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# WHAT LUTHER TAUGHT



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## WORKS QUOTED

The following are the editions of Luther's works to which reference is made in these articles: "*M. Luthers sämtliche Werke*", Erlangen, "*M. Lutheri Exegetica Opera Latina*" and "*M. Lutheri Opera Latina, etc.*," Erlangen; "*Dr. Martin Luthers Werke*," Weimar; the Halle edition, by J. G. Walch; and the earliest of all collections, the Wittenberg Edition, "*Dr. Martin Luthers Briefwechsel*," edited mainly by Enders, and "*M. Luthers Briefe*," collected by M. De Wette. Quotations are likewise given from "*D. Martini Lutheri Colloquia, etc.*," Bindseil, "*Tagebuch über Dr. Martin Luther*," Cordatus; and other editions of Luther's Tabletalk, etc. The works of historians and biographers cited in the various articles are sufficiently indicated in their proper places. The three great Catholic classics upon this subject are Janssen-Pastor, Denifle and Grisar. The latter has gathered into his "Luther" the most vital passages that are to be found in the "Reformer's" voluminous works. The references are all to Grisar's original German edition. An English translation is being published by Herder.

## I. Luther and Freedom of Thought

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J.

LUTHER has often been hailed as the champion of freedom of thought. Men were "emancipated" by him from the spiritual authority of the Pope to whom Christ had committed the keys of His Kingdom and the care of His flock. But for the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff, the successor of St. Peter, Luther substituted his own authority which brooked no rivalry or contradiction. "We believed," wrote the Protestant theologian Braun in the *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung* for March 30, 1913, "that we owed to him the spirit of toleration and liberty of conscience. Yet there is not a shadow of truth to this." Discerning Protestant critics admit it was never Luther's wish that there should be religious toleration for anyone except himself. "In speaking of Luther," says the Protestant historian Walter Köhler, "there can be absolutely no question of liberty of conscience or freedom of religion." (*Reformation und Ketzerprocess.*)

It is true that at times Luther apparently preached a doctrine of toleration, as when he said that neither Pope nor angel might presume to rob the Faithful of their liberty; but that liberty was to consist solely in an enforced conformity with every article of his creed, even the least. In the beginning of his career the Reformer demanded full freedom for the preaching of his doctrine which stood in such startling opposition to the Faith of fifteen centuries of Christianity. "As for combating heretics," he declared, "let the Bishops see to that. It is their function, not the office of princes; for heretics can

never be combated by force. . . . Here the Word of God must do battle." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XXII, p. 90.) Yet no one ever more studiously urged the princes to apply force when there was question of advancing his own doctrine and prohibiting every other. Therefore the words quoted, though often cited by his eulogists, are not meant to convey any principle of general religious toleration.

To establish this thesis it will be sufficient to consider the Reformer's attitude towards his fellow-Protestants. His intolerance of Catholics and their doctrines is too patent to call for proof. In his final work, "The Papacy an Institution of the Devil," the last will and testament of a hatred that verged upon insanity, he wrote: "Hang up the Pope, the Cardinals, and all the Papal rabble. Tear out their blaspheming tongues, and fix them on a gibbet, as they clap their seals to their Bulls." As for the Jews, he demanded in his work, "About the Jews and Their Lies," that their synagogues be burned, their houses broken down and destroyed and their rabbis forbidden to teach under pain of death. "Force them to work," he exclaims, "and treat them with every kind of severity, as Moses did in the desert and slew 3,000." (Erlangen Ed. Vol. XXXII, p. 99, etc.) Further illustrations would be superfluous.

In vain did his fellow-sectaries, to whom he had given the example of separation from the Mother Church, claim for themselves the privilege of private interpretation of the Scriptures. They might indeed have it, he said imperiously, but they must in that case agree with him on every point of his new doctrine, for "On the foundation of the Holy Scriptures I have overwhelmed and overcome all my opponents." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. LVIII, p. 6.) To disagree with him was dishonesty which deserved



punishment. Writing to the Elector, John of Saxony, February 9, 1526, Luther urged him, in the name of law and order, to permit no other doctrine besides his own: "In one place there should be one kind of sermon only."

Luther's proposed methods of dealing with those who ventured in any way to differ from him in religious belief is fully set forth in his explanation of Psalm 82. He distinguishes two classes of heretics. The first embraces all those who without authoritative commission from the Lutheran princes thrust themselves into the office of preaching. Such men he regarded not merely as a source of spiritual danger but as a possible cause of public disorder in a town where no Scripture interpretation except that of Luther was to be permitted by the public authorities. Any citizen who hears such a one is under obligation, by his oath as a citizen, Luther says, to denounce him to the city officials. "If he does not desist, the authorities will commend such a fellow to the proper master, the Master Executioner." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XXXIX, pp. 250-254.) The popular name given to the latter was "*Meister Hans*." Luther's frequent allusions to him are to be taken seriously, for they were acted upon by the local princes and brought many a poor fellow to the block or to the stake. In the year 1527 alone twelve men and one woman were executed by the Elector John, Luther's special favorite at this time. (Grisar, Vol. III, p. 735.)

It is true that in the case of the Anabaptists there had been considerable disorder. Yet perfectly peaceful citizens were executed for their religious beliefs only. "It is characteristic of the want of information concerning the real happenings of the epoch," writes the Protestant historian of the Reformation, L. Keller, "that very many

even at the present day proceed on the supposition that the executions and persecutions of the Anabaptists took place merely because of public disturbances, and that the Reformers had no part in them." (*Ibid.*, p. 747.) Of these same executions, which form but one phase of Luther's "mania for persecution," as a Protestant historian calls it, P. Wappler, likewise a Protestant author says :

The numerous executions of such Anabaptists as, according to evidence, were no disturbers of the peace, yet who were killed in precise conformity with the directive explanations of the Wittenberg theologians, give too plain a testimony against all attempts of writers who would still deny the clear fact that Luther approved of the death penalty inflicted *for the exclusive reason of heresy*. ("*Die Stellung Kursachsens, etc.*" p. 125.)

The second class of heretics, according to Luther's category, includes those who are entirely peaceful but presume "to preach publicly against an article of faith." They do not fare at his hands much better than the first class, and in practice, as we have seen, were often made to suffer the death-penalty. "These too are not to be suffered," Luther says of them, "but are to be punished as public blasphemers." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XXXIX, pp. 250-254.)

Luther did not give vent to his "mania for persecution" all at once. As late as 1528 he had not advocated the death-penalty for Anabaptists, but was content with approving the edict which interdicted their writings and those of other heretics. In 1530, however, he wrote the plain words quoted above in which Anabaptists and all other heretics were, under the given circumstances, commended to the tender mercies of the Master Executioner. In one word, as the Protestant historian, H. Barge, ad-



mits in his work, "*Andreas Bodenstein*," Luther's method of preserving the purity of his doctrine was "to mobilize the police." His last argument was the hangman.

In defending his actions Luther constantly writes that he does not in reality force men to believe against their consciences, but that he merely makes them conform outwardly, by forcing them to attend Lutheran instructions, build Lutheran schools and churches, and support the men who preach his doctrine. It is difficult to see how any further compulsion could possibly be exercised. "They must be forced to hear the sermons, whether or not they believe the Gospel," he wrote to Pastor Thomas Löscher regarding those who opposed his new doctrines. "If they would live among the people they should learn the law of the same people, even though unwilling." ("*Briefwechsel*," Vol. VII, p. 151.) The law in question was the religious creed laid down according to Luther's interpretation of the Scripture. "For the sake of the Ten Commandments," he wrote to Joseph Levin Metzsch, "let the people be driven to the sermon that they may at least learn the external works of obedience." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. LIV, p. 67.)

In the case of preachers who differed from him Luther insisted that there was no need of any nice hearing of testimony. Local authorities, in punishing them, might dispense with it entirely. Least of all was there to be any discussion with such men, he told the Landgrave Philip of Hesse. But the climax was reached when Luther signed Melancthon's document. It is a defense of the death-penalty not only for the "blasphemers" who maintained that "men could become holy without sermons or church service," but also for their adherents and deceivers who persist in saying that "Our Baptism and sermon are not

Christian, and our Church is not the Church of Christ." This *magna charta* of religious intolerance, directed mainly against the Anabaptists, was signed by Luther with the words: "It pleases me, M. Luther." (Grisar, Vol. III, p. 732.)

By Luther's principles, wrote the Protestant Church historian, Neander, "All oppressive domination of a State religion, and all tyranny over the conscience of men could be sanctioned. *His views were the same as those on which the Roman Emperors had acted in persecuting the Christians.*" ("*Das Eine und Manigfaltige des Christlichen Lebens,*" p. 224.)

It is claimed that the Reformer moderated his mania for religious persecution during his last days, but the evidence is far from convincing. A sermon preached at Eisleben, February 7, 1546, is quoted in this connection. It is an explanation of the parable of the cockle, and Luther points the obvious moral that "with human force and power we cannot extirpate (heretics) nor change them." Without any reference to the duties of princes he tells his ordinary hearers that they are to see to it that heretics are not permitted to rule among them, to enter the pulpit or approach the altar. Luther's principles always turned upon expediency, and the key to this modification of his extreme intolerance may be found in his cautious remark that an attempt to extirpate the cockle by force might make it worse. There were not a few "unbelievers" in Eisleben who had probably to be reckoned with.

Little of the spirit of even this modified and questionable toleration is shown, as Grisar points out, in the sermon immediately preceding and the one immediately following it, the last of Luther's life. In the former he demands of the citizens of Halle that the "scabby, shabby,

lousy monks," who still remained there, be thrown out of their town. In the latter he insists that the Jews "be not suffered nor tolerated." They are all to be instantly banished. It cannot be doubted that he could still have expressed himself as no less sincerely "delighted" at the murder of heretics than when, on receiving the premature announcement of the execution for heresy of John Campanus, he wrote to Justus Jonas, August 3, 1530, "*Lætus audivi.*" "I was delighted to hear of it." ("*Briefwechsel,*" Vol. VIII, p. 163.)

