

In the year 1542 Luther installed Nicholas Amsdorf, whom the elector had chosen as the Lutheran Bishop in Naumburg and Zeitz, to this holy office and consummated his public installation by preaching a sermon in which he gave the paradigm for the consecration of a true Lutheran bishop, that he would further expand in a written work that would appear under the same title a short time later.

In this year the Bohemian Brethren, as related by their bishop, Comenius, sent two representatives to Luther for the fourth and final time in order to hear in retrospect what results they might expect from the purification of the church. After they had spent two weeks in cordial conversation with him and the other theologians, at their parting he invited them to be his guests anytime, extended his hand to them in the presence of the professors present, and said: "You are the apostles to the Bohemians, as we desire to be apostles to the Germans. Carry on the work of Christ amongst you as you also are granted opportunity, and we will also carry it forth as it is granted among us." But Luther always uses that term, work of the LORD, such that he, above all, provide the church with pure doctrine, whereby the legitimate faith will be planted and nourished as a good tree, which, with that, also constantly not only shows how such a good tree of itself will bring forth good fruits in a pious life, but also, through her writings and constitution, as the circumstances demand, instituting a fine, honest, external church order for all

that is good, as witnessed in all Lutheran church orders from the age of the Reformation during her entire existence.

At the end of the year 1542 Luther was cheered by a lengthy letter from some brothers in Italy. Through his writings they'd come to the knowledge of the truth. It revealed their inexpressible joy stemming from their prizing pure doctrine, a lively zeal to defend it, a decisive rejection of all heresies, of course, even in the dissension over the Sacrament, a great steadiness in persecution, a deep respect for the extraordinary gifts of Luther and an enthusiastic appraisal of his writings from their own experiences. To give a little taste of this most laudatory letter, as there is not enough room here to share it in its entirety, it might serve to merely quote its beginning, which says: "The streams of living waters that flow, most honorable sir, from your person, must grow, more and more, through this heavenly rain, by which you might water the thirsty fields of the LORD daily, ever more richly and beneficially, as much by your preaching as also here through your writing." What joy must these orthodox people have experienced at their reception of the outstanding reply of Luther, wherein, of course, he gives them a fatherly warning against the sacramentarians.

In the year 1543 the Lutheran Church was once again surrounded by many sorts of external dangers. But Luther also evidenced here a strong trust in his God and predicted, with most perceptive insight, that war would not break out during his lifetime.

As Caspar Schwenkfeld sought to dress the old heresies about the sacrament in a new robe and thereby misled many people in Silesia, a few of his pamphlets were sent to Luther. So he replied to them with as coarse words as he could employ and roundly wrote him: He would not let himself be confused by this pamphlet which the devil had puked out of him. Luther displayed this same zeal against false doctrine at this time in a similar situation: For when a publisher had sent him a Swiss translation of the Bible, he wrote to him: He could just keep his gift, because it is a product of preachers with whom he could have no fellowship since they would not give up their heresies.

The foes from outside of Christianity also attacked Luther in a number of powerful writings. He published a refutation against the Koran, the religious book of the Turks, that had appeared earlier in the German language, and in its forward faithfully gave warning against its demonic teaching. In the year 1543 he produced several writings against the Jews, wherein he revealed many beautiful texts of the Bible which the Jews had displaced with their lies. As he purified them from those lies, he revealed their blasphemy against God and their wickedness against Christ and his Christians. He also believed at that time, as he had earlier, in a future universal conversion of the Jews. In that year the important writing on the final words of David (2 Sam. 23. 1-17.) was issued, where he issues a very spirited and serious, powerful witness to the three persons of the holy Trinity and the two natures in the single, undivided person of the LORD Christ, which can make every single Christian steadfast in his faith and defend him against every single heresy.

