



The title page of the original printing of this writing, in somewhat reduced measurement

in the frame decoration: on top the Saxon swords,
at the bottom the coat of arms of the city of Wittenberg

He then goes on to show that the Holy Scriptures contain two central doctrines: the law, which prescribes good works but does not give the power to do them, and the gospel, the word of divine promise. He describes the action of both and writes, "When man has learned from the Commandments how powerless he is and has understood that the law has to be fulfilled, he becomes terribly afraid of how he could possibly keep the law. Thus he is truly humbled and looks at himself as being nothing at all. He finds nothing in himself through which he might become holy.

"But then the other word is set forward, the divine promise and assurance. It says: Do you want to keep all of the commandments, get rid of your evil lust and sin as the Commandments compel and demand, then look to and believe in Christ, in whom you are assured of all grace, righteousness, peace, and freedom. As you believe, you have. If you don't believe, you don't have. (The German: "glaubst du, so hast du; glaubst du nicht, so hast du nicht.") This is how the promises of God provide what the Commandments demand. They fulfill what the Commandments require so that everything comes from God, both the Commandment and the fulfillment. He alone is the One who commands. He alone also fulfills. These, and all of God's Word, are holy, true, right, peaceful, free, and full of goodness. The result is that whoever clings to these with a true faith has his soul united with his Being so completely that all of the excellence of the Word also becomes the property of the soul. In this way, through faith the soul—holy, right, true, peaceful, free, and full of all goodness from God's Word—becomes a true child of God. This is as John 1:12 says: 'He has given to them that they may become God's children, all who believe in his name.'

"From this it is easily understood why faith has the power to do so much, and that no good work can be like it. ... This is the Christian freedom produced by personal faith, not that we might continue to do nothing or to do evil, but that we do not need a single work to attain holiness or blessedness. But since Christ, with whom we are united in faith as our bridegroom, is a King and Priest, so all Christians are kings and priests. Who then can imagine the honor and the nobility of a Christian? Through his kingdom he has authority over all things. Through his priesthood he has

God's authority, for 'God does what he asks and wants as is written in the Psalms: 'God does the will of those who fear him and hears their prayer.' This honor he attains is only through faith and not through any work. Thus a man can clearly see how a Christian has freedom in all things and is above all things.

"And since it is the common faith of all Christians which grants them such royal and priestly honor, therefore the distinction which the papacy draws between the priesthood and the laity is contrary to Scripture. The only distinction Scripture makes is between Christians as a whole and those doers and stewards who are to preach to other Christians, since not all can be stewards and preach.

"But a Christian in this life is not yet completely spiritual but still has flesh and blood, the old man, as a part of him. That old man fights against the new man and wants to imprison him with sin. Thus all who belong to Christ have to crucify their flesh together with their lusts and desires. This is where the works begin. The inner man is one with God, happy and cheerful for the sake of Christ, who has done so much for him. His entire delight is that he, in turn, also wants to serve Christ freely out of love for God. But these works are not to be done with the thought that through them man becomes righteous before God. But a Christian does them out of free love, and he sees in his works nothing other than that they are pleasing to God, whose will he enjoys doing in the best way possible.

"So in paradise Adam would not do his work to achieve righteousness since he already had it. So a Christian also will not become righteous and a Christian through the works he does. And if he had not been a Christian before, all of his works would be punishable and damning. Good holy works never produce a good holy man. But a good and holy man produces good and holy works, just as the good tree has to first exist in order to bear good fruit. In the same way a good house does not produce a

good builder, but a good builder makes a good house. Thus, whoever would do good works, must not begin with the good works but with the person who is to do the good works. But nothing makes the person good except faith alone, just as nothing makes him evil except unbelief alone. And whatever seems good without faith, all of it is vain. So to repeat, we do not reject good works as a whole. We only reject them when a person desires to become righteous and holy through them. Thereby he robs God of his honor, who makes holy by himself alone and by his grace.

"What's more, a Christian does not exist on this earth by himself alone; he lives among other people. So he should be of the same mind as Jesus who had only our best interest in mind. Even though Jesus was completely free, for our sake he became a servant. So a Christian will do as he sees in Christ. Though he is completely free he willingly makes himself a servant and thinks: 'Well then, my God has given to me, an unworthy, condemned man without any merit, the full riches of all holiness and blessedness. He has done this free of charge and out of pure compassion through and in Christ. Henceforth I have need of nothing except to believe that this is so.

"Listen! I want to do what pleases such a Father, who has poured out on me his superabundant goods. I want to do so freely, cheerfully, and without pay. At the same time I will become a Christ to my neighbor as Christ came to me. I will do no less than what I see he needs and is useful and blessed for him. After all, through faith in Christ I have plenty of all things.

"You see, this is the way love and desire for God flow out of faith; and a free, willing, and cheerful life of service for my neighbor, free of charge, flows out of love. For just as our neighbor suffers and is in need of our surplus, so were we suffering before God and in need of his grace." This

Luther also demonstrated with several examples and passages from Scripture and in so doing puts the works of the papists to the test. He says that any work that is not done (with the aim in Christ) to serve another or to submit himself into his will (German: "oder in seinen Willen zu schicken") as long as it does not go against God, is not a good or Christian work.

"From all of this comes the conclusion that a Christian does not live for himself but for Christ and his neighbor: for Christ, through faith; for his neighbor, through love. Through faith he elevates himself in God; from God he lowers himself through love and will always remain in God and godly love ...

"Note that this is true, spiritual Christian freedom. It sets the heart free from all sins, laws, and Commandments and surpasses all other freedoms as heaven surpasses the earth. May God grant that we rightly understand and preserve this. Amen."

If the previously mentioned main reformational writings of Luther could be described as war trumpets blaring against the tyranny of the Roman papacy, then in this writing Christianity was hearing a still, soft whisper. In contrast to the new spring storms it blew along pleasantly, warm and smelling of paradise and made the hearts alive. What a wonderful man who could compose such a pamphlet at such a time!

Luther sent this work directly into the dungeon which had enslaved Christians for centuries. In it they enjoyed calling the church the Pope's enslaved bondwoman. He sent it along with a friendly letter to the man who had just sent his most bitter enemy against him with the declaration of the ban. It was a testimony against his and God's enemy, a testimony for the truth. It was a testimony that the man who gave it was not sounding

the trumpet blare of battle to the nations against his enemies because he wanted to fight nor because of personal animosity.

For Luther the bull remained what it was, a work of the antichrist, and he treated it accordingly. Indeed, at first he left the person of the pope out of it, and assigned the blame for it to the one who had been most active in promoting it. In this way he was responding just like the others who refused to publish it because Eck had not acted in a legitimate fashion. He issued a small publication entitled, "About the New Bulls and Lies of Eck," in which he explained he could not yet ascribe such an injustice to the pope. He wouldn't have sent such a bull through his most bitter enemy while Luther's matter was still pending examination and his appeal remained fully in place. He first wanted to see the original bull with its papal seal.

But immediately thereafter he issued a document in Latin and German entitled, "Against the Bull of the Antichrist." In it he both defended some of the condemning statements in the bull and also took to task some of the distortions it contained. That he was not terribly afraid, which up to this point was the usual reaction to receiving a papal bull, he openly demonstrated to both his friends and his enemies. "Everyone should know," he wrote, "that a man who highly despised the insolent, heretical and deceitful bull is doing me no service. On the other hand, a man who holds it in high regard also gives me no grief. I am free through the grace of God, therefore I will not take comfort in regard to these matters, nor will I be upset by them. I know well where my comfort and my courage lies, and it keeps me safe before people and devils. I shall do what I do. Everyone must answer for himself when he dies and faces judgment, and then he will understand my faithful warning. But so that no one can use the excuse that he does not know what to watch out for against such sacrileges and errors, I will tell you those things which are condemned in the bull and point out the blindness and the malice of the Roman transgressors."

Finally he wrote, "If the pope does not retract and condemn this bull, and also punish Eck and his companions as purveyors of such a bull,

then no one can doubt that the pope is the enemy of God, the persecutor of Christ, the destroyer of Christianity, and the true antichrist. Up to this time no one has ever heard of condemning the Christian faith, when publicly confessed, as this hellish, accursed bull is doing."

In the Latin edition of this work he had gone into greater detail at its beginning what he had said here in conclusion. There he wrote that he would try not to believe that Pope Leo X and his cardinals had produced this bull. This was not to protect the honor of the name of Rome, but rather because he would not exalt himself as someone who enjoys the good fortune of being condemned from such a high throne for standing up for the truth. "May everyone in Rome cling to whatever he wants. I hold the instigator of this bull, whoever he may be, to be the antichrist. And against the antichrist I am writing this so that, as much as I am able, I will defend the truth, that truth which the issuer is trying to exterminate. First, so that he cannot hold against me everything that he maintains, I testify before God, our Lord Jesus, his holy angels, and the whole world, that I wholeheartedly declare myself innocent of the condemnation which has been declared in this bull. I condemn and curse such a bull as a malicious enemy and blasphemy against Christ, the Son of God, our Lord. Amen. Second, I maintain and hold tight with every confidence of my spirit to the articles which this bull condemns. I declare freely that all Christians, under the threat of the eternal curse, must continue to maintain these articles; and that all who support this bull are to be regarded as anti-Christian. In fellowship with the spirit of all who recognize and honor Christ I regard them as heathens and avoid them in accordance with the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. This is my retraction!"

A rally cry to Caesar, the other counts of Christendom, the bishops and doctors to not let themselves be insulted by such atrocious bulls he left out of the German edition. Still, he again summoned Caesar, the counts, the nobility and the cities with the renewal of every aspect of his appeal, which he had made on November 17th. He summoned them to stand with him in his appeal and to dismiss the bull by not following it.

At the same time he framed the pope as the accused, in that he allowed his appeal to be offered as if from Pope Leo:

"First, as from an atrocious power, a presumptive and unjust judge;

"Second, as from a hard-hearted, erring in all of Scripture, condemned heretic and apostate;

"Third, as from an enemy, adversary, and oppressor of all Holy Scripture;

"Fourth, as from a despiser, blasphemer, and abuser of the Holy Christian Church and of a free council..."

Luther had yet another response to the papal bull. On the 10th of November a special public posting demanded the attention of the student body of Wittenberg. On it Luther invited the young academics to attend a burning of the anti-Christian decretals at 9 a.m. (The decretals were the books of papal rights, on which the popes would base particular claims.) At the appointed time the students arrived in large numbers in front of the Elstergate of the Augustinian Monastery. Many doctor and magisters, including Carlstadt and Melanchthon, were also present. An eminent magister arranged a pile of wood and set it on fire. After laying the papal decretals on the pyre, Luther also consigned the papal bull to the flames. He proclaimed in Latin, "Because you have grieved the Holy One, let the eternal flames destroy you." Then Luther returned to the city with his friends.

However, the students had not yet had enough. They wanted to make a greater show of their agreement with their bold teacher. While a large number stayed by the fire and kept it burning, others went back into the city. They gathered many of the books of Eck, Emser, and other papists and piled them on a wagon. A banner, one cubit in length, was waving from the wagon like a flag. Singing, they paraded through the city to the fire where the books and the long banner shared the destiny of the decretals. But the next day Luther admonished those students, strongly encouraging

them to renounce the papacy with all their hearts by the salvation of their souls.

The place where their thought-provoking activity is said to have taken place is still being shown in Wittenberg. Each one of the previously mentioned writings was a bold action against the bull. The appeal to the pope for a future council was also an important step. But it would not be accurate to say that Luther was now proceeding from words to deeds. Still, the fire scene at the Elstergate was certainly eye-catching. It was not an act done in haste, but a carefully considered action. Many months prior to the deed Luther had planned payback for the burning of his books, and after sincere prayer he followed through with that bold step. He did not regret it. As he reported to Staupitz, he rejoiced more in this than in any other deed of his life. This action was a personal declaration that he was free from that abomination of abominations, the atrocious Roman papacy, and it spoke louder than any words could say.

To justify his actions he immediately issued a declaration in German and in Latin under the title, "Why the Books of the Pope and His Disciples Are Burned; Let It Be Shown, by Anyone, Why They Have Burned the Books of Dr. Luther." As a reason for the burning he cited 30 errors in the papal books, and, as a summary of the papal decretals, the statement about the primacy of the pope. He carried this out according to the old custom, in conformity with the example of St. Paul (perhaps referring to Acts 19:18,19), as a baptized Christian, and a sworn doctor of Holy Scripture.

About the same time a script appeared in Latin, and soon after in German, under the title, "Reason and Cause of All the Articles Which Were Unjustly Condemned by the Roman Bull." The elector and others had expressed their desire for Luther to issue such a script. In it Luther, once again, carefully discussed, fully and in detail, his statements in the same order as they had been condemned by Rome. He also issued a retraction here of individual statements, of course not in the sense that the pope desired. Thus the statement was rejected in the bull under Number 18, "The indulgence is a divine deception of Christians and a lessening of good work and of a number of things which are permissible but not beneficial."

Concerning this he admits that he had indeed said this, but had not known better at the time. "But now that the holy father, the pope, has commanded me to retract and condemn this article, I will obey and say, 'I confess my error.' This article is not true and I now say so: The indulgence is not a divine deception, thievery and robbery. It is a hellish, devilish, antichristian deception, thievery and robbery by which the Roman Nimrod and teacher of sin sells sin and hell to the whole world. He sucks out and licks off all of their money for such unspeakable damage. If this retraction is not enough, I shall improve it another time."

Also in regard to the following four statements which the bull rejected he had this to say: "To the honor of the highly intelligent bull I retract everything which I ever taught about indulgences, and I am sincerely sorry from my heart for whatever I said good about them. ... Hence, it was right for my books to be burned. For this surely happened because I had yielded and served too much to the pope and his indulgence, and I personally condemn such teachings to the fire."

When the time during which all of these things took place, the 120 days allowance established in the bull, had passed and no Luther let himself be seen in Rome during the following weeks, a second bull was issued on January 3rd. In it he was unconditionally placed under the ban, along with anyone else who was uniting with him, no matter how high their position or reputation. All of them were declared to be condemned people.

Together with all of their descendants they all were declared as deprived of all honors, dignities, and possessions; and they were guilty for the sacrilege of insulting majesty. In addition, anywhere Luther's teaching had been accepted, for three days all priests were to declare Luther and all his followers as heretics, banned and accursed. They were to preach against those heretics in the divine services. All places where Luther and his followers received shelter were to be placed under the interdict. This bull arrived in Worms as Caesar Charles V was opening his first diet.