Have non-Lutherans who are now lauding Luther as the apostle of freedom of thought ever considered what would have become of them had they expressed their religious convictions in Luther's favorite Saxony or in any State where he held sway? Had they dared to disagree with the Reformer, in all probability they would have been clapped into prison and possibly executed without much ceremony. And even if a more lenient course had been followed, they certainly would have been silenced at once. If they had disobeyed the order, however, and continued to preach their doctrine, there is little doubt that they would have been banished with threats of dire happenings should they ever presume to return. Lastly, had they persisted in their obstinacy, they would have been commended to *Meister Hans*, the executioner. "Those who come without official position or commission," Luther wrote, "are not good enough to be called false prophets, but tramps and rogues, who should be handed over to *Meister Hans.*" (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XLIII, p. 313.) What would have become of Luther if Catholic princes had acted upon this principle in his regard? At least one apostle of brutal coercion would have been silenced effectively.

## II. Luther and the State

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J.

**I**T is not strange that Luther's attitude towards the State should be greatly misunderstood. The reason is to be found in the contradictory assertions that abound in his writings. He can with equal facility be quoted as the supporter of an absolute separation of Church and State, or as the most extreme advocate of a perfect union of the two. On either side he departed entirely from the Church's practice of forbidding temporal rulers to interfere in purely spiritual interests, and Church authorities from meddling in purely secular concerns. Both, however, may cooperate harmoniously in promoting issues that are neither purely temporal nor purely spiritual, remembering always the difference in value between the things of time and those of eternity.

So striking are the contradictions in Luther's utterances upon this subject that a Protestant authority has made bold to say that the Reformer's attitude depended entirely upon the sentiment of the moment. This is partly true, but only in so far as that sentiment itself depended upon the principle of expediency, which was Luther's invariable law in dealing with this momentous question.

Those therefore who wish to represent him as the champion of a complete separation of Church and State have only to quote the principles laid down by him on occasions when local princes were unfavorably disposed towards his new teaching. This was particularly the case at the beginning of his career. He then insisted in the strongest terms upon the complete de-Christianization of

the State. Its functions "all belong to hell" was Luther's pithy statement in his *Kirchenpostille*. (Erlangen Ed, Vol. XIV, 2, p. 281.) Such too is the summary of Luther's teaching as given by the Protestant author, Brandenburg. ("*Anschaungen vom Staate*," p. 13.)

Luther's doctrine at this period was that secular powers have no right to exercise any authority whatsoever over "Christians," a term which he applied exclusively to his followers. Temporal authority was instituted for that world only which is estranged from God: Catholics, Turks, and non-Lutherans in general. "Therefore," he warns the princes, "you cannot extend it [the temporal sword] over and under Christians, who have no need of it." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XXII, p. 73.) Luther's Christians, although under no moral obligation, were to render obedience merely for the sake of social order. The temporal regimen, he says in his *Kirchenpostille*, "is not instituted for those who belong to Heaven [i.e., his own followers], but merely for this purpose that people may not sink deeper into hell and make their case still worse." (Cf. Grisar, Vol. III, p. 486.)

As Luther, however, won control over secular princes he immediately looked for the support of the secular arm to promote his doctrine. This made it necessary for him to confine his former restriction on the power of temporal rulers to Papistical and non-Lutheran rulers alone, and at times, in a limited degree, even to Lutheran princes in so far as he might fear to lose control of them. Those who favored him, on the contrary, were not merely exhorted to take earnestly to heart the spiritual welfare of their subjects, but likewise to use the full force of their power, to impose punishment, banishment and death in order to preserve inviolate the purity of his New Evangel.



The following illuminative passage is taken from a sermon preached by him in 1533:

Secular authority holds the sword, with the duty of preventing all scandal, that nothing of the kind may break into the realm and work mischief. But the most dangerous and abominable scandal exists when false teaching and incorrect Divine service break into the land. . . . Let it [secular authority] then confidently take preventive action and remember that its office allows of no other course than to use the sword and all power that doctrine be kept pure and Divine service unalloyed and unadulterated. (Erlangen Ed., Vol. I, 2, p. 157.)

Luther did not differ from other originators of new religions in his methods of winning the active support of princes. He held out to them the tempting lure of the confiscation of the property of churches and monasteries, casting over this act of robbery the glamor of righteousness. He moreover gave them the complete spiritual as well as temporal power over their subjects, denying the existence of any other spiritual authority upon earth. In his letter to the Elector John of Saxony, November 22, 1526, Luther reminds the prince that since an end has now been put to the Catholic Church in his dominion, "and all the monasteries and foundations have fallen into the hands of your Electoral Grace, *as the supreme head*," the Elector must likewise assume the duty and burden of "ordering this matter, which no one else undertakes, nor can or should undertake." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. LIII, p. 386.) To quote at greater length from McGiffert's translation of this same letter, in his "Martin Luther":

Where a city or village has sufficient means, your Grace has the right to require them to support schools, pulpits and churches. If they will not do it for their own good, it is the duty of your Grace, who are the chief guardian of the young and of all in need, to compel them by force to do it, just as they



are compelled to contribute money and labor for the building of bridges and roads and for other needed improvements. (Pp. 310, 311.)

It is to be remembered that this compulsion is to be exercised by the Elector over his subjects whether they believe in Luther's doctrine or not. "Worldly lordship," Luther explains in his work "*An den christlichen Adel*," has now assumed "a spiritual rank." Luther's princes are henceforth of a priestly and spiritual order, *mitpriester*, *mitgeistlich*, and free to exercise their power "wherever there is need and use for it."

In the work entitled, "Several Articles which Martin Luther is Prepared to Maintain against the Whole School of Satan" (1530), he takes away all spiritual authority from the church he has founded. Pastors and all higher church officials are told that they have no power to ordain, fast, pray, or perform Divine services. "Such a one," he says, "may exhort his church that it approve of some fasting, prayer, service, etc., for a time, because of some pressing need, dropping it again at its own will." But the power denied the supposed spiritual pastors over their flocks—if such terms may be used where no spiritual authority exists—is granted in the most absolute way to temporal lords. When the prince sets any fast days, Luther writes to Melanchthon, July 21, 1530, all his subjects are obliged to obey. The secular lord is thus constituted the sole spiritual as well as temporal ruler over all his subjects. To make this fact even more plain Luther adds in the same letter that when princes who are likewise "bishops" issue such orders they are to be obeyed, not because they are bishops, but solely because they are princes. (Grisar, Vol. III, p. 797.)

Luther indeed did not rest until he had introduced the

most refined inquisitorial methods enabling princes to prescribe, investigate and control the religious practices of their subjects. He had definitely asked for the appointment of four "visitors" by the Elector of Saxony, who should order Lutheran schools and parishes to be erected wherever they might determine that there was need of them. Two of these visitors were to be skilled in temporal matters, and two were to be theologians, whose duty it was to examine the teachers, the sermons, and the Divine services, and to see that all was carried out in strict accordance with Luther's prescriptions. (Letter to the Elector, November 22, 1526.) In the "*Instruktion*," consequently issued by the Elector, and with which Luther is most intimately associated, the prince, as supreme head, is said to be in duty bound not to permit any false doctrine or false religious service in his land. The visitors appointed by the prince must exhort the people that the Gospel is to be understood by all according to the interpretation laid down by the prince for his subjects, and they are to support the preachers given them. All "who preach or hold an error in religion are to be told to make good speed in leaving the land, with the warning that if they again set foot upon it they will be punished in real earnest." (*Ibid*, 501-514.)

We are not to suppose that Luther did not have his well-founded misgivings about these matters, hence the contradictions that again and again occur. Of what avail, however, are veiled protests even at the moment that he wrote the prologue to the very "*Unterricht*" that was to guide the visitors in the inquisitorial work initiated by him? He had indeed desired a church consisting of independent parish units, but he constantly found it necessary to have recourse to higher powers to prevent innovations.

Luther's principle, in brief, was that there must be no limit to the power of princes in spiritual matters provided they employ it faithfully in enforcing his own doctrine down to the least article. He compares them to David and tells them that they must extirpate all heresy throughout their realm. In his explanation of Psalm 101 (100) he adds to these statements that the spiritual and temporal power of rulers, and the spiritual and temporal obedience of subjects are to be mingled indiscriminately "like a cake." When, however, he finds that his expectations are disappointed he again chances upon the same figure, but now it is the devil who has mingled the ingredients of the cake. Luther entirely forgets that the cake was made after his own recipe.

Luther in fact had accomplished his work more thoroughly than he himself knew. He had delivered religion into the hands of the State, hoping that he himself might remain the power behind the throne. But this hope had proved vain even in his own lifetime and the ultimate result was the complete enslavement of human liberty, for which he must be held responsible, as its modern originator, which found its terse expression in the motto: *Cujus regio, illius et religio*: "The ruler determines the religion of his subjects."

That this political slavery was introduced by Luther, a writer so hostile to the Catholic Church as Scherr is forced to admit: "Luther was the originator of the doctrine of unconditional surrender to civil power," says this author in his book on "German Culture" (Third Edition, p. 260). "He preached that two and five make seven; that you know. But if the civil government should proclaim that two and five are eight, then you must believe it against your better knowledge and sense. That ex-

plains why so many German princes took so kindly to the servile policies of Lutheranism." Luther's constant distinction that the people are forced to conform outwardly only to his doctrines, is a mere verbal evasion. He is the father of the most reprehensible form of political despotism, despotism over the consciences of men.

### III. Luther and Religion

JOHN C. REVILLE, S.J.

THE lapse of 500 years affords the historian the perspective necessary to judge correctly of such an extraordinary and complex character as Martin Luther. The world is now entitled to pass a verdict on his work. Though much of that work has crumbled and disappeared, it still challenges attention and analysis. And as the apostate friar of Wittenberg gave himself out as the reformer of the Church of Christ, it is not unfair to apply to him the strictest standards of that faith and morality which he pretended to bring back to their original purity. In the chaos of errors and contradictions which everywhere disfigure his work, two principles stand out in bold relief. They may be taken as tests of his system. The first is that the Bible alone is the supreme rule of faith. The second is that man is justified by faith alone and that consequently good works are not necessary for salvation. The first principle, carried to its logical conclusion, substituted the individual as the supreme arbiter and judge in matters of faith, for the authority of the Church, and dealt a staggering blow to the visible unity of Christendom. The second, dealing more directly with the heart of the individual, perverted the whole doctrine of God's dealings with the soul and the creature's relations with his Creator. Both together, combined to produce the most frightful moral disorders, in the heart of the Reformer first of all and then of the society which adopted and lived up to his teaching.

