CONCERNING CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

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By Martin Luther

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LETTER OF MARTIN LUTHER TO POPE LEO X.

Among those monstrous evils of this age with which I have now for three years been waging war, I am sometimes compelled to look to you and to call you to mind, most blessed father Leo. In truth, since you alone are everywhere considered as being the cause of my engaging in war, I cannot at any time fail to remember you; and although I have been compelled by the causeless raging of your impious flatterers against me to appeal from your seat to a future council—fearless of the futile decrees of your predecessors Pius and Julius, who in their foolish tyranny prohibited such an action—yet I have never been so alienated in feeling from your Blessedness as not to have sought with all my might, in diligent prayer and crying to God, all the best gifts for you and for your see. But those who have hitherto endeavoured to terrify me with the majesty of your name and authority, I have begun quite to despise and triumph over. One thing I see remaining which I cannot despise, and this has been the reason of my writing anew to your Blessedness: namely, that I find that blame is cast on me, and that it is imputed to me as a great offence, that in my rashness I am judged to have spared not even your person.

Now, to confess the truth openly, I am conscious that, whenever I have had to mention your person, I have said nothing of you but what was honourable and good. If I had done otherwise, I could by no means have approved my own conduct, but should have supported with all my power the judgment of those men concerning me, nor would anything have pleased me better, than to recant such rashness and impiety. I have called you Daniel in Babylon; and every reader thoroughly knows with what distinguished zeal I defended your conspicuous innocence against Silvester, who tried to stain it. Indeed, the published opinion of so many great men and the repute of your blameless life are too

widely famed and too much reverenced throughout the world to be assailable by any man, of however great name, or by any arts. I am not so foolish as to attack one whom everybody praises; nay, it has been and always will be my desire not to attack even those whom public repute disgraces. I am not delighted at the faults of any man, since I am very conscious myself of the great beam in my own eye, nor can I be the first to cast a stone at the adulteress.

I have indeed inveighed sharply against impious doctrines, and I have not been slack to censure my adversaries on account, not of their bad morals, but of their impiety. And for this I am so far from being sorry that I have brought my mind to despise the judgments of men and to persevere in this vehement zeal, according to the example of Christ, who, in His zeal, calls His adversaries a generation of vipers, blind, hypocrites, and children of the devil. Paul, too, charges the sorcerer with being a child of the devil, full of all subtlety and all malice; and defames certain persons as evil workers, dogs, and deceivers. In the opinion of those delicate-eared persons, nothing could be more bitter or intemperate than Paul's language. What can be more bitter than the words of the prophets? The ears of our generation have been made so delicate by the senseless multitude of flatterers that, as soon as we perceive that anything of ours is not approved of, we cry out that we are being bitterly assailed; and when we can repel the truth by no other pretence, we escape by attributing bitterness, impatience, intemperance, to our adversaries. What would be the use of salt if it were not pungent, or of the edge of the sword if it did not slay? Accursed is the man who does the work of the Lord deceitfully.

Wherefore, most excellent Leo, I beseech you to accept my vindication, made in this letter, and to persuade yourself that I have never thought any evil concerning your person; further, that I am one who desires that eternal blessing may fall to your lot, and that I have no dispute with any man concerning morals, but only concerning the word of truth. In all other things I will yield to any one, but I neither can nor will forsake and deny the word.

He who thinks otherwise of me, or has taken in my words in another sense, does not think rightly, and has not taken in the truth.

Your see, however, which is called the Court of Rome, and which neither you nor any man can deny to be more corrupt than any Babylon or Sodom, and quite, as I believe, of a lost, desperate, and hopeless impiety, this I have verily abominated, and have felt indignant that the people of Christ should be cheated under your name and the pretext of the Church of Rome; and so I have resisted, and will resist, as long as the spirit of faith shall live in me. Not that I am striving after impossibilities, or hoping that by my labours alone, against the furious opposition of so many flatterers, any good can be done in that most disordered Babylon; but that I feel myself a debtor to my brethren, and am bound to take thought for them, that fewer of them may be ruined, or that their ruin may be less complete, by the plagues of Rome. For many years now, nothing else has overflowed from Rome into the world—as you are not ignorant—than the laying waste of goods, of bodies, and of souls, and the worst examples of all the worst things. These things are clearer than the light to all men; and the Church of Rome, formerly the most holy of all Churches, has become the most lawless den of thieves, the most shameless of all brothels, the very kingdom of sin, death, and hell; so that not even antichrist, if he were to come, could devise any addition to its wickedness.

Meanwhile you, Leo, are sitting like a lamb in the midst of wolves, like Daniel in the midst of lions, and, with Ezekiel, you dwell among scorpions. What opposition can you alone make to these monstrous evils? Take to yourself three or four of the most learned and best of the cardinals. What are these among so many? You would all perish by poison before you could undertake to decide on a remedy. It is all over with the Court of Rome; the wrath of God has come upon her to the uttermost. She hates councils; she dreads to be reformed; she cannot restrain the madness of her impiety; she fills up the sentence passed on her

mother, of whom it is said, "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; let us forsake her." It had been your duty and that of your cardinals to apply a remedy to these evils, but this gout laughs at the physician's hand, and the chariot does not obey the reins. Under the influence of these feelings, I have always grieved that you, most excellent Leo, who were worthy of a better age, have been made pontiff in this. For the Roman Court is not worthy of you and those like you, but of Satan himself, who in truth is more the ruler in that Babylon than you are.

Oh, would that, having laid aside that glory which your most abandoned enemies declare to be yours, you were living rather in the office of a private priest or on your paternal inheritance! In that glory none are worthy to glory, except the race of Iscariot, the children of perdition. For what happens in your court, Leo, except that, the more wicked and execrable any man is, the more prosperously he can use your name and authority for the ruin of the property and souls of men, for the multiplication of crimes, for the oppression of faith and truth and of the whole Church of God? Oh, Leo! in reality most unfortunate, and sitting on a most perilous throne, I tell you the truth, because I wish you well; for if Bernard felt compassion for his Anastasius at a time when the Roman see, though even then most corrupt, was as yet ruling with better hope than now, why should not we lament, to whom so much further corruption and ruin has been added in three hundred years?

Is it not true that there is nothing under the vast heavens more corrupt, more pestilential, more hateful, than the Court of Rome? She incomparably surpasses the impiety of the Turks, so that in very truth she, who was formerly the gate of heaven, is now a sort of open mouth of hell, and such a mouth as, under the urgent wrath of God, cannot be blocked up; one course alone being left to us wretched men: to call back and save some few, if we can, from that Roman gulf.

Behold, Leo, my father, with what purpose and on what principle

it is that I have stormed against that seat of pestilence. I am so far from having felt any rage against your person that I even hoped to gain favour with you and to aid you in your welfare by striking actively and vigorously at that your prison, nay, your hell. For whatever the efforts of all minds can contrive against the confusion of that impious Court will be advantageous to you and to your welfare, and to many others with you. Those who do harm to her are doing your office; those who in every way abhor her are glorifying Christ; in short, those are Christians who are not Romans.

But, to say yet more, even this never entered my heart: to inveigh against the Court of Rome or to dispute at all about her. For, seeing all remedies for her health to be desperate, I looked on her with contempt, and, giving her a bill of divorcement, said to her, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still," giving myself up to the peaceful and quiet study of sacred literature, that by this I might be of use to the brethren living about me.

While I was making some advance in these studies, Satan opened his eyes and goaded on his servant John Eccius, that notorious adversary of Christ, by the unchecked lust for fame, to drag me unexpectedly into the arena, trying to catch me in one little word concerning the primacy of the Church of Rome, which had fallen from me in passing. That boastful Thraso, foaming and gnashing his teeth, proclaimed that he would dare all things for the glory of God and for the honour of the holy apostolic seat; and, being puffed up respecting your power, which he was about to misuse, he looked forward with all certainty to victory; seeking to promote, not so much the primacy of Peter, as his own pre-eminence among the theologians of this age; for he thought it would contribute in no slight degree to this, if he were to lead Luther in triumph. The result having proved unfortunate for the sophist, an incredible rage torments him; for he feels that whatever discredit to Rome has arisen through me has been caused by the fault of himself alone.

Suffer me, I pray you, most excellent Leo, both to plead my own cause, and to accuse your true enemies. I believe it is known to you in what way Cardinal Cajetan, your imprudent and unfortunate, nay unfaithful, legate, acted towards me. When, on account of my reverence for your name, I had placed myself and all that was mine in his hands, he did not so act as to establish peace, which he could easily have established by one little word, since I at that time promised to be silent and to make an end of my case, if he would command my adversaries to do the same. But that man of pride, not content with this agreement, began to justify my adversaries, to give them free licence, and to order me to recant, a thing which was certainly not in his commission. Thus indeed, when the case was in the best position, it came through his vexatious tyranny into a much worse one. Therefore whatever has followed upon this is the fault not of Luther, but entirely of Cajetan, since he did not suffer me to be silent and remain quiet, which at that time I was entreating for with all my might. What more was it my duty to do?

Next came Charles Miltitz, also a nuncio from your Blessedness. He, though he went up and down with much and varied exertion, and omitted nothing which could tend to restore the position of the cause thrown into confusion by the rashness and pride of Cajetan, had difficulty, even with the help of that very illustrious prince the Elector Frederick, in at last bringing about more than one familiar conference with me. In these I again yielded to your great name, and was prepared to keep silence, and to accept as my judge either the Archbishop of Treves, or the Bishop of Naumburg; and thus it was done and concluded. While this was being done with good hope of success, lo! that other and greater enemy of yours, Eccius, rushed in with his Leipsic disputation, which he had undertaken against Carlstadt, and, having taken up a new question concerning the primacy of the Pope, turned his arms unexpectedly against me, and completely overthrew the plan for peace. Meanwhile Charles Miltitz was waiting, disputations were held, judges were being chosen, but no decision was arrived

at. And no wonder! for by the falsehoods, pretences, and arts of Eccius the whole business was brought into such thorough disorder, confusion, and festering soreness, that, whichever way the sentence might lean, a greater conflagration was sure to arise; for he was seeking, not after truth, but after his own credit. In this case too I omitted nothing which it was right that I should do.

I confess that on this occasion no small part of the corruptions of Rome came to light; but, if there was any offence in this, it was the fault of Eccius, who, in taking on him a burden beyond his strength, and in furiously aiming at credit for himself, unveiled to the whole world the disgrace of Rome.

Here is that enemy of yours, Leo, or rather of your Court; by his example alone we may learn that an enemy is not more baneful than a flatterer. For what did he bring about by his flattery, except evils which no king could have brought about? At this day the name of the Court of Rome stinks in the nostrils of the world, the papal authority is growing weak, and its notorious ignorance is evil spoken of. We should hear none of these things, if Eccius had not disturbed the plans of Miltitz and myself for peace. He feels this clearly enough himself in the indignation he shows, too late and in vain, against the publication of my books. He ought to have reflected on this at the time when he was all mad for renown, and was seeking in your cause nothing but his own objects, and that with the greatest peril to you. The foolish man hoped that, from fear of your name, I should yield and keep silence; for I do not think he presumed on his talents and learning. Now, when he sees that I am very confident and speak aloud, he repents too late of his rashness, and sees—if indeed he does see it—that there is One in heaven who resists the proud, and humbles the presumptuous.

Since then we were bringing about by this disputation nothing but the greater confusion of the cause of Rome, Charles Miltitz for the third time addressed the Fathers of the Order, assembled in chapter, and sought their advice for the settlement of the case, as

being now in a most troubled and perilous state. Since, by the favour of God, there was no hope of proceeding against me by force, some of the more noted of their number were sent to me, and begged me at least to show respect to your person and to vindicate in a humble letter both your innocence and my own. They said that the affair was not as yet in a position of extreme hopelessness, if Leo X., in his inborn kindliness, would put his hand to it. On this I, who have always offered and wished for peace, in order that I might devote myself to calmer and more useful pursuits, and who for this very purpose have acted with so much spirit and vehemence, in order to put down by the strength and impetuosity of my words, as well as of my feelings, men whom I saw to be very far from equal to myself—I, I say, not only gladly yielded, but even accepted it with joy and gratitude, as the greatest kindness and benefit, if you should think it right to satisfy my hopes.

Thus I come, most blessed Father, and in all abasement beseech you to put to your hand, if it is possible, and impose a curb to those flatterers who are enemies of peace, while they pretend peace. But there is no reason, most blessed Father, why any one should assume that I am to utter a recantation, unless he prefers to involve the case in still greater confusion. Moreover, I cannot bear with laws for the interpretation of the word of God, since the word of God, which teaches liberty in all other things, ought not to be bound. Saving these two things, there is nothing which I am not able, and most heartily willing, to do or to suffer. I hate contention; I will challenge no one; in return I wish not to be challenged; but, being challenged, I will not be dumb in the cause of Christ my Master. For your Blessedness will be able by one short and easy word to call these controversies before you and suppress them, and to impose silence and peace on both sides—a word which I have ever longed to hear.

Therefore, Leo, my Father, beware of listening to those sirens who make you out to be not simply a man, but partly a god, so that you can command and require whatever you will. It will not

happen so, nor will you prevail. You are the servant of servants, and more than any other man, in a most pitiable and perilous position. Let not those men deceive you who pretend that you are lord of the world; who will not allow any one to be a Christian without your authority; who babble of your having power over heaven, hell, and purgatory. These men are your enemies and are seeking your soul to destroy it, as Isaiah says, "My people, they that call thee blessed are themselves deceiving thee." They are in error who raise you above councils and the universal Church; they are in error who attribute to you alone the right of interpreting Scripture. All these men are seeking to set up their own impieties in the Church under your name, and alas! Satan has gained much through them in the time of your predecessors.

In brief, trust not in any who exalt you, but in those who humiliate you. For this is the judgment of God: "He hath cast down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble." See how unlike Christ was to His successors, though all will have it that they are His vicars. I fear that in truth very many of them have been in too serious a sense His vicars, for a vicar represents a prince who is absent. Now if a pontiff rules while Christ is absent and does not dwell in his heart, what else is he but a vicar of Christ? And then what is that Church but a multitude without Christ? What indeed is such a vicar but antichrist and an idol? How much more rightly did the Apostles speak, who call themselves servants of a present Christ, not the vicars of an absent one!

Perhaps I am shamelessly bold in seeming to teach so great a head, by whom all men ought to be taught, and from whom, as those plagues of yours boast, the thrones of judges receive their sentence; but I imitate St. Bernard in his book concerning Considerations addressed to Eugenius, a book which ought to be known by heart by every pontiff. I do this, not from any desire to teach, but as a duty, from that simple and faithful solicitude which teaches us to be anxious for all that is safe for our neighbours, and does not allow considerations of worthiness or unworthiness

to be entertained, being intent only on the dangers or advantage of others. For since I know that your Blessedness is driven and tossed by the waves at Rome, so that the depths of the sea press on you with infinite perils, and that you are labouring under such a condition of misery that you need even the least help from any the least brother, I do not seem to myself to be acting unsuitably if I forget your majesty till I shall have fulfilled the office of charity. I will not flatter in so serious and perilous a matter; and if in this you do not see that I am your friend and most thoroughly your subject, there is One to see and judge.

In fine, that I may not approach you empty-handed, blessed Father, I bring with me this little treatise, published under your name, as a good omen of the establishment of peace and of good hope. By this you may perceive in what pursuits I should prefer and be able to occupy myself to more profit, if I were allowed, or had been hitherto allowed, by your impious flatterers. It is a small matter, if you look to its exterior, but, unless I mistake, it is a summary of the Christian life put together in small compass, if you apprehend its meaning. I, in my poverty, have no other present to make you, nor do you need anything else than to be enriched by a spiritual gift. I commend myself to your Paternity and Blessedness, whom may the Lord Jesus preserve for ever. Amen.

Wittenberg, 6th September, 1520.