With Luther's advancing age the infirmities of age, crept more and more into his mortal shell, as he still tirelessly advanced his part of the whole task of Reformation and, as a true watchman upon the walls of Zion, his eyes were directed in every direction, and his burning desire for the maintenance of pure doctrine compelled him to issue several important writings, especially against the sacramentarians. Of course, when Schwenkfeld criticized Luther's coarse and brazen response mentioned above, saying if it weren't for his tone he might agree with him, this occasioned him in the year 1544 to write: "A Short Confession of the Holy LORD's Supper against the Enthusiasts," of which he says of himself: "Since I am on my way to my grave, I will take this witness and this boast along with me before the judgment seat of

my dear LORD and Savior, JESUS Christ, that I have made every effort to condemn and repel the enthusiasts and the foes of the sacraments, Carlstadt, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Stenckfeld and their disciples in Zurich and wherever they might be, and still daily use every sermon we preach every day against their blasphemous and deceptive heresy, as they are well aware."

In the year 1545, Melancthon, in preparation for the diet at Worms, published the so-called Wittenberg Concerns for the Reformation, to which Luther also subscribed. On that occasion he bore witness that it is impossible to remain with God's Word and keep a good conscience and, at the same time, receive the world's favor and the glory of her approval.

Shortly before his death, Luther had to encounter many bitter experiences, especially in Wittenberg, which caused his soul greater pain than anything else, through the godlessness of the peoples' lives. This had finally brought him, in the year 1545, to the point of having to hurriedly depart from the city and stay with friends in Merseburg and Zeitz. Only a very gracious letter from his elector, in which he made a compelling case for the university, and promised to use all his powers to settle all the controversies, moved him to return to Wittenberg again. There he finished his sixth and last publication of his German Bible, which production he had delayed for input from his scholarly colleagues, and on which he labored with great effort and, along with that, had made many great notes which came to be known by the name "marginal glosses." He also finished one of his greatest master works, his extensive commentary on the first book of Moses, on which he had lectured for ten years, though with many interruptions. Finally he published that important and powerful writing: "The Papacy, Invented by the Devil," and this was his last book.

At the beginning of the year 1546, a religious conference between the contending parties was once again to be convened at the command of the emperor in Regensberg, to which Dr. Major of Wittenberg was to be sent. But as he was going to Luther to take his leave, upon entering his study he found these words written in Luther's hand: "Our professors must be examined concerning the LORD's Supper."

In one of his last sermons Luther admonished his hearers to pray diligently and to test the spirits and if they should hear that he was ill, they should not pray for his life to be prolonged, but only pray for grace in his little hour. "I have," he said, "had enough of the world and the world is gladly rid of me, as a guest leaves an Inn." – Luther's final sermon is also especially noteworthy, which he preached on the 17th of January, based on Romans 12.3ff in which he treats the fruits of faith on Christ as well as of reason and its thoughts. He says, among other things: "Usury, drunkenness, killing and murder, etc., is noted by and even understood as sin by the world, but reason, the devil's bride, that beautiful whore, marches in and wants to be wise, and what she says she imagines to be the Holy Ghost. Then who can help? Not the lawyers, doctors, nor kings nor emperors. For reason is the greatest whore the devil pimps, for other coarse sins can be seen, but no one can judge reason. So there she goes, wreaking havoc with the Baptism and LORD's Supper of the enthusiasts, imagining that everything that occurs to her and that the devil places in her heart must be the Holy Ghost. That is why Paul says: 'As truly as I am an apostle and God has given me the Holy Ghost, so I admonish you.'" In this sermon Luther also had foretold the ruin the Lutheran church would have to experience shortly after Luther's death, for he says: "I see before my eyes, if God will not give us faithful preachers and servants of the church, then the devil will sift our church through fanatical spirits and he will not let up or stop until he has wiped it out. This is, in short, his whole plan. If he cannot do it through the pope and the emperor, then he will bring it about through those who are not unanimous with us in the pure doctrine. For that reason it is of utmost importance that you pray

from your heart that God would grant us pure doctrine. We are not safe and do not see how horribly the prince of this world is pursuing us from all directions through the pope, the emperor and our scholars, and saying: What harm can it do if you yield just a little? No, we must not yield even a hair's breadth. If they want to retain it with us, fine, if they don't, so be it. I did not receive the doctrine from them, but rather through God's divine grace. I am fully conscious of what I'm saying. Therefore earnestly pray to God that he allow you his Word, else it will have grave consequences." At the end of this sermon the publisher notes the same with specific application to the University at Wittenberg: "Dr. Martin Luther of blessed remembrance, had often said these words in the presence of many other reliable witnesses and also in the presence of Dr. Augustin Schurf: After my death none of these theologians will remain steadfast. And unfortunately this was also fulfilled."