The fable that Luther discovered the long-lost Bible,



that "he had never seen a Bible until he was twenty years of age," that Popery, to use his words, "had kicked Scripture under the bench," (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XLII, p. 280) has been abandoned by the most reliable Protestant writers, men of such recognized authority as Köhler, Walther, Geffken, Grimm, Thudichum, Dobschütz, Kolde and Kropatscheck. The rule of the Augustinian Order to which Luther belonged, and of which at one time at least in his life he seems to have been a faithful member, instructed its novices "to read the Scripture assiduously, hear it devoutly and learn it fervently." Biblical studies were in honor at Erfurt where he studied, and commentaries on Holy Writ were numerous and popular. And if we confine ourselves to the year intervening between the discovery of the art of printing and the year of Luther's excommunication, a period of seventy years dating from 1450 to 1520, we find that no less than 156 different Latin editions of the Bible had been printed. To these editions of the Bible in Latin must be added seventeen in German, eleven in Italian, ten in French, two in Bohemian, two in Spanish, and one each in Flemish, Russian and in the dialect of the Limousin. To these must be added six in Hebrew—over 200 editions in all of the complete Bible. In spite of Luther's assertion to the contrary, even Protestant authorities, like Reichert, (Cf. Grisar, Vol. III, p. 463) think it quite probable that he had these older translations, the German versions among them, at his elbow, when he made his own translation of the Scriptures, a translation which Catholic historians, Biblical scholars and theologians willingly admit to be an achievement worthy of all admiration if considered in its literary aspects alone and apart from its dogmatic errors.

A fundamental error lay at the very root of Luther's conception of the Bible. He was too keenly intelligent,



too practical a psychologist not to know that in matters of faith, there must be some standard of direction, some guide and rule. As a reformer he was too proud to bend to one not of his own creation. For fifteen centuries, the Church interpreting and expounding the Bible, in the light of her tradition, her own history, and infallible in her teaching and her decisions in this regard, had been the living rule of faith in the past. But a reformer of the stamp of Luther is ever restive under restraint. His revolt was a protest against the very principle of any authority in matters of faith outside of the individual himself. There was no other fountain of revealed truth for him but a dumb, though inspired, book of which the individual was constituted judge. Therefore this book was to become the rule and the guide, and in virtue of the universal priesthood of which, according to him, all Christians partook, every individual was constituted its authorized interpreter and expounder. Such was Luther's theory, although in practice he would allow of no interpretation in opposition to his own.

But the Bible, inspired as it is, is for us an obscure book. It does not explain its own difficulties. It is written in a language that bears the stamp of past centuries and forgotten civilizations. In it are to be found apparent contradictions and paradoxes which, without an infallible interpreter, it is almost impossible to reconcile. No book more directly affects the hearts, the lives and the passions of men. Its lessons are so stern, its legislation is in such opposition to the tendencies of our fallen nature, that the first impulse of the reader is to reject them altogether, unless he can be persuaded by some unerring guide that they must be received under penalty of the greatest punishment and loss. The Bible was lifted by Luther to an exclusive position, to which in spite of its

eminence, its inspiration, and authority, it had no right. The Church that interprets God's Word was thrust aside and the Book became the supreme judge in matters of faith and morals, a judge that could not explain even the meaning of its words. The heresiarch wished to bring back the Church to the purity of the ancient Faith. But in the words of the poet, when the Bible and the Bible alone interpreted by the light of private judgment is seated in the tribunal of authority,

"Chaos umpire sits and by decision more embroils the fray."

Seemingly exalted by Luther's act, the Bible was in reality degraded. When the individual becomes its sole authoritative interpreter to the exclusion of the Church, the Bible is lowered to the level of its erring, frail and sinful readers. The high-minded and the pure may, it is true, read into it their own lofty views. But the shallow, the coarse, the rash innovator, and the sinfully inclined will force it to bend to their passions, sanction their errors and their sins. If Christ prayed that there should be "one fold and one shepherd," there could be no better means taken to make void His prayer, than to lift the Bible into that position of false honor and dignity into which Luther thrust it. For those who follow his guidance, it has become an instrument of disunion and discord. Private judgment acting upon the Bible has proved the great dissolvent of Christianity and its teachings. For that judgment is varying, unstable, without authority and as fickle as the passions of the men who read the sacred volume. It has been the cause of the diminishing beliefs of millions, who first induced to consider the Bible alone, as their one infallible guide, soon came to look upon it as a mere human document and to disregard its Divine character altogether. At first those

who believed in the Reformer's teaching would believe nothing which they did not at least imagine they saw confirmed by the Bible. Now many reject almost everything they see there. The reaction has come. The Bible of Luther, worshiped to idolatry, succeeding generations have mutilated and ridiculed. It is not without reason that Thomas Munzer exclaimed: "Bibel, Babel." The Bible has become a real Babel of discordant tongues and divers creeds. Misinterpreted, because shorn of the only safeguard that could protect the sanctity of its words, it works havoc in Christendom. It brought anarchy into the fold of Christ. It destroyed the cohesion of the body of the Faithful united under the rule and the headship of the one supreme pastor. Heresies, sects, churches, all contradicting and fighting one another in the name of the Bible came into being at the bidding of unscrupulous and worldly-minded men to the spiritual loss and ruin of thousands. Cardinal Hosius and Staphylus tell us that at the end of the sixteenth century there were no fewer than 270 conflicting sects, the spurious brood of one false principle and a sad commentary on the extraordinary efficiency of the ruinous rule of faith devised by the Doctor of Wittenberg.

The results of this cardinal principle of the Reformer could be seen, felt and sensibly analyzed in the defections of thousands from the visible center of unity, from Rome and the Papacy, which were the constant object of the hatred and the scorn of the apostate friar.

His second principle, the principle of justification by faith alone and the uselessness of good works, went deep down into the hearts of men and wrought there the most disastrous results. By justification the Catholic Church understands that marvelous and supernatural transformation of the sinner from the state of sin and unright-

eousness, to the state of holiness, and sonship of God.

According to Catholic teaching, the faith that justifies is a firm belief in the truth of God's Revelation, not a dead faith, however, but one that must be informed or quickened by charity. Transferring the seat of the act of faith from the intellect to the will, Luther taught that faith is a feeling of trust and confidence infallible and beyond doubt, that God for Christ's sake will no longer impute to us our sins, but will deign to treat us as innocent, holy and justified in His sight, though in reality our sins are not done away with or blotted out, but only hidden, cloaked over, as it were, by the sheltering mantle of the merits of Christ. As in his theory of grace, Luther maintained that original sin had thoroughly perverted human nature so that it had lost even its glorious prerogative of free-will, to be logical he had to hold that the process of justification effected only an apparent change in the soul. The mantle of Christ's justice only covered the wounds of sin. Beneath its folds, these were still festering and bleeding. A gloomy and disheartening doctrine!

Sternly logical once more, the Reformer had to maintain in strict adherence to his doctrine of the total depravity and sinfulness of fallen human nature that good works were of no avail and useless. Human nature, he held, was irretrievably corrupt, it could work no good. This doctrine was everything to Luther and he made it the center around which his other theories revolved and on which they depended. As the cry: "The Bible and the Bible alone interpreted by the light of private judgment is the sole rule of faith" has been called the formal principle of Lutheranism, so the doctrine of justification by fiduciary faith without works has been called the material principle of its theology in the sense in which

✓ Luther himself speaks in a sermon of 1530, calling it "The only elementary article or doctrine by which we become Christians and are called such."

✓ To bolster up this new doctrine which perverted the very idea of faith and invented a dogma subversive of the laws of Christian morality, Luther had to falsify the text of St. Paul (Rom. iii:28) adding to the verse "we account a man to be justified by faith" the word "alone" so necessary for his theory. And as the Epistle of St. James is the express condemnation of his doctrine of justification by faith without works, the Reformer unceremoniously rejected it and called it an "Epistle of straw." Luther might cry aloud: "The Bible alone is the rule of faith," but when that principle stood in his way ✓ he ruthlessly set it aside.

Although Luther adhered to this principle of justification by faith alone without works more steadily than to any of his other teachings, he cannot be said to have always been absolutely consistent. Now and then he admits and insists on man's cooperation. (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XIV, 2, p. 285.) On the whole he maintained that it is the one principle by which the Church must stand or fall. His adherents both in his own age and after have at times considerably modified it. Yet it was so taught and so propagated that it undoubtedly deeply and disastrously influenced the lives of the Reformer and of all those who pretend to follow his new and purer interpretation of the Gospel.



## IV. Luther and Social Life

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J.

“UNFORTUNATELY the facts can be stated very briefly,” says Adolf Harnack speaking of the social work of the Reformation period. “Nothing of any consequence was accomplished. What is more, Catholics are right in holding that not we, but they experienced a revival of charity in the sixteenth century, and that within the province of Lutherdom conditions had soon grown worse than they were before in regard to social provisions.” (*Reden und Aufsätze.*)

The truth of these words cannot be questioned by anyone who has had direct recourse to the authentic documents of the time. They are fully borne out by the testimony of Luther himself, as well as that of his contemporaries, when he describes the social and moral deterioration that followed upon his doctrine. In his despair he even went so far as to exclaim: “If God had not closed my eyes and if I had foreseen these scandals, I would never have begun to teach the Gospel” (Walch Ed., Vol. VI, p. 920). The cities that received him with open arms became a new “Sodom and Gomorrah,” and he marveled that the gates and windows of hell were not opened to “snow or rain down devils.” As early as 1529 he proclaimed that social and moral conditions had become seven times worse than they were under the Papacy.

For after we have learned the Evangel we steal, lie, deceive, practise gluttony and drunkenness and every kind of vice. Now that one devil has been driven out, seven others, worse than the former, have entered into us, as we can see in princes, lords,



nobles, burghers, and peasants. So they act, and so they live, without any fear, regardless of God and His threats." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XXXVI, p. 411.)

No class of society, therefore, was excluded from the general deterioration, and all the leading cities that accepted Luther's doctrine fell, according to his own testimony, into the same deplorable state of complete social and moral disorder. His favorite Wittenberg is described by him in his letter to Justus Jonas, June 18, 1543, as "a plaything of the devil," the students "have been ruined by fallen women" and "half the town is going to destruction through adultery, usury, thievery and deceit." Neither the authorities nor any of the citizens are in the least concerned about these abominations, since "All laugh at them, are parties to them and go and do the same." (*M. Luthers Briefe*, De Wette Ed., Vol. V, p. 615.) The brazenness and corruption of the girlhood of the town, as pictured in his letter to the Elector, January 22, 1544, beggars description. It leaves the reader under the impression that the whole city had been turned into a cesspool of impurity and lasciviousness, where women vied with men in open and shameless immorality. (*Ibid.*, p. 615.) Ever since the New Evangel was preached there, he is obliged to confess, "Things have steadily grown worse." He fears that at the end he must hear that "They have never been worse than now." (*Ibid.*, VI, p. 302.)