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Christian faith has appeared to many an easy thing; nay, not a few even reckon it among the social virtues, as it were; and this they do because they have not made proof of it experimentally, and have never tasted of what efficacy it is. For it is not possible for any man to write well about it, or to understand well what is rightly written, who has not at some time tasted of its spirit, under the pressure of tribulation; while he who has tasted of it, even to a very small extent, can never write, speak, think, or hear about it sufficiently. For it is a living fountain, springing up into eternal life, as Christ calls it in John iv.

Now, though I cannot boast of my abundance, and though I know how poorly I am furnished, yet I hope that, after having been vexed by various temptations, I have attained some little drop of faith, and that I can speak of this matter, if not with more elegance, certainly with more solidity, than those literal and too subtle disputants who have hitherto discoursed upon it without understanding their own words. That I may open then an easier way for the ignorant—for these alone I am trying to serve—I first lay down these two propositions, concerning spiritual liberty and servitude:—

A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one.

Although these statements appear contradictory, yet, when they are found to agree together, they will make excellently for my purpose. They are both the statements of Paul himself, who says, "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all" (1 Cor. ix. 19), and "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Rom. xiii. 8). Now love is by its own nature dutiful

and obedient to the beloved object. Thus even Christ, though Lord of all things, was yet made of a woman; made under the law; at once free and a servant; at once in the form of God and in the form of a servant.

Let us examine the subject on a deeper and less simple principle. Man is composed of a twofold nature, a spiritual and a bodily. As regards the spiritual nature, which they name the soul, he is called the spiritual, inward, new man; as regards the bodily nature, which they name the flesh, he is called the fleshly, outward, old man. The Apostle speaks of this: "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. iv. 16). The result of this diversity is that in the Scriptures opposing statements are made concerning the same man, the fact being that in the same man these two men are opposed to one another; the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh (Gal. v. 17).

We first approach the subject of the inward man, that we may see by what means a man becomes justified, free, and a true Christian; that is, a spiritual, new, and inward man. It is certain that absolutely none among outward things, under whatever name they may be reckoned, has any influence in producing Christian righteousness or liberty, nor, on the other hand, unrighteousness or slavery. This can be shown by an easy argument.

What can it profit the soul that the body should be in good condition, free, and full of life; that it should eat, drink, and act according to its pleasure; when even the most impious slaves of every kind of vice are prosperous in these matters? Again, what harm can ill-health, bondage, hunger, thirst, or any other outward evil, do to the soul, when even the most pious of men and the freest in the purity of their conscience, are harassed by these things? Neither of these states of things has to do with the liberty or the slavery of the soul.

And so it will profit nothing that the body should be adorned with sacred vestments, or dwell in holy places, or be occupied in sacred

offices, or pray, fast, and abstain from certain meats, or do whatever works can be done through the body and in the body. Something widely different will be necessary for the justification and liberty of the soul, since the things I have spoken of can be done by any impious person, and only hypocrites are produced by devotion to these things. On the other hand, it will not at all injure the soul that the body should be clothed in profane raiment, should dwell in profane places, should eat and drink in the ordinary fashion, should not pray aloud, and should leave undone all the things above mentioned, which may be done by hypocrites.

And, to cast everything aside, even speculation, meditations, and whatever things can be performed by the exertions of the soul itself, are of no profit. One thing, and one alone, is necessary for life, justification, and Christian liberty; and that is the most holy word of God, the Gospel of Christ, as He says, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me shall not die eternally" (John xi. 25), and also, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John viii. 36), and, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. iv. 4).

Let us therefore hold it for certain and firmly established that the soul can do without everything except the word of God, without which none at all of its wants are provided for. But, having the word, it is rich and wants for nothing, since that is the word of life, of truth, of light, of peace, of justification, of salvation, of joy, of liberty, of wisdom, of virtue, of grace, of glory, and of every good thing. It is on this account that the prophet in a whole Psalm (Psalm cxix.), and in many other places, sighs for and calls upon the word of God with so many groanings and words.

Again, there is no more cruel stroke of the wrath of God than when He sends a famine of hearing His words (Amos viii. 11), just as there is no greater favour from Him than the sending forth of His word, as it is said, "He sent His word and healed them, and

delivered them from their destructions" (Psalm cvii. 20). Christ was sent for no other office than that of the word; and the order of Apostles, that of bishops, and that of the whole body of the clergy, have been called and instituted for no object but the ministry of the word.

But you will ask, What is this word, and by what means is it to be used, since there are so many words of God? I answer, The Apostle Paul (Rom. i.) explains what it is, namely the Gospel of God, concerning His Son, incarnate, suffering, risen, and glorified, through the Spirit, the Sanctifier. To preach Christ is to feed the soul, to justify it, to set it free, and to save it, if it believes the preaching. For faith alone and the efficacious use of the word of God, bring salvation. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9); and again, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 4), and "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. i. 17). For the word of God cannot be received and honoured by any works, but by faith alone. Hence it is clear that as the soul needs the word alone for life and justification, so it is justified by faith alone, and not by any works. For if it could be justified by any other means, it would have no need of the word, nor consequently of faith.

But this faith cannot consist at all with works; that is, if you imagine that you can be justified by those works, whatever they are, along with it. For this would be to halt between two opinions, to worship Baal, and to kiss the hand to him, which is a very great iniquity, as Job says. Therefore, when you begin to believe, you learn at the same time that all that is in you is utterly guilty, sinful, and damnable, according to that saying, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23), and also: "There is none righteous, no, not one; they are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 10-12). When you have learnt this, you will know that Christ is necessary for you, since He has

suffered and risen again for you, that, believing on Him, you might by this faith become another man, all your sins being remitted, and you being justified by the merits of another, namely of Christ alone.

Since then this faith can reign only in the inward man, as it is said, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. x. 10); and since it alone justifies, it is evident that by no outward work or labour can the inward man be at all justified, made free, and saved; and that no works whatever have any relation to him. And so, on the other hand, it is solely by impiety and incredulity of heart that he becomes guilty and a slave of sin, deserving condemnation, not by any outward sin or work. Therefore the first care of every Christian ought to be to lay aside all reliance on works, and strengthen his faith alone more and more, and by it grow in the knowledge, not of works, but of Christ Jesus, who has suffered and risen again for him, as Peter teaches (1 Peter v.) when he makes no other work to be a Christian one. Thus Christ, when the Jews asked Him what they should do that they might work the works of God, rejected the multitude of works, with which He saw that they were puffed up, and commanded them one thing only, saying, "This is the work of God: that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent, for Him hath God the Father sealed" (John vi. 27, 29).

Hence a right faith in Christ is an incomparable treasure, carrying with it universal salvation and preserving from all evil, as it is said, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). Isaiah, looking to this treasure, predicted, "The consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined (verbum abbreviatum et consummans), in the midst of the land" (Isa. x. 22, 23). As if he said, "Faith, which is the brief and complete fulfilling of the law, will fill those who believe with such righteousness that they will need nothing else for justification." Thus, too, Paul says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. x. 10).

But you ask how it can be the fact that faith alone justifies, and affords without works so great a treasure of good things, when so many works, ceremonies, and laws are prescribed to us in the Scriptures? I answer, Before all things bear in mind what I have said: that faith alone without works justifies, sets free, and saves, as I shall show more clearly below.

Meanwhile it is to be noted that the whole Scripture of God is divided into two parts: precepts and promises. The precepts certainly teach us what is good, but what they teach is not forthwith done. For they show us what we ought to do, but do not give us the power to do it. They were ordained, however, for the purpose of showing man to himself, that through them he may learn his own impotence for good and may despair of his own strength. For this reason they are called the Old Testament, and are so.

For example, "Thou shalt not covet," is a precept by which we are all convicted of sin, since no man can help coveting, whatever efforts to the contrary he may make. In order therefore that he may fulfil the precept, and not covet, he is constrained to despair of himself and to seek elsewhere and through another the help which he cannot find in himself; as it is said, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help" (Hosea xiii. 9). Now what is done by this one precept is done by all; for all are equally impossible of fulfilment by us.

Now when a man has through the precepts been taught his own impotence, and become anxious by what means he may satisfy the law—for the law must be satisfied, so that no jot or tittle of it may pass away, otherwise he must be hopelessly condemned—then, being truly humbled and brought to nothing in his own eyes, he finds in himself no resource for justification and salvation.

Then comes in that other part of Scripture, the promises of God, which declare the glory of God, and say, "If you wish to fulfil the

law, and, as the law requires, not to covet, lo! believe in Christ, in whom are promised to you grace, justification, peace, and liberty." All these things you shall have, if you believe, and shall be without them if you do not believe. For what is impossible for you by all the works of the law, which are many and yet useless, you shall fulfil in an easy and summary way through faith, because God the Father has made everything to depend on faith, so that whosoever has it has all things, and he who has it not has nothing. "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. xi. 32). Thus the promises of God give that which the precepts exact, and fulfil what the law commands; so that all is of God alone, both the precepts and their fulfilment. He alone commands; He alone also fulfils. Hence the promises of God belong to the New Testament; nay, are the New Testament.

Now, since these promises of God are words of holiness, truth, righteousness, liberty, and peace, and are full of universal goodness, the soul, which cleaves to them with a firm faith, is so united to them, nay, thoroughly absorbed by them, that it not only partakes in, but is penetrated and saturated by, all their virtues. For if the touch of Christ was healing, how much more does that most tender spiritual touch, nay, absorption of the word, communicate to the soul all that belongs to the word! In this way therefore the soul, through faith alone, without works, is from the word of God justified, sanctified, endued with truth, peace, and liberty, and filled full with every good thing, and is truly made the child of God, as it is said, "To them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John i. 12).

From all this it is easy to understand why faith has such great power, and why no good works, nor even all good works put together, can compare with it, since no work can cleave to the word of God or be in the soul. Faith alone and the word reign in it; and such as is the word, such is the soul made by it, just as iron exposed to fire glows like fire, on account of its union with the

fire. It is clear then that to a Christian man his faith suffices for everything, and that he has no need of works for justification. But if he has no need of works, neither has he need of the law; and if he has no need of the law, he is certainly free from the law, and the saying is true, "The law is not made for a righteous man" (1 Tim. i. 9). This is that Christian liberty, our faith, the effect of which is, not that we should be careless or lead a bad life, but that no one should need the law or works for justification and salvation.

Let us consider this as the first virtue of faith; and let us look also to the second. This also is an office of faith: that it honours with the utmost veneration and the highest reputation Him in whom it believes, inasmuch as it holds Him to be truthful and worthy of belief. For there is no honour like that reputation of truth and righteousness with which we honour Him in whom we believe. What higher credit can we attribute to any one than truth and righteousness, and absolute goodness? On the other hand, it is the greatest insult to brand any one with the reputation of falsehood and unrighteousness, or to suspect him of these, as we do when we disbelieve him.

Thus the soul, in firmly believing the promises of God, holds Him to be true and righteous; and it can attribute to God no higher glory than the credit of being so. The highest worship of God is to ascribe to Him truth, righteousness, and whatever qualities we must ascribe to one in whom we believe. In doing this the soul shows itself prepared to do His whole will; in doing this it hallows His name, and gives itself up to be dealt with as it may please God. For it cleaves to His promises, and never doubts that He is true, just, and wise, and will do, dispose, and provide for all things in the best way. Is not such a soul, in this its faith, most obedient to God in all things? What commandment does there remain which has not been amply fulfilled by such an obedience? What fulfilment can be more full than universal obedience? Now this is not accomplished by works, but by faith alone.

On the other hand, what greater rebellion, impiety, or insult to God can there be, than not to believe His promises? What else is this, than either to make God a liar, or to doubt His truth—that is, to attribute truth to ourselves, but to God falsehood and levity? In doing this, is not a man denying God and setting himself up as an idol in his own heart? What then can works, done in such a state of impiety, profit us, were they even angelic or apostolic works? Rightly hath God shut up all, not in wrath nor in lust, but in unbelief, in order that those who pretend that they are fulfilling the law by works of purity and benevolence (which are social and human virtues) may not presume that they will therefore be saved, but, being included in the sin of unbelief, may either seek mercy, or be justly condemned.

But when God sees that truth is ascribed to Him, and that in the faith of our hearts He is honoured with all the honour of which He is worthy, then in return He honours us on account of that faith, attributing to us truth and righteousness. For faith does truth and righteousness in rendering to God what is His; and therefore in return God gives glory to our righteousness. It is true and righteous that God is true and righteous; and to confess this and ascribe these attributes to Him, this it is to be true and righteous. Thus He says, "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. ii. 30). And so Paul says that Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness, because by it he gave glory to God; and that to us also, for the same reason, it shall be imputed for righteousness, if we believe (Rom. iv.).

The third incomparable grace of faith is this: that it unites the soul to Christ, as the wife to the husband, by which mystery, as the Apostle teaches, Christ and the soul are made one flesh. Now if they are one flesh, and if a true marriage—nay, by far the most perfect of all marriages—is accomplished between them (for human marriages are but feeble types of this one great marriage), then it follows that all they have becomes theirs in common, as well good things as evil things; so that whatsoever Christ

possesses, that the believing soul may take to itself and boast of as its own, and whatever belongs to the soul, that Christ claims as His.

If we compare these possessions, we shall see how inestimable is the gain. Christ is full of grace, life, and salvation; the soul is full of sin, death, and condemnation. Let faith step in, and then sin, death, and hell will belong to Christ, and grace, life, and salvation to the soul. For, if He is a Husband, He must needs take to Himself that which is His wife's, and at the same time, impart to His wife that which is His. For, in giving her His own body and Himself, how can He but give her all that is His? And, in taking to Himself the body of His wife, how can He but take to Himself all that is hers?

In this is displayed the delightful sight, not only of communion, but of a prosperous warfare, of victory, salvation, and redemption. For, since Christ is God and man, and is such a Person as neither has sinned, nor dies, nor is condemned, nay, cannot sin, die, or be condemned, and since His righteousness, life, and salvation are invincible, eternal, and almighty,—when I say, such a Person, by the wedding-ring of faith, takes a share in the sins, death, and hell of His wife, nay, makes them His own, and deals with them no otherwise than as if they were His, and as if He Himself had sinned; and when He suffers, dies, and descends to hell, that He may overcome all things, and since sin, death, and hell cannot swallow Him up, they must needs be swallowed up by Him in stupendous conflict. For His righteousness rises above the sins of all men; His life is more powerful than all death; His salvation is more unconquerable than all hell.

Thus the believing soul, by the pledge of its faith in Christ, becomes free from all sin, fearless of death, safe from hell, and endowed with the eternal righteousness, life, and salvation of its Husband Christ. Thus He presents to Himself a glorious bride, without spot or wrinkle, cleansing her with the washing of water

by the word; that is, by faith in the word of life, righteousness, and salvation. Thus He betrothes her unto Himself "in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies" (Hosea ii. 19, 20).

Who then can value highly enough these royal nuptials? Who can comprehend the riches of the glory of this grace? Christ, that rich and pious Husband, takes as a wife a needy and impious harlot, redeeming her from all her evils and supplying her with all His good things. It is impossible now that her sins should destroy her, since they have been laid upon Christ and swallowed up in Him, and since she has in her Husband Christ a righteousness which she may claim as her own, and which she can set up with confidence against all her sins, against death and hell, saying, "If I have sinned, my Christ, in whom I believe, has not sinned; all mine is His, and all His is mine," as it is written, "My beloved is mine, and I am His" (Cant. ii. 16). This is what Paul says: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," victory over sin and death, as he says, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. xv. 56, 57).

From all this you will again understand why so much importance is attributed to faith, so that it alone can fulfil the law and justify without any works. For you see that the First Commandment, which says, "Thou shalt worship one God only," is fulfilled by faith alone. If you were nothing but good works from the soles of your feet to the crown of your head, you would not be worshipping God, nor fulfilling the First Commandment, since it is impossible to worship God without ascribing to Him the glory of truth and of universal goodness, as it ought in truth to be ascribed. Now this is not done by works, but only by faith of heart. It is not by working, but by believing, that we glorify God, and confess Him to be true. On this ground faith alone is the righteousness of a Christian man, and the fulfilling of all the commandments. For to him who fulfils the first the task of fulfilling all the rest is easy.

