

Chapter 43

The Wittenberg Concord

One of those who sought Luther while he was at the Coburg was the aforementioned Martin Butzer. It happened this way. Butzer had previously sought a connection with the Lutherans at Augsburg. Since he did not succeed, the southern German cities of Strassburg, Constanz, Memmingen, and Lindau had drawn up their own confession. It was called the Confession of the Four Cities. But Butzer did not give up trying. He wrote Luther a letter. It included a series of articles and was sent along with Regius after a discussion with Melanchthon and Regius. Since neither Luther nor Regius responded to him, Butzer dug in his spurs and hurried to Coburg. He arrived there on a Sunday evening. The next morning he went to the castle. He reported, "Luther invited me to lunch there, and after lunch we engaged in conversation." However, Luther didn't want to hear about the unification articles in the Butzer form, which everyone could understand according to his own opinion.

"The next day," Butzer went on, "I again came for lunch, as he had directed me. After we had eaten, we again talked about this business. Finally, he did not want to be persuaded that our preachers had not taught unworthily about this secret, and he stood firm in his conviction that it would be necessary for our preachers to lead our people back to the right way. He added, in order to avoid offense, he did not wish for us suddenly to change our minds. I agreed to admonish those of our party accordingly." Referring to Luther as a person, Butzer wrote, "I discovered that this man truly fears God and seeks to honor God from his heart."

Luther on the other hand soon commented, "There is hope that the Sacramentarians, at least those from Strassburg, will soon be reconciled to us. After all, Butzer had been sent specifically to discuss this church business with me at Coburg in confidence. And, if what he told me is not

deceptive, - I admonished him to keep everything out in the open - then this hope is not a trifling matter."

Butzer kept on doing his work. It is to be said in his favor that the points in regard to which he attempted to persuade his own people seemed to them to be too Lutheran. Particularly the people of Zurich refused them.



An image of Martin Butzer according to an original woodcut by Reusner

But soon the two leaders of the reformed, namely Zwingli and Oecolampad, were rapidly called away, one after the other.

The people of Zurich instigated the Catholic canton in their area to an eruption of an old rancor, as they responded to a political ruling. That mountain canton simultaneously took up arms and stormed Zurich. The battle ensued on October 11, 1531 near Kappel, and the people of Zurich were defeated by a much larger force. One fourth of them were killed on the battle field. Zwingli, who had gone along as a field chaplain, lay under a tree, critically wounded. Two enemy soldiers called out to him, "Do you want to confess and call upon the mother of God?" When he shook his head in reply, the captain Unterwalden delivered the death blow. The next day his body was quartered, burned, and the ashes strewn into the wind.

Luther was deeply moved by the news of these events. He saw the end of Zwingli as a judgment of God, just as he had also viewed the end of Muenzer. Six weeks later Oecolampad also died.

Butzer would not allow himself to be diverted from his goal in spite of the critical comments Luther repeatedly expressed about the Sacramentarians. Once again it was Philip of Hessen who offered to help. In accordance with his arrangement a discussion took place between Butzer and Melanchthon at Kassel December 27, 1534. At that meeting Butzer confessed his agreement with the statements Luther had sent, statements in which Luther's doctrine was set forth clearly and distinctly as never before. Melanchthon knew Luther well enough to be sure that Luther would do everything possible to avoid an appearance of extending the hand of fellowship without a true agreement in doctrine. As a result he was deeply concerned that the negotiations for unity would end with even greater differences. What's more, he himself was plagued with doubt in regard to the disputed doctrine. He even went so far as to write to a trusted friend that he had served as "messenger of a foreign doctrine" at Kassel. The lectures he gave after his return from Kassel were not at all to Luther's liking. They sounded almost Zwinglian. It was therefore all the more pleasing how Butzer wanted himself to be understood.

Nevertheless, Luther did not jump to a quick conclusion. He studied and carefully weighed the explanations which Butzer had provided and the formal confession he submitted, with which the people of Augsburg had already declared themselves to be in agreement. After such a conscientious study, Luther made it known during the last days of January that, since they now desired to teach according to the Augsburg Confession, he personally could not oppose a union. Since they clearly confessed that the body of Christ was being distributed truly and in essence, received, and eaten, he was satisfied with their wording.

Still, the final adoption of the concord was to be delayed until the troubled waters on both sides had settled and the distrust that remained here and there had disappeared. He also desired that the matter be adopted not only between Butzer and himself but also between a larger number of persons on both sides. This was because just as he did not want to concede his conviction to others, he also did not want to pressure others by way of his conviction.

Since he had now become more confident in regard to this issue, Luther would also be participant with heart and hand. He expressed his sincere readiness for actual unity in one faith and confession during those days with these words, "Nothing more cheerful has happened to me during this entire time of the renewed rising of the gospel after the deplorable schism, than that I may finally hope for, indeed can even see, a concord. When this concord stands established I shall sing with joyful tears, 'Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace,' for I shall leave peace behind for the church. Be assured that as far as things pertain to me, I shall do and endure, faithfully and cheerfully, anything and everything that is possible for the completion of this concord."

There were also steps being taken to set up, if possible, a meeting for many to participate for the purpose of formally recognizing each other. Since Luther was quite ill at that time a place had to be chosen which was more suitable for Luther. The elector decided upon Eisenach as that place.

Hence invitations went out for a meeting at Eisenach on May 14, 1536. But when the people from southern Germany were already under way, it was realized that Luther was too weak even for a trip to Eisenach. What's more, some circumstances had quickly developed which were throwing the goal of establishing the concord into question.