Lutheran apologists seek at times to excuse these abominations by dwelling upon what they consider the social and moral degeneracy of the Papacy; but Luther's own words are an absolute refutation to all such explanations, since he continually insists, in countless passages that the very worst conditions under the Papacy were as nothing compared with the indifference, laxity

and vice that followed where his doctrine had been preached. Those who are specially accused by him of such conduct are not the men and women who remained faithful to the Church of the preceding fifteen centuries, but those who accepted his own doctrines. Thus he states very explicitly: "The good receive the law [i.e. abide in Catholicism] and the wicked receive the Gospel [i.e. Luther's New Evangel]." (*Analecta Lutherana et Melanchthonia*, p. 402.)

Everyone admits the many evils of the time immediately preceding Luther's preaching. They called for a true reformer, in the spirit of Christ, such as St. Francis had been in his day. In place, however, of seeking to reform the morals of the men who were unfaithful to the teachings of their Church, Luther sought to reform the doctrine of the Church itself, which Christ declared could never err, since He had promised it His abiding presence even to the consummation of the world, and had given it the assurance that the gates of hell should never prevail against it. Either Luther was wrong in seeking to correct the doctrine, which Christ proclaimed would never need correction, or the words of Christ were false. It is a dilemma from which there is no escape, and which should suffice to bring back into the one true Fold all the souls that still believe in Christianity.

No less unhappy were Luther's economic reforms. The poor had previously been bountifully provided for by the monasteries and the liberality of the Faithful, as well as through the channel of well-regulated civic organizations which had already developed in Catholic cities at this early period of the economic transition. City and church authorities cooperated in a thoroughly scientific way. But the pillage of monasteries and foundations, and the in-

roduction of the New Evangel at once destroyed the flourishing work of charity. Luther hoped that the money taken with his approval might, as he expressly states, be spent in propagating his new religion, and the superfluities devoted to governmental and charitable purposes. Needless to say, his hope was vain. The princes and nobles had joined his revolt for booty and license and for the ampler power which, by making them the sole spiritual rulers, it gave them over their subjects. They were by no means minded to bestow upon the poor the riches which Luther had authorized them to gather into their treasuries. The citizens were therefore urged to begin anew to offer contributions, but his ideal system of relief, introduced into Leisnig, proved to be an utter failure, as Luther bitterly admitted.

The contrast between the social conditions under the Papacy, and those that arose under the New Evangel were indeed so great and appalling that Luther was repeatedly forced to advert to them :

If we did not have the goods bestowed by our forefathers in mild alms and foundations, the Gospel [Luther's New Evangel] would long ago have been extinct because of the burghers in the cities and the nobles and peasants upon the land. Not a single poor preacher would have food or drink; since we do not wish to do anything but take and rob by force what others have given and founded for this purpose [i. e. for charity and religion in Catholic times]. (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XLIII, p. 164.)

The manner in which lords and public officials gorged themselves with the goods of the Church was "eating away the substance of beggars, guests and the poor." To the latter the wealth of the Church had always been open. "Wo, wo to you" he cried, "peasants, burghers and nobles, who wrest, scrape and scratch together every-

thing for yourselves, and yet claim that you are thoroughly evangelical!" (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XLIV, p. 356.) And so too they were, according to Luther's own doctrine, however much he might protest against them, and however powerful, and at times even beautiful, his exhortations to virtue and charity might be.

His first anti-social teaching is that concerning good works. Even though performed with a supernatural motive, he claimed, they were not meritorious for Heaven. "The most tangible consequence of Luther's doctrine of grace," says Feuchtwanger, "which allowed nothing to human merit, was, for the multitude at least, libertinism and irresponsibility." By a deliberate falsehood, it would seem, Luther persisted in attributing to the Catholic Church the most un-Catholic doctrine, that "Christ did not die for our sins, but each one should satisfy for them himself." Her plain teaching had been on the contrary that without the merits of Christ mankind could never be saved, but that good works of every sort induce God to apply these merits of Christ to our souls, according to the Divine promise. "This do, and thou shalt live," Our Lord had said in reference to good works. (Luke, x:28.) To these and similar words of Christ Luther opposed his own destructive doctrine, which he thus briefly expresses:

Those pious souls who do good to gain the Kingdom of Heaven, not only will never succeed, but they must even be reckoned among the impious; and it is more important to guard them against good works than against sin. (Wittenberg Ed., Vol. VI, p. 160.)

The choice, therefore, between Luther and Christ, is open for all. We cannot follow both.

The second anti-social doctrine of Luther is his teaching regarding sin. "There is no longer any sin in the



world except unbelief," is his dogmatic assertion. The stench of all other sins committed by the Faithful passes unnoticed by God because of their faith. The exact wording of the passage itself (Erlangen Ed., Vol. IV., 2, p. 131) cannot be quoted here owing to its indecency. If therefore on the one hand he inveighed against sin, on the other he thus removes from it all terror:

You see how rich the Christian is [i. e. the follower of Luther], since even if he wished it he could not lose his salvation, no matter how many sins he might commit, provided he will believe. No sin can bring about his damnation except unbelief alone. All else is swept away by his faith the moment it returns or clings to the Divine promises made to the baptized. (Weimar Ed., Vol. VI, p. 529.)

This is comfortable doctrine, but is of no avail to restrain the passions of men. Luther's counsel for those who are troubled with doubts about the truth of his new religion and with similar temptations is to indulge in sensuality, in thoughts "of a beautiful girl, of money-making, of drink, or of some other vivid emotion." ("*Colloq.*" Ed. Bindseil, Vol. II, p. 209.) In his letter to Melanchthon, August 1, 1521, he wrote:

God does not save those who are mere imaginary sinners: Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe more boldly. . . . It is sufficient that through the riches of the glory of God we have known the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world. *Sin would not tear us away from this even though in a single day we commit fornication and murder a thousand and a thousand times.* . . . Pray boldly, for you are a very bold sinner. ("*Briefwechsel,*" Vol. III, p. 208.)

Explain such passages as we may, they cannot be excused. We have quoted enough of Luther's language to show how perverse his teachings were; but there is

another phase of his New Evangel more ruinous perhaps than all these.

The third anti-social doctrine in Luther is that of "the slave-will." According to this teaching, man is not responsible for either his good or his evil actions. Here as elsewhere Luther's practice contradicts his doctrine, for why preach at all if men are of necessity compelled to sin or to be virtuous? But Luther's hearers were more consistent than he, and many of them did not fail to act upon the logical conclusions to which his dreadful doctrines led. No teaching is more essential to Lutheranism, as propounded by him, than that of the slave-will. God and the devil, he tells us, in his most characteristic passage, are struggling with one another for the human soul. When God is in possession it is not possible for us to will anything except what is good, but when the devil has gained the upper hand we can will only what is evil. Thus he paints the awful and blasphemous picture, which represents neither more nor less than the ancient pagan dualism:

When the stronger comes upon us and makes us his prey, in wresting us from our former ruler, we become his servants and prisoners in such a way that we wish and gladly do whatever he wills. Thus the human will stands like a steed between the two. If God mounts into the saddle, man wills and goes according to God's will, as the Psalm has it: "I am become as a beast before thee: and I am always with thee." If however the devil leaps into the saddle, man wills and goes as the devil wills. It is not in his power to run to one of the two riders and offer his service to him; but the riders themselves struggle with one another for possession of the animal. ("*De Servo Arbitrio*," Weimar Ed., Vol. XVIII, p. 635.)

If virtue or vice do not depend upon human agents, and if human beings, as Luther teaches, are predestined to



hell or heaven independently of any will of theirs, why seek to be good at all? Why not follow the way taken by Luther's practical disciples, in all the cities where his Evangel was accepted, who after hearing his teaching went and gave themselves over to the gratification of their passions, regardless of God or neighbor? Why labor to be virtuous if, according to Luther's doctrine, God damns even such as do not in the least deserve it; "*inmeritos damnat*"? (*Ibid.*, p. 730.) It does violence to sane reason, he admits, to say that "Merely according to His good pleasure God forsakes men, hardens and damns them," but his only answer is that "No application of our intellect, no matter how hard we try, can ever save the holiness of God." Reason must simply bow to the inevitable. (*Ibid.*, p. 719.) Such abhorrent doctrines will confirm the sinner in his sins, as Luther clearly foresaw, but he added that it did not matter, since in His proper time the Spirit of God would transform into His children those whom He predestined to save.

Could any teachings be more destructive of social and moral life? Out of his own mouth Luther stands condemned. In vain did he strive to excuse the evil effects of his preaching, when forced to offer a defense, by saying that the morning star was now risen and sin had become more apparent than before. He had too often contradicted this assurance. Lutheranism, as taught by him, hardly outlived his own day; but the Pope, whose death he boasted he would be, is today encompassed by the glory of new triumphs of the Faith, and the center of the greatest social and moral renewal of all things in Christ.

## V. Luther and Education

JOHN C. REVILLE, S.J.

**N**O man, however corrupt his life or low his ideals, is entirely bad. While the private conduct of the apostate friar fell far below the standard of purity and goodness which the Catholic Church requires not only of her priests but even of her ordinary Faithful, and his intellectual and religious principles were unsound, subversive of morality and Christianity, he was not absolutely a monster. Had he been such, his work could not have had the measure of success, which in some respects, it has enjoyed. The strange inconsistencies which everywhere meet us in his life and in his work, seem at times to emphasize the nobler sides of his nature. As an evidence of this we need only read the words of his address to the magistrates of the cities of Germany, in 1524, in which he speaks of the necessity of educating the young. There he reminds his hearers that it would be the greatest possible evil to neglect or defile "the noble souls of the children. A hundred gulden would not be too much to make a good Christian out of a child." As if reiterating the constant teaching of that Church which he had left and which he so virulently attacked, he was far-seeing enough to know that "The welfare of a city does not consist in wealthy mansions, but in its educated, trained and intelligent citizens." Without schools and education there will not be the men needed and required for the government of the Church and even for civil life, for the ordered economy of family life. (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XXII, p. 173, etc.) In the same letter he considered that educa-

tion was especially needed to tame the passions of the German people. He wished that all should be taught, not only languages, but history, mathematics, and the other sciences, but above all religion.