Works, since they are irrational things, cannot glorify God, although they may be done to the glory of God, if faith be present. But at present we are inquiring, not into the quality of the works done, but into him who does them, who glorifies God, and brings forth good works. This is faith of heart, the head and the substance of all our righteousness. Hence that is a blind and perilous doctrine which teaches that the commandments are fulfilled by works. The commandments must have been fulfilled previous to any good works, and good works follow their fulfillment, as we shall see.

But, that we may have a wider view of that grace which our inner man has in Christ, we must know that in the Old Testament God sanctified to Himself every first-born male. The birthright was of great value, giving a superiority over the rest by the double honour of priesthood and kingship. For the first-born brother was priest and lord of all the rest.

Under this figure was foreshown Christ, the true and only First-born of God the Father and of the Virgin Mary, and a true King and Priest, not in a fleshly and earthly sense. For His kingdom is not of this world; it is in heavenly and spiritual things that He reigns and acts as Priest; and these are righteousness, truth, wisdom, peace, salvation, etc. Not but that all things, even those of earth and hell, are subject to Him—for otherwise how could He defend and save us from them?—but it is not in these, nor by these, that His kingdom stands.

So, too, His priesthood does not consist in the outward display of vestments and gestures, as did the human priesthood of Aaron and our ecclesiastical priesthood at this day, but in spiritual things, wherein, in His invisible office, He intercedes for us with God in heaven, and there offers Himself, and performs all the duties of a priest, as Paul describes Him to the Hebrews under the figure of Melchizedek. Nor does He only pray and intercede for us; He also teaches us inwardly in the spirit with the living teachings of His Spirit. Now these are the two special offices of a priest, as is

figured to us in the case of fleshly priests by visible prayers and sermons.

As Christ by His birthright has obtained these two dignities, so He imparts and communicates them to every believer in Him, under that law of matrimony of which we have spoken above, by which all that is the husband's is also the wife's. Hence all we who believe on Christ are kings and priests in Christ, as it is said, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter ii. 9).

These two things stand thus. First, as regards kingship, every Christian is by faith so exalted above all things that, in spiritual power, he is completely lord of all things, so that nothing whatever can do him any hurt; yea, all things are subject to him, and are compelled to be subservient to his salvation. Thus Paul says, "All things work together for good to them who are the called" (Rom. viii. 28), and also, "Whether life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's" (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23).

Not that in the sense of corporeal power any one among Christians has been appointed to possess and rule all things, according to the mad and senseless idea of certain ecclesiastics. That is the office of kings, princes, and men upon earth. In the experience of life we see that we are subjected to all things, and suffer many things, even death. Yea, the more of a Christian any man is, to so many the more evils, sufferings, and deaths is he subject, as we see in the first place in Christ the First-born, and in all His holy brethren.

This is a spiritual power, which rules in the midst of enemies, and is powerful in the midst of distresses. And this is nothing else than that strength is made perfect in my weakness, and that I can turn all things to the profit of my salvation; so that even the cross and

death are compelled to serve me and to work together for my salvation. This is a lofty and eminent dignity, a true and almighty dominion, a spiritual empire, in which there is nothing so good, nothing so bad, as not to work together for my good, if only I believe. And yet there is nothing of which I have need—for faith alone suffices for my salvation—unless that in it faith may exercise the power and empire of its liberty. This is the inestimable power and liberty of Christians.

Nor are we only kings and the freest of all men, but also priests for ever, a dignity far higher than kingship, because by that priesthood we are worthy to appear before God, to pray for others, and to teach one another mutually the things which are of God. For these are the duties of priests, and they cannot possibly be permitted to any unbeliever. Christ has obtained for us this favour, if we believe in Him: that just as we are His brethren and co-heirs and fellow-kings with Him, so we should be also fellow-priests with Him, and venture with confidence, through the spirit of faith, to come into the presence of God, and cry, "Abba, Father!" and to pray for one another, and to do all things which we see done and figured in the visible and corporeal office of priesthood. But to an unbelieving person nothing renders service or work for good. He himself is in servitude to all things, and all things turn out for evil to him, because he uses all things in an impious way for his own advantage, and not for the glory of God. And thus he is not a priest, but a profane person, whose prayers are turned into sin, nor does he ever appear in the presence of God, because God does not hear sinners.

Who then can comprehend the loftiness of that Christian dignity which, by its royal power, rules over all things, even over death, life, and sin, and, by its priestly glory, is all-powerful with God, since God does what He Himself seeks and wishes, as it is written, "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them"? (Psalm cxlv. 19). This glory certainly cannot be attained by any works, but by faith only.

From these considerations any one may clearly see how a Christian man is free from all things; so that he needs no works in order to be justified and saved, but receives these gifts in abundance from faith alone. Nay, were he so foolish as to pretend to be justified, set free, saved, and made a Christian, by means of any good work, he would immediately lose faith, with all its benefits. Such folly is prettily represented in the fable where a dog, running along in the water and carrying in his mouth a real piece of meat, is deceived by the reflection of the meat in the water, and, in trying with open mouth to seize it, loses the meat and its image at the same time.

Here you will ask, "If all who are in the Church are priests, by what character are those whom we now call priests to be distinguished from the laity?" I reply, By the use of these words, "priest," "clergy," "spiritual person," "ecclesiastic," an injustice has been done, since they have been transferred from the remaining body of Christians to those few who are now, by hurtful custom, called ecclesiastics. For Holy Scripture makes no distinction between them, except that those who are now boastfully called popes, bishops, and lords, it calls ministers, servants, and stewards, who are to serve the rest in the ministry of the word, for teaching the faith of Christ and the liberty of believers. For though it is true that we are all equally priests, yet we cannot, nor, if we could, ought we all to, minister and teach publicly. Thus Paul says, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1).

This bad system has now issued in such a pompous display of power and such a terrible tyranny that no earthly government can be compared to it, as if the laity were something else than Christians. Through this perversion of things it has happened that the knowledge of Christian grace, of faith, of liberty, and altogether of Christ, has utterly perished, and has been succeeded by an intolerable bondage to human works and laws; and, according to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, we have become the

slaves of the vilest men on earth, who abuse our misery to all the disgraceful and ignominious purposes of their own will.

Returning to the subject which we had begun, I think it is made clear by these considerations that it is not sufficient, nor a Christian course, to preach the works, life, and words of Christ in a historic manner, as facts which it suffices to know as an example how to frame our life, as do those who are now held the best preachers, and much less so to keep silence altogether on these things and to teach in their stead the laws of men and the decrees of the Fathers. There are now not a few persons who preach and read about Christ with the object of moving the human affections to sympathise with Christ, to indignation against the Jews, and other childish and womanish absurdities of that kind.

Now preaching ought to have the object of promoting faith in Him, so that He may not only be Christ, but a Christ for you and for me, and that what is said of Him, and what He is called, may work in us. And this faith is produced and is maintained by preaching why Christ came, what He has brought us and given to us, and to what profit and advantage He is to be received. This is done when the Christian liberty which we have from Christ Himself is rightly taught, and we are shown in what manner all we Christians are kings and priests, and how we are lords of all things, and may be confident that whatever we do in the presence of God is pleasing and acceptable to Him.

Whose heart would not rejoice in its inmost core at hearing these things? Whose heart, on receiving so great a consolation, would not become sweet with the love of Christ, a love to which it can never attain by any laws or works? Who can injure such a heart, or make it afraid? If the consciousness of sin or the horror of death rush in upon it, it is prepared to hope in the Lord, and is fearless of such evils, and undisturbed, until it shall look down upon its enemies. For it believes that the righteousness of Christ is its own, and that its sin is no longer its own, but that of Christ; but, on account of its faith in Christ, all its sin must needs be

swallowed up from before the face of the righteousness of Christ, as I have said above. It learns, too, with the Apostle, to scoff at death and sin, and to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 55-57). For death is swallowed up in victory, not only the victory of Christ, but ours also, since by faith it becomes ours, and in it we too conquer.

Let it suffice to say this concerning the inner man and its liberty, and concerning that righteousness of faith which needs neither laws nor good works; nay, they are even hurtful to it, if any one pretends to be justified by them.

And now let us turn to the other part: to the outward man. Here we shall give an answer to all those who, taking offence at the word of faith and at what I have asserted, say, "If faith does everything, and by itself suffices for justification, why then are good works commanded? Are we then to take our ease and do no works, content with faith?" Not so, impious men, I reply; not so. That would indeed really be the case, if we were thoroughly and completely inner and spiritual persons; but that will not happen until the last day, when the dead shall be raised. As long as we live in the flesh, we are but beginning and making advances in that which shall be completed in a future life. On this account the Apostle calls that which we have in this life the firstfruits of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 23). In future we shall have the tenths, and the fullness of the Spirit. To this part belongs the fact I have stated before: that the Christian is the servant of all and subject to all. For in that part in which he is free he does no works, but in that in which he is a servant he does all works. Let us see on what principle this is so.

Although, as I have said, inwardly, and according to the spirit, a man is amply enough justified by faith, having all that he requires to have, except that this very faith and abundance ought to increase from day to day, even till the future life, still he remains

in this mortal life upon earth, in which it is necessary that he should rule his own body and have intercourse with men. Here then works begin; here he must not take his ease; here he must give heed to exercise his body by fastings, watchings, labour, and other regular discipline, so that it may be subdued to the spirit, and obey and conform itself to the inner man and faith, and not rebel against them nor hinder them, as is its nature to do if it is not kept under. For the inner man, being conformed to God and created after the image of God through faith, rejoices and delights itself in Christ, in whom such blessings have been conferred on it, and hence has only this task before it: to serve God with joy and for nought in free love.

But in doing this he comes into collision with that contrary will in his own flesh, which is striving to serve the world and to seek its own gratification. This the spirit of faith cannot and will not bear, but applies itself with cheerfulness and zeal to keep it down and restrain it, as Paul says, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin" (Rom. vii. 22, 23), and again, "I keep under my body, and bring it unto subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. ix. 27), and "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts" (Gal. v. 24).

These works, however, must not be done with any notion that by them a man can be justified before God—for faith, which alone is righteousness before God, will not bear with this false notion—but solely with this purpose: that the body may be brought into subjection, and be purified from its evil lusts, so that our eyes may be turned only to purging away those lusts. For when the soul has been cleansed by faith and made to love God, it would have all things to be cleansed in like manner, and especially its own body, so that all things might unite with it in the love and praise of God. Thus it comes that, from the requirements of his own body, a man cannot take his ease, but is compelled on its account to do

many good works, that he may bring it into subjection. Yet these works are not the means of his justification before God; he does them out of disinterested love to the service of God; looking to no other end than to do what is well-pleasing to Him whom he desires to obey most dutifully in all things.

On this principle every man may easily instruct himself in what measure, and with what distinctions, he ought to chasten his own body. He will fast, watch, and labour, just as much as he sees to suffice for keeping down the wantonness and concupiscence of the body. But those who pretend to be justified by works are looking, not to the mortification of their lusts, but only to the works themselves; thinking that, if they can accomplish as many works and as great ones as possible, all is well with them, and they are justified. Sometimes they even injure their brain, and extinguish nature, or at least make it useless. This is enormous folly, and ignorance of Christian life and faith, when a man seeks, without faith, to be justified and saved by works.

To make what we have said more easily understood, let us set it forth under a figure. The works of a Christian man, who is justified and saved by his faith out of the pure and unbought mercy of God, ought to be regarded in the same light as would have been those of Adam and Eve in paradise and of all their posterity if they had not sinned. Of them it is said, "The Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. ii. 15). Now Adam had been created by God just and righteous, so that he could not have needed to be justified and made righteous by keeping the garden and working in it; but, that he might not be unemployed, God gave him the business of keeping and cultivating paradise. These would have indeed been works of perfect freedom, being done for no object but that of pleasing God, and not in order to obtain justification, which he already had to the full, and which would have been innate in us all.

So it is with the works of a believer. Being by his faith replaced

afresh in paradise and created anew, he does not need works for his justification, but that he may not be idle, but may exercise his own body and preserve it. His works are to be done freely, with the sole object of pleasing God. Only we are not yet fully created anew in perfect faith and love; these require to be increased, not, however, through works, but through themselves.

A bishop, when he consecrates a church, confirms children, or performs any other duty of his office, is not consecrated as bishop by these works; nay, unless he had been previously consecrated as bishop, not one of those works would have any validity; they would be foolish, childish, and ridiculous. Thus a Christian, being consecrated by his faith, does good works; but he is not by these works made a more sacred person, or more a Christian. That is the effect of faith alone; nay, unless he were previously a believer and a Christian, none of his works would have any value at all; they would really be impious and damnable sins.

True, then, are these two sayings: "Good works do not make a good man, but a good man does good works"; "Bad works do not make a bad man, but a bad man does bad works." Thus it is always necessary that the substance or person should be good before any good works can be done, and that good works should follow and proceed from a good person. As Christ says, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. vii. 18). Now it is clear that the fruit does not bear the tree, nor does the tree grow on the fruit; but, on the contrary, the trees bear the fruit, and the fruit grows on the trees.

As then trees must exist before their fruit, and as the fruit does not make the tree either good or bad, but on the contrary, a tree of either kind produces fruit of the same kind, so must first the person of the man be good or bad before he can do either a good or a bad work; and his works do not make him bad or good, but he himself makes his works either bad or good.

We may see the same thing in all handicrafts. A bad or good house

does not make a bad or good builder, but a good or bad builder makes a good or bad house. And in general no work makes the workman such as it is itself; but the workman makes the work such as he is himself. Such is the case, too, with the works of men. Such as the man himself is, whether in faith or in unbelief, such is his work: good if it be done in faith; bad if in unbelief. But the converse is not true that, such as the work is, such the man becomes in faith or in unbelief. For as works do not make a believing man, so neither do they make a justified man; but faith, as it makes a man a believer and justified, so also it makes his works good.

Since then works justify no man, but a man must be justified before he can do any good work, it is most evident that it is faith alone which, by the mere mercy of God through Christ, and by means of His word, can worthily and sufficiently justify and save the person; and that a Christian man needs no work, no law, for his salvation; for by faith he is free from all law, and in perfect freedom does gratuitously all that he does, seeking nothing either of profit or of salvation—since by the grace of God he is already saved and rich in all things through his faith—but solely that which is well-pleasing to God.

So, too, no good work can profit an unbeliever to justification and salvation; and, on the other hand, no evil work makes him an evil and condemned person, but that unbelief, which makes the person and the tree bad, makes his works evil and condemned. Wherefore, when any man is made good or bad, this does not arise from his works, but from his faith or unbelief, as the wise man says, "The beginning of sin is to fall away from God"; that is, not to believe. Paul says, "He that cometh to God must believe" (Heb. xi. 6); and Christ says the same thing: "Either make the tree good and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt" (Matt. xii. 33),—as much as to say, He who wishes to have good fruit will begin with the tree, and plant a good one; even so he who wishes to do good works must begin, not by working, but by believing, since it is this which makes the

person good. For nothing makes the person good but faith, nor bad but unbelief.

It is certainly true that, in the sight of men, a man becomes good or evil by his works; but here "becoming" means that it is thus shown and recognised who is good or evil, as Christ says, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. vii. 20). But all this stops at appearances and externals; and in this matter very many deceive themselves, when they presume to write and teach that we are to be justified by good works, and meanwhile make no mention even of faith, walking in their own ways, ever deceived and deceiving, going from bad to worse, blind leaders of the blind, wearying themselves with many works, and yet never attaining to true righteousness, of whom Paul says, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. iii. 5, 7).

He then who does not wish to go astray, with these blind ones, must look further than to the works of the law or the doctrine of works; nay, must turn away his sight from works, and look to the person, and to the manner in which it may be justified. Now it is justified and saved, not by works or laws, but by the word of God—that is, by the promise of His grace—so that the glory may be to the Divine majesty, which has saved us who believe, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, by the word of His grace.