Chapter 21

Before Caesar and the Empire

The hopes were high in Germany for the young Austrian noble, the twenty-year-old nephew of Maximilian. (Footnote: Karl V was born on Feb. 24, 1500 to Philip the Handsome of Austria, and Johannah, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, the heir to the kingdoms of Spain, Naples, Sardinia, Sicily, Austria, Burgundy, Mexico, and Peru.) On October 22, 1520, he made his majestic entrance in Aachen. He rode on a stallion which was covered with golden brocade, followed by a company of five thousand riders. The following day as he was being crowned through the papal fiat, he accepted the title of the elected Roman Caesar. The German counts may well have been somewhat skeptical as they beheld that tender, slim figure of medium height and pale, beardless face for the first time. A German he was not. They heard no German from him, and their German he did not understand. Karl likewise did not display the fresh and knightly presence with which Maximilian had departed himself. His eyes gave the impression of being tired and dejected. It was reported that he was completely under the control of his Secretary of State, Wilhelm von Croix and his father confessor, the Franciscan Glapio. Glapio was a cunning old fox who knew how to furrow his brow, choose his words, and hang his cloak just as the situation demanded. In addition to his new authority Karl's scepter also extended over the kingdoms of Spain and Naples, and over Sicily where he could only rule as a Catholic count.

Still, men from both parties in Germany, even though their confrontations were becoming more violent, had high hopes for him. Hutten traveled to him in the Netherlands and one of his pamphlets showed Caesar's picture with the heading:

O Carle, Kaiser lobesan

O Charlie, Caesar, man of praise

Greif du die Sach zum ersten an Attack the issue first, in haste

Gott wirts mit dir ohn Zweifel han God, without doubt, will bless your case

"I will serve you day and night without pay or reward," Hutten called. "I shall arouse many a proud hero to help you. You shall be the leader, commander, and finisher." Caesar was also being encouraged in other areas: to dismiss the Franciscans, to rule with the nobility instead, to make Hutten and Erasmus his counselors, and to set limits to the ongoing pressure by Rome and also for the orders of beggars. Then he would have the nation on his side and have no need for the pope and the cardinals.

Luther had already written to Caesar in 1520. He made a heartfelt appeal for his own cause, since a huge effort was being made to destroy him along with the entire gospel. "After I had tried everything else, though in vain, it seemed right for me to follow the example of holy Athanasius. And so I turn to you, majestic Caesar, to see whether through your highness God will be gracious to me. Therefore, I beseech your majesty, Caesar, prostrate on my knees, that you will take not my person but the issue of truth under the shadow of your wings. Protect me only until I have been given my hearing, to see if I shall be found to be ungodly or a heretic. The only thing I ask is that neither truth nor untruth be condemned without a hearing and without having been disproved."

At that time Luther did not get a reply to his humble letter, though he was easily comforted in this regard. Indeed, when Spalatin, who had journeyed with the elector to meet Caesar, wrote to him that there was not much to hope for from Caesar, Luther expressed his joy. He rejoiced that through this his friends had to learn that we are not to put our trust in princes. God had assigned the spreading of his gospel to fishermen, not to the mighty of this earth. But it was different for others. They understood that they would be disappointed in Karl. When the news arrived that Caesar had allowed the hated bull to be executed in the Netherlands, which also was a part of his inherited kingdom, and that following his coronation

in Cologne Luther's books were supposed to have been burned in his presence, there was good cause for suspicion.

Hutten, who had found little comfort in the Netherlands, lashed out in both German and Latin. He especially attacked the burning of Luther's works. Not satisfied with this, he began to press for a call to arms in Germany and personally tried to win the elector of Saxony to his side. To his friend Sickingen, who was still putting his hopes on Caesar and greatly trusted in his own ability to influence the ruler, he held up the example of Ziska. Ziska was a wild leader of the Hussites and had once been a terror to the papists. Soon there were rumors of a large war band being prepared to head toward Rome. The number supposedly included 35,000 Saxons together with an equal number of Bohemians. Luther was not pleased with such efforts and reports, but increased his warnings against the use of force, asking that the matter be left to God and his Word. He even wrote the same to Hutten. When he invited Caesar and the entire nation to stand with him for his appeal, he was not calling for the use of earthly force. He wrote, "The world was overcome through the Word. The church was saved through the Word. It will be reformed through the Word. The antichrist, too, who began without power, will also be trampled under foot by the Word."

But the legate was very much aware of Germany's frame of mind. Thus Aleander reported to Rome that everywhere in Germany tumult and exasperation were reigning and Caesar would not remain ignorant of what was going on while he traveled through that nation. Although the legates were pushing Caesar to enforce the bull strictly in Germany as elsewhere, the suggestion of the Elector Frederick did receive a hearing. For Caesar had responded to him in a letter from Oppenheim, dated November 28. In it he expressed his desire for this issue, which could cause so much confusion, to be set aside. Thus he was prepared to allow Luther to receive a hearing before better understanding and highly educated authorities during the upcoming diet. He would also take care that no injustice would befall him there. The elector was to bring him along and meanwhile should

see to it that Luther would write nothing more against the papal authority or the throne of Rome.

Meanwhile the elector had received news of the intentional burning of Luther's writings at Cologne, shortly after he had departed. Without doubt he also heard about what had occurred at the Elster gate in Wittenberg. With both events in mind he responded to Caesar on the 20th of December that he was asking to be excused from his assigned task. He evidently wanted to avoid two issues. One, if what had happened to Hus were to happen to Luther, he did not want to be the one who would have delivered him to be executed; the other, as an elector of the empire he wanted to remain unconnected with Luther's cause.

But before the elector's answer reached him Caesar had changed his mind. As early as December 17th he wrote to the elector that he could leave Luther at home in case he did not wish to recant, or if he wished to recant he was to bring him only as far as Frankfurt. He wrote this because he had noticed that the ban against Luther had already expired and the interdict had been posted in every location Luther would stop for lodging.

Caesar's change of mind we have to credit to the account of the Romanists' influence. They were afraid that the open testimony of Luther before Caesar and the empire would be a fresh disaster for the Roman throne. Luther also saw it that way and was saddened when he heard of how things had turned. When the elector asked him whether he was ready to appear before the diet, he had answered, "If I will be called, I will come insofar as it refers to me, even if it means having to be carried there if I were sick. Should Caesar call me, there is no doubt that God would be calling me. Should they resort to strength as it appears (for they surely are not summoning me to instruct me) the matter must be committed to God." He was putting his trust in the One who had preserved the three men in the fiery furnace. He believed that if God did not want to preserve him, "his head was a small thing in comparison with Christ, who was killed in utter disgrace." But in conclusion he wrote, "You may be mistaken about me in anything save this, that I will flee or recant. I do not want to flee, much less recant, as surely as my Lord Jesus gives me strength."

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According to the "Golden Bull" the German Caesar was to be chosen at Frankfurt, crowned at Aachen, and then conduct his first court business at Nuernberg. Because at this time the plague was threatening Nuernberg, the honor of hosting the first diet of Karl V was allotted to the city of Worms. Caesar made his entrance in December. The authorities were summoned January 6th. But the diet was first convened January 28th. However, even before the opening several issues dealing with Luther's matter had been attended to. There was heightened anticipation for him to appear before Caesar and the empire. Luther also declared himself ready to stand before Caesar, and the elector forwarded that information to him. But again it seems that the little red caps intervened and Luther had to patiently await further developments.

Meanwhile this delay was a time of restless activity for him. We have already been introduced to a number of his labors during these weeks. He occupied himself with the bull and with the "Buck Emser." The Roman theologian, Ambrosius Katharinus, had written a book, "Against the Ungodly and Highly Destructive Errors of Martin Luther," which Luther dismissed with a Latin essay. In the epilogue of this work he dealt quite briefly with Silvester Prierias, who had again attacked him.

What's more, he continued his interpretation of the Psalms and issued an interpretation of the sermon texts for the Sundays in Advent. They were intended to be the first section of a postil, a book of family devotions, which he had begun to announce in 1519, acceding to the wish of his elector and others. For those whose consciences were being pressured by their father confessors to turn over Luther's books, he who was always painfully aware of the need for conscience counseling wrote, "Instruction for the Confessing Children." Luther supplied the text for the 26 pictures done by his friend, Lucas Cranach. Cranach had illustrated Christ and his humility in contrast to the pope and his pride. This work was

later published in a booklet with the title, "The Passion of Christ and the Antichrist." (Footnote: This Passion has been reissued as a faithful copy and with a new forward by Dr. C.F.W. Walther. See Luther's Saemmtliche Schriften by Dr. Johann Georg Walch, Vol. XIV, pp. 198-249) In addition he preached twice daily during this time on Genesis and about the Gospels. Finally, since the end of February he had been working on an edifying interpretation of The Song of Mary, intended for the nephew of Elector John Frederick. Then Caesar summoned him to Rome, away from all this work.

Meanwhile things were heating up at the diet. The bull of January 3rd had arrived. With it came a papal brief to Caesar, in which he demanded the immediate execution of the verdict and urged Caesar to use the sword. Caesar placed this brief before the elector. On the 13th of February the legate Aleander gave a speech three hours long. It concluded with the bull. He listed a good number of statements which he said were sufficient in and of themselves. Because of such statements thousands of heretics had already been burned. He protested the granting of a hearing to one already condemned at the diet. He regarded the diet as being unable to judge in matters of faith and demanded that Luther's writings be burned.

There was very little, if any sign among the authorities in attendance that the speech had a powerful effect. The elector of Saxony, who was ill, did not hear any of it. But the Romanists were burrowing like moles. Aleander had been given a lot of money and knew how to use it for bribery. For fifty guelders one of Caesar's secretaries promised to pass on secret information. In one of his letters we read, "The counselors and scribes, even if they are ever so hostile toward the Roman court, dance to our tunes when they see money. Without this nothing will happen.

Caesar's confessor, Father Glapio, was also present and was very busy. In an underhanded way he sought to gain something by exerting influence on Luther's elector. But the elector would yield nothing. And secret discussions held between Glapio and the Saxon Chancellor Brueck over a number of days in succession likewise accomplished nothing, regardless how little Glapio requested. His actions had been intended to

convince the elector's Chancellor that Luther should recant because it would be in Caesar's best interest.



A self-portrait of Lucas Cranach

Among the concessions Glapio offered in these discussions was that Luther would be given a hearing before impartial men in an advantageous location in Germany. But he did not include Worms among these advantageous places. Again and again he emphasized that Luther should not leave the territory of his elector. In this he was in agreement with the papal legates, who were vainly striving for Luther to be condemned away

from Caesar's presence. They also persuaded Caesar to introduce an edict at the diet in which Luther was to be handcuffed as a heretic without any further hearing. Discussions in regard to this edict bounced back and forth for seven days, during which the Elector Frederick also let his powerful voice be heard. Finally, a legal decision for the good ("a Gutachten") was established which gave Caesar something to ponder. He had learned that Luther had too much support among the people to be dealt with so summarily.

He was, as a result, to be summoned with a safe escort to face questions posed by men of learning, "whether he would or would not stand by the writings he had issued against our holy Christian faith." If he would retract these, then he would be given a further hearing on other points and issues. Thus the issues would be disposed of reasonably. But if he did not appear or declined the request to recant, he would then be treated as a manifest heretic.

The outrage of the legates in regard to these proceedings was heightened, because the old grievances about the extortions out of the nation and the encroachment of the Roman court and her ambassadors into the judicial work of the world were again becoming evident. They listed 101 grievances, and the legates were horrified when even Duke George delivered his contribution of a full dozen grievances. And what type of language he used! In part he denounced the same practices that Luther had named in his address to the nobility. In fact, he attacked the very matter of the indulgences which had begun this entire struggle. "The indulgence," he said, "is being sold for money. It is being praised in a most shameful manner only to gather a lot of money, and because of this, the preachers who are supposed to proclaim the truth instead bring forth a lot of deception and lies. The bishopric officials are just as zealous in the decision to rake in money. The poor have to pay, ... the rich are spared." In conclusion he even requested a council and at this council "a general reformation."

There was no reference to the papal bull in the "Gutachten," a legal document for the good in general, adopted by the authorities. The items

which were to be given to Luther to recant were left so unspecific that it was possible to reduce them to something very insignificant. Nor was there any definition of what was to be regarded under "other points and issues" concerning which a further hearing could be held. The same could be said about the idea of reasonable disposing. In view of the grievances the Romanists could very well ask themselves what they should fear more, the victory that Luther would recant or a stubborn refusal to recant. For if the first occurred they had to be afraid that when they got to "the other points," with the monk as standard bearer the entire diet, Duke George included, would stand against the pope. Then what?

But the authorities had spoken and Caesar yielded. He did make one more attempt to avoid extending an official imperial summons, when he asked the Elector Frederick to summon Luther. But when he would not agree, the official citation was completed on March 6th. It was signed by Caesar and the Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, the archchancellor of the empire. It made no mention of recanting, but justified summoning Luther with the phrasing decided on by Caesar and the authorities, "on account of the teachings and the books," that had been written by him for some time. They needed information from him. The amicable address, "honorable, dear, devout" with which the summons began was outrageous to the legate Aleander.

Carrying this summons and Caesar's accompanying letter, together with additional letters from the counts through whose territory Luther would have to travel, was the royal herald, Kaspar Sturm. He proceeded to Wittenberg where he arrived on March 26th, the Tuesday of Holy Week.

Luther had already received information about what was decided for him at Worms through Spalatin, before he had received the summons. He also replied immediately that unless he was convinced of some error, he would retract nothing. Indeed, if he were to be invited to Worms only for retracting, he would rather stay in Wittenberg. He could retract there just as well. But since he found nothing in the imperial summons about a request to retract, he immediately prepared for his journey. This was in order to arrive within the graciously allowed 21 days as stated in the

summons. He celebrated Easter in Wittenberg. On Easter Sunday he sent the finished pages of Mary's Song of praise along with an accompanying letter to Prince John Frederick. On Monday he sent the epilogue of his writing to Katharinus to his friend, Link. He began his journey on Tuesday. He was seated together with his colleague Amsdorf, a noble student from Pomerania, and a brother of his order, in a covered wagon supplied by the council of Wittenberg. He left the city amid hundreds of students, friends, and colleagues. Would he see them again? Who could say? Therefore at his farewell he admonished his students to hold tight to the teaching of the gospel. To Melanchthon he said, "If I don't return and my enemies murder me, I put you under oath, dear brother. Swear that you will not stop teaching and remaining in the truth of God's Word." His friends thought that they were seeing him for the last time.