Now as already in the fall of the previous year Luther had traveled to Eisleben at the request of the Counts of Mansfeld, who wanted to bring about an agreement between them and their subjects over mining conditions, but this had not been accomplished, he returned there at the beginning of 1546 to that end. He himself said he had been compelled to depart from Wittenberg for the Counts of Mansfeld's purposes, so that he would have a rest from his daily work and routine and he wanted to go merely to pray and preach at Eisleben and to admonish his lords unto unity and peace. So he set off from Wittenberg with his three sons on the following Saturday, after that last sermon of his, on the 23rd of January, and they arrived in Halle on the following Sunday, where he visited with his faithful friend, Dr. Jonas. He preached there throughout the entire day. Since it was the feast of the conversion of St. Paul, he preached on the Acts of the Apostles 9.1-19, on the call of St. Paul into the apostolic office. He especially praised the writings of this apostle as the legitimate sanctuary, compared to which all the invented sanctuaries of the papacy, and especially the supposed head of St. Paul, displayed in St. Peter's church in Rome, is to be considered as nothing.

After he had a brush with death on his journey over the Saale River on a barge and had been received at the border of Mansfeld by the Counts and more than one hundred cavalry, he entered with this company into Eisleben, but drawing near to the city he became so weak that they feared for his life, yet he felt better and he remained three weeks in Eisleben. He personally took part in the business of negotiations up to a day before his end. Only that business was obstructed time and again through the fault of the lawyers so that Luther determined that should he live any longer he would write a special book just against them. During the course of his stay in Eisleben he yet conferred ordination on two pastors and received absolution and the holy LORD's Supper twice. He also preached four sermons, as he was always ever ready to preach, as he had confessed of himself that over the last 25 years he had often preached four sermons in a single day. Despite all of his physical weakness, in these four sermons Luther yet once more with great zeal presented a most powerful witness to all the chief articles of the Christian doctrine and against all the heresies of the papacy, the sacramentarians and the enthusiasts that mitigated against them. At the conclusion of his last sermon, three days before his end, he took formal leave of his dear friends in Eisleben with the words: "Now after I have been here for quite a long period of time and have preached to you and now must depart and might preach no longer, so I want to bless you by this, and I have prayed that you would strive to remain with the Word, that your preachers and pastors would faithfully teach of God's grace, and I commend you to pray that God would defend you against all the wise people and all people who despise the doctrine of the Gospel, for they have often caused great harm and still might." He then concluded his last sermon with this wish: "The dear God grant grace that we receive his precious Word with

thanksgiving, to receive it and grow in faith in the remembrance of his Son, our LORD JESUS Christ, and remain to the end in the steadfast confession of his holy Word. Amen." –

He prayed, as had always been his habit even apart from this, every evening in his study before an open window with great zeal for a good while, whereupon he joyously turned again to his friends as if a great weight had been lifted off of him, and spoke with them for another half an hour and then went to bed. In these, his last days, many important addresses and encouraging phrases were heard from his mouth around the dinner table. On the 17th of February his weakness became so apparent that he was advised to retire and rest, which he also did. On the last evening, among others, he answered questions as to whether believers would also know each other in that other world, which he proved by Adam, who had recognized the woman made from his rib as his own flesh, since he had been full of the Spirit and the knowledge of God. Then he went into his study and prayed as was his custom, especially also for the church of his fatherland, but soon complained that he was feeling pain in his chest. He took the medicine offered him and at about 8 o'clock laid down on his bed, where he said: "If I might nap for half an hour, I hope I will feel better." Now he slept gently until about 10 o'clock, when he awakened, stood up and said, as he was in the threshold of his bedroom: "God grant that I go to bed, into your hands I commend my spirit. You have redeemed me, LORD, you faithful God." When he had laid down in bed he extended his hand to all, received good nights and said: "Dr. Jonas and Judge Coeli and all of you, pray before our LORD God that his Gospel would please him, for that council in Trent and that miserable Pope must sorely enrage him."