From all this it is easy to perceive on what principle good works are to be cast aside or embraced, and by what rule all teachings put forth concerning works are to be understood. For if works are brought forward as grounds of justification, and are done under the false persuasion that we can pretend to be justified by them, they lay on us the yoke of necessity, and extinguish liberty along with faith, and by this very addition to their use they become no longer good, but really worthy of condemnation. For such works are not free, but blaspheme the grace of God, to which alone it belongs to justify and save through faith. Works

cannot accomplish this, and yet, with impious presumption, through our folly, they take it on themselves to do so; and thus break in with violence upon the office and glory of grace.

We do not then reject good works; nay, we embrace them and teach them in the highest degree. It is not on their own account that we condemn them, but on account of this impious addition to them and the perverse notion of seeking justification by them. These things cause them to be only good in outward show, but in reality not good, since by them men are deceived and deceive others, like ravening wolves in sheep's clothing.

Now this leviathan, this perverted notion about works, is invincible when sincere faith is wanting. For those sanctified doers of works cannot but hold it till faith, which destroys it, comes and reigns in the heart. Nature cannot expel it by her own power; nay, cannot even see it for what it is, but considers it as a most holy will. And when custom steps in besides, and strengthens this pravity of nature, as has happened by means of impious teachers, then the evil is incurable, and leads astray multitudes to irreparable ruin. Therefore, though it is good to preach and write about penitence, confession, and satisfaction, yet if we stop there, and do not go on to teach faith, such teaching is without doubt deceitful and devilish. For Christ, speaking by His servant John, not only said, "Repent ye," but added, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2).

For not one word of God only, but both, should be preached; new and old things should be brought out of the treasury, as well the voice of the law as the word of grace. The voice of the law should be brought forward, that men may be terrified and brought to a knowledge of their sins, and thence be converted to penitence and to a better manner of life. But we must not stop here; that would be to wound only and not to bind up, to strike and not to heal, to kill and not to make alive, to bring down to hell and not to bring back, to humble and not to exalt. Therefore the word of grace and of the promised remission of sin must also

be preached, in order to teach and set up faith, since without that word contrition, penitence, and all other duties, are performed and taught in vain.

There still remain, it is true, preachers of repentance and grace, but they do not explain the law and the promises of God to such an end, and in such a spirit, that men may learn whence repentance and grace are to come. For repentance comes from the law of God, but faith or grace from the promises of God, as it is said, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17), whence it comes that a man, when humbled and brought to the knowledge of himself by the threatenings and terrors of the law, is consoled and raised up by faith in the Divine promise. Thus "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm xxx. 5). Thus much we say concerning works in general, and also concerning those which the Christian practises with regard to his own body.

Lastly, we will speak also of those works which he performs towards his neighbour. For man does not live for himself alone in this mortal body, in order to work on its account, but also for all men on earth; nay, he lives only for others, and not for himself. For it is to this end that he brings his own body into subjection, that he may be able to serve others more sincerely and more freely, as Paul says, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord" (Rom. xiv. 7, 8). Thus it is impossible that he should take his ease in this life, and not work for the good of his neighbours, since he must needs speak, act, and converse among men, just as Christ was made in the likeness of men and found in fashion as a man, and had His conversation among men.

Yet a Christian has need of none of these things for justification and salvation, but in all his works he ought to entertain this view and look only to this object—that he may serve and be useful to others in all that he does; having nothing before his eyes but the

necessities and the advantage of his neighbour. Thus the Apostle commands us to work with our own hands, that we may have to give to those that need. He might have said, that we may support ourselves; but he tells us to give to those that need. It is the part of a Christian to take care of his own body for the very purpose that, by its soundness and well-being, he may be enabled to labour, and to acquire and preserve property, for the aid of those who are in want, that thus the stronger member may serve the weaker member, and we may be children of God, thoughtful and busy one for another, bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ.

Here is the truly Christian life, here is faith really working by love, when a man applies himself with joy and love to the works of that freest servitude in which he serves others voluntarily and for nought, himself abundantly satisfied in the fulness and riches of his own faith.

Thus, when Paul had taught the Philippians how they had been made rich by that faith in Christ in which they had obtained all things, he teaches them further in these words: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. ii. 1-4).

In this we see clearly that the Apostle lays down this rule for a Christian life: that all our works should be directed to the advantage of others, since every Christian has such abundance through his faith that all his other works and his whole life remain over and above wherewith to serve and benefit his neighbour of spontaneous goodwill.

To this end he brings forward Christ as an example, saying, "Let

this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death" (Phil. ii. 5-8). This most wholesome saying of the Apostle has been darkened to us by men who, totally misunderstanding the expressions "form of God," "form of a servant," "fashion," "likeness of men," have transferred them to the natures of Godhead and manhood. Paul's meaning is this: Christ, when He was full of the form of God and abounded in all good things, so that He had no need of works or sufferings to be just and saved—for all these things He had from the very beginning—yet was not puffed up with these things, and did not raise Himself above us and arrogate to Himself power over us, though He might lawfully have done so, but, on the contrary, so acted in labouring, working, suffering, and dying, as to be like the rest of men, and no otherwise than a man in fashion and in conduct, as if He were in want of all things and had nothing of the form of God; and yet all this He did for our sakes, that He might serve us, and that all the works He should do under that form of a servant might become ours.

Thus a Christian, like Christ his Head, being full and in abundance through his faith, ought to be content with this form of God, obtained by faith; except that, as I have said, he ought to increase this faith till it be perfected. For this faith is his life, justification, and salvation, preserving his person itself and making it pleasing to God, and bestowing on him all that Christ has, as I have said above, and as Paul affirms: "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20). Though he is thus free from all works, yet he ought to empty himself of this liberty, take on him the form of a servant, be made in the likeness of men, be found in fashion as a man, serve, help, and in every way act towards his neighbour as he sees that God through Christ has acted and is acting towards him. All this he should do freely, and with regard to nothing but the good pleasure of God, and he

should reason thus:—

Lo! my God, without merit on my part, of His pure and free mercy, has given to me, an unworthy, condemned, and contemptible creature all the riches of justification and salvation in Christ, so that I no longer am in want of anything, except of faith to believe that this is so. For such a Father, then, who has overwhelmed me with these inestimable riches of His, why should I not freely, cheerfully, and with my whole heart, and from voluntary zeal, do all that I know will be pleasing to Him and acceptable in His sight? I will therefore give myself as a sort of Christ, to my neighbour, as Christ has given Himself to me; and will do nothing in this life except what I see will be needful, advantageous, and wholesome for my neighbour, since by faith I abound in all good things in Christ.

Thus from faith flow forth love and joy in the Lord, and from love a cheerful, willing, free spirit, disposed to serve our neighbour voluntarily, without taking any account of gratitude or ingratitude, praise or blame, gain or loss. Its object is not to lay men under obligations, nor does it distinguish between friends and enemies, or look to gratitude or ingratitude, but most freely and willingly spends itself and its goods, whether it loses them through ingratitude, or gains goodwill. For thus did its Father, distributing all things to all men abundantly and freely, making His sun to rise upon the just and the unjust. Thus, too, the child does and endures nothing except from the free joy with which it delights through Christ in God, the Giver of such great gifts.

You see, then, that, if we recognize those great and precious gifts, as Peter says, which have been given to us, love is quickly diffused in our hearts through the Spirit, and by love we are made free, joyful, all-powerful, active workers, victors over all our tribulations, servants to our neighbour, and nevertheless lords of all things. But, for those who do not recognise the good things given to them through Christ, Christ has been born in vain; such persons walk by works, and will never attain the taste and feeling

of these great things. Therefore just as our neighbour is in want, and has need of our abundance, so we too in the sight of God were in want, and had need of His mercy. And as our heavenly Father has freely helped us in Christ, so ought we freely to help our neighbour by our body and works, and each should become to other a sort of Christ, so that we may be mutually Christs, and that the same Christ may be in all of us; that is, that we may be truly Christians.

Who then can comprehend the riches and glory of the Christian life? It can do all things, has all things, and is in want of nothing; is lord over sin, death, and hell, and at the same time is the obedient and useful servant of all. But alas! it is at this day unknown throughout the world; it is neither preached nor sought after, so that we are quite ignorant about our own name, why we are and are called Christians. We are certainly called so from Christ, who is not absent, but dwells among us—provided, that is, that we believe in Him and are reciprocally and mutually one the Christ of the other, doing to our neighbour as Christ does to us. But now, in the doctrine of men, we are taught only to seek after merits, rewards, and things which are already ours, and we have made of Christ a taskmaster far more severe than Moses.

The Blessed Virgin beyond all others, affords us an example of the same faith, in that she was purified according to the law of Moses, and like all other women, though she was bound by no such law and had no need of purification. Still she submitted to the law voluntarily and of free love, making herself like the rest of women, that she might not offend or throw contempt on them. She was not justified by doing this; but, being already justified, she did it freely and gratuitously. Thus ought our works too to be done, and not in order to be justified by them; for, being first justified by faith, we ought to do all our works freely and cheerfully for the sake of others.

St. Paul circumcised his disciple Timothy, not because he needed circumcision for his justification, but that he might not offend or

contemn those Jews, weak in the faith, who had not yet been able to comprehend the liberty of faith. On the other hand, when they contemned liberty and urged that circumcision was necessary for justification, he resisted them, and would not allow Titus to be circumcised. For, as he would not offend or contemn any one's weakness in faith, but yielded for the time to their will, so, again, he would not have the liberty of faith offended or contemned by hardened self-justifiers, but walked in a middle path, sparing the weak for the time, and always resisting the hardened, that he might convert all to the liberty of faith. On the same principle we ought to act, receiving those that are weak in the faith, but boldly resisting these hardened teachers of works, of whom we shall hereafter speak at more length.

Christ also, when His disciples were asked for the tribute money, asked of Peter whether the children of a king were not free from taxes. Peter agreed to this; yet Jesus commanded him to go to the sea, saying, "Lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth thou shalt find a piece of money; that take, and give unto them for Me and thee" (Matt. xvii. 27).

This example is very much to our purpose; for here Christ calls Himself and His disciples free men and children of a King, in want of nothing; and yet He voluntarily submits and pays the tax. Just as far, then, as this work was necessary or useful to Christ for justification or salvation, so far do all His other works or those of His disciples avail for justification. They are really free and subsequent to justification, and only done to serve others and set them an example.

Such are the works which Paul inculcated, that Christians should be subject to principalities and powers and ready to every good work (Titus iii. 1), not that they may be justified by these things—for they are already justified by faith—but that in liberty of spirit they may thus be the servants of others and subject to powers, obeying their will out of gratuitous love.

Such, too, ought to have been the works of all colleges, monasteries, and priests; every one doing the works of his own profession and state of life, not in order to be justified by them, but in order to bring his own body into subjection, as an example to others, who themselves also need to keep under their bodies, and also in order to accommodate himself to the will of others, out of free love. But we must always guard most carefully against any vain confidence or presumption of being justified, gaining merit, or being saved by these works, this being the part of faith alone, as I have so often said.

Any man possessing this knowledge may easily keep clear of danger among those innumerable commands and precepts of the Pope, of bishops, of monasteries, of churches, of princes, and of magistrates, which some foolish pastors urge on us as being necessary for justification and salvation, calling them precepts of the Church, when they are not so at all. For the Christian freeman will speak thus: I will fast, I will pray, I will do this or that which is commanded me by men, not as having any need of these things for justification or salvation, but that I may thus comply with the will of the Pope, of the bishop, of such a community or such a magistrate, or of my neighbour as an example to him; for this cause I will do and suffer all things, just as Christ did and suffered much more for me, though He needed not at all to do so on His own account, and made Himself for my sake under the law, when He was not under the law. And although tyrants may do me violence or wrong in requiring obedience to these things, yet it will not hurt me to do them, so long as they are not done against God.

From all this every man will be able to attain a sure judgment and faithful discrimination between all works and laws, and to know who are blind and foolish pastors, and who are true and good ones. For whatsoever work is not directed to the sole end either of keeping under the body, or of doing service to our neighbour—provided he require nothing contrary to the will of

God—is no good or Christian work. Hence I greatly fear that at this day few or no colleges, monasteries, altars, or ecclesiastical functions are Christian ones; and the same may be said of fasts and special prayers to certain saints. I fear that in all these nothing is being sought but what is already ours; while we fancy that by these things our sins are purged away and salvation is attained, and thus utterly do away with Christian liberty. This comes from ignorance of Christian faith and liberty.

This ignorance and this crushing of liberty are diligently promoted by the teaching of very many blind pastors, who stir up and urge the people to a zeal for these things, praising them and puffing them up with their indulgences, but never teaching faith. Now I would advise you, if you have any wish to pray, to fast, or to make foundations in churches, as they call it, to take care not to do so with the object of gaining any advantage, either temporal or eternal. You will thus wrong your faith, which alone bestows all things on you, and the increase of which, either by working or by suffering, is alone to be cared for. What you give, give freely and without price, that others may prosper and have increase from you and your goodness. Thus you will be a truly good man and a Christian. For what to you are your goods and your works, which are done over and above for the subjection of the body, since you have abundance for yourself through your faith, in which God has given you all things?

We give this rule: the good things which we have from God ought to flow from one to another and become common to all, so that every one of us may, as it were, put on his neighbour, and so behave towards him as if he were himself in his place. They flowed and do flow from Christ to us; He put us on, and acted for us as if He Himself were what we are. From us they flow to those who have need of them; so that my faith and righteousness ought to be laid down before God as a covering and intercession for the sins of my neighbour, which I am to take on myself, and so labour and endure servitude in them, as if they were my own; for thus has Christ done for us. This is true love and the genuine

truth of Christian life. But only there is it true and genuine where there is true and genuine faith. Hence the Apostle attributes to charity this quality: that she seeketh not her own.

We conclude therefore that a Christian man does not live in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbour, or else is no Christian: in Christ by faith; in his neighbour by love. By faith he is carried upwards above himself to God, and by love he sinks back below himself to his neighbour, still always-abiding in God and His love, as Christ says, "Verily I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John i. 51).

Thus much concerning liberty, which, as you see, is a true and spiritual liberty, making our hearts free from all sins, laws, and commandments, as Paul says, "The law is not made for a righteous man" (1 Tim. i. 9), and one which surpasses all other external liberties, as far as heaven is above earth. May Christ make us to understand and preserve this liberty. Amen.

Finally, for the sake of those to whom nothing can be stated so well but that they misunderstand and distort it, we must add a word, in case they can understand even that. There are very many persons who, when they hear of this liberty of faith, straightway turn it into an occasion of licence. They think that everything is now lawful for them, and do not choose to show themselves free men and Christians in any other way than by their contempt and reprehension of ceremonies, of traditions, of human laws; as if they were Christians merely because they refuse to fast on stated days, or eat flesh when others fast, or omit the customary prayers; scoffing at the precepts of men, but utterly passing over all the rest that belongs to the Christian religion. On the other hand, they are most pertinaciously resisted by those who strive after salvation solely by their observance of and reverence for ceremonies, as if they would be saved merely because they fast on stated days, or abstain from flesh, or make formal prayers; talking loudly of the precepts of the Church and of the Fathers, and not

caring a straw about those things which belong to our genuine faith. Both these parties are plainly culpable, in that, while they neglect matters which are of weight and necessary for salvation, they contend noisily about such as are without weight and not necessary.

How much more rightly does the Apostle Paul teach us to walk in the middle path, condemning either extreme and saying, "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth" (Rom. xiv. 3)! You see here how the Apostle blames those who, not from religious feeling, but in mere contempt, neglect and rail at ceremonial observances, and teaches them not to despise, since this "knowledge puffeth up." Again, he teaches the pertinacious upholders of these things not to judge their opponents. For neither party observes towards the other that charity which edifieth. In this matter we must listen to Scripture, which teaches us to turn aside neither to the right hand nor to the left, but to follow those right precepts of the Lord which rejoice the heart. For just as a man is not righteous merely because he serves and is devoted to works and ceremonial rites, so neither will he be accounted righteous merely because he neglects and despises them.