However, anyone who saw Doctor Martinus Luther traveling toward Worms would not have gotten the impression that he was a heretic to be detested. He looked hardly to be the one whom the pope had condemned anew in his Maundy Thursday bull, a man who with his adherents was on his way to his funeral pyre. The imperial herald in a coat of armor with the royal eagle on his chest did not look like an executioner. In Leipzig the council received the doctor with the customary honorary drink of wine. People were streaming together out of the cities and villages through which he traveled in order to see that brave man. At the border of the territory of Erfurt, the rector of the university, riding at the front of a stately train, prepared a festive reception. Luther preached in the Augustinian church that Sunday. His sermon was based on the Gospel of John 20:19ff about the peace of God in Christ Jesus. The church was so overfilled that the galleries crackled due to too much weight, which terrified the people inside. There was even a throng of people outside the doors, listening to his preaching. He then proceeded to preach at Gotha and Eisenach as well. When he fell ill at Eisenach the mayor of the city sent him a "precious water flask" (Waesserlein), which revived him at least enough to continue on his journey.

Thus Luther was in good spirits as he moved ever closer to the end of his journey. But his friends as well as his enemies at Worms were afraid as they waited for him to arrive. His friends feared that the safe conduct would not remain in place for Luther since he was a condemned heretic. They warned him, reminding him of the end of Hus, offering their opinion that if he were to come he would be burned to ashes in Worms. But he replied, "Even if they were to kindle a fire all the way from Wittenberg to Worms that reached all the way to heaven, I still want to appear in the name of the Lord, step into the mouth of the Behemoth with its large teeth, and confess Christ and let him reign."

Shuddering, his enemies noted that Luther was actually coming to press his suit. At first they had still hoped that an imperial mandate which had already been posted on March 26th, demanding an overall handing over of all Lutheran books, would have perhaps motivated him to turn around on his journey. Actually the imperial herald had asked Luther, when this mandate was seen posted throughout the journey, whether he still wanted to press on. But the hopes of the enemies were dashed. By this time his books had been loaded on a wagon and burned not far from Luther. Thereupon Luther wrote to Spalatin from Frankfurt, where he was lodging at the Inn of the Crest, "I know that a royal command has gone out to frighten me. But Christ lives and we shall enter Worms despite the gates of hell. Hence, prepare an inn for us." When he received another warning from Spalatin, he replied from Oppenheim, "And if there were as many devils in Worms as tiles on the roof, I still wish to enter."

As Luther was writing this there was another final attempt to keep him away from Worms. This was an attempt agreed upon by both his friends and enemies. It targeted his courage and awareness. But it was also shattered, because Luther was bound by his duty.

Unexpectedly an unusual guest, old Glapio, appeared at the Ebernburg castle, where Franz von Sickingen was having Luther's writings read to him and from where Hutten had sent his angry and threatening letters to the legates. Glapio played the role of being a friend to both sides. He spoke about Luther as a man, whom even his bitterest enemies could

not dissuade, unless he had first been convinced by the truths of Holy Scripture. He responded to Hutten's question as to what crime Luther had committed with a shrug of his shoulders. He did not know. He then suggested to those nobles how suspicious Luther's appearing in Worms actually was and how much better it would be if the discussion with him would be held at the secure Ebernburg castle.

Actually it was Butzer, the former Dominican, whom Luther had once met at Heidelberg and who was at that time staying with Sickingen, who was sent to Oppenheim. There he extended Sickingen's invitation to Luther with the urgent message to consider the dangers threatening him at Worms and to accept the invitation. But Luther tore the net which Glapio had so cleverly spread as though it were a cobweb. He replied that the safe conduct under which he traveled would only last another three days. He had not been summoned to appear before Glapio, but before Caesar and the empire. He thanked his friends for their concern. "So," he said later, "I continued my journey in all simplicity, for if I had waited three days, my safe conduct would have come to an end and they would have locked the gates. I was unafraid. Nothing scared me. God must be able to make a man so stupefied. I don't know if I would have been so cheerful today."

So the enemies had to be ashamed because they had shouted, "He won't dare, he will not come." Luther came. On April 16th at 10:00 a.m. the watchman's trumpet resounded from the tower of the cathedral, indicating the arrival of a foreign procession. Thousands of people left their breakfast tables and hurried to the place where the procession could be seen, with the imperial herald leading the way. A crowd of many shades surged around the wagon in which the Wittenbergers were sitting. It was made up in part by riders like Justus Jonas, who had joined them at Erfurt, and others who had joined them along the way. The rest were those who had come out of Worms to meet him. Mothers lifted their children up high so that in the future they could say that they had seen that brave monk. Luther stepped down from the wagon before the inn which had been prepared for him, a house of the Johannites. He was not staying in the royal palace as Aleander had wanted, but near the residence of his elector and next to

those of the elector's counselors von Feilitzsch and von Thun. As he stepped down from the wagon Luther said, "God will be with me."

By now his friends were also of good cheer, and the circle of friends grew. People were coming to and going from Luther's residence until late in the evening. Numerous high lords came by to get acquainted. Immediately upon his arrival he had invited von Glapio to come for the discussion. Glapio responded that now it was too late.

And it was too late. Luther's taking a stand before Caesar and the empire could no longer be prevented. Already before breakfast the next morning the summons to appear at 4 p.m. arrived. It had been brought by the imperial hereditary marshal, Ulrich von Pappenheim, who lived in the same house with him. It also became known in the city that the monk was to be given a hearing at 4 p.m. As the hour drew near, a throng of people was so pressed together in the street that Pappenheim and Sturm, who were to escort Luther, preferred to lead him through the garden and then by side streets to the royal palace where the authorities were assembled. The multitude had hurried there when they learned that Luther was no longer at his inn. It took considerable effort to clear away the crowd in front of the entrance. Curiosity had driven many to their roofs.

Luther was led into the hall following a two-hour wait. It is said that just as he was about to enter, Field Marshal Georg Frundsberg tapped him on the shoulder. He is supposed to have said, "Little monk, little monk, you are now walking the path to take a stand, a stand the likes of which neither I nor many high officers have ever taken, even in our most pressing battles. If you are of right mind and sure of your cause, continue in God's name and trust that God will not forsake you."

Caesar sat on his throne under a purple canopy in the center of the large hall with his brother Ferdinand next to him. Six electors and about 200 high lords were arranged by rank, sitting on both sides. A brilliant court-state ("Hofstat") sparkled around the throne. The simple monk from Wittenberg stepped into this assembly and excitement spread throughout the large hall. When it had quieted down, the hereditary marshal spoke.

He reminded Luther that he was to speak only when he was asked a question. Next to the official from Trier, who had the same name as Luther's main enemy from Ingolstadt, Eck, lay a pile of books. The official then asked Luther a twofold question. First, did Luther recognize those books which contained many evil teachings as his own; and second, whether he wanted to retract them or defend them.

Before Luther could reply, his friend Schurf, who along with other lawyers had been assigned to him as legal consultants, called out, "Let the names of the titles of these books be given." And the titles were read off. Luther answered the first part of the questions by confessing that they were his books. But the second part of the question had surprised him. For one thing there had been nothing in the imperial summons about an immediate retraction, and we have heard that Luther would never have come in response to such a summons without more information. In addition the question was posed in such a way that Luther would have had to speak out about his writings in a wholesale fashion.

Luther knew immediately how to regard the huge importance of this moment. Thus he humbly asked for time to think about it so that he could respond to the question without prejudice to the Word of God and his own soul. This request was granted after a brief discussion among the authorities. However, it was granted with the official declaring Luther to be unworthy of such permission, since he should have known from the imperial summons the reason for his appearance. A glance at the summons itself would brand the official's assertion as a lie.

So Luther was dismissed. As he was leaving the building, a voice from amid the throng of thousands pressing against the building cried out, "Blessed is the body which has borne you!"

Caesar had truly imagined the dangerous doctor differently. He did not want to believe that this frail monk had written those books and stated that he would not make a heretic out of him. With that he told the truth. In any event, ten heads like the one that was on Karl's shoulders could not have produced such books.

"I shall not retract one line, if Christ will be gracious to me," Luther wrote that evening. Christ was gracious to him.

The time granted for consideration ran out the following evening. The lanterns were already burning when Luther was allowed to enter the hall where all of the seats were occupied for the second time. He had been kept waiting for two hours in the compact antechamber, where he had remained in good spirits all the while. After being reproached again for asking for time to consider, in which he was accused of acting unworthily as a Christian, let alone a learned professor of theology, the official repeated the question. He did so in a more direct manner than the way in which the second question had been posed to him at the first hearing, in both Latin and German. Luther was to answer whether he wanted to defend some of the books he admitted to be his own, or if he wanted to retract some of them. The day before Luther had answered quite timidly so that only those standing nearby could hear him. Now every muscle contraction had disappeared. With a modest, yet loud, voice that was audible throughout the hall, Luther responded with a longer, carefully prepared speech. He expressed his respect for the assembly with slightly bended knees.

He began by asking for forgiveness in case he, a simple monk, should offend through his inexperience against the custom of the court. He again admitted that he was the author of those writings. Then he divided them into three classes. Those in the first class, which simply dealt with faith and customs, he could not retract without condemning the truth which his enemies themselves confessed. Those in the second class he likewise could not retract, for they had been directed against the unutterable tyranny of the Roman papacy. It was destroying all of Christianity but especially the nation of Germany, both spiritually and physically, in a deplorable fashion. If he were to retract these he would be opening doors and windows for it to continue. Concerning the third class of books, which he had directed against individuals who defended the tyranny of Rome and against enemies of wholesome doctrine, he confessed that he had been too harsh. But he also was unable to retract these, because if he did he would help the tyranny and ungodliness which he had been fighting against. "Have I

spoken evil? Then prove that it is evil!" He went on to plead, for the sake of the grace of God, for them to defeat him with the writings of the Prophets and Evangelists, if he had erred. Concerning the unrest which might come about as a result of his teaching, as he had been reminded yesterday, he did not wonder. After all, this is the path which the Word of God takes as Christ had prophesied. However, he warned young Caesar that care must be taken lest a rule of calamity result from trying to achieve peace by condemning divine truth.

Caesar would later have reason to reflect on the penetrating truth of this warning. He was troubled while in his solitude at the monastery of St. Just, for in the battle against pure truth he had drawn the short straw. However at this time and later he would be unable to be confronted with such truth. Luther, in spite of the oppressing heat of the questioning, obeyed a request to repeat his entire speech in German. Then the Trier official, after getting advice from the assembled authorities, turned to him in the name of Caesar. He accused him of indiscretion and of avoiding the question. He explained that Luther's statements had already been condemned by the Kostnitz Council, so retracting would be superfluous. He should now give a simple answer, one without horns and without a cloak.

To this Luther responded as follows, "Since your royal majesty and your grace desire a simple answer, I shall give you one without horns or teeth: Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Holy Scripture or with clearly illuminated reason—for I believe neither pope nor council alone, since it is clear that they have often erred and contradicted each other—I am held by the power of the passages of Scripture I have quoted. My conscience is held captive by the Word of God. I can retract nothing, nor do I desire to do so, because it is not safe but dangerous to act against conscience."

As once the other Eck at Leipzig had pressed him about the councils, so this Eck at Worms did the same and Luther responded to him. The official also held him directly to this kind of questioning and asked him once more to express himself very clearly on the point whether he meant that councils can err. But Luther stood firm and replied that it is evident that

councils have erred a number of times. The Council at Kostnitz had erred against a number of clear passages of Scripture. When Eck interjected that he could not prove it, Luther replied that he would prove it in many ways.

Enough had been heard. Irritated, Caesar put an end to the matter. Yelling and unrest began in the hall. It had become night. "I cannot do anything else. Here I stand. God help me. Amen." were Luther's last words. Immediately he stepped out of the hall, led by two escorts. He did so as the Spaniards hissed and scoffed, amid the burgeoning turmoil of the Germans who believed he had been arrested. When Duke Erich von Braunschweig offered him a refreshing draught of Einbecker beer in a silver pitcher, Luther said, "As Duke Erich remembered me today, may our Lord Jesus Christ remember him in his last hour." It is reported that those words were remembered by Duke Erich in his last hour, as he was seeking comfort of the gospel from his noble son.

"I have gotten through it! I have gotten through it!" Luther cried out stretching his hands straight up as he cheerfully and in a good mood entered his inn where his friends awaited him at 8 o'clock. In front of everyone he told Spalatin that if he had a thousand heads, he would allow all of them to be chopped off before he would retract.

Caesar also considered the matter ended. The very next morning he explained to the diet that he was in agreement with the Council of Kostnitz. He declared his intention to send Luther immediately back to Wittenberg in accordance with his letter of safe escort. He would then attack him as a hardened heretic.

But the matter would not be resolved so quickly. The monk had pleased many very well. Immediately after the hearing his elector had drawn Staupitz into his room and with deep emotion had said, "Pater Doctor Martinus has spoken well before the distinguished Caesar and all of the imperial counts and authorities in both Latin and German. He is far too bold for me." The Landgrave Philip of Hessen sought him out in his inn and extended his hand to him in bidding him farewell with these words, "You are

right, distinguished doctor, so help you God." Many others who visited him during the following days expressed similar positions.

Immediately following these events, Worms heard and read about a secret alliance of 400 nobles who would stand between the Romanists and Luther with their swords and of 8000 soldiers who would be raised. The words, "Bundschuh, Bundschuh, Bundschuh!" (a shoe made up of a sole strapped to the foot; also a symbol and name of the Peasant Confederation during the Peasant Revolt of 1525) were on the poster of the one who reported this news. They were supposed to mean that farmers would be enlisted for the counts on Luther's behalf.