In Luther's view, the first aim of the school is to fight the devil who in order to spread his rule and power in Germany wishes no schools. If harm is to be done him, it must be done through the young growing up in the knowledge of God and becoming the means and the instrument of teaching to others the Sacred Word. Another aim of the school, he tells us, is that men may not receive the grace of God in vain nor let slip the acceptable and favorable time. And as he asserted that the "ass-stalls and devil-schools" of the cloister were on the point of taking their departure, he warned his "dear Germans" to use God's grace and Word now present in their midst. (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XXII, pp. 173, 35.) He insisted on the necessity of having men who would do God's work and dispense His Sacraments. But where can such men be found, he asked, if schools are allowed to go, and if others more in accord with the spirit of Christ are not built in their stead? (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XXII, p. 193.)

The coldness of his followers leads him to see that if the schools are neglected "a pigsty," a wild and lawless mass of Turks will be the result. With that exaggeration and lack of balance which marred almost everything he said and wrote, he thinks it would be no wonder if the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah should overtake them "for they were not one tenth as bad as Germany now is." (Weimar Ed., Vol. XXX, 2, p. 582.) Credit undoubtedly must be given to the Reformer for his insistence on the necessity of education. We shall see, however, that his views in this respect were not so broad and sound as they are

often painted. As to the content of his system of pedagogy, it is needless to say that the Bible formed an important study, besides the Luther catechism and the Church hymns. "Would to God," he wrote, "every city had its girl-school where every day the girls could hear the Gospel for an hour, either in Latin or in German." He insisted on Latin, even at the cost of German; he wants the lessons in Latin and insists that Latin should be spoken in the schoolroom. He had but little use for the sciences and scarcely gave them any place in his curriculum, which, however, to do him justice was not without a certain breadth. For that breadth of view he was undoubtedly a debtor to the old monastic education which he had received in those few happy days he had spent in his first fervor at Erfurt. (Cf. p. 4.) Compayré writes in his "History of Pedagogy" that it is to Luther in the sixteenth and to Comenius in the seventeenth century, that must be ascribed the honor of having first organized schools for the people. "In its origin, the primary school is the child of Protestantism, and its cradle was the Reformation" ("History of Pedagogy," p. 112). The statement is by no means borne out by the facts. To prove it we need not go back further than the very century of Luther himself.

It were unhistorical, of course, to maintain that education was as common and as widespread in the fifteenth century as it is now. Yet popular schools were by no means neglected. It is true there were no general education boards, no revised codes or statutes, no regents' examinations, little of that complex machinery with all its gearing and cogs, and wheels within wheels that keeps our educational system moving in its standardized grooves and appointed pathway. But popular schools

were plentiful and well attended. Every town, almost every village could boast of them. Religious education was urged above everything else, but children were instructed in the elements of secular learning and taught to reverence their teachers. In the sixth chapter of the "*Narrenschiff*" or "Ship of Fools" Sebastian Brant allots a special place among the fools, whom he describes with so much caustic wit and humor, to the man who neglects the education of his children. In small towns like Xanten and Wesel, there were as many as four or five schoolmasters. The salaries which they received, according to the money value of the time, were not inconsiderable. In Goch, for instance, the schoolmaster had eight florins a year, besides his house and the schoolpence, while the salary of the town clerk amounted only to five florins. (Cf. Verres, "Luther," pp. 11, 12.) Although compulsory education was unknown, yet it happened that sometimes the schools were overcrowded. Thus at Xanten, the little town on the lower Rhine, mentioned above, the master of a school for reading and writing complained that he and his assistant were not sufficient for the number of scholars and begged for another master. The town council provided him, and also another school in the town, with a second assistant. They stipulated, however, that the parents must provide the additional salary. On Christmas, 1494, the five teachers of the town of Wesel, who were employed to instruct the children of the town in reading, writing, arithmetic and choir-singing, were entertained by the clergy and presented with a piece of cloth for a coat and a small coin "for they have all well earned this reward." To these details, given us by Janssen in his admirable "History of the German People" (Vol. I, c. 2) where he treats the whole question of "Elementary



Schools and Religious Education," at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, the historian adds that in the district of the Middle Rhine, in the year 1500, there were whole stretches of country where a national school was to be found within a circuit of every six miles, a record, we think, which might compare quite favorably with certain conditions which not so long ago prevailed in some parts of our own country.

We can see that the sacred cause of instructing the young was by no means neglected, when "small parishes of 500 or 600 souls, such as Weisenau, near Mayence, and Michelstadt in the Odenwald, were not without their village schools." And education was not confined to boys alone. Girls' schools were numerous also and well attended. At Xanten, in 1497, the school founded for them by the great Cardinal Nicholas de Cusa, counted eighty-four scholars, no small number when the size and the population of the town are taken into consideration. And in true democratic fashion, the pupils came both from the ranks of the nobility and the humbler and poorer classes.

We boast of the methodized grading in our schools and point with pride to the various steps and levels, the primary, secondary, college and university courses whereby our generation climbs to the very pinnacle of the temple of science. Even that the Germany of Luther's day knew long before his educational theories were expounded.

In the fifteenth century, academies and grammar schools were as numerous in Germany as they were in England thirty years ago. Writing of those times, Erasmus says: "*In Germania tot fere sunt academiæ, quot oppida.*" "In Germany, there are as many academies, as

there are towns." The elder humanists, who culled the honey from the pagan literature of Greece and Rome and left the poison, and in whom the love of secular learning was blended with love and veneration of the Faith and a loyal submission to the Church, developed the greatest activity in establishing the intermediate or academy and grammar schools. Prominent among these benefactors of education were the members of the illustrious Brotherhood, founded by Gerhard de Groote, who, while occupying a more prominent place in the educational and intellectual life of Flanders and Holland, had schools in every part of the Empire. At Zwolle they had at one time 800 students, at Alkmar 900, at Hertogenbosch 1,200, and at Deventer more than 2,000. They counted among their friends Cardinal Nicholas de Cusa and the two Popes, Eugenius IV and Pius II. About the same time Cologne had eleven grammar schools in connection with its eleven collegiate churches.

If from the grammar schools and the academies, we pass to the universities, we find that during the fifteenth century they were more flourishing in Germany perhaps than they were thirty years ago. In the middle of the fifteenth century Germany could boast of seven universities, among them Cologne, Vienna, Prague, Erfurt and Heidelberg. Between 1456 and 1506, nine others had been founded, among others, those of Greifswald, Ingoldstadt, Tübingen and Wittenberg. With few exceptions they had been founded by Popes and their existence and maintenance were secured from revenues of Church property set apart for that purpose. They were well attended, some of them overcrowded. The University of Vienna at one time could boast of 7,000 students. In the second half of the fifteenth century, the number of university

students in the whole of Germany cannot have been much smaller than 20,000.

If judged by their output, they were doing good work in every field of human endeavor. Among the great literary men of the age, it is possible to mention a few only, and that in the briefest terms. The learned Carthusian monk Werner Rolewink, as famous for the holiness of his life as for the depth of his Scriptural knowledge, saw thousands of students crowd his lecture-hall to listen to his interpretation of the Epistles of St. Paul. Rudolph Agricola, surnamed the second Vergil, equally famous for his classical knowledge, his German lyrics, his modesty and his piety, seems to have been one of those favored characters of history over whose grave no words but those of love and admiration are spoken. He may be considered as the model of those elder humanists who vied with one another in their endeavor to press the literatures of antiquity into the service of the Gospel and to use them as the interpreters of that natural law which God has planted in the human breast. Though Agricola cannot be reckoned among the professional teachers, his life and character exercised a great influence on Alexander Hegius, a pupil of "The Brethren of the Common Life" and rector of the gymnasium of Wesel on the lower Rhine from 1469 to 1474. Hegius was a great and practical teacher. By discarding antiquated methods, simplifying the curriculum and getting rid of the old and rather complicated text-books, and centralizing the attention of the pupil on the study of the classics, he may be said to have infused a new life into the schools.

Side by side with Hegius stands Jacob Wimpheling, who saw 30,000 copies of his pedagogical treatises scattered over all Germany. For years, Geiler von Kaisers-

berg, one of the world's great pulpit orators, preached in Strassburg, not always in the best of taste, but always with a power, a vitality and originality of thought and expression which have been seldom surpassed. Trithemius, abbot of Sponheim, acknowledged to be the most universal genius of his age; the jurist, Ulrich Zasius; the mathematician and cosmographer, Johann Müller, surnamed Regiomontanus, who became Bishop of Ratisbon, and is with Nicolas de Cusa one of the pioneers of modern astronomical science; Gabriel Biel, the last of the scholastics; Johann von Dalberg, the zealous Bishop of Worms and the Mæcaenas of all the learned men of the day; the poets Sebastian Brant, Gregory Reisch, Joannes Heynlin of Stein; Cochläus and Eck, those two future formidable adversaries of Luther, would have cast an undying luster even on a century far more enlightened and advanced in the arts and sciences than the fifteenth.

There was a revival of learning before Luther came. It had extended to every rank of society. Noble women in the cloister and in the world were everywhere enthusiastic for the "new learning." Of the nun Ursula Cantor, it was said that in theology and in the arts and accomplishments more specially suited to her sex, Germany had not seen her equal for centuries. Aleydis Raiskop, the nun of Goch, whom her contemporaries compared to Hroswitha, the nun of Gandersheim, and to the saintly Hildegard, could write sound and instructive homilies on the Epistles of St. Paul and translate a book of devotions on the Mass into strong and popular German. Caritas Pirkheimer, the learned and pious abbess of Nuremberg, and her sister Clara, illustrated the cloister with all the virtues of true brides of Christ, and the culture and refinement of high-born ladies. The same could be said of



the Augustinian nun Christina von der Leyden, of Marienthal, of the Benedictine Barbara von Dalberg, of Marienberg. German princesses, too, imitated in their own sphere the virtues of their cloistered sisters. The Countess Palatine Matilda was looked upon as the patroness of arts, of scholars and literary men. The Duchess Hedwig of Suabia read the classics in the original with her house chaplain, and wrote Latin and German poetry. And to the efforts and influence of the Countess Matilda mentioned above we owe the foundation of two universities, those of Freiburg in Breisgau and of Tübingen. (Cf. Janssen, "History of the German People," Vol. 1 *passim*.)