It is not from works that we are set free by the faith of Christ, but from the belief in works, that is from foolishly presuming to seek justification through works. Faith redeems our consciences, makes them upright, and preserves them, since by it we recognise the truth that justification does not depend on our works, although good works neither can nor ought to be absent, just as we cannot exist without food and drink and all the functions of this mortal body. Still it is not on them that our justification is based, but on faith; and yet they ought not on that account to be despised or neglected. Thus in this world we are compelled by the needs of this bodily life; but we are not hereby justified. "My kingdom is not hence, nor of this world," says Christ; but He does not say, "My kingdom is not here, nor in this world." Paul, too,

says, "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh" (2 Cor. x. 3), and "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20). Thus our doings, life, and being, in works and ceremonies, are done from the necessities of this life, and with the motive of governing our bodies; but yet we are not justified by these things, but by the faith of the Son of God.

The Christian must therefore walk in the middle path, and set these two classes of men before his eyes. He may meet with hardened and obstinate ceremonialists, who, like deaf adders, refuse to listen to the truth of liberty, and cry up, enjoin, and urge on us their ceremonies, as if they could justify us without faith. Such were the Jews of old, who would not understand, that they might act well. These men we must resist, do just the contrary to what they do, and be bold to give them offence, lest by this impious notion of theirs they should deceive many along with themselves. Before the eyes of these men it is expedient to eat flesh, to break fasts, and to do in behalf of the liberty of faith things which they hold to be the greatest sins. We must say of them, "Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind" (Matt. xv. 14). In this way Paul also would not have Titus circumcised, though these men urged it; and Christ defended the Apostles, who had plucked ears of corn on the Sabbath day; and many like instances.

Or else we may meet with simple-minded and ignorant persons, weak in the faith, as the Apostle calls them, who are as yet unable to apprehend that liberty of faith, even if willing to do so. These we must spare, lest they should be offended. We must bear with their infirmity, till they shall be more fully instructed. For since these men do not act thus from hardened malice, but only from weakness of faith, therefore, in order to avoid giving them offence, we must keep fasts and do other things which they consider necessary. This is required of us by charity, which injures no one, but serves all men. It is not the fault of these persons that they are weak, but that of their pastors, who by the snares and

weapons of their own traditions have brought them into bondage and wounded their souls when they ought to have been set free and healed by the teaching of faith and liberty. Thus the Apostle says, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth" (1 Cor. viii. 13); and again, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. It is evil for that man who eateth with offence" (Rom. xiv. 14, 20).

Thus, though we ought boldly to resist those teachers of tradition, and though the laws of the pontiffs, by which they make aggressions on the people of God, deserve sharp reproof, yet we must spare the timid crowd, who are held captive by the laws of those impious tyrants, till they are set free. Fight vigorously against the wolves, but on behalf of the sheep, not against the sheep. And this you may do by inveighing against the laws and lawgivers, and yet at the same time observing these laws with the weak, lest they be offended, until they shall themselves recognise the tyranny, and understand their own liberty. If you wish to use your liberty, do it secretly, as Paul says, "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God" (Rom. xiv. 22). But take care not to use it in the presence of the weak. On the other hand, in the presence of tyrants and obstinate opposers, use your liberty in their despite, and with the utmost pertinacity, that they too may understand that they are tyrants, and their laws useless for justification, nay that they had no right to establish such laws.

Since then we cannot live in this world without ceremonies and works, since the hot and inexperienced period of youth has need of being restrained and protected by such bonds, and since every one is bound to keep under his own body by attention to these things, therefore the minister of Christ must be prudent and faithful in so ruling and teaching the people of Christ, in all these matters, that no root of bitterness may spring up among them, and so many be defiled, as Paul warned the Hebrews; that is, that they may not lose the faith, and begin to be defiled by a belief in

works as the means of justification. This is a thing which easily happens, and defiles very many, unless faith be constantly inculcated along with works. It is impossible to avoid this evil, when faith is passed over in silence, and only the ordinances of men are taught, as has been done hitherto by the pestilent, impious, and soul-destroying traditions of our pontiffs and opinions of our theologians. An infinite number of souls have been drawn down to hell by these snares, so that you may recognise the work of antichrist.

In brief, as poverty is imperilled amid riches, honesty amid business, humility amid honours, abstinence amid feasting, purity amid pleasures, so is justification by faith imperilled among ceremonies. Solomon says, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" (Prov. vi. 27). And yet as we must live among riches, business, honours, pleasures, feastings, so must we among ceremonies, that is among perils. Just as infant boys have the greatest need of being cherished in the bosoms and by the care of girls, that they may not die, and yet, when they are grown, there is peril to their salvation in living among girls, so inexperienced and fervid young men require to be kept in and restrained by the barriers of ceremonies, even were they of iron, lest their weak minds should rush headlong into vice. And yet it would be death to them to persevere in believing that they can be justified by these things. They must rather be taught that they have been thus imprisoned, not with the purpose of their being justified or gaining merit in this way, but in order that they might avoid wrong-doing, and be more easily instructed in that righteousness which is by faith, a thing which the headlong character of youth would not bear unless it were put under restraint.

Hence in the Christian life ceremonies are to be no otherwise looked upon than as builders and workmen look upon those preparations for building or working which are not made with any view of being permanent or anything in themselves, but only because without them there could be no building and no work.

When the structure is completed, they are laid aside. Here you see that we do not contemn these preparations, but set the highest value on them; a belief in them we do contemn, because no one thinks that they constitute a real and permanent structure. If any one were so manifestly out of his senses as to have no other object in life but that of setting up these preparations with all possible expense, diligence, and perseverance, while he never thought of the structure itself, but pleased himself and made his boast of these useless preparations and props, should we not all pity his madness and think that, at the cost thus thrown away, some great building might have been raised?

Thus, too, we do not contemn works and ceremonies—nay, we set the highest value on them; but we contemn the belief in works, which no one should consider to constitute true righteousness, as do those hypocrites who employ and throw away their whole life in the pursuit of works, and yet never attain to that for the sake of which the works are done. As the Apostle says, they are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. iii. 7). They appear to wish to build, they make preparations, and yet they never do build; and thus they continue in a show of godliness, but never attain to its power.

Meanwhile they please themselves with this zealous pursuit, and even dare to judge all others, whom they do not see adorned with such a glittering display of works; while, if they had been imbued with faith, they might have done great things for their own and others' salvation, at the same cost which they now waste in abuse of the gifts of God. But since human nature and natural reason, as they call it, are naturally superstitious, and quick to believe that justification can be attained by any laws or works proposed to them, and since nature is also exercised and confirmed in the same view by the practice of all earthly lawgivers, she can never of her own power free herself from this bondage to works, and come to a recognition of the liberty of faith.

We have therefore need to pray that God will lead us and make

us taught of God, that is, ready to learn from God; and will Himself, as He has promised, write His law in our hearts; otherwise there is no hope for us. For unless He himself teach us inwardly this wisdom hidden in a mystery, nature cannot but condemn it and judge it to be heretical. She takes offence at it, and it seems folly to her, just as we see that it happened of old in the case of the prophets and Apostles, and just as blind and impious pontiffs, with their flatterers, do now in my case and that of those who are like me, upon whom, together with ourselves, may God at length have mercy, and lift up the light of His countenance upon them, that we may know His way upon earth and His saving health among all nations, who is blessed for evermore. Amen. In the year of the Lord MDXX.

Author/Historical Context

During the time this book was originally written, the world was a very different place. The happenings of the time as well as the personal and professional life of the author produced an effect on how this book was written, worded and the content of the manuscript The following is intended to help the reader better connect with these writings.

Martin Luther (10 November 1483 – 18 February 1546) was a German professor of theology, priest, author, composer, former Augustinian monk, and is best known as a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation and as the namesake of Lutheranism.
Luther was ordained to the priesthood in 1507. He came to reject several teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church; in particular, he disputed the view on indulgences. Luther proposed an academic discussion of the practice and efficacy of indulgences in his Ninety-five Theses of 1517. His refusal to renounce all of his writings at the demand of Pope Leo X in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521 resulted in his excommunication by the pope and condemnation as an outlaw by the Holy Roman Emperor.
Luther taught that salvation and, consequently, eternal life are not earned by good deeds but are received only as the free gift of God's grace through the believer's faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin. His theology challenged the authority and office of the pope by teaching that the Bible is the only source of divinely revealed knowledge, and opposed sacerdotalism by considering all baptized Christians to be a holy priesthood. Those who identify with these, and all of Luther's wider teachings, are called Lutherans, though Luther insisted on Christian or Evangelical (German: evangelisch) as the only acceptable names for individuals who professed Christ. His translation of the Bible into the German vernacular (instead of Latin) made it more accessible to the laity, an event that had a tremendous impact on both the church and German culture. It fostered the development of a standard version of the German language, added several principles to the art of translation, and influenced the writing of an English translation, the Tyndale Bible. His hymns influenced the development of singing in Protestant churches. His marriage to Katharina von Bora, a former nun, set a model for the practice

of clerical marriage, allowing Protestant clergy to marry.
In two of his later works, Luther expressed antagonistic, violent views towards Jews and called for the burnings of their synagogues and their expulsion. His rhetoric was not directed at Jews alone but also towards Roman Catholics, Anabaptists, and nontrinitarian Christians. Luther died in 1546 with Pope Leo X's excommunication still in effect.

Early Life

Birth and Education
Luther) and his wife Margarethe (née Lindemann) on 10 November 1483 in Eisleben, County of Mansfeld in the Holy Roman Empire. Luther was baptized the next morning on the feast day of St. Martin of Tours. His family moved to Mansfeld in 1484, where his father was a leaseholder of copper mines and smelters and served as one of four citizen representatives on the local council; in 1492 he was elected as a town councilor. The religious scholar Martin Marty describes Luther's mother as a hard-working woman of "trading-class stock and middling means", contrary to Luther's enemies, who labeled her a whore and bath attendant.
He had several brothers and sisters and is known to have been close to one of them, Jacob.
Hans Luther was ambitious for himself and his family, and he was determined to see Martin, his eldest son, become a lawyer. He sent Martin to Latin schools in Mansfeld, then Magdeburg in 1497, where he attended a school operated by a lay group called the Brethren of the Common Life, and Eisenach in 1498. The three schools focused on the so-called "trivium": grammar, rhetoric, and logic. Luther later compared his education there to purgatory and hell.
In 1501, at age 17, he entered the University of Erfurt, which he later described as a beerhouse and whorehouse. He was made to wake at four every morning for what has been described as "a day of rote learning and often wearying spiritual exercises." He received his master's degree in 1505.
In accordance with his father's wishes, he enrolled in law but dropped out almost immediately, believing that law represented uncertainty. Luther sought assurances about life and was drawn to theology and philosophy, expressing particular interest in Aristotle, William of Ockham, and Gabriel Biel. He was deeply influenced by two tutors, Bartholomaeus Arnoldi von Usingen and

Jodocus Trutfetter, who taught him to be suspicious of even the greatest thinkers and to test everything himself by experience.
Philosophy proved to be unsatisfying, offering assurance about the use of reason but none about loving God, which to Luther was more important. Reason could not lead men to God, he felt, and he thereafter developed a love-hate relationship with Aristotle over the latter's emphasis on reason. For Luther, reason could be used to question men and institutions, but not God. Human beings could learn about God only through divine revelation, he believed, and Scripture therefore became increasingly important to him.
On 2 July 1505, while Luther was returning to university on horseback after a trip home, a lightning bolt struck near him during a thunderstorm. Later telling his father he was terrified of death and divine judgment, he cried out, "Help! Saint Anna, I will become a monk!" He came to view his cry for help as a vow he could never break. He left university, sold his books, and entered St. Augustine's Monastery in Erfurt on 17 July 1505. One friend blamed the decision on Luther's sadness over the deaths of two friends. Luther himself seemed saddened by the move. Those who attended a farewell supper walked him to the door of the Black Cloister. "This day you see me, and then, not ever again," he said. His father was furious over what he saw as a waste of Luther's education.

Monastic Life

himself to fasting, long hours in prayer, pilgrimage, and frequent confession. Luther described this period of his life as one of deep spiritual despair. He said, "I lost touch with Christ the Savior and Comforter, and made of him the jailer and hangman of my poor soul." Johann von Staupitz, Luther's superior and confessor, pointed Luther's mind away from continual reflection upon his sins toward the merits of Christ. He taught that true repentance does not involve self-inflicted penances and punishments but rather a change of heart.
On 3 April 1507, Jerome Schultz (lat. Hieronymus Scultetus), the Bishop of Brandenburg, ordained Luther in Erfurt Cathedral. In 1508, von Staupitz, first dean of the newly founded University of Wittenberg, sent for Luther to teach theology. He received a bachelor's degree in Biblical studies on 9 March 1508 and another bachelor's degree in the Sentences by Peter Lombard in 1509. On 19 October 1512, he was awarded his Doctor of Theology and, on 21 October 1512, was received into the senate of the theological faculty of the University of Wittenberg, having succeeded von Staupitz as chair of

theology. He spent the rest of his career in this position at the University of Wittenberg.
He was made provincial vicar of Saxony and Thuringia by his religious order in 1515. This meant he was to visit and oversee each of eleven monasteries in his province.

Start Of The Reformation
In 1516, Johann Tetzel, a Dominican friar, was sent to Germany by the Roman Catholic Church to sell indulgences to raise money in order to rebuild St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Tetzel's experiences as a preacher of indulgences, especially between 1503 and 1510, led to his appointment as general commissioner by Albrecht von Brandenburg, Archbishop of Mainz, who, deeply in debt to pay for a large accumulation of benefices, had to contribute the considerable sum of ten thousand ducats toward the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Albrecht obtained permission from Pope Leo X to conduct the sale of a special plenary indulgence (i.e., remission of the temporal punishment of sin), half of the proceeds of which Albrecht was to claim to pay the fees of his benefices.
On 31 October 1517, Luther wrote to his bishop, Albrecht von Brandenburg, protesting against the sale of indulgences. He enclosed in his letter a copy of his "Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences" , which came to be known as the Ninety-five Theses. Hans Hillerbrand writes that Luther had no intention of confronting the church but saw his disputation as a scholarly objection to church practices, and the tone of the writing is accordingly "searching, rather than doctrinaire." Hillerbrand writes that there is nevertheless an undercurrent of challenge in several of the theses, particularly in Thesis 86, which asks: "Why does the pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build the basilica of St. Peter with the money of poor believers rather than with his own money?"
Luther objected to a saying attributed to Tetzel that "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory (also attested as 'into heaven') springs." He insisted that, since forgiveness was God's alone to grant, those who claimed that indulgences absolved buyers from all punishments and granted them salvation were in error. Christians, he said, must not slacken in following Christ on account of such false assurances.
According to one account, Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg on 31 October 1517. Scholars Walter Krämer, Götz Trenkler, Gerhard Ritter, and Gerhard Prause

contend that the story of the posting on the door, even though it has settled as one of the pillars of history, has little foundation in truth. The story is based on comments made by Luther's collaborator Philip Melanchthon, though it is thought that he was not in Wittenberg at the time. According to Roland Bainton, on the other hand, it is true.

The Latin Theses were printed in several locations in Germany in 1517. In January 1518 friends of Luther translated the Ninety-five Theses from Latin into German. Within two weeks, copies of the theses had spread throughout Germany. Luther's writings circulated widely, reaching France, England, and Italy as early as 1519. Students thronged to Wittenberg to hear Luther speak. He published a short commentary on Galatians and his Work on the Psalms. This early part of Luther's career was one of his most creative and productive. Three of his best-known works were published in 1520: To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church, and On the Freedom of a Christian.

Justification By Faith Alone

From 1510 to 1520, Luther lectured on the Psalms, and on the books of Hebrews, Romans, and Galatians. As he studied these portions of the Bible, he came to view the use of terms such as penance and righteousness by the Catholic Church in new ways. He became convinced that the church was corrupt in its ways and had lost sight of what he saw as several of the central truths of Christianity. The most important for Luther was the doctrine of justification—God's act of declaring a sinner righteous—by faith alone through God's grace. He began to teach that salvation or redemption is a gift of God's grace, attainable only through faith in Jesus as the Messiah. "This one and firm rock, which we call the doctrine of justification", he writes, "is the chief article of the whole Christian doctrine, which comprehends the understanding of all godliness."