A note is said to have been found even in Caesar's chamber, which read, "Woe to the land whose ruler is a child!" The visitors to Luther's inn were more numerous than before. "Before Luther will be suppressed by the power of the pope a hundred thousand people will lay down their lives." Such words were issued forth from Worms in those days. Both short and long reports and discussions about how Luther was dealt with were spreading throughout the land and were being read with keen interest. When he left Erfurt on his journey back to Wittenberg someone called after him, "All of Germany will go to combat for you in regard to the holy strife!"

It is possible that the threats of 400 knights and 8000 soldiers and the "Bundschuh" were an exaggeration. Perhaps they had even been promoted by Luther's enemies to have him appear to disturb the peace of the empire. In any event it was apparent that using force in an immediate attack against him would lead to a bloody battle. That would not have bothered the Romanists. Aleander had openly declared, "If you Germans will cast off the Roman yoke, we shall make it our business for you to kill each other until you are destroyed in your own blood." Aleander was even now busily inducing Caesar to immediately dissolve any dealings with Luther. But the legate had no crown to lose, as did Caesar. When the authorities sought permission from Caesar to continue correspondence with Luther, he yielded. Such correspondence was slated for the following Wednesday.

The Archbishop of Trier was appointed to chair this session. On April 24th at 6:00 a.m. Luther was ordered to appear in the court of the German order of knights, the residence of the Archbishop. His friends Spalatin, Schurf, Amsdorf, and Justus Jonas stood at his side. With moving words the speaker for the commission, the Baden chancellor, Hieronymous Vehus, described to him the confusion that would come from his writings. He cited the pamphlet about Christian Freedom, and how he by standing firm in these writings would make it impossible to promote other writings in which he had written many good things.

The testimony concerning the councils was also brought up again. But here again Luther stood firm. He did not bow before the authority of the councils. He threw back the accusation of causing unrest with the same arguments he had used in the assembly of the diet. He wanted to be bested by Scripture. The official Eck later contested the rightness of this request. He had been called in by the archbishop to continue the debate after the rest of the commission had removed themselves. The theologian Cochlaeus, whom Eck had requested as a witness, injected himself. He had looked up Luther at his inn during the afternoon. When after considerable idle talk he challenged that Luther give up his claim for safe conduct, one of the present nobles almost laid hands on him.

The diet had still not abandoned its hope for success. As Vehus reported, Caesar even extended the time of Luther's stay in Worms for two more days. The discussion continued the next morning and again in the afternoon. Luther was to submit to Caesar, the empire, and to a future council. But all attempts, even when they were thought to have attained their goal, failed because of Luther's persistent insistence that Holy Scripture would have to decide for the council what true teaching is. Even in a last discussion which the archbishop at first conducted under only four eyes and then with Spalatin in their company, Luther was led to conclude with these words, "I ask your electoral grace to grant me your gracious leave from the royal majesty of Caesar to go home again. For I have now been here for ten days, and nothing has been accomplished in regard to me."

Thereupon the archbishop rode to Caesar, while Luther paid a sick call to the Knight, Hans von Minkwitz, to whom he had given the Lord's Supper on the day of his first hearing. "I shall leave again tomorrow," he told him as he said farewell.

It was before 6 p.m., scarcely three hours after separating from the Archbishop of Trier, when Dr. Eck and a secretary of Caesar appeared at his inn. They reported that Caesar was granting him 21 days of safe transport. He was to arrive home before those 21 days expired and was also to abstain from preaching and writing during his journey. Of course there had been no shortage of attempts to get Caesar to refuse the safe conduct. The Elector of Brandenburg had involved himself in that regard. For that reason, as Luther reported, he had gotten into such a heated argument with the Elector Ludwig of the Palatinate, who disagreed with him, that both of them had been reaching for their daggers.

But Duke George had decisively declared that the German counts would not permit the disgrace of a breach of safe conduct. In fact, at the conclusion of Caesar's first diet Caesar himself had rejected this demand. The safe conduct was secure. Luther relayed his thanks for this, as well as his gratitude for the gracious hearing he had received before Caesar and his empire and said, "As it pleased the Lord, so it has taken place. Blessed be the name of the Lord." He went on to explain that he would always submit to Caesar and was ready to endure anything for Caesar and his empire. He reserved for himself only this, that he would be allowed to preach and confess the Word of God freely and without restriction. Caesar's representatives shook hands, bidding farewell to the man who up to these last comments had stood firm and unshakable in defense of the majesty of God's Word.

But now what? It could be seen that after the safe conduct had expired Caesar, with the majority of the authorities on his side, would stop at nothing to stop Luther. And Luther himself was ready to endure anything. But how would the elector conduct himself in this matter? Would he allow the upright man, the honored light of his university, to fall? Or would he leave himself, his country, and his people to fate for the sake

of this man? His nephew, King Christian II of Denmark, was said to have bargained with Luther during those days, but they could not come to terms. Yet the elector was not without advice. His plan was already intact. That same evening he secretly informed Luther that he would be set aside. And he allowed himself to be satisfied with that.

Luther had entered Worms as a celebrity. He left it again in all quietness in the forenoon of April 26th. "Nothing else was accomplished here than this: Are these books yours? Yes. Do you want to retract them? No. Then be gone!" This is an account from Luther himself to his friend Lucas Cranach in a letter of April 28.

Soon the imperial herald, Sturm, who had escorted Luther from Oppenheim to Friedberg, returned to Worms. He carried a letter from Luther which was directed to Caesar in Latin and to the authorities in German. Once again, several days passed. On April 30th the authorities were faced with Caesar's question what they should do with Luther. When the authorities left the decision to Caesar to make his recommendations in the form of an edict, he assigned the task of drawing up such a document to Aleander. Then Worms heard the surprising news that Luther had been attacked on his homeward journey and had been taken away. Who could have done that? Since some guessed that Aleander was the instigator, he became afraid of Luther's followers, especially those from among the people. Aleander, on his part, guessed correctly that it was the elector, and wrote to Rome that the fox had hidden his monk. Still others believed that Earl Wilhelm von Henneberg, an enemy of the new doctrine, had taken him captive. As fast as the wind the news about that gallant man's disappearance flew throughout Germany. "Is Luther still alive or have they murdered him?" wrote the artist Albrecht Duerer in his daily diary in Nuernberg. "This I do not know. He has suffered so much for the sake of the Christian truth, and because he has punished the unchristian papacy. O God, is Luther dead? Who will be the one to present the gospel so clearly? Oh God, what might he have written in the next ten or twenty years? Oh you upright Christians, help me to mourn this God inspired man and beg God to send us another enlightened man."

Caesar could only welcome this turn of events. He could now justify himself formally to the pope and his followers and post an imperial alert about Luther without fear that someone would respond by laying hands on him so that a bloody battle would ensue. So he allowed the question as to who had organized this kidnapping of the monk to resolve itself. He also took his time for issuing an edict. After a large number of the authorities, including the Elector Frederick and the Elector of Palatinate, had left Worms, the papal legate relayed news of a letter from the pope to the four elector counts and several other lords who had escorted Caesar to his living quarters after the diet sessions. This news was passed on to them on May 25th.

Then Caesar laid out before them the edict which Aleander had drawn up. The elector of Brandenburg immediately explained that the edict was exactly what the authorities had in mind. As far as the diet was concerned, another formal resolution, which had already been resolved concerning which Luther had been summoned, was regarded as superfluous. Thereby the edict was accepted.

The next morning Caesar signed it and hung upon Luther the title of heretic, condemned by the pope, who preached rebellion and misled the people into bestiality. Indeed, as a devil in human form under the ban and double ban of the empire, no one should any longer supply him with food, drink, or shelter. What's more, anyone who captured him should deliver him as a prisoner to Caesar.

As written, this was the decision with the unanimous counsel of the electors and authorities. The certification of this bungled piece of work was dated retroactively to May 8th, when all of the authorities were still present.

Chapter 22

Patmos

When Luther received the news about this edict he was quite safe. He was enjoying excellent protection at the Wartburg, the old castle residence of the late duke of Thuringia, situated in a wooded area on top of a small mountain. But how did he get there? Let us return all the way to the day on which Luther had released the royal herald with letters for Caesar and his empire.

He had traveled from Friedberg to Hersfeld. "The abbot," he wrote, "sent his chancellor and chamberlain out to meet me while still a mile away. He personally welcomed me to his castle and with many riders escorted me into the city. The magistrate awaited me at the gate. I was served wondrously and was well housed in the monastery. Over my objections I was obligated to preach a sermon the next morning at 5 o'clock. The next day the abbot escorted us up to the forest and had his chancellor serve a farewell meal to all of us in Berka."

He also received a big reception in Eisenach, where he was again compelled to preach a sermon. But when the rest of his co-travelers continued on their way to Gotha, Luther, accompanied only by Amsdorf and Brother Petzensteiner, paid a little visit to the village of his birth, Moehra. There a large number of his relatives from the area gathered together. He spent the night with his uncle Heinz, who along with many other friends and relatives heard a sermon which Luther preached under the big Linden tree the next morning. The relatives accompanied him to the Altenstein Castle, which belonged to the knight, Burkhard Hund.

Soon it was time again to say farewell. As the evening shadows were extending over the area, the wagon rolled slowly over the bumpy road. It came to a lonely site in a narrow hollow, three fourths of an hour from Altenstein. Suddenly they heard the sound of hoof beats and the clanging of weapons as a troop of armored riders galloped toward the

wagon. They harshly commanded the driver to stop, with an aimed crossbow as added persuasion. The monastic brother was allowed to go, for he had immediately proceeded to flee without bidding farewell. Luther was torn out of the wagon, but they left the openly enraged and complaining Amsdorf and the shocked driver alone by themselves. The riders raced away into the forest, so quickly that their captive had to abandon his gray hat. They appeared to be heading in the direction of Brotterode. They then seated Luther on a spare horse and threw a rider's cloak over him. They rode late into the evening, until about midnight the walls of the Wartburg castle opened to receive the exhausted rider and his captors.

Luther was gone. He who had been cursed by the pope and outlawed by Caesar was being vainly sought by his enemies, who even resorted to fortune-telling as they tried to pick up his tracks. The only information the wagon driver could supply was that the riders had set out in the direction of Brotterode, to the east. But the Wartburg was located north of the place where the attack had occurred. The other witness to the kidnapping, Amsdorf, could not give more information and Brother Petzensteiner even less. Those who could have had something to say, like the castle captain, Knight Hans von Berlepsch, and Burkhard Hund, who carried out the kidnapping, remained silent as the grave.

But soon a bearded knight, iron-clad and armed, could be seen walking to and fro within the confines of the Wartburg. He prowled around the woods, looking for strawberries. He was even seen taking part in a hunt. He once stopped at the inn of a neighboring village, accompanied by a fellow knight, and later visited the monks in the monastery. There it is reported that this man, who could stroke his beard like any other knight, chose to take part in a conversation on spiritual topics including, well, that Luther person. He became quite animated about the subject, until his companion stated that it was time to leave. It became apparent that this was a man who, upon noticing a book in a house, could not resist taking a look at it. If anyone were to ask who this strange knight was, the answer was, "Squire George." One could tell that he was a noble by the golden

chain he wore around his neck. One could also tell that this was no usual house knight because of the first rate attention which the valiant captain of the castle allowed him to receive.

Of course, if an outsider could have observed Squire George in his room, his curiosity would be piqued. He would sit for hours, reading a book. If a person would have peeked over his shoulders, he would have seen at one time Greek letters, and another time Hebrew letters. He even spoke many times in those two languages. If one could have eavesdropped on conversations he had with his host, he would have heard much discussion about spiritual matters. It wasn't long before he sat all day long at his table, writing, writing, and writing. Sometimes he wrote letters to the court preacher, Spalatin. Carried by royal messengers they were either addressed to Spalatin or to be forwarded by him. They were addressed "from the area of the heights," or "from the realm of the birds," or, "from my place." They gave an indication of the site where the writer was staying, as from his "Patmos" or from his "wilderness."

"I have been," it was stated in one of those letters, "taking part in a hunt for two days so that I might get a taste of the bittersweet air of the high nobility. We caught two rabbits and a few poor partridges. In truth, it is a worthy occupation for the idle. I have even had theological ideas amidst these nets and hounds. Even though viewing such things has entertained me, the intended purpose of these activities filled me with sadness and compassion. For what other meaning can be derived from these images than that the devil through his godless huntsmen and hounds, the bishops and theologians, secretly hunts and traps the innocent small animals. The image of simple and believing souls appeared very lifelike before me. Then something horrible was added. I had kept a poor little bunny alive and was hiding it in the sleeve of my coat and trying to move a small distance away. Nevertheless the hounds sniffed it out, slashed its hamstrings by cutting through the cloth of my sleeve with their teeth, and finally killed it. The pope and Satan frustrate my efforts in the same way, as in their rage they destroy souls that have been saved."

He also sent out letters to Wittenberg, to Melanchthon and others. In them he asked how things stood in the church and with his personal friends. He also requested that they send him certain writings, which he had had to leave behind unfinished.

One of these writings, as we recall, was the "Magnificat," or the "Interpretation of Mary's Song of Praise." He once again turned his attention to this interpretation and completed it. Here he wrote in a very tender fashion about God's compassion. He also wrote about faith and different kinds of fruits of faith, especially about the fruit of humility. It is noteworthy that in the addendum Luther could still write to Duke Johann Frederick, "May the same Mother of God obtain for me the spirit through which I might profitably and thoroughly interpret this, her song". Then in his conclusion of the interpretation he wrote, "We shall leave it at this and ask God for a true understanding of the Magnificat. This song not only enlightens and speaks, but burns and lives in one's body and soul. God grant us such through the intercession and will of his dear Mother Mary. Amen."

From this writing it becomes sufficiently evident that at this time Luther was still far from removing the idea of Mary as being next to or even above Christ, or calling upon her as a help in time of need, according to the papal customs. But those reflections on the intercession of Mary were attached to him like glue as reminders of earlier days. He would later do away with them completely. Luther would in later years have good reason to point out how difficult it was for those who had grown up under the papacy to rid themselves of papal behavior.