As the clock struck one, he awakened and said: "Oh, LORD God, I have such pain! Oh dear Dr. Jonas, I will remain here in Eisleben where I was born and baptized." Now he again left his bed chamber, went into the study and repeated: "Into your hands I commend my spirit, you have redeemed me, LORD, you faithful God." As he was breaking out in a sweat for the warmth of the room and being massaged, those standing around him, especially the counts and all the other friends who had rushed to be with him, uttered their hope to him that he would improve. He replied: "Yes, it is a cold death sweat, I will yield my spirit, for my illness is getting worse." Whereupon he prayed: "O my heavenly Father, God and Father of our LORD JESUS Christ, you God of all comfort, I thank you that you have revealed your dear Son, JESUS Christ to me, upon whom I believe, whom I have preached and confessed, whom I have loved and praised, whom the deplorable pope and all the godless mock, persecute and blaspheme. I pray you, LORD JESUS Christ, let my soul be commended to you. O heavenly Father, if I soon must forsake this body and be taken away out of this life, yet I know of a certainty that I remain by you forever and no one can pluck me out of your hand."

He went on to say in Latin: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that all who believe in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Jn. 3.16. And the Words from the 68th Psalm: "We have one God who helps them and the LORD of lords who redeems from death." As a pill gave him yet one more surge of strength, he took it and said once again: "I depart, I will yield my spirit," whereupon he rapidly repeated three times in Latin the Words: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit, you have redeemed me, you faithful God." Then he started to lay quietly with hands folded and eyes closed. They beckoned him, but he did not reply. Then Jonas and Coelius addressed him with loud voices: "Venerable father, do you want to die steadfast upon Christ and the doctrine as you have preached it?" Then he said, so that all could hear him: "Ja," and this was his last word. Then he turned over upon his right side and began to sleep for almost a quarter of an hour. Those attending him even began to embrace new hope, when his face went pale. His hands and feet grew cold,

he took but one deep but gentle breath and with that he gave up his spirit into the hands of his faithful God, peacefully and with great patience, and thus fell asleep, after his final illness had lasted only around seven hours, without distress, without pain of body or the tumults of death, gently and peacefully in the LORD, on the 18th of February, 1546, as on the day of Concordia's dawning, between 2 and 3 o'clock in the 63rd year of his pilgrimage on earth. . .

The sad news of Luther's death spread rapidly throughout the city and countryside. A great crowd of people of every station hastened there to draw near his precious body with heated tears. Early on the 19th of Feb., the news of Luther's death reached Wittenberg and universal dismay and great anxiety arose. The professors gave Melancthon the commission to make this painful news known to the students. He did this in a brief announcement in Latin and therein used the Word of Elisha at the ascension of the prophet Elijah (2 Kings 21.12), which he had also applied to him before: "this is then the chariot of Israel and its driver, who ruled the church in this last age of the world." The procession of Luther's body was, indeed, regal, as on the 19th of February the body was laid in a pewter coffin amidst Christian hymns, carried into the main church in Eisleben and placed before the altar, where Dr. Jonas preached a funeral sermon based on 1 Thess. 4.13 – 18, on the person and gifts of Dr. Luther, on the resurrection and eternal life, and the power his death would leave behind him against Satan's kingdom. That evening the elector's reply to the report received by him arrived, according to which the body was to be brought to Wittenberg for burial. On the following day, that is, the 20th of Feb., the pastor of Eisleben, Mag. Eblius, preached an excellent funeral sermon on the Words of Is. 57.1-2, whereupon the body was led out of Eisleben with great reverence. A crowd beyond numbering surrounded the hearse amidst loud lamenting and painful cries and almost every town echoed these sounds of mourning. As the body arrived late that evening before the gates of Halle, it was received with great honor and placed in the Church, accompanied by that hymn of Luther: From Deepest Woe I Cry to Thee, more sobbed than sang. On the next day the body moved on, solemnly received in every place, and led to and,