Luther came to understand justification as entirely the work of God. This teaching by Luther was clearly expressed in his 1525 publication On the Bondage of the Will, which was written in response to On Free Will by Desiderius Erasmus (1524). Luther based his position on predestination on St. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians 2:8–10. Against the teaching of his day that the righteous acts of believers are performed in cooperation with God, Luther wrote that Christians receive such righteousness entirely from outside themselves; that righteousness not only comes from Christ but actually is the

righteousness of Christ, imputed to Christians (rather than infused into them) through faith.
"That is why faith alone makes someone just and fulfills the law," he writes. "Faith is that which brings the Holy Spirit through the merits of Christ." Faith, for Luther, was a gift from God; the experience of being justified by faith was "as though I had been born again." His entry into Paradise, no less, was a discovery about "the righteousness of God"—a discovery that "the just person" of whom the Bible speaks (as in Romans 1:17) lives by faith. He explains his concept of "justification" in the Smalcald Articles:
The first and chief article is this: Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins and was raised again for our justification (Romans 3:24–25). He alone is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29), and God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). All have sinned and are justified freely, without their own works and merits, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood (Romans 3:23–25). This is necessary to believe. This cannot be otherwise acquired or grasped by any work, law or merit. Therefore, it is clear and certain that this faith alone justifies us ... Nothing of this article can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth and everything else falls (Mark 13:31).
Luther's rediscovery of "Christ and His salvation" was the first of two points that became the foundation for the Reformation. His railing against the sale of indulgences was based on it.

Breach With The Papacy
Archbishop Albrecht did not reply to Luther's letter containing the Ninety-five Theses. He had the theses checked for heresy and in December 1517 forwarded them to Rome. He needed the revenue from the indulgences to pay off a papal dispensation for his tenure of more than one bishopric. As Luther later notes, "the pope had a finger in the pie as well, because one half was to go to the building of St Peter's Church in Rome".
Pope Leo X was used to reformers and heretics, and he responded slowly, "with great care as is proper." Over the next three years he deployed a series of papal theologians and envoys against Luther, which served only to harden the reformer's anti-papal theology. First, the Dominican theologian Sylvester Mazzolini drafted a heresy case against Luther, whom Leo then summoned to Rome. The Elector Frederick persuaded the pope to have Luther examined at Augsburg, where the Imperial Diet was held. Over a three-day period in October

1518, Luther defended himself under questioning by papal legate Cardinal Cajetan. The pope's right to issue indulgences was at the centre of the dispute between the two men. The hearings degenerated into a shouting match. More than writing his theses, Luther's confrontation with the church cast him as an enemy of the pope: "His Holiness abuses Scripture", retorted Luther. "I deny that he is above Scripture". Cajetan's original instructions had been to arrest Luther if he failed to recant, but the legate desisted from doing so. With help from the Carmelite monk Christoph Langenmantel, Luther slipped out of the city at night, unbeknownst to Cajetan.
In January 1519, at Altenburg in Saxony, the papal nuncio Karl von Miltitz adopted a more conciliatory approach. Luther made certain concessions to the Saxon, who was a relative of the Elector and promised to remain silent if his opponents did. The theologian Johann Eck, however, was determined to expose Luther's doctrine in a public forum. In June and July 1519, he staged a disputation with Luther's colleague Andreas Karlstadt at Leipzig and invited Luther to speak. Luther's boldest assertion in the debate was that Matthew 16:18 does not confer on popes the exclusive right to interpret scripture, and that therefore neither popes nor church councils were infallible. For this, Eck branded Luther a new Jan Hus, referring to the Czech reformer and heretic burned at the stake in 1415. From that moment, he devoted himself to Luther's defeat.

Excommunication
On 15 June 1520, the Pope warned Luther with the papal bull (edict) Exsurge Domine that he risked excommunication unless he recanted 41 sentences drawn from his writings, including the Ninety-five Theses, within 60 days. That autumn, Eck proclaimed the bull in Meissen and other towns. Von Miltitz attempted to broker a solution, but Luther, who had sent the pope a copy of On the Freedom of a Christian in October, publicly set fire to the bull and decretals at Wittenberg on 10 December 1520, an act he defended in Why the Pope and his Recent Book are Burned and Assertions Concerning All Articles. As a consequence, Luther was excommunicated by Pope Leo X on 3 January 1521, in the bull Decet Romanum Pontificem. And although the Lutheran World Federation, Methodists and the Catholic Church's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity agreed (in 1999 and 2006, respectively) on a "common understanding of justification by God's grace through faith in Christ," the Catholic Church has never lifted the 1520 excommunication.

Diet Of Worms

The enforcement of the ban on the Ninety-five Theses fell to the secular authorities. On 18 April 1521, Luther appeared as ordered before the Diet of Worms. This was a general assembly of the estates of the Holy Roman Empire that took place in Worms, a town on the Rhine. It was conducted from 28 January to 25 May 1521, with Emperor Charles V presiding. Prince Frederick III, Elector of Saxony, obtained a safe conduct for Luther to and from the meeting.

Johann Eck, speaking on behalf of the empire as assistant of the Archbishop of Trier, presented Luther with copies of his writings laid out on a table and asked him if the books were his and whether he stood by their contents. Luther confirmed he was their author but requested time to think about the answer to the second question. He prayed, consulted friends, and gave his response the next day:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.

At the end of this speech, Luther raised his arm "in the traditional salute of a knight winning a bout." Michael Mullett considers this speech as a "world classic of epoch-making oratory."

Eck informed Luther that he was acting like a heretic, saying,

Martin, there is no one of the heresies which have torn the bosom of the church, which has not derived its origin from the various interpretation of the Scripture. The Bible itself is the arsenal whence each innovator has drawn his deceptive arguments. It was with Biblical texts that Pelagius and Arius maintained their doctrines. Arius, for instance, found the negation of the eternity of the Word—an eternity which you admit, in this verse of the New Testament—Joseph knew not his wife till she had brought forth her first-born son; and he said, in the same way that you say, that this passage enchained him. When the fathers of the Council of Constance condemned this proposition of Jan Hus—The church of Jesus Christ is only the community of the elect, they condemned an error; for the church, like a good mother, embraces within her arms all who bear the name of Christian, all who are called to enjoy the celestial beatitude.

Luther refused to recant his writings. He is sometimes also quoted as

saying: "Here I stand. I can do no other". Recent scholars consider the evidence for these words to be unreliable since they were inserted before "May God help me" only in later versions of the speech and not recorded in witness accounts of the proceedings. However, Mullett suggests that given his nature, "we are free to believe that Luther would tend to select the more dramatic form of words."

Over the next five days, private conferences were held to determine Luther's fate. The emperor presented the final draft of the Edict of Worms on 25 May 1521, declaring Luther an outlaw, banning his literature, and requiring his arrest: "We want him to be apprehended and punished as a notorious heretic." It also made it a crime for anyone in Germany to give Luther food or shelter. It permitted anyone to kill Luther without legal consequence.

At Wartburg Castle

Luther's disappearance during his return to Wittenberg was planned. Frederick III had him intercepted on his way home in the forest near Wittenberg by masked horsemen impersonating highway robbers. They escorted Luther to the security of the Wartburg Castle at Eisenach. During his stay at Wartburg, which he referred to as "my Patmos", Luther translated the New Testament from Greek into German and poured out doctrinal and polemical writings. These included a renewed attack on Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, whom he shamed into halting the sale of indulgences in his episcopates, and a "Refutation of the Argument of Latomus," in which he expounded the principle of justification to Jacobus Latomus, an orthodox theologian from Louvain. In this work, one of his most emphatic statements on faith, he argued that every good work designed to attract God's favor is a sin. All humans are sinners by nature, he explained, and God's grace (which cannot be earned) alone can make them just. On 1 August 1521, Luther wrote to Melanchthon on the same theme: "Be a sinner, and let your sins be strong, but let your trust in Christ be stronger, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world. We will commit sins while we are here, for this life is not a place where justice resides."

In the summer of 1521, Luther widened his target from individual pieties like indulgences and pilgrimages to doctrines at the heart of Church practice. In On the Abrogation of the Private Mass, he condemned as idolatry the idea that the mass is a sacrifice, asserting instead that it is a gift, to be received with thanksgiving by the whole congregation. His essay On Confession, Whether the Pope has the

Power to Require It rejected compulsory confession and encouraged private confession and absolution, since "every Christian is a confessor." In November, Luther wrote The Judgement of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows. He assured monks and nuns that they could break their vows without sin, because vows were an illegitimate and vain attempt to win salvation.
In 1521 Luther dealt largely with prophecy, in which he broadened the foundations of the Reformation, placing them on prophetic faith. His main interest was centered on the prophecy of the Little Horn in Daniel 8:9–12, 23–25. The antichrist of 2 Thessalonians 2 was identified as the power of the Papacy. So too was the Little Horn of Daniel 7, coming up among the divisions of Rome, explicitly applied.
Luther made his pronouncements from Wartburg in the context of rapid developments at Wittenberg, of which he was kept fully informed. Andreas Karlstadt, supported by the ex-Augustinian Gabriel Zwilling, embarked on a radical programme of reform there in June 1521, exceeding anything envisaged by Luther. The reforms provoked disturbances, including a revolt by the Augustinian friars against their prior, the smashing of statues and images in churches, and denunciations of the magistracy. After secretly visiting Wittenberg in early December 1521, Luther wrote A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to All Christians to Guard Against Insurrection and Rebellion. Wittenberg became even more volatile after Christmas when a band of visionary zealots, the so-called Zwickau prophets, arrived, preaching revolutionary doctrines such as the equality of man, adult baptism, and Christ's imminent return. When the town council asked Luther to return, he decided it was his duty to act.

Return To Wittenberg and Peasants' War

Luther secretly returned to Wittenberg on 6 March 1522. He wrote to the Elector: "During my absence, Satan has entered my sheepfold, and committed ravages which I cannot repair by writing, but only by my personal presence and living word." For eight days in Lent, beginning on Invocavit Sunday, 9 March, Luther preached eight sermons, which became known as the "Invocavit Sermons". In these sermons, he hammered home the primacy of core Christian values such as love, patience, charity, and freedom, and reminded the citizens to trust God's word rather than violence to bring about necessary change.
Do you know what the Devil thinks when he sees men use violence to propagate the gospel? He sits with folded arms behind the fire of hell, and says with malignant looks and frightful grin: "Ah, how wise these

madmen are to play my game! Let them go on; I shall reap the benefit. I delight in it." But when he sees the Word running and contending alone on the battle-field, then he shudders and shakes for fear.

The effect of Luther's intervention was immediate. After the sixth sermon, the Wittenberg jurist Jerome Schurf wrote to the elector: "Oh, what joy has Dr. Martin's return spread among us! His words, through divine mercy, are bringing back every day misguided people into the way of the truth."

Luther next set about reversing or modifying the new church practices. By working alongside the authorities to restore public order, he signalled his reinvention as a conservative force within the Reformation. After banishing the Zwickau prophets, he faced a battle against both the established Church and the radical reformers who threatened the new order by fomenting social unrest and violence.

Despite his victory in Wittenberg, Luther was unable to stifle radicalism further afield. Preachers such as Thomas Müntzer and Zwickau prophet Nicholas Storch found support amongst poorer townspeople and peasants between 1521 and 1525. There had been revolts by the peasantry on smaller scales since the 15th century. Luther's pamphlets against the Church and the hierarchy, often worded with "liberal" phraseology, led many peasants to believe he would support an attack on the upper classes in general. Revolts broke out in Franconia, Swabia, and Thuringia in 1524, even drawing support from disaffected nobles, many of whom were in debt. Gaining momentum under the leadership of radicals such as Müntzer in Thuringia, and Hipler and Lotzer in the south-west, the revolts turned into war.

Luther sympathised with some of the peasants' grievances, as he showed in his response to the Twelve Articles in May 1525, but he reminded the aggrieved to obey the temporal authorities. During a tour of Thuringia, he became enraged at the widespread burning of convents, monasteries, bishops' palaces, and libraries. In Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants, written on his return to Wittenberg, he gave his interpretation of the Gospel teaching on wealth, condemned the violence as the devil's work, and called for the nobles to put down the rebels like mad dogs:

Therefore let everyone who can, smite, slay, and stab, secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful, or devilish than a rebel ... For baptism does not make men free in body and property, but in soul; and the gospel does not make goods common, except in the case of those who, of their own free will, do what the

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

Luther justified his opposition to the rebels on three grounds. First, in choosing violence over lawful submission to the secular government, they were ignoring Christ's counsel to "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's"; St. Paul had written in his epistle to the Romans 13:1–7 that all authorities are appointed by God and therefore should not be resisted. This reference from the Bible forms the foundation for the doctrine known as the divine right of kings, or, in the German case, the divine right of the princes. Second, the violent actions of rebelling, robbing, and plundering placed the peasants "outside the law of God and Empire", so they deserved "death in body and soul, if only as highwaymen and murderers." Lastly, Luther charged the rebels with blasphemy for calling themselves "Christian brethren" and committing their sinful acts under the banner of the Gospel. Only later in life did he develop the Beerwolf concept permitting some cases of resistance against the government.

Without Luther's backing for the uprising, many rebels laid down their weapons; others felt betrayed. Their defeat by the Swabian League at the Battle of Frankenhausen on 15 May 1525, followed by Müntzer's execution, brought the revolutionary stage of the Reformation to a close. Thereafter, radicalism found a refuge in the Anabaptist movement and other religious movements, while Luther's Reformation flourished under the wing of the secular powers. In 1526 Luther wrote: "I, Martin Luther, have during the rebellion slain all the peasants, for it was I who ordered them to be struck dead."

Marriage

Martin Luther married Katharina von Bora, one of 12 nuns he had helped escape from the Nimbschen Cistercian convent in April 1523, when he arranged for them to be smuggled out in herring barrels. "Suddenly, and while I was occupied with far different thoughts," he wrote to Wenceslaus Link, "the Lord has plunged me into marriage." At the time of their marriage, Katharina was 26 years old and Luther was 41 years old.

On 13 June 1525, the couple was engaged, with Johannes Bugenhagen, Justus Jonas, Johannes Apel, Philipp Melanchthon and Lucas Cranach the Elder and his wife as witnesses. On the evening of the same day, the couple was married by Bugenhagen. The ceremonial walk to the church and the wedding banquet were left out and were made up two weeks later on 27 June.
Some priests and former members of religious orders had already married, including Andreas Karlstadt and Justus Jonas, but Luther's wedding set the seal of approval on clerical marriage. He had long condemned vows of celibacy on Biblical grounds, but his decision to marry surprised many, not least Melanchthon, who called it reckless. Luther had written to George Spalatin on 30 November 1524, "I shall never take a wife, as I feel at present. Not that I am insensible to my flesh or sex (for I am neither wood nor stone); but my mind is averse to wedlock because I daily expect the death of a heretic." Before marrying, Luther had been living on the plainest food, and, as he admitted himself, his mildewed bed was not properly made for months at a time.
Luther and his wife moved into a former monastery, "The Black Cloister," a wedding present from Elector John the Steadfast. They embarked on what appears to have been a happy and successful marriage, though money was often short. Katharina bore six children: Hans – June 1526; Elizabeth – 10 December 1527, who died within a few months; Magdalene – 1529, who died in Luther's arms in 1542; Martin – 1531; Paul – January 1533; and Margaret – 1534; and she helped the couple earn a living by farming and taking in boarders. Luther confided to Michael Stiefel on 11 August 1526: "My Katie is in all things so obliging and pleasing to me that I would not exchange my poverty for the riches of Croesus."