Prior to sending Spalatin the completed "Magnificat" he had sent a continued edition of his interpretation of Psalms, Psalm 22 in particular. While at the Wartburg he worked on other psalms as well. These included the 68th, the 37th, which he interpreted for his congregation, "that poor little flock at Wittenberg," and the 119th, which he translated with some brief commentary. He added that last mentioned psalm to the writing he had published under the title, "About Confession, Whether the Pope Has the Power to Command it." He dedicated it to the knight, Franz von

Sickingen. In it he praised private confession as a precious thing from which one can derive great comfort. But he warned against viewing it and practicing it as a



Woodcut of Luther as Squire George according to a portrait by Cranach

work commanded by the pope, without whose authority, as it was claimed, a person could not obtain the forgiveness of sins. Concerning his enforced stay in hiding he wrote, "I can no longer function. I have been shoved away from my purpose. Now they have the time to change what a person cannot and should not, nor should want to tolerate. If they are not changing, then someone else will change them, for which they will not be grateful, for he does not teach like Luther, with letters and words, but in deeds." Thanks and praise be to God, that his fear of an aversion to the Hemp-god of Rome had been lessened.

Luther had begun another work at Wittenberg which was still incomplete. This was the Postil, the book of family sermons, which he now requested to be sent to him at the Wartburg so that he might continue his work from where he had left off. The first section, the Advent Postil, had already been printed at the time when he was traveling to Worms. But now he wanted to change that partly completed plan and issue the Postil in German. He first completed the interpretations of the Epistles and Gospels of Advent in German and sent them to the printer. When the printing was once again delayed, he continued his work with great energy and by the end of September had finished the second part of the Festival of the Epiphany. In a unique manner he would issue the Postil so as to allow the Gospel sermon to immediately follow that of the Epistle. Later editors would be the ones who would separate them into a Gospel Postil and an Epistle Postil.

This work, which Luther began in this manner, was one of the most important and richly blessed works which he would ever bring to light. For at that time very few preachers had the ability, even if they had the desire, to preach a proper Gospel sermon. With this Postil they were now being offered a treasure trove from which they with little effort could mine the rich resources of wholesome doctrine gathered in simple and plain language. And in case they could not even do this, as happened far too often, they could simply read to the congregation that which they were unable to preach freely.

From this usage Luther's Postil was rightly called the "Church Postil." Thousands harvested the best lessons from this book, lessons which they then presented from the pulpit. Thousands of the listeners would draw instruction and edification from it in their homes, as one might draw water from a well. Thus the blessings which were bestowed were immeasurable.

For the completed Postil, "a short instruction of what was to be sought and expected in each Gospel lesson" was printed ahead of the Gospel. Luther had planned this already by this time. As early as the second edition he included this introduction, along with his dedication to the Count of Mansfeld. If he had not done so, it would have been delayed even longer. In addition to the two sections of the Postil Luther had issued only one sermon for those, designated for the Postil, to allow them to go out with a singular message. With it, as he described it, Luther was dipping a sample out of the midst of the barrel for his dear Germans.

One of them was a sermon on the Gospel for the 14th Sunday after Trinity "about the ten lepers." In it he wanted to lead people away from the false commentary of the papists, who wanted to prove the necessity of oral confession from the words, "Go and show yourself to the priests." Because of the various other labors he had undertaken at the Wartburg and later on at Wittenberg, Luther was hindered from continuing this work without interruption. So the Postil, which Luther described in a writing of 1527 as "the best book" that he ever produced, would be completed much later.

Part of the time at Wartburg which Luther could not use for working on the Postil, he used to refute a scholarly writing issued against him by the Lyon theologian, Latomus. Although he had no reference materials at his disposal at Patmos, using only his Bible he turned this work into one of the most thorough treatments of the doctrines of sin and grace, Law and Gospel, which we have received from his pen. A comparison of quotations from church fathers issued by his opponent he could not achieve due to his lack of books. And so he submitted them to his friends in Wittenberg. He also urged them to do something for the gospel and put an end to the serpent whose head Christ had crushed.

The pope would again receive his share. While he was at the Wartburg Luther learned that the pope had included Luther among the heretics. He did this the previous Maundy Thursday, condemning Luther by name in his famous "Lord's Supper" Bull. Luther, in a writing seasoned sharply with salt and pepper, expressed that he wanted to present a New Year's gift to the "most charming, tender, and highly learned throne." "Who knows," he scoffed, "perhaps you will yet give even me a cardinal's cap, a bishopric, or a good parish. It is time for me to acknowledge that I am indebted to you and will serve you by helping to spread this bull and make it available to everyone. Therefore I shall not only translate it into German, but I will include some notes along with it. But I will not hide the great effort I will put into translating it and adding the notes to the margins. That way, if you decide to reward me, you will look at my efforts properly and not merely reward me with a cardinal title without a tax. For I tell you, although that bull was produced in a Latin nation, yet it is so un-Latin that it might have been drawn up by a kitchen boy. But while I might not do enough you might consider it to be sufficient. I shall improve on it another time. New Year's Day has so quickly passed, and I wanted to bring this gift with me. Take care, my favor and grace, you charming, friendly and holy seat."

Luther was now also punishing the theologians of the University of Paris from the Wartburg. They had declared a long list of statements from Luther's writings to be pestilential heresies. Melancthon had already defended Luther. Now Luther was personally dishing out punishment from the Wartburg by simply translating his statements and their verdict and with a short prologue and epilogue handing them over for printing.

However, he announced the most important work he was undertaking at the Wartburg in a letter of December 18, 1521 to his friend Lange, declaring it with the words, "I want to translate the New Testament into German." If this activity was the prime reason for the postil project to come to a standstill, we have nothing to complain about in exchanging the former for the latter. For, though the Church Postil produced many blessings, the profit which the Reformation and the Church of the

Reformation have gleaned from the Bible translation by Luther was far greater. Bear in mind that there had been German translations of Holy Scripture prior to Luther's. But all of them suffered in two areas. First, they were produced from the terribly inaccurate Latin version, the Vulgate, and in addition to the mistakes in the Vulgate more mistakes were added in translating it into German. Second, the language of the older German Bibles was so un-German that they simply could not serve for the good of the people.

Luther's friend Lange had begun a translation of the New Testament from the original Greek that same summer and issued a translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew. In the aforementioned letter Luther urged him to continue his work. But though Lange's knowledge of Greek was up to an accurate understanding of the text, his German could not compete with Luther's. There was no other German theologian as skilled in the German language as Luther to provide the German people with an accurate German Bible. Even though he had at first complained about his inactivity, without the forced leisure of the Wartburg Luther would never have gotten to this work so quickly. Thus again we have reason to admire the wise guidance and dispensation of God in regard to the exiled Luther.

Luther very zealously applied himself to the completion of this difficult task. As he went on he became even more aware of its difficulty, even considering the idea of returning to Wittenberg in secret to carry on his work in some small cell with his friends' support. But nothing came of it, so he kept on working alone. He did so diligently that he completed the entire New Testament during his stay at the Wartburg.

The type of language Luther used for his German Bible was, as he had used in his earlier German writings, not the German that existed at that time in the established idiom of the day. This means it was not simply Meissen German, but rather the verbiage of the Saxon governing offices, which was used to write to the princely courts of Germany. It was in the middle of High German (referring to southern Germany which included the Alps) and Low German (referring to the lowlands of the north). But the words Luther used were not those most commonly found in books; they

were the words that could be heard from mothers in their homes, children in the streets, and by the commoner in the market place. Yet he also put his stamp on the language with his mighty yet tender, and heavy yet moving, wondrously rich spirit. Thus Luther became the patriarch from whom the highest masters of the German language would learn.

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While Luther was restlessly occupied working with these various tasks from his elevated seclusion, the active business below the Wartburg, from which he had been torn, did not stop either. The Edict of Worms was being published in various areas, and many may have thought that the Wittenberg monk had been removed as a result. The belief was that he would not dare to come out of hiding and again play his part for projecting the wheels of history in the forward direction.

Among the many who were breathing much easier as the news of Luther's removal sped through the nation, was the Archbishop of Mainz. On the one hand he now had the hope that peace would rule in his territory. We discovered that in order to maintain peace he commanded those, who would preach against Luther, to be silent. On the other hand, he now also understood that he had rid himself of the anchor which had been hindering him from pursuing his interests. For his pockets had been hurt the worst when Luther spoiled the business of the sellers of indulgence. Just as previously, so now the bishop needed money, a lot of money. He needed so much that his regular main sources of income fell far short.

But now the well, which had been sealed by Luther, was again to be opened. He had assembled a rich treasure of relics in Halle. They included such rarities as the alleged pieces of Moses' burning bush, thorns from the

Savior's crown of thorns, dregs from the wine at the wedding of Cana plus the pitchers in which the water had been changed into wine, even entire corpses of the saints. These treasures were now put on display in Halle, and the archbishop issued a summons inviting the people to come. In doing so they would acquire a rich indulgence with a devout viewing of those sacred artifacts and a donation of alms to the church foundation.

The news of this new grace collection also moved on to one whom the archbishop had not intended it to reach, the man in the Wartburg. He had already bitterly regretted the fact that he had tiptoed so gingerly at Worms. While there he had remarked that if the situation would not change he would have to throw the windows wide open. Now he wished that he had opened them. Luther believed that if he once again appeared before them, the idols would get to hear something different. Thus, when he heard about the new idolatry in Halle, he quickly came to a decision of what he would do. He announced to Spalatin in October that he would publicly attack the indulgence idol of the cardinal.

The realization that the outlaw was loading his gun against such a high clerical lord and empirical count was just registering outside of the Wartburg. From various directions hasty efforts were made to hinder the expected well-aimed volley from the lofty Wartburg. An ugly letter arrived from Spalatin with the news that the elector would not tolerate the publication of any writing which would disturb the public peace. Luther angrily replied that he would not tolerate such a veto. He would rather lose Spalatin, the count, and the entire world. He had taken on the pope, why would he give way to his creature? In fact, he had already sent the finished work to Spalatin so that he could bring it to Melanchthon for possible changes prior to publication.

But news of what was to come had already reached the court of the elector in Mainz. One day that threatened prelate's trusted counselor, Capito, appeared before Melanchthon with his friend Stromer. In answer to his question as to what may have brought such lords before him, they replied that they wanted to visit their friends and to see the famous Wittenberg. But soon they began, although with hesitation and

reservation, to get to the point. But Melanchthon provided them with small comfort as he explained to them that they had come to the wrong craftsman. He had no role to play in this business. In this case they would have to deal with Luther's own conscience. For when they came straight to the point as to what they wanted, Melanchthon would not allow himself to become a mediator.

But Luther had also found out that Albrecht allowed no peace to the priests who desired to get married. Even though he was aware that the publication of his work had been delayed, he nevertheless located the archbishop and wrote him a letter on December 1st. He wrote this letter in downright plain German.

"Now your electoral grace," he wrote, "has again set up his idol in Halle. This idol will cause the poor, simple Christians to lose money and soul. Perhaps your electoral grace thinks that I am no longer a part of the game, that I want safety for myself, and shall subdue the monk (in myself) by way of the imperial majesty. That I shall allow. But your electoral grace should know that I desire to do what Christian love demands in spite of the threatening gates of hell. I will neither endure it nor remain silent if the Bishop of Mainz pretends that he neither knew nor understood that it was proper for him to teach, when a poor man requested to be well informed, yet he (the archbishop) proceeds without shame for ever and ever as if there were profit in it for him. I do not want to be insulting. A person has to sing and listen differently. Therefore it is my humble petition to your eminent grace that your eminent grace must not allow the poor people to be misled or robbed, to show yourself to be a bishop, not a wolf. God still lives; let no one doubt this. God also is skilled to oppose a Cardinal of Mainz, even though many caesars were to support him. Your eminent grace surely should not think that Luther is dead."

"Therefore be it finally announced to your eminent grace in writing that if that idol is not removed, I must tell the entire world the difference between a bishop and a wolf. May your eminent grace conduct himself in accord with such information. Secondly, I ask that your eminent grace

would stand back and peacefully allow the priests who, to avoid unchastity, desire to get married."

Then, in case this would not be accepted, he threatened to expose the shame of the bishops. "I shall not remain silent," he added, "and if I should fail, I hope that you bishops will not sing out a little song of joy. In regard to this I shall await your eminent grace's proper and quick reply within 14 days. For after the 14 days my pamphlet against the idol in Halle will go out, if I have not received an agreeable response."

An answer arrived from the archbishop in support of the truth within the requested 14 days. "Dear Doctor," it began. "I have received and read your letter, dated the day of St. Katherine. I have accepted it in a positive way and have changed my plan completely. The reason for which you wrote such a letter has been removed for some time. I shall, if God wills, conduct myself in such a manner as it applies to an upright, spiritual, and Christian count. This is as God grants me his grace, strength, and reason. For these things I faithfully pray and ask others to pray for me."

That is the way in which an archbishop, cardinal, and elector responded to the monk banned by the pope and outlawed by Caesar. It was also soon reported in Wittenberg that the archbishop had released a priest who had been imprisoned because of his marriage and allowed him to return to his parish and his spouse. In addition it was now proclaimed, as was being said, that Albrecht was uniting with the Gospel, and, as a result, was continuing all the more boldly on the path which lay before him.

What kind of pathway was this?

Chapter 23

The Disruption at Wittenberg

During the first days after Luther departed from Wittenberg, life went on following the path Luther had set for it. The university continued to function in a lively fashion. A letter from that time contained the comment, "There are over 1500 students here; each one of them, whether going or standing, is carrying a Bible with him. All are unarmed and there is great harmony among these brothers in Christ. Here there are Saxons, Prussians, Poles, Bohemians, Bavarians, Swiss, French, Thuringians, people from Meissen, and from other areas. The whole city is unmistakably occupied and taken over by students."

The twenty five year old Melanchthon stood at the top of the faculty. The burden of responsibility rested heavily on his shoulders. He had longingly hoped for Luther's return since, upon hearing the news of his hiding, he had written, "Our precious father is alive!" He strove to set a good example in his call as a professor. The mediators of the Bishop of Mainz attended his lectures in which he was teaching First Corinthians. He was also working on his exhaustive lectures about living the Christian faith, the Locj. As these pages appeared in print Luther received them with great joy. Luther was constantly concerned about this gifted co-worker because of his weak body. And so even now he encouraged him, in whom he had placed almost too much hope, to take good care of himself. Melanchthon received a new assistant in the person of Justus Jonas, who had moved from Erfurt to Wittenberg shortly after the Diet of Worms. The Pomeranian theologian, Johann Bugenhagen, also began to teach at the university. Matthaeus Aurogallus stepped in as a professor of Hebrew. Amsdorf was put into Luther's pulpit. However, Luther's wish that Melanchthon would also be called to preach remained unfulfilled. Johann Agricola of Eisleben, who was also active in teaching at the university, was assigned to be the Catechist for the instruction of children.