Such was the condition of the schools, of the academies and grammar schools, of the universities, of education and literature in general, when the Reformer of Wittenberg launched forth his new program. It would be natural to expect from his efforts and those of the men and the princes who backed his movement, many of them of unquestionable talents and endowments, the most favorable results. Was the result, on the whole favorable to letters, to art, to science, to the intellectual uplift of the people? Let us see.

It is true that Luther insisted on popular education. His works are full of exhortation, counsel, reprimand, invective, wherever he touches on this topic. But it is evident from all these that his views on the subject were limited by the dominant idea, not so much that the people should be broadly educated for their sphere and all its duties as that Luther should beget followers and disciples, learned preachers and doctors for the work he had begun, for the fight against the Papacy and the Church which he had abandoned. He wanted education rather for Luther's sake than for any other cause. Luther's schools were



valuable in his eyes only as they were, as he himself called them *seminaria ecclesiarum*, nurseries for the churches of which he was the self-ordained founder and where he expected to have his doctrines taught to the people. The man who denied the liberty of the human will and heaped the vilest abuse upon the noblest gift that man enjoys, his reason, could scarcely have a right concept of the true function of education and the school.

And what were the results of the agitation of the Reformer for the new education? Violence, untruth, exaggeration ever recoil upon themselves. Luther had thundered his anathemas against the old church schools and the education given there. He saw those fierce denunciations work out, if not the complete destruction, at least the deterioration of the school itself, even of the one whose function and aim he had proclaimed. He had preached the universal priesthood of all Christians and the right of the individual to interpret what all men recognized to be the most difficult book in the world. He had preached the doctrine of justification and salvation by faith alone. He had inflamed his contemporaries with the fierce flames of theological controversy and political disputes. He saw in consequence of these principles a spirit of arrogance, self-sufficiency and self-conceit pervade every class of society, and where any intellectual effort was still visible, all its energy and power wasted in the arena of the fiercest and most ruinous theological discussion and debate.

The Reformer bitterly complains that his schools are neglected and that the parents are bringing their children up only for the most unworthy careers. (Erlangen Ed., Vol. LXIII, p. 280.) The spiritual outlook on life and its tasks had been practically blotted out of the thoughts and

hearts of those whom the influence of the Reformer had more closely affected, and men and women were satisfied with the material gains which life could afford, careless and disdainful of more spiritual values. But though the result of Luther's work, even in the field, where he might seem to have a special claim to success, that of popular education, were by no means adequate to the seeming earnestness of his pleas on its behalf nor to the material and political means of success at his command, it is especially in the field of higher education that we see the total collapse of his system and his influence.

The words of Erasmus have become classical: "*Ubi-cumque regnat Lutheranismus, ibi est litterarum interitus.*" "Wherever Lutheranism prevails, there letters die." How far the words may be true of ages and studies not contemplated by the Dutch humanist, may be left to others to decide. But of the Germany of his time and of the universities of the Empire, it may be said, that they are absolutely true.

According to Janssen ("History of the German People," Vol. III, p. 355) already in 1524, people were complaining that students were no longer interested in serious studies, that controversy and disputations about the new doctrines were absorbing their whole attention, that they were "degenerating into coarseness and immorality, while at the same time they pretended to be the messengers of a new wisdom and the reformers of public life." How could the universities, the natural home of sciences and the haunt of reason in her noblest form, thrive under Luther's guidance? He had denounced reason in terms too coarse to be quoted. "The Devil's Bride" was the mildest of the odious nicknames which this master of obscenity and filthy invective heaped upon her. He called

the universities the gates of hell, styled them worse than Sodom and Gomorrah, likened the youth instructed in their halls to the youths sacrificed of old to the hideous idol of Moloch. (Cf. Luther's Works; Walch Edition, Vol. XIV, 1430-1431.) Again he writes that the universities deserve to be reduced to ashes for nothing "more hellish or diabolical has been seen from the beginning of the world." (Walch Ed., Vols. XII, p. 45; XI, p. 123; IX, p. 862; VI, p. 2,553.) Melanchthon echoes the words of his chief and in writing against Emser in 1521 says that "Never had anything more corrupt or godless been invented than the universities; not the Popes but the devil himself was their originator." And Janssen, documents in hand, gives the cause of this fierce hatred. Luther and Melanchthon hated the universities, because true to the old Catholic instinct these had always exalted the light of nature, and had attempted a reconciliation between religion and science. If later on Melanchthon somewhat changed this ridiculous and unworthy opinion of reason, his chief had nothing but words of contempt and scorn for reason itself and its functions. Yet Luther has been called the emancipator of the human mind. Never was the splendid title less deserved.

Describing the decay of intellectual life subsequent to the revolt of the apostate friar, Janssen begins with Erfurt, so closely associated with the movement for a new intellectual and spiritual life in the German people. Between May, 1520 and 1521, as many as 311 students had been matriculated; in the following year the number sank to 120; in 1524 it had dropped to thirty-four. From a letter of Melanchthon to Eobanus in 1523 it can be seen that conditions in Wittenberg were similar. There was a very considerable falling off in studies, which Mel-

anchthon himself acknowledges to have been flourishing but a short time before. (Cf. Döllinger, "Reformation," Vol. I, p. 354; Janssen, "History of the German People," Vol. III, p. 358 sq.). In the other North German universities, there was a similar decay of arts, philosophy, science, theology, literature and studies in general, and a similar falling off in the number of scholars. The universities of Leipzig and Rostock gradually lost their former position of preeminence. At Rostock, Janssen again informs us, where formerly 300 students had matriculated every year, the number in 1524, had been reduced to 38, and in 1525 to 15. The South German universities, Basle, Freiburg, Heidelberg presented the same lamentable picture. In Basle in 1522, only twenty-nine new students were entered and in 1526 only five. In Heidelberg in 1535 there were more professors than students and from Freiburg, Zasius, one of the most renowned professors of law of his time, wrote that he had scarcely six regular attendants at his lectures, and these were Frenchmen. The deplorable condition of letters caused the most widespread alarm. Glareamus writes to Wilibald Pirckheimer in 1524, that he feared that learning and science would soon be lost together with the knowledge of the classical languages. And Melanchthon had reason to exclaim: "In Germany, all the schools are disappearing. Wo to the world!"

For years the downward tendencies inflicted by the Reformation on the course of the universities continued. Paulsen, in his work "The German Universities" (p. 42) writes that at the end of the seventeenth century, the German universities had sunk to the lowest level which they had ever reached in the public esteem and in the intellectual life of the German people.

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Academic science was no longer in touch with reality and its controlling ideas. . . . Added to this was the prevailing coarseness of the entire life. The students had sunk to the lowest depths, and carousals and brawls, carried to the limits of brutality and bestiality, largely filled their days.

Had Luther no other regret as he surveyed his life-work but that which must inevitably have been his at the thought of the ruin and the havoc he had made in the halls of learning and the schools of which Catholic Germany had so many reasons to be proud, that spectacle must have surely riven his very heart. He had wrought in anger and in hatred a work of destruction and disintegration. It took years to rebuild on the ruins which he made. With all his gifts, with all his talents, in education as in religion, his work has not been for the benefit of that Germany which he pretended to disentrall or of the spiritual or moral uplift of the world which he pretended to reform.



## VI. Luther, Slaves and Peasants

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J.

SO little is known of the real Luther, even in our day, that the statement may appear startling that he was an ardent admirer and a strong defender of slavery. More than this, he considered it the ideal state for the hired men and women, *das Gesinde*, of his own race. Nothing is more plainly contained in his writings. He went so far as to hold that slavery must of necessity be introduced into modern Europe. Other writers may have favored such a system while it was actually in existence, but Luther is apparently the only religious teacher who held that the infliction of this bitter bondage upon men and women of his own blood was the one satisfactory solution of the social question. If there are civilized men today who agree with him, they certainly are careful not to voice their opinion in public. Yet Luther expressed his opinion without shame or hesitation.

His utterances in favor of serfdom and slavery must not be regarded as merely casual remarks. They are the expression of his firm convictions. If, in the beginning, for certain reasons, he spoke of the wrongs of the greatly oppressed peasants, he later held that they were treated only too well: "You worthless, coarse peasants and mules," he said, "the thunder strike you dead! You have the best of the land." (Weimar Ed., Vol. XXVIII, p. 520.) Far from being content with the statement that, "Slavery is not against the Christian order, and he who says so lies!" (*Ibid.*, Vol. XVI, p. 244.) Luther really wished that this system might be reintroduced. (Erlang-

en Ed. XXXIII p. 390.) A striking utterance of his opinion is to be found in the sermon preached by him in 1524. That the sentiments contained in it were not the result of a passing impression is plain from the fact that the sermon was printed three years after its delivery, with an introduction by Luther in which he states that it expresses his true "mind and conviction." Referring in the course of this sermon to a gift of servants and handmaids which Abimelech made to Abraham together with a present of sheep and oxen, Luther said of the former:

These too are personal possessions, like other cattle (*wie ander Viehe*), which the Patriarchs sold as they pleased, as it would well-nigh be best were it done so now, since in no other way can servants on estates be forced into subjection and tamed. . . . Should the world continue long *this state would have to be introduced again*. . . . The Patriarchs, so far as they themselves were concerned, would have given it up; but such an act would not have been good. They (i. e. the former slaves) would soon have become too proud, if so much right had been conceded them, or they had been treated as one's self or child. . . . *If the rule of fist and force were here as in days gone by* (i. e. if slavery were reintroduced) so that no one could stir but the fist would come down upon his head, there would then be a better state of affairs. Nothing else is of any avail. (Weimar Ed., Vol. XXIV, pp. 367, 368.)

So far Luther, the "Ecclesiastes by God's grace." But this is not all. How tenderly devoted he was in reality to the common people may be judged from a sermon printed by him in 1526, a period when he was able soberly to form his final opinion of them. They were scornfully called by him *Herr Omnes*, "Master All," and in the following gentle terms he suggests the manner in which they should be treated:

Because God has given the law and knows that nobody observes it, He has in addition instituted rod-masters, drivers and

urgers. So the Scripture by a similitude calls the rulers. They must be like men who drive mules. One must constantly cling to their necks and urge them on with whips, or else they will not move ahead. So then are the rulers to drive, beat, choke, hang, burn, behead and break upon the wheel the vulgar masses, Sir All. (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XV, 2, p. 276.)