Organising The Church

By 1526, Luther found himself increasingly occupied in organising a new church. His Biblical ideal of congregations choosing their own ministers had proved unworkable. According to Bainton: "Luther's dilemma was that he wanted both a confessional church based on personal faith and experience and a territorial church including all in a given locality. If he were forced to choose, he would take his stand with the masses, and this was the direction in which he moved."
From 1525 to 1529, he established a supervisory church body, laid down a new form of worship service, and wrote a clear summary of the new faith in the form of two catechisms. To avoid confusing or

upsetting the people, Luther avoided extreme change. He also did not wish to replace one controlling system with another. He concentrated on the church in the Electorate of Saxony, acting only as an adviser to churches in new territories, many of which followed his Saxon model. He worked closely with the new elector, John the Steadfast, to whom he turned for secular leadership and funds on behalf of a church largely shorn of its assets and income after the break with Rome. For Luther's biographer Martin Brecht, this partnership "was the beginning of a questionable and originally unintended development towards a church government under the temporal sovereign".

The elector authorised a visitation of the church, a power formerly exercised by bishops. At times, Luther's practical reforms fell short of his earlier radical pronouncements. For example, the Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony (1528), drafted by Melanchthon with Luther's approval, stressed the role of repentance in the forgiveness of sins, despite Luther's position that faith alone ensures justification. The Eisleben reformer Johannes Agricola challenged this compromise, and Luther condemned him for teaching that faith is separate from works. The Instruction is a problematic document for those seeking a consistent evolution in Luther's thought and practice.

In response to demands for a German liturgy, Luther wrote a German Mass, which he published in early 1526. He did not intend it as a replacement for his 1523 adaptation of the Latin Mass but as an alternative for the "simple people", a "public stimulation for people to believe and become Christians." Luther based his order on the Catholic service but omitted "everything that smacks of sacrifice", and the Mass became a celebration where everyone received the wine as well as the bread. He retained the elevation of the host and chalice, while trappings such as the Mass vestments, altar, and candles were made optional, allowing freedom of ceremony. Some reformers, including followers of Huldrych Zwingli, considered Luther's service too papistic, and modern scholars note the conservatism of his alternative to the Catholic mass. Luther's service, however, included congregational singing of hymns and psalms in German, as well as parts of the liturgy, including Luther's unison setting of the Creed. To reach the simple people and the young, Luther incorporated religious instruction into the weekday services in the form of catechism. He also provided simplified versions of the baptism and marriage services.

Luther and his colleagues introduced the new order of worship during their visitation of the Electorate of Saxony, which began in 1527. They also assessed the standard of pastoral care and Christian education in

the territory. "Merciful God, what misery I have seen," Luther writes, "the common people knowing nothing at all of Christian doctrine ... and unfortunately many pastors are well-nigh unskilled and incapable of teaching."

Catechisms

Luther devised the catechism as a method of imparting the basics of Christianity to the congregations. In 1529, he wrote the Large Catechism, a manual for pastors and teachers, as well as a synopsis, the Small Catechism, to be memorised by the people. The catechisms provided easy-to-understand instructional and devotional material on the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, The Lord's Prayer, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Luther incorporated questions and answers in the catechism so that the basics of Christian faith would not just be learned by rote, "the way monkeys do it", but understood.

The catechism is one of Luther's most personal works. "Regarding the plan to collect my writings in volumes," he wrote, "I am quite cool and not at all eager about it because, roused by a Saturnian hunger, I would rather see them all devoured. For I acknowledge none of them to be really a book of mine, except perhaps the Bondage of the Will and the Catechism." The Small Catechism has earned a reputation as a model of clear religious teaching. It remains in use today, along with Luther's hymns and his translation of the Bible.

Luther's Small Catechism proved especially effective in helping parents teach their children; likewise the Large Catechism was effective for pastors. Using the German vernacular, they expressed the Apostles' Creed in simpler, more personal, Trinitarian language. He rewrote each article of the Creed to express the character of the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. Luther's goal was to enable the catechumens to see themselves as a personal object of the work of the three persons of the Trinity, each of which works in the catechumen's life. That is, Luther depicts the Trinity not as a doctrine to be learned, but as persons to be known. The Father creates, the Son redeems, and the Spirit sanctifies, a divine unity with separate personalities. Salvation originates with the Father and draws the believer to the Father. Luther's treatment of the Apostles' Creed must be understood in the context of the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments) and The Lord's Prayer, which are also part of the Lutheran catechetical teaching.

Translation Of The Bible

Luther had published his German translation of the New Testament in

1522, and he and his collaborators completed the translation of the Old Testament in 1534, when the whole Bible was published. He continued to work on refining the translation until the end of his life. Others had previously translated the Bible into German, but Luther tailored his translation to his own doctrine. Two of the earlier translations were the Mentelin Bible (1456) and the Koberger Bible (1484). There were as many as fourteen in High German, four in Low German, four in Dutch, and various other translations in other languages before the Bible of Luther.

Luther's translation used the variant of German spoken at the Saxon chancellery, intelligible to both northern and southern Germans. He intended his vigorous, direct language to make the Bible accessible to everyday Germans, "for we are removing impediments and difficulties so that other people may read it without hindrance." Published at a time of rising demand for German-language publications, Luther's version quickly became a popular and influential Bible translation. As such, it contributed a distinct flavor to the German language and literature. Furnished with notes and prefaces by Luther, and with woodcuts by Lucas Cranach that contained anti-papal imagery, it played a major role in the spread of Luther's doctrine throughout Germany. The Luther Bible influenced other vernacular translations, such as the Tyndale Bible (from 1525 forward), a precursor of the King James Bible.

When he was criticised for inserting the word "alone" after "faith" in Romans 3:28, he replied in part: " he text itself and the meaning of St. Paul urgently require and demand it. For in that very passage he is dealing with the main point of Christian doctrine, namely, that we are justified by faith in Christ without any works of the Law. ... But when works are so completely cut away—and that must mean that faith alone justifies—whoever would speak plainly and clearly about this cutting away of works will have to say, 'Faith alone justifies us, and not works'." Luther did not include First Epistle of John 5:7–8, the Johannine Comma in his translation, rejecting it as a forgery. It was inserted into the text by other hands after Luther's death.

Hymnodist

Luther was a prolific hymnodist, authoring hymns such as "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" ("A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"), based on Psalm 46, and "Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her" ("From Heaven Above to Earth I Come"), based on Luke 2:11–12. Luther connected high art and folk music, also all classes, clergy and laity, men,

women and children. His tool of choice for this connection was the singing of German hymns in connection with worship, school, home, and the public arena. He often accompanied the sung hymns with a lute, later recreated as the waldzither that became a national instrument of Germany in the 20th century.

Luther's hymns were frequently evoked by particular events in his life and the unfolding Reformation. This behavior started with his learning of the execution of Jan van Essen and Hendrik Vos, the first individuals to be martyred by the Roman Catholic Church for Lutheran views, prompting Luther to write the hymn "Ein neues Lied wir heben an" ("A new song we raise"), which is generally known in English by John C. Messenger's translation by the title and first line "Flung to the Heedless Winds" and sung to the tune Ibstone composed in 1875 by Maria C. Tiddeman.

Luther's 1524 creedal hymn "Wir glauben all an einen Gott" ("We All Believe in One True God") is a three-stanza confession of faith prefiguring Luther's 1529 three-part explanation of the Apostles' Creed in the Small Catechism. Luther's hymn, adapted and expanded from an earlier German creedal hymn, gained widespread use in vernacular Lutheran liturgies as early as 1525. Sixteenth-century Lutheran hymnals also included "Wir glauben all" among the catechetical hymns, although 18th-century hymnals tended to label the hymn as Trinitarian rather than catechetical, and 20th-century Lutherans rarely used the hymn because of the perceived difficulty of its tune.

Autograph of "Vater unser im Himmelreich", with the only notes extant in Luther's handwriting

Luther's 1538 hymnic version of the Lord's Prayer, "Vater unser im Himmelreich", corresponds exactly to Luther's explanation of the prayer in the Small Catechism, with one stanza for each of the seven prayer petitions, plus opening and closing stanzas. The hymn functions both as a liturgical setting of the Lord's Prayer and as a means of examining candidates on specific catechism questions. The extant manuscript shows multiple revisions, demonstrating Luther's concern to clarify and strengthen the text and to provide an appropriately prayerful tune. Other 16th- and 20th-century versifications of the Lord's Prayer have adopted Luther's tune, although modern texts are considerably shorter.

Luther wrote "Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir" ("From depths of woe I cry to You") in 1523 as a hymnic version of Psalm 130 and sent it as a sample to encourage his colleagues to write psalm-hymns for use in German worship. In a collaboration with Paul Speratus, this and seven

other hymns were published in the Achtliederbuch, the first Lutheran hymnal. In 1524 Luther developed his original four-stanza psalm paraphrase into a five-stanza Reformation hymn that developed the theme of "grace alone" more fully. Because it expressed essential Reformation doctrine, this expanded version of "Aus tiefer Not" was designated as a regular component of several regional Lutheran liturgies and was widely used at funerals, including Luther's own. Along with Erhart Hegenwalt's hymnic version of Psalm 51, Luther's expanded hymn was also adopted for use with the fifth part of Luther's catechism, concerning confession.

Luther wrote "Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein" ("Oh God, look down from heaven"). "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland" (Now come, Savior of the gentiles), based on Veni redemptor gentium, became the main hymn (Hauptlied) for Advent. He transformed A solus ortus cardine to "Christum wir sollen loben schon" ("We should now praise Christ") and Veni Creator Spiritus to "Komm, Gott Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist" ("Come, Holy Spirit, Lord God"). He wrote two hymns on the Ten Commandments, "Dies sind die heilgen Zehn Gebot" and "Mensch, willst du leben seliglich". His "Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ" ("Praise be to You, Jesus Christ") became the main hymn for Christmas. He wrote for Pentecost "Nun bitten wir den Heiligen Geist", and adopted for Easter "Christ ist erstanden" (Christ is risen), based on Victimae paschali laudes. "Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin", a paraphrase of Nunc dimittis, was intended for Purification, but became also a funeral hymn. He paraphrased the Te Deum as "Herr Gott, dich loben wir" with a simplified form of the melody. It became known as the German Te Deum.

Luther's 1541 hymn "Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam" ("To Jordan came the Christ our Lord") reflects the structure and substance of his questions and answers concerning baptism in the Small Catechism. Luther adopted a preexisting Johann Walter tune associated with a hymnic setting of Psalm 67's prayer for grace; Wolf Heintz's four-part setting of the hymn was used to introduce the Lutheran Reformation in Halle in 1541. Preachers and composers of the 18th century, including J.S. Bach, used this rich hymn as a subject for their own work, although its objective baptismal theology was displaced by more subjective hymns under the influence of late-19th-century Lutheran pietism.

Luther's hymns were included in early Lutheran hymnals and spread the ideas of the Reformation. He supplied four of eight songs of the First Lutheran hymnal Achtliederbuch, 18 of 26 songs of the Erfurt

Enchiridion, and 24 of the 32 songs in the first choral hymnal with settings by Johann Walter, Eyn geystlich Gesangk Buchleyn, all published in 1524. Luther's hymns inspired composers to write music. Johann Sebastian Bach included several verses as chorales in his cantatas and based chorale cantatas entirely on them, namely Christ lag in Todes Banden, BWV 4, as early as possibly 1707, in his second annual cycle (1724 to 1725) Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein, BWV 2, Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam, BWV 7, Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 62, Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ, BWV 91, and Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir, BWV 38, later Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, BWV 80, and in 1735 Wär Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit, BWV 14.

On The Soul After Death

In contrast to the views of John Calvin and Philipp Melanchthon, throughout his life Luther maintained that it was not false doctrine to believe that a Christian's soul sleeps after it is separated from the body in death. Accordingly, he disputed traditional interpretations of some Bible passages, such as the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. This also led Luther to reject the idea of torments for the saints: "It is enough for us to know that souls do not leave their bodies to be threatened by the torments and punishments of hell, but enter a prepared bedchamber in which they sleep in peace." He also rejected the existence of purgatory, which involved Christian souls undergoing penitential suffering after death. He affirmed the continuity of one's personal identity beyond death. In his Smalcald Articles, he described the saints as currently residing "in their graves and in heaven." The Lutheran theologian Franz Pieper observes that Luther's teaching about the state of the Christian's soul after death differed from the later Lutheran theologians such as Johann Gerhard. Lessing (1755) had earlier reached the same conclusion in his analysis of Lutheran orthodoxy on this issue.

Luther's Commentary on Genesis contains a passage which concludes that "the soul does not sleep (anima non sic dormit), but wakes (sed vigilat) and experiences visions". Francis Blackburne argues that John Jortin misread this and other passages from Luther, while Gottfried Fritschel points out that it actually refers to the soul of a man "in this life" (homo enim in hac vita) tired from his daily labour (defatigus diurno labore) who at night enters his bedchamber (sub noctem intrat in cubiculum suum) and whose sleep is interrupted by dreams.

Henry Eyster Jacobs' English translation from 1898 reads:

"Nevertheless, the sleep of this life and that of the future life differ;

for in this life, man, fatigued by his daily labour, at nightfall goes to his couch, as in peace, to sleep there, and enjoys rest; nor does he know anything of evil, whether of fire or of murder."

Sacramentarian controversy and the Marburg Colloquy

In October 1529, Philip I, Landgrave of Hesse, convoked an assembly of German and Swiss theologians at the Marburg Colloquy, to establish doctrinal unity in the emerging Protestant states. Agreement was achieved on fourteen points out of fifteen, the exception being the nature of the Eucharist—the sacrament of the Lord's Supper—an issue crucial to Luther. The theologians, including Zwingli, Melanchthon, Martin Bucer, and Johannes Oecolampadius, differed on the significance of the words spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper: "This is my body which is for you" and "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Corinthians 11:23–26). Luther insisted on the Real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine, which he called the sacramental union, while his opponents believed God to be only spiritually or symbolically present.

Zwingli, for example, denied Jesus' ability to be in more than one place at a time. Luther stressed the omnipresence of Jesus' human nature. According to transcripts, the debate sometimes became confrontational. Citing Jesus' words "The flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6.63), Zwingli said, "This passage breaks your neck". "Don't be too proud," Luther retorted, "German necks don't break that easily. This is Hesse, not Switzerland." On his table Luther wrote the words "Hoc est corpus meum" ("This is my body") in chalk, to continually indicate his firm stance.

Despite the disagreements on the Eucharist, the Marburg Colloquy paved the way for the signing in 1530 of the Augsburg Confession, and for the formation of the Schmalkaldic League the following year by leading Protestant nobles such as John of Saxony, Philip of Hesse, and George, Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach. The Swiss cities, however, did not sign these agreements.

Epistemology

Some scholars have asserted that Luther taught that faith and reason were antithetical in the sense that questions of faith could not be illuminated by reason. He wrote, "All the articles of our Christian faith, which God has revealed to us in His Word, are in presence of reason sheerly impossible, absurd, and false." and "[That] Reason in no way contributes to faith. For reason is the greatest enemy that faith has; it never comes to the aid of spiritual things." However, though seemingly

contradictorily, he also wrote in the latter work that human reason "strives not against faith, when enlightened, but rather furthers and advances it", bringing claims he was a fideist into dispute. Contemporary Lutheran scholarship, however, has found a different reality in Luther. Luther rather seeks to separate faith and reason in order to honor the separate spheres of knowledge that each applies to.

On Islam

At the time of the Marburg Colloquy, Suleiman the Magnificent was besieging Vienna with a vast Ottoman army. Luther had argued against resisting the Turks in his 1518 Explanation of the Ninety-five Theses, provoking accusations of defeatism. He saw the Turks as a scourge sent by God to punish Christians, as agents of the Biblical apocalypse that would destroy the Antichrist, whom Luther believed to be the papacy and the Roman Church. He consistently rejected the idea of a Holy War, "as though our people were an army of Christians against the Turks, who were enemies of Christ. This is absolutely contrary to Christ's doctrine and name". On the other hand, in keeping with his doctrine of the two kingdoms, Luther did support non-religious war against the Turks. In 1526, he argued in Whether Soldiers can be in a State of Grace that national defence is reason for a just war. By 1529, in On War against the Turk, he was actively urging Emperor Charles V and the German people to fight a secular war against the Turks. He made clear, however, that the spiritual war against an alien faith was separate, to be waged through prayer and repentance. Around the time of the Siege of Vienna, Luther wrote a prayer for national deliverance from the Turks, asking God to "give to our emperor perpetual victory over our enemies".