The one person on this list of co-workers whom a person could have expected to have an especially close connection with Luther in this outward work was Carlstadt. After all, he had been Luther's fellow soldier at the Pleissenburg. Their common enemy, Eck, had placed him along with Luther in the first bull. But instead of a closer unity, ever growing estrangement developed between the two. The fault for this was Carlstadt's. From the beginning Carlstadt had been jealous of Luther's fame. Having been placed in Luther's shadow at Leipzig resulted in Carlstadt's cooling relationship. Luther's journey to Worms, and everything connected with it, added nothing to the healing process. The fact that shortly after Worms the elector temporarily lent him to the King of Denmark, after refusing to allow Luther to go there, simply testified to the fact that Carlstadt was dispensable.

But now that Luther had been removed from Wittenberg Carlstadt could hope to advance to the forefront, the place he formerly had to yield to Luther. Already that summer he returned to Wittenberg after a very short stay in Denmark.

From this time on some amazing news reached the prisoner at the Wartburg. Carlstadt was stepping forth as a reformer. Immediately upon returning from Denmark on June 19th, he posted theses for a debate to be held on the 21st. It was to be about the unmarried state of monks and the sacrifices connected with monastic vows. He followed up on the 24th by issuing a German document in regard to monastic vows, and then five days later an extensive explanation of his theses. The second of these theses stated, "No one who is unmarried should be called to a spiritual position." He substantiated this statement out of St. Paul's words of 1.Timothy 3:2, "Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife." Here, he said, the marriage of priests was commanded, just as it had been commanded to the Levites under the old covenant. Thus we see two things about Carlstadt which would later become even more clearly recognizable. He showed an unhealthy tendency toward excess and an unhealthy transfer of Old Testament practices and laws to New Testament Christianity.

In a second edition he threatened to publicly attack some of the bishops if they would continue to persecute married priests. In the German edition he saw no problem in applying of Old Testament laws concerning vows to contemporary New Testament living. In addition, he posed a question as to how images should be considered and declared that all pictures were objectionable for divine services. In this work he went on to declare that confession of sins was useless, leaning toward the position that all visible and outward divine services are useless. In an attack on pilgrimages to a holy grave he asserted, "The flesh of Christ counts for nothing," as Christ says; whereas the Lord in John 6:63 clearly did not mean his own flesh when he said, "The flesh counts for nothing."

Luther could not agree with the excessive expansion of doctrine. He could neither acknowledge the false statements nor some of the statements, which were correct when they stood by themselves but were supported by false premises. In fact, he had issued some of those statements (which Carlstadt now was misapplying) himself some time ago. He now, also sent his own corresponding explanations to Wittenberg.

But in this case debate and writing were not allowed to take their proper course. Indeed, it was in the same Augustinian monastery where the fire kindled by Carlstadt first flared into flames as the monks began to make use of their rights. Thirteen of them had resigned and some wanted to take up a profession and get married. On the other hand those who remained in the monastery were persecuted, mocked and threatened by citizens and students. Marriage of priests was already taking place outside of Wittenberg. Parson Bernhardi from Feldkirchen had done so. We had made his acquaintance earlier, as the one who had become the Provost at Kemberg.

Luther had much earlier stated that priests should be allowed to marry, and those for whom the single life posed questions of conscience should take up an orderly married life. We read a few pages back how he had expressed himself to the Archbishop of Mainz from the Wartburg. However, when he heard about what was happening in Wittenberg he could not help being concerned that those monks who renounced their

vows may have done so at the expense of peace of conscience. Rather, they took this step as they had been brain-washed by Carlstadt's teaching about their rights. Therefore Luther sought to help them and others by writing, "About Monastic Vows." He dedicated this work to his father, whom he had once hurt so deeply by taking his own vows. He explained that his vow, because of the damage it had done regarding his filial obedience, was not worth the value of a wild plum.

At the same time this booklet provided additional instruction for his monastic brothers on another issue. For a one-eyed monastic preacher named Gabriel Zwilling (translated "Didymus" into Greek, "Twin" in English) had begun to preach against the adoration of the host and the mass for the dead. He also demanded that in the celebration of Holy Communion the cup be offered to all communicants. The consequence of his preaching was that most of the monks refused to conduct a mass after the papal fashion.

Since his prior, Held, did not want to allow such a practice, as Zwilling requested, to start, mass was discontinued in its entirety in the monastery church.

When Didymus' sermon first became known, the university had intervened and set up a commission which was to deal with the monks. Carlstadt, Jonas, and Melanchthon were a part of this commission. When this commission could not reach agreement, a new commission was sent to the monks a few days later. This commission had issued a "Gutachten" to the elector on October 20, 1521, affirming the main issue that the monks were correct. They asked the elector to reinstitute the distribution of the Sacrament of both kinds to all communicants and to discontinue the sacrifice of the mass, especially the mass for the dead. Melanchthon, too, stepped forward in October with 65 theses against the sacrifice of the mass. But the elector refrained from carrying out the Gutachten's requests. He, in turn, asked the writers to wait until others had the chance to come to the same understanding. He also asked them to consider the fact that if masses were to be discontinued, the church would lose the biggest portion of its income.

Now Luther also spoke out. He issued a pamphlet, first in Latin, then also in German, dedicated to the Augustinians in Wittenberg about "This Misuse of the Masses." He sent it to Spalatin to be forwarded to Wittenberg. Where Luther stood in regard to the entire matter and what he wanted to accomplish with this work can be gleaned from the opening words of the address where he said, "I have been informed, both by word of mouth and in writing, dear brothers, that you are the very first to begin to do away with the abuse of the mass in your assemblies. This gave me great joy as an action which I believe the Word of God is working in you and which you have not received in vain. Yet along with this joy I have a great concern, a concern out of Christian love which never fails. I am concerned that not all of you are of the same stability and good conscience as you are taking such a huge first step."

As with his work on "Monastic Vows" Luther wished to make sure that the brothers would undertake their actions, which he considered proper, with a good conscience and absolute conviction that what they were doing was correct. Toward the end of his work he also hoped that they would carry out their work with consideration for the weak ones whom they might have in their midst.

This was exactly the admonition that the monastic brothers needed. Prior Held wrote to the elector on November 12 that the people were being stirred up to hatred through the sermons preached in the monastery church, even to the point of violence against the brothers. Thirteen monks had left the monastery and were inciting the people and the students against the prior and those monks who remained, so that they faced great danger. The movement also spread from the monastery church to the city church. There the priests who were saying the masses were driven away from their altars after the mass books had been ripped out of their hands. It had been reported that the students who had participated in this riot had been carrying unsheathed knives under their cloaks.

On December 4th threats were posted on the church doors. The monks who desired to read masses were mocked and persecuted in other ways. The senate even set night watchmen for the monks since an attack

by the students was feared. It was thought that the instigators of such unrest were outsiders, especially students from Erfurt. The elector was also requested to punish the guilty. But the very university committee which was to examine the issue could not come to an agreement on the main questions, namely, what was to be done with the masses. At last each party submitted a "Gutachten." The one, signed by the university rector plus Carlstadt, Melanchthon, Amsdorf and others, the elector had rejected as mentioned earlier. The other one, the opposite view, sought protection for the mass.

During those stormy December days a strange rider dismounted at the home of Nicolaus Amsdorf. He must also have needed to speak with Magister Phillippus, for Melanchthon spent many an hour in private and confidential conversation with that bearded man clad in gray riding clothing. He did not allow himself to be seen in the city but remained in hiding for three days in Amsdorf's home. Then, at the end of those three days, as a rumor was being spread throughout Wittenberg that Doctor Martinus was in the city, he quietly hurried off the same way he had come.

The rumor had been true. The gray rider was indeed Luther. He had been able to stand it no longer and so, together with a companion, had taken steps to gain personal insight into the situation at Wittenberg. He had spent cheerful hours there in his circle of friends. "Everything that I see and hear pleases me very much," he wrote to Amsdorf. "May God strengthen the spirit of those who want things to go well for us." Yet he mentioned two concerns which inhibited his joy.

Instead of sending them on to Wittenberg, Spalatin had held on to Luther's works about the vows of the monks and the abuses of the mass. Luther now demanded their immediate publication, or else he would write much more strongly.

The second concern was that he had heard that people in Wittenberg were going too far. Immediately upon his return to the Wartburg he took up the task of writing a warning against such disorderly activity. That work appeared soon after under the title, "A True Admonition

to All Christians to Watch Themselves against Insurrection and Rebellion." In it he wrote, "Those who read and understand my teaching correctly do not cause insurrection. They have not learned that from me. But what can we do about those who engage in insurrection and, using my name, boast about themselves? Isn't that exactly what the papists are doing in the name of Christ? They not only do what Christ has forbidden but also that which destroys Christ. But as I have said, the devil seeks such a cause, to slander this doctrine as much as he can. But if you say: 'What shall we do?' ... Let your mouth be a mouth of the spirit of Christ, of whom Paul reminds us above, our Lord Jesus Christ will kill him with the breath of his mouth. That is what we are doing as we confidently continue what has been begun. We stay active with sermons and publications about the pope's and the papists' bullying and treachery among the people. We will do so until he is exposed in his nakedness, is recognized for who he is, and will be ruined in disgrace throughout the world.

"Take a look at my actions. Did I not destroy more of the power of the pope, the bishops, the priests, and the monks, using only my mouth? Without the whirl of a sword, I have done more to this day to destroy his power than all caesars, kings, and counts. How can this be? This is as Daniel 8 says, that this "king" shall be destroyed without a hand, and, as St. Paul says, he shall be overthrown with the mouth of Christ. Therefore you must not desire a physical insurrection. Christ himself has begun one with his mouth which will be too much for the pope to bear. Let us follow his example and carry on in the same way. It is not our work which has been set in motion in this world. It is impossible for anyone to begin and carry out such a work by himself. It has come this far without my planning and counseling, it shall also continue to proceed without my counsel, and the gates of hell will not prevent it. It is another pilot who is at the helm. The devil has been afraid of these years for a long time and has smelled the roasting from afar. He often would very much have liked to kill me. Now he would like an insurrection, so that the spiritual insurrection would come to dishonor and be prevented. But it will not and shall not help him, as God wills. He must be destroyed without a hand, only by mouth; nothing will prevent it. Look around, be active and help to put the holy gospel to work;

teach, talk, write, and preach that human laws are nothing. So let us carry on for another two years, and you will see what will be left of pope, bishops, cardinals and all the swarming and worming of papal government. It will vanish like smoke."

He also demanded such teaching to continue for the sake of the weak. "For," he said, "there are some who have never heard such things before and would like to learn, or they may be too weak to be able to grasp it. A person should not trample or rumble over them, but instruct them in a friendly and gentle manner, pointing out reason and cause. When they cannot grasp it right away, have patience with them. You cannot be too strong against the wolves; you cannot be too gentle toward weak sheep."

Even before this work of Luther was published the elector had expressed himself with similar thoughts. He had informed the people of Wittenberg that the matter "should be debated, should be written, read, and preached about." Therefore he had decreed that for the present time all people should abstain from any new form of church service.

Now it was Carlstadt who kept the ball rolling. Until this time the foundation lords were the ones who kept holding on to the Roman mass. The foundation lords also were the majority of those who had asked the elector to protect the historically traditional practices. But Carlstadt was one of the foundation lords. For quite some time he had abstained from conducting masses, and his partners had substituted for him whenever it was his turn. Since he was so strongly attacking the mass from the pulpit in addition to the aforementioned writings, they explained that they would no longer take his place. So he announced in his Sunday sermon on December 22 that he would personally conduct a mass on New Year's Day, but it would be an evangelical mass with the distribution of the bread and the wine. At once steps were taken to prevent him from carrying out his intent. But he headed them off. As soon as Christmas he preached his sermon "About Receiving the Holy Sacrament." He then went to the altar, blessed the bread and the wine in German, and distributed them both without any previous confession. He distributed them to all who desired to receive

them. He did the same on New Year's Day and the following Sundays, and the people no longer bothered about the other masses.

And there was more to come. On the Day of St. Stephen he announced his engagement to an impoverished noble maiden, Anna von Mochau. He did this in the presence of Provost Jonas, Melanchthon, and other professors. At the same time he performed a marriage of a pastor to his lady cook. He wanted his own wedding to be conducted in an especially festive manner. He even issued a written justification for it and invited the elector to the wedding. Six resolutions from a large Augustinian convention which had convened in Wittenberg during those days were attached to his written justification.

Melanchthon, who had also spoken out in favor of stopping the sacrifice of the mass and similar abuses, now began to view with increasing alarm all of the actions of Carlstadt and Zwilling, who was also traveling through the territory preaching rebellion. Melanchthon urged both men to be more careful with their actions. But he could no longer hold back the flood and so he reported soon after to the elector. However, the water in this flood was to become even muddier and wilder, and the perplexity of Melanchthon bigger.

During all of this, as thousands of people including a growing number of the residents of Wittenberg were crowding the altar for Communion in both kinds, two weavers appeared. Their names were Markus Stuebner and Nicolaus Storch. Stuebner, who had previously studied in Wittenberg, was a guest in Melanchthon's home. These men boasted of incredible revelations by the Holy Spirit, which had been imparted to them in dreams and visions. They also claimed to have had conversations with God. They announced a much greater reformation than Luther's, a reformation which would also attack secular authorities. During that reformation all the godless and the pastors would be killed. Among the things that would be discontinued was infant baptism.

They had already preached the same things in Zwickau, where preacher Thomas Muenzer had begun a storm against established order.

He had won a large following. Storch and Stuebner were among his followers. The swarmers of Zwickau had even chosen 12 apostles and 72 disciples from their number and had caused all kinds of other disorder. When the city council of Zwickau had begun to oppose and it had further led to insurrection, Muenzer and Stuebner had escaped to Bohemia. Storch had stayed behind. Nicolaus Hausmann, a friend of Luther and the first pastor of the city at that time, had taken a stand against his activities and summoned him to take responsibility for his actions. Instead of appearing, Storch moved to Wittenberg. He was accompanied by Stuebner, who had returned to Germany during that time.