This "evangelical" teaching of the new apostle is wholly in accord with his desire for the reintroduction of bondage and slavery. Thus shackled and handed over to their masters, the common people could certainly far more readily be driven, beaten, and if so desired, broken upon the wheel. Luther's New Evangel, it may be noticed, has in more than one regard a striking similarity to the old Roman paganism. But Luther literally out-Herods Herod in his final reflection upon the poor slaughtered peasants, who were butchered in the revolution, and for whose fate he was doubly responsible. Leading Protestant historians freely admit that he had been largely the immediate cause of their uprising, which took place in the name of the New Evangel. Yet not content with their defeat, he goaded the princes to their slaughter. But our blood boils when after the destruction of 100,000 of these misguided men, incited to revolt by his violent invectives against bishops and princes, we hear him actually boasting years after the bloody deeds had taken place:

I, Martin Luther, have during the rebellion slain all the peasants, for it was I who ordered them to be struck dead. All their blood is upon my head. But I put it all on our Lord God; for He commanded me to speak thus. (*Tischreden*. Erlangen Ed., Vol. LIX, p. 284.)

How, we marvel, was it possible for any human being to be so heartless, brutal and unnatural? Even had these men not been incited to rebellion by Luther himself, still

they were at least to be pitied. This cruel boast is made the more unnatural by the fact that he himself was the son of a peasant, and that, as Vedder remarks in another connection "His sympathies should naturally have been with the class from which he had risen, and in thus taking without reservation the side of the princes, and becoming more violent in word than they were in deed, he was acting the renegade." (p. 244.) But that rôle he had assumed in many ways. He was the great Benedict Arnold of history, who after betraying by foul and lying words the spiritual Mother who had nursed him, betrayed likewise the class to which he belonged and was willing to hand them over to bondage, slavery and death.

How was it that Luther came to such a monstrous state of mind? It is possible to follow the process step by step. The story is long and complicated, but the outline of it can be given in few words.

Luther's first appeal was to the princes by whom he hoped to sweep the Church from the face of the land and forcibly impose upon the people his newly invented creed, if they would not accept it willingly. When his expectations were disappointed he turned to the people, thinking that the same effect could be brought about by a popular movement. But this resulted more disastrously than he had imagined, and its direct effect was the dreadful peasants' war. It was not the carnage and destruction, however, which made him turn like a wounded boar upon the peasants and tear them with his tusks. The deepest grievance lay in the fact that, in place of accepting his New Evangel, they preferred to follow his example and interpret the Scriptures for themselves. This was of all things the most dreaded and abhorred by Luther. It meant heresy against his own doctrine and his own inter-

pretation, which no one was to question, much less to gainsay. Moreover his Lutheran princes too were now imperiled. What therefore was to become of his religion if the peasants should be victorious? The very thought made Luther frantic with rage, and turning against his own class he cast his full power on the side of the princes. In terms of unexampled violence he called upon all to "strike, stab and slay" the peasants, openly, secretly and in every possible way "like mad dogs." Such is the history in brief.

In confirmation of these statements a few quotations from his own writings previous to the peasant uprising must be given. "What wonder," he wrote, "if princes, nobles and the laity were to strike Pope, bishops, priests and monks over the head, and drive them out of the land?" (Erlangen Ed. Vol. XXIV, 2, p. 46.) Yet he gently added that he did not by this wish to excite the masses against their spiritual authorities. "Why," he again demanded, in even far clearer language, "do we not seize upon all weapons, and wash our hands in their blood?" (*Opp. lat. var.* II, p. 80.) Later editors strove to modify this passage by an insertion, but the original is unqualified. Equally anarchistic is the following declaration:

It were better that all bishops be murdered, all foundations and monasteries torn up, root and all, than that a single soul should perish; how much better then were this than that all souls be lost because of the useless fetishes and idols (i. e. bishops, priests, etc.) Of what good are they except to live in luxury by other peoples' sweat and toil, and to hinder the Word of God (which Luther alone possessed). . . . *What fitter thing could happen to them than a powerful revolution which will wipe them from the earth.* And this were only a matter of mirth, if it were to take place, as the Divine Wisdom says:



"You have despised all my counsels and have neglected my reprehension. I also will laugh in your destruction." (Weimar Ed., Vol. X, 2, p. 111.)

Finally in true Mohammedan style the people were told that "All who give aid, all who risk life, goods and honor, that the bishoprics be destroyed and the regimen of the Bishops extirpated, these are the dear children of God, and true Christians," while the men who supported the Bishops were "the devil's own servants." (*Ibid.*, p. 140.) How else could the peasants understand such words than as the declaration of a holy war, and so in fact they interpreted them and acted accordingly. Words of patience were spoken by him only to be retracted the next moment by a storm of new invectives. In like manner the secular authorities were denounced as "worse than robbers and knaves," and the Emperor styled "a sack of maggots," while Luther declared that, "God Himself has abolished all authority which acts against the Evangel," that is, in opposition to the heresiarch's pet ideas. (De Wette, Vol. II, p. 192.) Even the ardent admirer of Luther, Fr. V. Bezold, writes: "Such language could be used by Luther only in case he wished to place himself at the head of a rebellion," a purpose which we do not ascribe to him.

When finally the peasants arose in arms, in the name of the Evangel, they immediately turned to Luther for a consecration of their cause. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, he now sent forth a message of peace. He denounced both peasants and princes, for he saw the harm that was being done to his own cause, but while telling the peasants that if they were Christians "they would suffer everything" and even patiently allow themselves to be tortured by the princes, as he had always taught

them (!), he again broke into the most violent denunciations of the Catholic lords who had not accepted his doctrine:

God is so bringing it about that one cannot and will not any longer endure your tyranny. You must change and yield to the Word of God (i. e. to the religion of Luther's invention). If you will not do so by gentle means, you must do so through violent destructive ways. If the peasants do not accomplish this, others must do it. (Weimar Ed., Vol. XVIII, p. 293.)

Such was his message of peace by which he fanned anew the flames of war. But the leadership among the peasants had been assumed by sectaries, who, although of Luther's own making, had become heretics in his sight by interpreting the Bible for themselves after Luther's example. This was the one unpardonable sin for which no punishment could be too great. He also saw that his own princes, who were great oppressors of the people, were being attacked, and that both he and his doctrine might be discredited and some other form of "evangelical Christianity" introduced. Such doctrine would surely have the same justification as his and might equally insist that the authority of all earthly rulers was null and void in the sight of God the moment they opposed it.

Luther's decision was soon taken. Heart and soul he cast his influence on the side of the princes. All the devils of hell, he now believed, had entered into the peasants. "Let everybody who can," he cried in frantic passion, "strike, slay, stab, secretly or publicly."

Although the princes needed no exhortation, yet he insisted that neither patience nor mercy should be shown. The violence of his language knew no bounds:

Hence it may happen that he who is killed on their side may be a true martyr before God. . . . But whoever falls on the

side of the peasants is a brand of hell for all eternity, because he is a member of the devil. . . . It is such a wonderful time now that a prince may gain heaven by bloodshed better than by prayer. (Weimar Ed., Vol. XVIII, p. 358, etc.)

A wonderful time indeed it was, for while 100,000 peasants, whose blood he boasted was upon his head, were being mercilessly slaughtered, Luther himself celebrated his union with the nun Katharine Bora. His intercourse with women had been such, he tells us, that he was turning into a woman. Such was the man who could write tender letters to his "sweetheart Kate" and at the same time urge the princes and their followers to strangle, stab and kill; who could speak in glowing terms of Christian liberty and in his heart desire that the days of bondage and of slavery might soon return with their rule of "force and fist"; who could claim a message from the Most High, and yet so deeply despise his own class, the peasant population whose hangman he made himself, that he believed not even the devil cared for them: "He despises them as he does leaden pennies," since he can have them without trouble, for no one else "would claim them." (Cordatus, *Tagebuch*, p. 127.) The common people, he held, "must be driven and forced like swine and wild beasts." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XV, 2, p. 276.) His titanic pride reached such heights that by the favor and power of princes he wished to impose upon them and upon all mankind his own irrational and self-invented creed. "Since I am sure of it," he proclaimed, "I shall be through it your judge and the judge of angels, as St. Paul says, so that he who does not embrace my doctrine cannot be saved." (Walch Ed., Vol. XIX, pp. 838, 839.) But the people too, had their day when they sat in judgment upon Luther, and the name they gave him clung through life: "Hypocrite and princes' menial."

## VII. Luther and Woman

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J.

LUTHER has been acclaimed the restorer of woman's dignity. The Fathers of the Church, he tells us, had never written anything worthy of note upon the subject of matrimony. God had waited for his coming in order that marriage might be reestablished in the world before the Last Day, as it had from the first been "instituted and commanded." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. LXI, p. 178.) Catholics, we are assured, had hitherto regarded the nuptial state as "un-Christian" and entirely "dedicated to the devil." "They have made mortal sins of all the words and actions of married people, and I myself, when I was still a monk, had the same idea: that the married life was a damned state." (*M. Lutheri Exegetica Opera Latina*, Vol. VI, p. 283. Cf. Grisar II, p. 481, etc.)

There is one short word which adequately describes such statements as the foregoing. That here, as elsewhere when speaking of the Church, Luther should wilfully misrepresent the truth is not strange. It is the simple application of his principle that a lie must not be balked at when it serves the New Evangel: "What would it matter," he said in the famous case of the Landgrave of Hesse, "if for the sake of a greater good and of the Christian Church one were to tell a big round lie?"—"*Ein gудte stargke Lugen thet*," in Luther's sixteenth-century German. (*Briefwechsel*, between Philip and Bucer, Vol. I, p. 369.)

That Luther was aware he was libeling the Church is

plain from his own earlier writings, in which the Catholic attitude towards matrimony is perfectly stated. "Matrimony," he wrote in 1519, "is a Sacrament, an external, sacred sign of the most high, holy, worthy, and noble thing that ever was or ever will be, the union of the Divine and human nature in Christ." This is the exact description given by the Roman Pontiffs of the Sacrament of Matrimony as existing between the Faithful when consummated, while the Sacrament in general is described as representing the union between Christ and His Church. Luther then continues to speak of it as a "bond of fidelity," which has for "its end and principle object" to bear children who are to be "educated in the service of God." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XXIV, 2, p. 63.) This definition of the Catholic doctrine, as it has always been held in the Church, is completed by the equally Catholic statement: "Marriage is good, virginity is better:" "*Bonum coniugium, melior virginitas.*" (Weimar Ed., Vol. VIII, p. 330.)