In 1542, Luther read a Latin translation of the Qur'an. He went on to produce several critical pamphlets on Islam, which he called "Mohammedanism" or "the Turk". Though Luther saw the Muslim faith as a tool of the devil, he was indifferent to its practice: "Let the Turk believe and live as he will, just as one lets the papacy and other false Christians live." He opposed banning the publication of the Qur'an, wanting it exposed to scrutiny.

Antinomian Controversy

Early in 1537, Johannes Agricola—serving at the time as pastor in Luther's birthplace, Eisleben—preached a sermon in which he claimed that God's gospel, not God's moral law (the Ten Commandments), revealed God's wrath to Christians. Based on this sermon and others

by Agricola, Luther suspected that Agricola was behind certain anonymous antinomian theses circulating in Wittenberg. These theses asserted that the law is no longer to be taught to Christians but belonged only to city hall. Luther responded to these theses with six series of theses against Agricola and the antinomians, four of which became the basis for disputations between 1538 and 1540. He also responded to these assertions in other writings, such as his 1539 open letter to C. Güttel Against the Antinomians, and his book On the Councils and the Church from the same year.

In his theses and disputations against the antinomians, Luther reviews and reaffirms, on the one hand, what has been called the "second use of the law," that is, the law as the Holy Spirit's tool to work sorrow over sin in man's heart, thus preparing him for Christ's fulfillment of the law offered in the gospel. Luther states that everything that is used to work sorrow over sin is called the law, even if it is Christ's life, Christ's death for sin, or God's goodness experienced in creation. Simply refusing to preach the Ten Commandments among Christians—thereby, as it were, removing the three letters l-a-w from the church—does not eliminate the accusing law. Claiming that the law—in any form—should not be preached to Christians anymore would be tantamount to asserting that Christians are no longer sinners in themselves and that the church consists only of essentially holy people.

Luther also points out that the Ten Commandments—when considered not as God's condemning judgment but as an expression of his eternal will, that is, of the natural law—positively teach how the Christian ought to live. This has traditionally been called the "third use of the law." For Luther, also Christ's life, when understood as an example, is nothing more than an illustration of the Ten Commandments, which a Christian should follow in his or her vocations on a daily basis.

The Ten Commandments, and the beginnings of the renewed life of Christians accorded to them by the sacrament of baptism, are a present foreshadowing of the believers' future angel-like life in heaven in the midst of this life. Luther's teaching of the Ten Commandments, therefore, has clear eschatological overtones, which, characteristically for Luther, do not encourage world-flight but direct the Christian to service to the neighbor in the common, daily vocations of this perishing world.

Bigamy Of Philip I, Landgrave Of Hesse

From December 1539, Luther became implicated in

the bigamy of Philip I, Landgrave of Hesse, who wanted to marry one of his wife's ladies-in-waiting. Philip solicited the approval of Luther, Melanchthon, and Bucer, citing as a precedent the polygamy of the patriarchs. The theologians were not prepared to make a general ruling, and they reluctantly advised the landgrave that if he was determined, he should marry secretly and keep quiet about the matter because divorce was worse than bigamy. As a result, on 4 March 1540, Philip married a second wife, Margarethe von der Saale, with Melanchthon and Bucer among the witnesses. However, Philip's sister Elisabeth quickly made the scandal public, and Philip threatened to expose Luther's advice. Luther told him to "tell a good, strong lie" and deny the marriage completely, which Philip did. Margarethe gave birth to nine children over a span of 17 years, giving Philip a total of 19 children. In the view of Luther's biographer Martin Brecht, "giving confessional advice for Philip of Hesse was one of the worst mistakes Luther made, and, next to the landgrave himself, who was directly responsible for it, history chiefly holds Luther accountable". Brecht argues that Luther's mistake was not that he gave private pastoral advice, but that he miscalculated the political implications. The affair caused lasting damage to Luther's reputation.

Antisemitism

Tovia Singer, an Orthodox Jewish rabbi, remarking about Luther's attitude toward Jews, put it thusly: "Among all the Church Fathers and Reformers, there was no mouth more vile, no tongue that uttered more vulgar curses against the Children of Israel than this founder of the Reformation."

Luther wrote negatively about the Jews throughout his career. Though Luther rarely encountered Jews during his life, his attitudes reflected a theological and cultural tradition which saw Jews as a rejected people guilty of the murder of Christ, and he lived in a locality which had expelled Jews some ninety years earlier. He considered the Jews blasphemers and liars because they rejected the divinity of Jesus. In 1523, Luther advised kindness toward the Jews in That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew and also aimed to convert them to Christianity. When his efforts at conversion failed, he grew increasingly bitter toward them.

Luther's major works on the Jews were his 60,000-word treatise Von den Juden und Ihren Lügen (On the Jews and Their Lies), and Vom Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi (On the Holy Name and the Lineage of Christ), both published in 1543, three years before his death. Luther argues that the Jews were no longer the chosen people

but "the devil's people", and refers to them with violent language. Citing Deuteronomy 13, wherein Moses commands the killing of idolaters and the burning of their cities and property as an offering to God, Luther calls for a "scharfe Barmherzigkeit" ("sharp mercy") against the Jews "to see whether we might save at least a few from the glowing flames." Luther advocates setting synagogues on fire, destroying Jewish prayerbooks, forbidding rabbis from preaching, seizing Jews' property and money, and smashing up their homes, so that these "envenomed worms" would be forced into labour or expelled "for all time". In Robert Michael's view, Luther's words "We are at fault in not slaying them" amounted to a sanction for murder. "God's anger with them is so intense," Luther concludes, "that gentle mercy will only tend to make them worse, while sharp mercy will reform them but little. Therefore, in any case, away with them!"

Luther spoke out against the Jews in Saxony, Brandenburg, and Silesia. Josel of Rosheim, the Jewish spokesman who tried to help the Jews of Saxony in 1537, later blamed their plight on "that priest whose name was Martin Luther—may his body and soul be bound up in hell!—who wrote and issued many heretical books in which he said that whoever would help the Jews was doomed to perdition." Josel asked the city of Strasbourg to forbid the sale of Luther's anti-Jewish works: they refused initially but did so when a Lutheran pastor in Hochfelden used a sermon to urge his parishioners to murder Jews. Luther's influence persisted after his death. Throughout the 1580s, riots led to the expulsion of Jews from several German Lutheran states.

Luther was the most widely read author of his generation, and within Germany he acquired the status of a prophet. According to the prevailing opinion among historians, his anti-Jewish rhetoric contributed significantly to the development of antisemitism in Germany, and in the 1930s and 1940s provided an "ideal underpinning" for the Nazis' attacks on Jews. Reinhold Lewin writes that anybody who "wrote against the Jews for whatever reason believed he had the right to justify himself by triumphantly referring to Luther." According to Michael, just about every anti-Jewish book printed in the Third Reich contained references to and quotations from Luther. Heinrich Himmler (albeit never a Lutheran, having been brought up Catholic) wrote admiringly of his writings and sermons on the Jews in 1940. The city of Nuremberg presented a first edition of On the Jews and their Lies to Julius Streicher, editor of the Nazi newspaper Der Stürmer, on his birthday in 1937; the newspaper

described it as the most radically antisemitic tract ever published. It was publicly exhibited in a glass case at the Nuremberg rallies and quoted in a 54-page explanation of the Aryan Law by E.H. Schulz and R. Frercks. On 17 December 1941, seven Protestant regional church confederations issued a statement agreeing with the policy of forcing Jews to wear the yellow badge, "since after his bitter experience Luther had already suggested preventive measures against the Jews and their expulsion from German territory." According to Daniel Goldhagen, Bishop Martin Sasse, a leading Protestant churchman, published a compendium of Luther's writings shortly after Kristallnacht, for which Diarmaid MacCulloch, professor of the history of the church at the University of Oxford argued that Luther's writing was a "blueprint." Sasse applauded the burning of the synagogues and the coincidence of the day, writing in the introduction, "On 10 November 1938, on Luther's birthday, the synagogues are burning in Germany." The German people, he urged, ought to heed these words "of the greatest antisemite of his time, the warner of his people against the Jews."

At the heart of scholars' debate about Luther's influence is whether it is anachronistic to view his work as a precursor of the racial antisemitism of the Nazis. Some scholars see Luther's influence as limited, and the Nazis' use of his work as opportunistic. Johannes Wallmann argues that Luther's writings against the Jews were largely ignored in the 18th and 19th centuries, and that there was no continuity between Luther's thought and Nazi ideology. Uwe Siemon-Netto agreed, arguing that it was because the Nazis were already antisemites that they revived Luther's work. Hans J. Hillerbrand agreed that to focus on Luther was to adopt an essentially ahistorical perspective of Nazi antisemitism that ignored other contributory factors in German history. Similarly, Roland Bainton, noted church historian and Luther biographer, wrote "One could wish that Luther had died before ever [On the Jews and Their Lies] was written. His position was entirely religious and in no respect racial." However, Christopher J. Probst, in his book Demonizing the Jews: Luther and the Protestant Church in Nazi Germany (2012), shows that a large number of German Protestant clergy and theologians during the Nazi Third Reich used Luther's hostile publications towards the Jews and their Jewish religion to justify at least in part the anti-Semitic policies of the National Socialists.

Some scholars, such as Mark U. Edwards in his book Luther's Last Battles: Politics and Polemics 1531–46 (1983), suggest that since

Luther's increasingly antisemitic views developed during the years his health deteriorated, it is possible they were at least partly the product of a state of mind. Edwards also comments that Luther often deliberately used "vulgarity and violence" for effect, both in his writings condemning the Jews and in diatribes against "Turks" (Muslims) and Catholics.

Since the 1980s, Lutheran denominations have repudiated Martin Luther's statements against the Jews and have rejected the use of them to incite hatred against Lutherans. Strommen et al.'s 1970 survey of 4,745 North American Lutherans aged 15–65 found that, compared to the other minority groups under consideration, Lutherans were the least prejudiced toward Jews. Nevertheless, Professor Richard Geary, former professor of modern history at the University of Nottingham and the author of Hitler and Nazism (Routledge 1993), published an article in the magazine History Today examining electoral trends in Weimar Germany between 1928 and 1933. Geary notes, based on his research, that the Nazi Party received disproportionately more votes from Protestant than Catholic areas of Germany.

Final Years, Illness and Death

including Ménière's disease, vertigo, fainting, tinnitus, and a cataract in one eye. From 1531 to 1546 his health deteriorated further. The years of struggle with Rome, the antagonisms with and among his fellow reformers, and the scandal that ensued from the bigamy of Philip I incident, all may have contributed. In 1536, he began to suffer from kidney and bladder stones, arthritis, and an ear infection ruptured an ear drum. In December 1544, he began to feel the effects of angina. His poor physical health made him short-tempered and even harsher in his writings and comments. His wife Katharina was overheard saying, "Dear husband, you are too rude," and he responded, "They are teaching me to be rude." In 1545 and 1546 Luther preached three times in the Market Church in Halle, staying with his friend Justus Jonas during Christmas.

His last sermon was delivered at Eisleben, his place of birth, on 15 February 1546, three days before his death. It was "entirely devoted to the obdurate Jews, whom it was a matter of great urgency to expel from all German territory," according to Léon Poliakov. James Mackinnon writes that it concluded with a "fiery summons to drive the Jews bag and baggage from their midst, unless they desisted from their calumny and their usury and became Christians." Luther said, "we want to practice Christian love toward them and pray that they convert," but

also that they are "our public enemies ... and if they could kill us all, they would gladly do so. And so often they do."
Luther's final journey, to Mansfeld, was taken because of his concern for his siblings' families continuing in their father Hans Luther's copper mining trade. Their livelihood was threatened by Count Albrecht of Mansfeld bringing the industry under his own control. The controversy that ensued involved all four Mansfeld counts: Albrecht, Philip, John George, and Gerhard. Luther journeyed to Mansfeld twice in late 1545 to participate in the negotiations for a settlement, and a third visit was needed in early 1546 for their completion.
The negotiations were successfully concluded on 17 February 1546. After 8 p.m., he experienced chest pains. When he went to his bed, he prayed, "Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God" (Ps. 31:5), the common prayer of the dying. At 1 a.m. on 18 February, he awoke with more chest pain and was warmed with hot towels. He thanked God for revealing his Son to him in whom he had believed. His companions, Justus Jonas and Michael Coelius, shouted loudly, "Reverend father, are you ready to die trusting in your Lord Jesus Christ and to confess the doctrine which you have taught in his name?" A distinct "Yes" was Luther's reply.
An apoplectic stroke deprived him of his speech, and he died shortly afterwards at 2:45 a.m. on 18 February 1546, aged 62, in Eisleben, the city of his birth. He was buried in the Schlosskirche in Wittenberg, in front of the pulpit. The funeral was held by his friends Johannes Bugenhagen and Philipp Melanchthon. A year later, troops of Luther's adversary Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor entered the town but were ordered by Charles not to disturb the grave.
A piece of paper was later found on which Luther had written his last statement. The statement was in Latin, apart from "We are beggars," which was in German. The statement reads:
No one can understand Virgil's Bucolics unless he has been a shepherd for five years. No one can understand Virgil's Georgics, unless he has been a farmer for five years.
No one can understand Cicero's Letters (or so I teach), unless he has busied himself in the affairs of some prominent state for twenty years.
Know that no one can have indulged in the Holy Writers sufficiently, unless he has governed churches for a hundred years with the prophets, such as Elijah and Elisha, John the Baptist, Christ and the apostles.

Do not assail this divine Aeneid; nay, rather prostrate revere the ground that it treads.

Legacy and commemoration

Luther made effective use of Johannes Gutenberg's printing press to spread his views. He switched from Latin to German in his writing to appeal to a broader audience. Between 1500 and 1530, Luther's works represented one fifth of all materials printed in Germany.

In the 1530s and 1540s, printed images of Luther that emphasized his monumental size were crucial to the spread of Protestantism. In contrast to images of frail Catholic saints, Luther was presented as a stout man with a "double chin, strong mouth, piercing deep-set eyes, fleshy face, and squat neck." He was shown to be physically imposing, an equal in stature to the secular German princes with whom he would join forces to spread Lutheranism. His large body also let the viewer know that he did not shun earthly pleasures like drinking—behavior that was a stark contrast to the ascetic life of the medieval religious orders. Famous images from this period include the woodcuts by Hans Brosamer (1530) and Lucas Cranach the Elder and Lucas Cranach the Younger (1546).

Luther is honoured on 18 February with a commemoration in the Lutheran Calendar of Saints and in the Episcopal (United States) Calendar of Saints. In the Church of England's Calendar of Saints he is commemorated on 31 October. Luther is honored in various ways by Christian traditions coming out directly from the Protestant Reformation, i.e. Lutheranism, the Reformed tradition, and Anglicanism. Branches of Protestantism that emerged afterwards vary in their remembrance and veneration of Luther, ranging from a complete lack of a single mention of him to a commemoration almost comparable to the way Lutherans commemorate and remember his persona. There is no known condemnation of Luther by Protestants themselves.

Various sites both inside and outside Germany (supposedly) visited by Martin Luther throughout his lifetime commemorate it with local memorials. Saxony-Anhalt has two towns officially named after Luther, Lutherstadt Eisleben and Lutherstadt Wittenberg. Mansfeld is sometimes called Mansfeld-Lutherstadt, although the state government has not decided to put the Lutherstadt suffix in its official name.

Reformation Day commemorates the publication of the Ninety-five Theses in 1517 by Martin Luther; it has been historically important in the following European entities. It is a civic holiday in the German states of Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia, Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg. Two further

states (Lower Saxony and Bremen) are pending a vote on introducing it. Slovenia celebrates it because of the profound contribution of the Reformation to its culture. Austria allows Protestant children not to go to school that day, and Protestant workers have a right to leave work in order to participate in a church service. Switzerland celebrates the holiday on the first Sunday after 31 October. It is also celebrated elsewhere around the world.