Melanchthon did not know what to think about these new prophets. He and others had discussions with them. When they asked who had given them the authority to preach, Stuebner answered, "Our Lord God." When he was asked whether he had written any books he replied, "No, our Lord God has forbidden this to me." As early as the first day of their arrival Melanchthon gave a report to the elector, "I have heard them myself. They tell such wondrous things about themselves. I cannot very well describe how much all of this affects me. Indeed, I have good reason why I don't want to despise them. This much is substantiated that there are many spirits in them. However, no one can easily come up with the right assessment except Martinus." Since Stuebner had also appealed to Luther, a request was made to the elector to allow Luther to come to Wittenberg. If this were to occur, Melanchthon hoped to find relief from his inability to give good counsel.

Upon hearing this report the elector found himself in a great quandary. He, too, was afraid of acknowledging or rejecting them. Their existence in his territory made him very uncomfortable and he felt that if he would permit them to remain he would lose property and people. Yet he did not have the keenness of mind to discern that they were swarmers.

(A translator's note: These swamers were often translated with the word enthusiasts, "religious enthusiasts". Swarming happens in a beehive, when the bee population succeeds in hatching a new queen. Usually the hive then splits into two bee populations, which weakens the hive considerably

in the midst of honey producing time. The old queen then has to move out with all her old followers and find some other place – perhaps some hollow tree trunk – to set up a new kind of a hive. Since every beehive allows for only one reigning queen, the new queen will claim ownership of the hive. Sometimes there may be as many as 3, 4, 5, or 6 new queen cells being developed by the bee population at the same time, at least some of which could even hatch at the same time. These will fight it out for supremacy of the hive. I think that this is what Martin Luther had in mind when he referred to those kind of enthusiasts {or, perhaps, “super apostles”}. A beekeeper will carefully watch for any such new queen capped larvae which are a little longer than ordinary worker bee capped larvae cells. I learned such operation of bee hives, by starting to take a few lessons first, and then operating a few beehives for a few years as a hobby. I usually gave the extra honey away after the extracting process on Labor Day.)

Thus he (the elector) was fearful of acting against God by moving against them. "Unless I would understand this issue I would rather take staff in hand and walk away before I would knowingly act against God," he said in a conversation on the matter. But he dared not allow Luther to return to Wittenberg. His cousin George was already bending his ear. If he would at this time allow the outlaw, the one regarded as the primary instigator of unrest, to freely and openly become involved in the matter, especially at a time when Wittenberg was being viewed as breeding grounds for rebellion, he would have to be afraid of the imperial army coming against him. The imperial troops, Caesar's representatives, were stationed at Nuernberg. Duke George wielded strong influence with them and they would be breathing down his neck.

The only one who was not puzzled about the Zwickau prophets was Luther. He wrote to Melanchthon in a calm manner that he found nothing about the self-proclaimed prophets that could not be produced by Satan. They should prove their calling. Their reasoning against infant baptism would not stand up under examination. Those people, who did not move him in the least, could not induce him to come to Wittenberg. He also wrote to Amsdorf that they should not allow themselves to become

confused by the new prophets. It would be better for them to test the spirits to see whether they are from God. But he wrote to Spalatin that the elector should not, by any means, stain his hands with the blood of those Zwickau prophets.

While this was going on the establishment of a new order kept progressing in Wittenberg. Carlstadt produced a new congregational constitution, which was adopted by the city council and the university. According to it the entire church system was to start out on a new foundation. A congregational treasury was to be established from all of the church's possessions and receipts. From it the poor of the congregation were to receive support, partially through alms and partially through interest free loans. The education of gifted poor children would also be funded from this treasury. Begging should immediately cease. In addition all pictures should be removed from the churches and only three altars allowed to remain. Holy Communion would be administered strictly according to the words of Christ, by which the communicants could take both the wafer and the cup into their own hands.

But Carlstadt was not finished. With Zwilling's support, he incited the people against the mass, confession, and pictures in his daily evening services. He urged the congregation to rise up against these abuses. When a fully authorized agent of the elector told him to stop, he cited his office in the foundation church and his doctorate, maintaining that he was standing on the Word of God. His sermons and those of Zwilling affected the hearers so much that they attacked the pictures. The people threw them forcefully out of the church, chopped them to pieces, and burned them. Confession stopped almost completely. During this wild madness against external things, the pastoral care of the healthy and the sick was being ignored to a shocking degree. Carlstadt also neglected his teaching office at the university. His despising of his educational responsibilities, which he demonstrated plainly in both word and deed, caused many students to move away, saying that they wanted to learn a profession. Carlstadt and Zwilling traveled through the people's homes and allowed common persons to serve as interpreters of Scripture. Professor More urged the city's

citizens, both men and women, to take their children out of school. He did so both in the school and in the churchyard, begging and pleading. He kept on until the school finally became completely empty and the building was converted into a bakery.

The consequences of these actions were being felt outside of Wittenberg as well. Some counts forbade their subjects to attend school at the University of Wittenberg. They demanded that those already enrolled leave, in order to protect against the expansion of Carlstadt's basic theses into their territory. The imperial government also spoke out, and the Bishop of Meissen stated his intention to send out preachers to counter the sermons of this new movement. That would have amounted to pouring oil on the fire and finally actually causing murder, arson, and burning. At this time the hard-headedness and forcefulness of the foundation lords of Wittenberg, who would not sufficiently defend the traditional customs, were truly adding to the stormy environment.

The news about what was happening traveled to the Wartburg. It brought the wish that Luther had expressed to ripen to its conclusion. He wanted to return to Wittenberg. First, he took up his pen once again and wrote a sharp correction to the people in Wittenberg. He reproached them for forgetting about faith and love and substituting minor things. He wrote, "We still have many brothers and sisters living in Leipzig, in the territory of Meissen, and all around. We want them also to be with us in heaven. This movement was begun so quickly, shame, shame, and was reinforced with clenched fists. I do not approve of this at all. You must know that. If it comes down to your continuing this way, I will not be on your side. You have started this without me. See to it that you finish it without me. What you have done is not right, even if Carlstadt and others should have said so. You have started a burdening of many consciences in those who had received the Sacrament, and then attacked, torn down pictures, eaten eggs and meat. If they were to have to give an account of this to the devil while dying or during a panic attack, they would not know a thing about it. ... It appears to me that those who have started this whole mess were only looking for their own praise."

Luther had hit the bull's-eye with these words. But he was not a man who would accuse a drowning man of thoughtlessness or light-mindedness and then let him go drown. Since the council and the people were now calling to him, and he saw the need and the danger to which his brothers had exposed themselves, he considered it his duty to save what could be saved. He was rightly angry with his elector, because he had not granted a hearing on account of fear for man and self-justifying desires. He wrote to him by the end of February. His intent was not merely to deliver a sensitive rebuke. "Your electoral grace has, for a long time, been collecting sacred relics from all nations. But now God has listened to your lust and sent you, free of charge and effort, a whole cross with nails, spears, and scourge. (Footnote: He meant the cross of the Wittenberg unrest with this reproach.) But he concluded, "I don't have any more time. I will be there myself, if it is God's will. Your electoral grace need not concern yourself with me."

Because this letter upset him the elector took immediate steps to prevent Luther from carrying out his intentions, being afraid of the consequences. That the elector would start to oppose him Luther had known in advance. So he put on his traveling garb in order to remain unrecognizable on his journey, and on March 1st set out for Wittenberg.

Chapter 24

The Smothering of the Disruptions at Wittenberg

On the day before Ash Wednesday two students from Switzerland walked into the Bear's Inn in Jena, where the carnival was being celebrated. The inn was just outside the city gates. The two students were on their way to Wittenberg to study Holy Scripture. Inside this particular guest house they found a traveler, a rider who had taken off his knightly garment. He was sitting at a table and was immersed in a pamphlet. During the ensuing conversation this knight showed an impressive familiarity with the popular professors at the university. He also knew that Luther was not currently in Wittenberg but would be arriving shortly. As one of the students cast a glance into that rider's booklet, he noticed that it was a Hebrew book of Psalms. When the students expressed their heartfelt wish to meet the man who had taken on the entire authority of the priesthood, the inn keeper informed them that Luther had been in that very inn two days ago. However, a little later he called one of them outside and told him that the man who had shared a table with them was Luther. When this student whispered what the manager had told him into the other student's ear, he said that he must have misunderstood him. The inn keeper might have said that his name was Hutten.

When two other business men arrived, one of whom was carrying a copy of Luther's commentary of the gospels and epistles, the knightly stranger also engaged them in conversation. One of them made the statement that he would give his last ten guilders if he were allowed to make confession before Luther. The knight paid their bill for the evening meal and after supper was again alone with them as they were caring for their horses. They thanked him and voiced their opinion that they believed him to be Hutten. Meanwhile the innkeeper once again stepped in as the mystery man called out to him that he had entertained the nobility that

evening, since these Swiss men thought him to be Ulrich von Hutten. The inn keeper replied, "You are not, but you are Martinus Luther." This seemed to amuse the knight who replied, "They think I am Hutten, you say I am Luther; soon I will be called Marcolfus." Then he had a farewell drink and threw his knightly tabard over his shoulders. He shook hands with the students and said, "When you get to Wittenberg, please greet Doctor Hieronymus Schurf for me." When they asked, "From whom?" he said, "the one who is coming is extending his greetings." Then he went to rest for the night. The next morning he resumed his ride in the direction of Wittenberg.

When the students went to relay the greeting, they found their friend from the Bear's Inn in Jena in a chamber actively engaged in conversation with Melanchthon, Justus Jonas, Amsdorf, and the medicine man, Schurf.

Luther had returned to Wittenberg on March 6th. On the day before he had written a detailed letter to his elector from Borna. The evening before, while still at the Wartburg, he had received the elector's last letter objecting to his coming out of hiding. The elector asked him to consider that his emerging from hiding could result in a dangerous showdown with the imperial army and especially with Duke George. Luther answered:

"It was enough, your electoral grace, for me to accede to your wish for this year in my service to your electoral grace. The devil knows very well that I did not do so because I was scared. He got a good look at my heart when I entered Worms to see that if I had known that there were as many devils against me as there were clay tiles on the rooftops, I would still have leaped into their midst with great joy. Now Duke George is in no way a match for a single devil. Since the Father of inexhaustible compassion has made us joyful lords above all devils and death through the gospel and has given us the treasure of confidence so that we may say to him, 'Precious Father'! ... your electoral grace can easily see that it is highly disgraceful to such a Father for us to fail to trust him that we are also lords over the wrath of Duke George. I know this much about myself, that if this entire matter was in Leipzig I would still ride in. I would do so even if (Y.E.G. forgive my foolish words) it were to rain Duke Georges for nine days, and each one

were nine times angrier than this one. He considers my Christ a straw man. My Lord and I may endure that for a little while. But I do not want to hide from Y.E.G. that I have prayed and wept for him more than once that God would enlighten him. I shall pray and weep for him once more, after that, never again. And I plead that Y.E.G. will also help with prayers and allow prayers to be said, that the judgment might be turned away from him, which—O Lord God—is depressing him without any relief. I would quickly choke Duke George with one word, if that would finish it.

"This is being written to Y.E.G. with the information that I am coming to Wittenberg, so that Y.E.G. may know that I am coming to Wittenberg with much greater protection than the protection of the elector. In addition I do not think that I shall want the protection of Y.E.G. Truly, I think that I will protect Y.E.G. more than you can protect me. What's more, if I would know that Y.E.G. was able to protect me and was willing to do so, I would not come. No sword should nor could advise or assist in this matter. God must work by himself without the contribution of any human worry and assistance. Therefore, the one who believes more, he will protect more. Since I sense that Y.E.G. is still very weak in the faith, I can in no way regard Y.E.G. as the man to protect or rescue me. Since I will not follow Y.E.G, Y.E.G. is excused before God were I to be captured or killed.

"Y.E.G. should regard yourself within the realm of humanity as follows: namely, as elector to obey the higher authority, and as an elector to let the imperial majesty rule in Y.E.G. cities and lands in regard to body and property, as ought to be the case in harmony with empire orderliness. You ought not to defend or oppose, nor desire opposition or hindrance to the authority that exists, if it should want to arrest me or kill me. For no one has the right to bust up or oppose the higher government authority except the One who instituted that power. To do otherwise is rebellion and is against God. But I hope that you will make use of sound reason that Y.E.G. recognizes that, though you were born in a little higher crib, that you should be the one to imprison me. If Y.E.G. will keep the gates open and give free electoral escort, if they themselves or their ambassadors should

come to take me, Y.E.G. will have been sufficiently obedient. But should they be so unreasonable as to order that Y.E.G. lay hands on me personally, I shall then tell Y.E.G. what is to be done. I shall keep Y.E.G. safe regarding your body, property and soul, as pertains to my case, whether Y.E.G. believes it or not.

"With this I commend Y.E.G. to God's grace. It is a man other than Duke George with whom I am dealing. He knows me quite well, and I intend no evil against him. If Y.E.G. would believe then you would see God's glory. But because Y.E.G. does not yet believe, therefore you have not yet seen. Love and praise be to God eternally. Amen. Given at Borne by the travel-guide (or, travel-escort, for "Geleitsmann") on Ash Wednesday, the year 1522. Y.E.G. submissive servant, Mart. Luther."

What should the elector do? He just had to let happen what he would have liked to prevent. But the fact that Luther had indeed returned to Wittenberg without his permission he wanted to have from him in writing. He wrote to his adviser, Hier. (Jerome) Schurf, "After extending our gracious greeting you are to talk and deal with him so that he declare to us in writing, indicating for what cause and reason he has returned to Wittenberg, adding that this occurred without our permission. He should also include something to the extent of notification that he does not wish to be a burden to anyone. May his message be fashioned and finished in such a way that we may send it to several of our lords and friends to preserve respect."

Luther complied with his elector's urging. He even amended the letter he had written, when the elector desired several changes after receiving the first copy of his letter. (Footnote: See L.V. Vol. 7, p. 29ff.) The elector could now show written proof to whoever was supposed to or desired to read it, that Luther returned to Wittenberg in order to smother the disruptions which had developed there and to prevent rebellion in general. By doing so he had held his elector's grace or disgrace of second importance, and "behind his back and without his knowledge, will, favor, or permission, he had returned to Wittenberg and again taken up residence."