at length, arriving, on the 22nd of February, at Wittenberg. Here the funeral procession moved amidst hymns and the ringing of every bell in the following order to the Castle Church. In front were the school choirs and the assembled clerics, then the electoral commissioners and the counts of Mansfeld on horseback, followed by 60 riders, followed by the quadruple widthed funeral wagon, with a great, expensive funeral pall draped in black, a gift of the elector. After the funeral wagon came Luther's widow and his four children, as well as other relatives; followed by the Rector of the University in his robes, accompanied by the students of ruling and noble classes, followed by the assembled faculty, the whole city council, the great mass of students and the assembled citizenry. After the body was brought into the Castle Church, Dr Bugenhagen preached an excellent sermon on 1 Thess. 4. 13-14 but in which he and his hearers often broke out in profuse tears. At the conclusion, Melancthon gave yet another address in Latin, whereupon the body was lowered into the vault in the chancel area, where Luther in his lifetime had delivered many powerful sermons, and, as Paul said, he was sown in weakness so he will rise on that latter day in eternal glory.

May the eternal heavenly Father, who had called this Dr. Martin Luther to his great work, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST, whom he faithfully preached and confessed, and the Holy Ghost, who had given him such joy and such great courage through his divine power in many exulted battles against all the gates of hell, gant us all such a Christian departure from this life and the same eternal bliss.

In conclusion, I call to you, my dear reader, in the Words from Hebrews 13.7: "Remember your teachers, who have spoken to you the Word of God, look to their end and follow after them in faith." For it is Luther and it will remain him, of whom, above all the teachers of Christianity since the holy Apostles, the words of Sirach (Ch. 39.12 – 15.) apply: "Many were astounded by his wisdom and it will never be destroyed. He will never be forgotten and his name will remain forever and ever. What he taught, will continue to be preached and the congregation will praise him. While he lived his name was greater than that of 1000's of others, and long after his death his name shall endure."

The Evangelical Church in North America

By C.F.W. Walther

(Issues 11 - 14)

Under this title, in the "*Theophilus*", a religious newspaper appearing in Zanesville, Ohio, (in the 11th issue of the same) it is reported that the "German Evangelical Church Union of the West," established in 1840, has held its seventh convention in October of this past year in the Gravois Settlement, near St. Louis, Mo., and that 6 ordained pastors and 3 candidates attended. The pastors named as officers of the union for the coming year are: Garlichs in Femme Osage, Mo., Nollau in Gravois Settlement, Mo., and Riess in Centerville, Illinois. Also reported are the adapted statutes, in 16 paragraphs, as they have been adapted and ratified at the 1843 Convention (a summary of conditions). The attributes of the church, whose growth is the goal of this association, is stated in the sixth, as the only unalterable paragraph of the statutes, which is, of course, quoted as follows: "The members of this association acknowledge the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God and the only norm of faith, and confess with it the expositions of the Scriptures which are stated in the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran and the Evangelical Reformed churches of Germany, insofar as these agree with the same."

This confession states, as clear as day, that the members of this association have made an attempt to create a pathway to create, here also, the union or unification of Lutheran and Reformed Churches into one so-called Evangelical Church, as it has been forced by officials in most of the territories of Germany since 1817 (especially in Prussia, Nassau, in the province of Hanau in electoral Hessen, in Rhenesh Bavaria, Waldeck and Pymont, Baden, Hessen-Darmstadt, Anhalt-Bernburg). Now if this union were the sort of church unification which was founded upon the same faith and upon the mutual acceptance of the truth, it would thereby be a powerful evidence that those who previously were in error had finally confessed their errors, renounced them and received the truth, then obviously anyone who is a Christian would, with all his heart, wish for the best outcome for these men in their good plans, and who should not be prepared to join with them and to most joyfully sacrifice wealth and health if necessary for their most holy goal. Yes, woe to the hand that would not dare to lift a finger for such a God pleasing work(!) to give God his glory for this and not begrudge salvation for souls bought at such a great price. We on our part can, in truth, assure you that we are deeply saddened by the divisions in Christianity, that we take no pleasure