Luther therefore merely applied his clearly expressed principle about lying when he said that as a monk he had believed, in common with other Catholics, that all the words and actions of married people are mortal sins. No Catholic ever believed so absurd a doctrine, and nowhere was married life esteemed so highly and held to be so holy and sacred as within the Catholic Church. In rating the chastity of the virginal state as even higher in excellence and spiritually more desirable than matrimonial life, the Church was not belittling the latter, but was merely repeating the plain teaching of Christ and of St. Paul. But a great change had come over Luther, and no one who discerningly follows the development of his New Evangel can say that it was a change for the better.



Marriage in the first place was robbed by him of its Sacramental character, and entirely secularized. It became for him "an external bodily thing, like any other manipulation." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XVI, p. 519.) It was to be regarded simply like eating, drinking and sleeping; whence he also concludes: "As I can eat, drink, sleep, walk, ride, trade and deal with a pagan, a Jew, a Turk and a heretic, so too I may marry and remain married with them." (*Ibid.*, Vol. LXI, p. 205.) Finally, after being robbed of all its sacredness, marriage was handed over by Luther entirely to the secular powers: "Hitherto I was foolish enough to expect more than is human from human beings, and to imagine that they could be guided by the Gospel. No, the fact shows that they despise God and would be forced by the law and the sword." ("*Briefwechsel*," Vol. VI, p. 6.) Such was the disastrous effect of his new doctrine from the very first, and such the cynicism of Luther.

Secondly, it was Luther, and not the Church, who taught that matrimony is of necessity sinful. This statement may appear startling to those who are not acquainted with the real Luther and his teachings. "The matrimonial duty," he says, "is never performed without sin." (Weimar Ed., Vol. XX, 2, p. 304.) That sin, which he holds married people must of necessity continually commit, is described by him as in its nature "differing in nothing from adultery and fornication." (*Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 654.) To complete the absurdity of his doctrine, he adds that the sin which according to him is necessarily committed by every person in the married state is overlooked by God out of pure mercy, "since it is impossible for us to avoid it, although we are obliged to refrain from it." (*Ibid.*) Could any doctrine be more unreasonable, more disgraceful, or more dishonorable to God?

In the third place marriage is made of strict obligation by Luther. Mistaking for a universal law God's blessing, "Increase and multiply," spoken likewise over the fish and fowl which surely were not capable of receiving a Divine precept, Luther created a new commandment, thus placing himself in opposition to the words of Our Lord and of St. Paul, who, though not enjoining the state of virginity, yet highly commended it. Here then is Luther's law: "Whatever is man must have a wife." (Weimar Ed., Vol. X, 2, p. 276.) So likewise he commands every woman to have a husband. Some rare exceptions, he admits, are made by God; but these are "wonders," and no man or woman is to presume that such a miracle will be worked in his or her regard. In a letter to Archbishop Albrecht, dated June 2, 1525, he thus applies his hitherto unheard-of law:

It is a terrible thing for a man to be found without wife at the hour of death. He must at least have the intention and resolution of entering into the married state. For what answer will he give to Almighty God when He asks of him: "I made you a man, who is not to stand alone, but is to have a wife. Where is your wife?" (De Wette, Vol. II, p. 676.)

No less terrible, however, will be the fate of the unmarried woman. "God's word and work are evident," says Luther, "that woman must be used for matrimony or for lust." (Erlangen Ed., Vol. LI, p. 6.) We forbear to give his plainer language. All single women are flatly accused by him of immorality:

Though women folk are ashamed to confess it, yet it is proved by Scripture and experience that there is not one among many thousands to whom God gives the grace to keep pure chastity; but a woman has no power over herself. (*Ibid.*, II, p. 535.)

Can any Protestant woman consent to the apotheosis of the shameless ex-monk who thus defames her sex and slanders her sisters who by thousands upon thousands are living pure lives in the unmarried state? Can a Protestant gentleman, once he understands Luther's infamous slander of womankind, look on such doctrine with indifference?

Much is said of the domestic felicity of Luther's household, and tender passages are quoted from his letters. But is there a Protestant woman so far lost to all sense of decency that she could sit down without shame and indignation at Luther's table and listen to his outpourings of coarse and vulgar jests at her own sex and at all that is sacred in her person, "taking a stable boy's unclean delight at rude witticisms over woman's physical differentiation from man"? Even the most foul-mouthed of Luther's contemporaries found his language too obscene. A volume could be filled with Luther's scurrilities that would be fit reading no place outside the bottomless pit. Yet out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

How profound his appreciation for woman really was may be gaged from the following estimate written by him in defense of her sex:

The body of women is not strong, and their soul is even weaker in the common run. So it is a matter of importance whether the Lord places a wild or a mild one at our side. The woman is half a child. He who takes a woman should consider himself as the guardian of a child. . . . She is likewise a freakish animal ("*ein toll Thier*"). Recognize her weakness. If she does not always walk in the straight path, guide her weakness. A woman remains a woman in eternity. (Weimar Ed., Vol. XV, p. 420.)

His personal experience gave him little opportunity to act upon his own advice, for "Master Kate," as he called his wife, was not the "weaker vessel" so far as family authority was concerned. "If I were to woo another," he said, "I would hew me an obedient wife out of a block of stone, else I despair of the obedience of all wives." (Köstlin-Kawerau, II, p. 487.) The fact is, however, that Luther had not done the wooing, since Kate had simply offered herself indifferently to him and his friend Amsdorf. Luther took her, and we do not wish to question either his affection or his fidelity towards her. This is the least to be expected of any married man. The religious exaltation of his ideals may be judged from the following "jocular" language which occurs in a letter to Spalatin by Luther before his own marriage. He is urging his clerical friend to marry, and says :

But if you desire me for an example, behold I have given you a most signal one. For I have had three wives at once, and loved them so ardently that I have lost two of them, who will take other husbands. The third I scarcely hold on my left arm, and am perhaps about to lose her too. (*Briefwechsel*," Vol. V, p. 157.)

While this is merely a sample of Luther's idea of humor, his permission given to the Landgrave of Hesse to have two wives at once is sufficiently well known. A confessed libertine, the ruler had delicately hinted at the strong support he might give to the New Evangel if the keeping of two wives were granted him, and it was therefore deemed advisable for the sake of the good cause to permit this on condition of secrecy, "for the Church is poor and miserable, small and desolate, and is indeed in want of righteous rulers (!)" (De Wette, Vol. V, p.



237.) The reason of piety is likewise alleged, for when did this ever fail even the devil himself: "If his Highness does not abstain from an impure life, which according to his own statement is impossible, it is better that he should provide for the peace and security of his conscience by an additional marriage." (*Ibid.*)

This must not, however, be regarded as an isolated case. The right of keeping several wives was openly preached by Luther: "*It is not forbidden that a man should have more than one wife. I could not forbid it today.*" (Erlangen Ed., Vol. XXXIII, p. 324.) It is true that Luther did not advise it, and that, as occasion served, he even severely reprehended it. Yet he held it to be entirely permissible before God. In the test case at Orlamünde, when his counsel was asked, he gave the same clear reply: "I confess that if a man wishes to marry several wives, I cannot forbid it, nor is it in opposition to the Holy Scriptures." "*Ego sane fateor, me non posse prohibere, si quis plures uxores velit ducere, nec repugnat sacris litteris.*" (De Wette, Vol. II, p. 459.) Thus, in spite of empty remonstrances, was a complete license given for polygamy, as the Landgrave of Hesse said, to abbreviate his words: "If it is right in conscience before Almighty God, what do I care for the cursed world!"

When Luther's sanction of Philip's bigamy became public, Melancthon was deeply chagrined, but Luther soon recovered himself, and joked about the topic, even bantering his wife upon the subject, in that ideal home, by telling her the time was coming when "A man will take several wives," to which the meek Kate replied: "The devil believe it!" Decency forbids quotation of Luther's argument. A marvelous application of supposed texts now



followed: "Paul said," was Kate's rejoinder, "'Let every man have his own wife.'" To which the Doctor replied "'His own,' but not 'one only one,' that cannot be found in Paul." So, we are authentically informed, "the Doctor joked for a long time, until the Doctor's wife said: 'Before I will tolerate that, I will rather go back into the convent, and leave you and all the children alone.'" (Schlaginhaufen, "*Tischreden Luthers aus den Jahren 1531 und 1532.*" p. 69.)

Whether or not Luther rejected this doctrine in an isolated passage towards the end of his life, is of small concern. In word and practice he had defended polygamy as entirely "Christian" and lawful before God. Mormonism is nothing more than the consistent application of his words. Polygamy is inseparably connected with the name of Luther; we cannot loathe the one and extol the other.

Adultery, with the husband's consent, is also expressly sanctioned by Luther, when no children result from the marriage. The child thus secretly begotten is to be ascribed to the legal husband. (Weimar Ed., Vol. VI, p. 558). The keeping of a mistress, too, is strongly urged by him upon those who must by vow conform to the rule of celibacy: "Let them secretly marry their cook." (Lauterbach, "*Tagebuch,*" p. 198.) Neither before the law nor before the Church was this a marriage, and its object is clear. The members of the Teutonic Order were expressly told by him not to seek a dispensation for marriage from the Council. "I would rather look through God's fingers and trust in His grace for him who has two or three concubines, than for him who takes a lawful wife with the consent of the Council." (Weimar Ed., Vol. XII, p. 237, etc.) And what are we to say of the

brutal language regarding the wife who refuses her duty: "If the woman would not, let the maid come." The husband has only to "Let Vasthi go and take an Esther, like King Assuerus." (*Ibid.*, Vol. X, 2, p. 290.) To the wife's remonstrance he is simply to say: "Go —— and run to the devil!" (*Ibid.*, III, p. 222.)

We might multiply quotations but the subject is too nauseating: it smells to heaven. Yet mention of it cannot be avoided if Luther is to be seen in his true light. Many beautiful passages can doubtless be gathered from his writings, but they are merely the remnant of his Catholic inheritance. What has here been given is Luther's own entirely, and upon this must therefore be founded his claim to a Divine mission. One tenth of what has been quoted in these pages is sufficient to discredit him forever as a religious teacher.