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On the Wednesday after Invocavit, after Luther had explained his reappearance as his elector had requested, he was already in the midst of the work which no one else could have achieved. On Thursday he had arrived as a knight. On Sunday, Invocavit (first Sunday after Ash Wednesday), he once again stood in his pulpit in the city church clad as a monk. Still, his outward appearance had undergone a few changes since his farewell at Easter the previous year. The good treatment he had received at the Wartburg, which initially had caused him to be physically ill, later proved to be good for him. He looked stronger and healthier and carried himself with his head held high. He had kept the falcon-like glint in his dark eyes.

His form of speech was firm, unlike the forceful attacking preachers of the previous weeks, as he proceeded to calmly, yet powerfully and with all seriousness, tell his children what they needed to hear. But this was much more than could be said in one sermon. He preached eight days in a row in response to questions which had plagued the citizens of Wittenberg during the recent months. (For these eight sermons, see L.V. Vol. 17, 18. p. 186 ff.). He told them straight out how they had especially neglected and removed love out of their vision for their weaker brothers and harmed consciences. He proclaimed that they had taken into their own rough hands what should have been left to the working of God's Word, and how they were not to continue pursuing their terrible course. "You have heard," he said, "that no one is to be dragged by his hair to or from the gospel, but to simply preach the Word freely and let it do its work without our input as to what it should and will accomplish. For I can herd no one into heaven, nor beat him to death." "You have so misapplied your actions that it would have come as no surprise for thunder and lightning to smash you to the ground. If you do not stop what you are doing, then neither king, nor Caesar, nor anyone else will have to drive me away from you. I shall flee

from you myself without being forced. I may state, well and freely, that none of my enemies, though they have done much evil to me, have given me as much grief as have you, my friends, in your recent actions. You have truly stabbed me to the heart."

Once again the Word, through which Luther wanted to see everything done, proved its amazing power. When the eight days were over, the wild waves in Wittenberg, whose thunder had reached Luther's ears all the way at the Wartburg, had become calm, and there was once again peace in the city. People could take a deep breath of fresh air. The council gave the man who had brought help to resolve the crisis cloth for new clothing and a refreshing drink.

Even Gabriel Zwilling, one of the main stormy preachers, became reasonable and regained Luther's trust, but not Carlstadt. To be sure, he was quiet at first, but inwardly he was boiling. Although Luther showed all possible patience in his eight sermons and attacked Carlstadt's person as little as he had Zwilling, the sins which he had to punish were especially Carlstadt's, and his pride was deeply offended. It was time for a number of the new practices established by the new reformer to be reversed. The tearing down of pictures had to stop. When the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the city church, only the papal sacrifice was left out and the reception of the cup was left up to the communicants. This continued until the members of the congregation, out of their own conviction, stayed completely away from the one altar at which the old customs were still practiced for those who attended. Then this misuse came to an end all by itself. (Footnote: In the castle church all of the papal abuses continued for a longer period of time, including the private mass which had been discontinued for good in the city church.)

Luther understood Carlstadt all too well. He did not trust him. It was soon discovered that he was about to distribute a book in which he had attacked Luther. The book was confiscated by a decision of the university, without any action by Luther. Luther truly wanted to spare Carlstadt. This can be seen from the fact that Luther offered a substitute to Carlstadt's bookseller, who had suffered much loss from his association with Carlstadt.

Luther simply offered to give one of his own writings to the publisher. But Carlstadt's true feelings also came to light on the same day in which his book had been suppressed. He lied to Luther to his face, stating that he had never written anything against Luther. Yet, he noticeably started drawing back, stopped all his writing for a while, and moved out of Wittenberg into the country for a long time.

The Zwickau prophets achieved just as little as Carlstadt. When Stuebner again showed himself in Wittenberg several weeks after Luther's return, Luther had a meeting with him. Luther remained as firm toward these swarmers as he had toward the papists, asserting that Holy Scripture is the only source from which we are to draw divine truth. Since Stuebner spoke of new revelations and his call to proclaim them, Luther challenged him to prove its divine origin and his call from God by means of signs. After threatening to do just that, Stuebner retreated and left the city that very day, never to be seen there again. Nothing he had said had been established by any sign. Claus Storch was another person who appeared later in Wittenberg. He also met with Luther. When he soon saw that he would accomplish nothing more there, he moved away, dressed in his spectacular soldier's uniform.

But Luther was not yet done with the swarmers. He had quenched their flames in Wittenberg. But he also wanted to extinguish their wild fire at its center, in the area of Zwickau. He could not put his plan into motion at once, for during the ensuing Lent and Easter seasons his professional responsibilities at the professor's lectern and in the pulpit left him no time for travel. Even so, even during this time, he remained active by dealing with those troubling questions by means of various writings.

And so he wrote a treatise, "Receiving the Sacrament in Both Kinds and Other Renewals." He wrote an epistle ("Sendbrief" in German) to Knight Hartmuth of Kronberg in which he held the enemies of the truth responsible for the disaster which was threatening to descend on Germany. (Footnote: See L.V. Vol. 2, p. 163 ff.) In both works he seriously warned against denying the truth, which was now being despised and persecuted.

In the writing about both kinds he wrote, "In conclusion I see that there is need for a good admonition to those whom Satan is now beginning to persecute. There are those among them who think they may avoid the danger of being attacked by saying, 'I don't stand with that Luther, nor with anyone, but stand by the holy gospel. Truly, such a confession does not help them one bit. It is the same as denying Christ. Therefore I plead that they be cautious. It is true that you do not say by body or soul: I am Lutheran or papal. For neither of those two died for you, nor are they your master, but only Christ. You should confess yourself to be a Christian. But if you confess that Luther's teaching is evangelical, and the pope's unevangelical, then you must not throw Luther away. If you do, you are throwing away his teaching, which you recognize as Christ's teaching. For you can see that the tyrants do not go around seeking to destroy Luther, but they want to destroy the teaching. They attack you because of the teaching and ask whether you are Lutheran."

In the conclusion of his letter to Hartmuth of Kronberg Luther noted, "I have also undertaken to Germanize the Bible. That was necessary for me, lest I may well have died in the error, thinking that I am learned." We also find him carrying on this work in Wittenberg, which he had begun at the Wartburg. Here he also had access to that for which he longed so much during his "Patmos", namely, the help of his friends, especially Melanchthon. With his file (in reference to a carpenter's tool) poised to begin, he resumed his work, and as soon as a piece had been properly shaped it went to press.

This work was interrupted when Luther left Wittenberg to carry out his intent to further address the swarmers. Before many hearers he preached at Borna, in Altenburg, in Zwickau, and in Eilenburg. At Eilenburg Zwilling had celebrated his reforms on the first day of the year, just as he had done in Wittenberg. After he had preached wearing the robe of a student, he had given the Sacrament in both kinds into the hands of the people without any previous confession.

In Zwickau the crowds who wanted to hear Luther were so large that he preached one of his sermons from a window of the courthouse, while

the people standing below were pushed together in this spacious area. (To this year, 1997, that building is so designated.) Twenty-five thousand people from the surrounding area were said to have assembled there. In Altenburg steps were being taken to assign a gospel preacher to a parish church. The elector's choice fell on Luther's friend, Link. He began his work in spite of the opposition of the choir lords in that area. He then also got married the following year.

There were storms developing in Erfurt just as had happened in Wittenberg. The reception that had been given to the monk, who had once wandered that city's streets as a beggar, was replaced by a confrontation between the angry priests and their opponents, the students and the citizens. A prebendary ("soloist" or "cantor" in today's language) who had taken part in Luther's reception was now kicked out of the choir by way of slander, as he was attempting to sing his hourly prayers. This premeditated revenge by the priest against a member of the university was punished by the students with a general attack against the clergy. They broke windows, destroyed furniture, emptied wardrobes and basements, cut open much of the feather bedding and emptied the feathers into the streets in the air. All through the city it seemed like it was snowing.

Those events kept being repeated. The university had gotten such a bad reputation that it resulted in many students and a number of professors to move away. Luther had heard about this while at the Wartburg and expressed his concern. He remarked that such devil's work would give rise to the disgrace of the gospel. Strong sermons were later preached from the pulpits against the papacy and, just as had happened in Wittenberg, they gave no consideration to the sparing of the weak. But now there was a zealous attack directed especially against the honoring of the saints. Luther's old friend, Lange, who had also left the monastery, desired Luther to come to Erfurt and to guide them in the right direction.

But Luther considered such a journey ill-advised. Instead, he sent "A Letter, or Instructions about the Saints" to the Christians of Erfurt. (Footnote: See L.V. Vol. 7, p. 34 ff.) In it he expressed his joy that the light of grace had also dawned on the brothers at Erfurt. But he also noted that

quarrels and dissension had erupted among them, caused by several sermons about unnecessary matters. Now he admonished them that they must not forget the main issue for the sake of desires for lesser matters. They must not allow Satan to set his evil into motion.

Yet those people of Erfurt were to be given the pleasure of seeing Luther in their city and hearing him preach in October of that same year. Accompanied by Melanchthon and other friends, he arrived and was again welcomed and lodged with high honor. The fermentation of rebellion was still considerable in the city, and Luther approached the problem with great gentleness. He avoided any possible kind of sensationalism, and his three simple sermons, preached in the so-called St. Michael's Church, contributed quite a bit toward calming people's minds. Later that afternoon after his concluding sermon, he returned to Weimar. He had been so invited by Duke Johann and he preached there on four successive days. He then returned to his work in Wittenberg.

Chapter 25

Planting and Watering

The entire New Testament had already been printed even before Luther's trip to Erfurt. Three printing presses issuing 10,000 sheets a day had accomplished the swift production. Thus September 21, 1522 was recognized as the birthday of the German New Testament. The first edition appeared as a large volume without naming the translator, the printer, or the year. It was made up of the New Testament text with forewords and marginal notations. Illustrated with woodcuts by Cranach, it was being sold for one and one half guilders. In spite of the high cost, and in spite of, or perhaps because of, the ban against purchase in many locations the available books were soon sold out and a new edition was already needed in December.

The book had been strictly forbidden. Deliveries were confiscated by the authorities in Bavaria, Mark of Brandenburg, and Austria. Duke George was also one of them. In addition he requested that his faculty in Leipzig issue a "Gutachten" in regard to this book. This "Gutachten" was issued on January 6, 1523. It declared that this translation contained many mistakes. In addition the forewords and marginal notes were full of heresies that had been declared as such for a long time. They declared that the ban was justified. Emser had also a writing in hand in which he wanted to prove "for what cause or purpose Luther's translation of the New Testament was being forbidden to the common man with apparent references, where, how, and in which places Luther's translation falsified the text, etc." But the 1400 mistakes which Emser claimed to have found were mostly aberrations from the mistake-riddled Latin translation, places where Luther, in agreement with the Greek text, had correctly translated them into German. When it was learned that the Lutheran translation could not be taken from the people by issuing bans against it, they attempted to sweep it away by the news that Emser had also issued a

translation. His work, however, was copied almost word for word from Luther's translation, changing only the errors from the Latin edition.

But none of that helped. The New Testament was now in the hands of the people and was being zealously read and memorized in portions by men, women, workmen, servants, and maids. Soon there were reports that simple lay members were going toe to toe with priests and monks, defeating them in personal debates. Luther had addressed the various bans that same year with his writing, "About Worldly Authorities, How Far a Person is Obligated to be Obedient." (L.V, Vol. 27.28., p. 85 ff.) He opined that not a single leaf should be handed over to such tyrants. But if they were to take the books by force, a person ought to endure this and leave the judgment of such tyrannical fools to God.

Even before the New Testament editions had been circulated, Luther had already started with the Old Testament. He translated the first five books before Christmas. Then while Luther, with the help of Melancthon and Aurogallus, the professor of Hebrew at Wittenberg, was still carefully reviewing and improving the work, this section of the Old Testament went to print at the beginning of the year. The next year two other parts of the Bible appeared, including the books up to the Song of Solomon. The rest of the books would finally appear years later. We will find our translator, who had begun this work in a castle, once again translating in a castle.

Upon his return this was Luther's preferred work, applying the Word of God to hearts and consciences. It involved a thorough interpretation of the Word of God, which he had now given to the German people in the German language, and which had already begun to produce good fruit. This Word, from which he had garnered all his hope, he applied both by preaching and in print. At the onset he preached twice every Sunday in the city church, in addition to daily preaching during the week. In the main services he would use the text for the given Sundays. In the other services he continued to focus on entire books of the Bible. As a result in 1522 he had already commented on 1. Peter, to be followed by 2. Peter. He talked of the Epistle of Jude, the five books of Moses, and 1. Timothy. He had

been preaching sermons for the sickly city pastor until he passed away in 1523. He continued, though less extensively, until Bugenhagen arrived from his homeland of Pomerania and filled the position. Most of his sermons were being diligently recorded by his hearers and sent to the printer. Sometimes this was with his approval and sometimes not. These included his sermons on 1. Peter in 1523, and 2. Peter and Jude in 1524. During this same period his individual sermons were printed in Wittenberg, Basel, and Strassburg. The printers made quite a profit, especially considering that Luther took no payment for them.

In order to promote healthy preaching in other places Luther also resumed his work on his Church Postil. When he delivered the update to the printer he learned that a type-setter had stolen over half of the manuscript and allowed it to be published hastily in Wittenberg, producing a sloppy result. Yet the Postil for the first half of the church year was printed in Wittenberg that same year under Luther's supervision.

Luther also kept active in his classroom duties, developing his students into proper teachers of Scripture. He especially concentrated on teaching them about the prophets, with Melanchthon and Bugenhagen standing at his side in this scholarly interpretation of Scripture. Melanchthon explained the New Testament writings and Bugenhagen the Psalms.

As the congregation grew in its understanding and was strengthened through this faithful work, it was now possible to continue the restoration of a pure church service for the congregation. One piece of sour papal dough after another was being swept out of the Wittenberg congregation. An example was the Corpus Christi Festival, which had also been abandoned at the elector's residence at Torgau. Since the foundation lords of the castle church were tenaciously hanging on to the sacrifice of the mass, Luther, after having exercised a great deal of patience, issued a work about "The Abomination of the Low Mass" (or, Private Mass – "Stillmesse" in German). Some stormy confrontations and broken window panes still took place despite all of Luther's efforts at appeasement. But then the foundation lords, who had still been depending on their elector's attachment to his and