A writing of Zwingli which had survived appeared in print. In it not only did Zwingli's teaching about the Lord's Supper stand forth bluntly, but the editor also extended a ready hope to the "Christian King" of France, to whom the writing had been addressed, that in the next life with Christ and the saints under the old covenant he would also find the presence of wise heathens: Socrates, Aristides, and others. Zwingli's follower, Bullinger, had praised this work in the foreword as Zwingli's swan song in which he surpassed himself. Furthermore, about the same time there appeared a collection of letters by Zwingli and Oecolampad, which was introduced with a foreword by Butzer.

But Luther did not back down. Instead he asked all the more that, in order to make it possible for him to attend, the meeting might be held at Grimma. But the people from southern Germany now had decided to travel straight to Wittenberg, where they arrived on May 21st. When the two men from Strassburg, Butzer and Capito, visited Luther at his home the next day, a Monday, Luther did not give the slightest indication that he would hide his thinking, which had risen anew in his mind. He emphasized that an external unification without an inner unity would make the evil a hundred times worse. It would be better to leave the issue where it was at that time. Butzer responded that Luther's suspicion was unfounded. Those letters, which included his own letter in the preface, had been published by the printer's own decision and without his own knowledge or desire. However, they were completely sincere in regard to the concord, which could have been adopted already if there had not been a prevailing misunderstanding on both sides. But that was not good enough for Luther. He wanted the other side to disavow what they had previously taught. He would then also acknowledge where he had been too harsh in his writings. The other side should confess their agreement that the ungodly also receive

the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. If they could and would desire to do this, they were to consider this once more with their friends among themselves and give their answer the next day.

The afternoon of the following day all of the representatives of both sides again assembled at Luther's residence. Butzer, who was the spokesman for the southern Germans, then explained that they believed and taught with a united voice that unworthy guests also receive the true body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, and as a result, those who drew near without faith received the Sacrament unto judgment. Only among such godless people, who falsified the words and institution of Christ, could they not accept the actual benefit ("wahrhaftige Geniessung") of the body and blood of Christ. He repeatedly explained that as far as the rest was concerned they did not make the presence of the body and blood in the Lord's Supper contingent upon the faith and unbelief of those who receive it. In the event that they had still not expressed themselves clearly enough, they welcomed further questions to be addressed to them.

When they, each and every one of them, had personally testified in answer to questions that they taught exactly like Butzer and were in complete agreement with the Augsburg Confession without any reservation and asked again to be received into the fellowship of faith, the Saxon theologians withdrew into an adjacent room with Luther. After a brief discussion Luther returned and, with a joyfully uplifted voice and beaming face, said, "Honorable lords and brothers! We now have heard the answer and confession of each of you that you believe and teach that the true body and the true blood of the Lord is given and received in the Lord's Supper and not only bread and wine. In addition you confess that this administering and receiving truly takes place and is not imagined. You take offense only in regard to the godless; yet you confess, as St. Paul says, that the unworthy receive the body of the Lord where the institution and the words of the Lord are not falsified. Therefore we do not wish to quarrel. Since this is the way it is with you, we are at one. We recognize and accept you as our dear brothers in the Lord as it pertains to this article. We shall want to discuss the public open writing of this concord later, when the

other articles will also have been treated. Philip shall now put this article into writing."

Everyone listened to these words with folded hands, Butzer and Capito with tears in their eyes. After exchanging handshakes all around, further discussion was postponed to the next day since it had already gotten late. The meeting was adjourned.

The rest of the points about baptism, absolution, and the power of the office of preaching were taken care of on Wednesday without any difficulties. The next day they were celebrating the Festival of the Ascension, for which Luther preached a powerful sermon with Mark 16:15 as the text, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." On Friday Melanchthon presented the document which he had prepared regarding the Lord's Supper, and it was accepted by both sides without any objection.

On Sunday Albert of Reutlingen preached in the morning, Butzer at noon, and Luther in the evening. The bonded union found an endearing expression with a joint Communion celebration according to the Lutheran rite. In the evening Butzer and some of his group celebrated a "Gemuetlichkeit" while dining with Luther. "As now," an eye witness reported, "a number of comments were expressed about the sermons. Luther told Butzer that his sermon that day had pleased him very much. Yet, I am a much better preacher than you. Butzer replied, 'Yes, everyone who has heard you will testify to that and has praised your sermon.' 'Not that way,' Luther said, 'You are not to explain it as praise for me, for I know my weakness and do not know how to put together as ingenious and intelligent a sermon as you. But when I step into the pulpit I see what kind of listeners I have. To them I preach what they can understand, for most of them are poor lay people and simple serfs. But you elevate your sermon too high and float it on the airwaves, in the ether, the ether ("im Gaischt, Gaischt"). Therefore your sermon applies only to the intelligent. Those things my country folk, my serfs, cannot understand. Thus I behave like a faithful mother who offers her breasts to the mouth of a crying and nursing child and gives it milk to drink. From that milk the child is much better refreshed

and served than if she would pour in a sugary drink or some other costly syrup from the drug store. Such practice every preacher should follow. He should take note of what kind of listeners he has and whether they can understand and grasp what he preaches, and not how educated he is."

On Monday all of the articles of unification, including the added statements regarding baptism and absolution, were signed by all of the participants. Later that same day the guests set out on their homeward travels after heartfelt good-byes.

Luther and Melanchthon reported to the elector that, "Butzerus and his fellow travelers have distanced themselves from their error, have acknowledged the same, have confessed the truth, have publicly recanted, and have turned to the confession and teaching of our church."

Chapter 44

Schmalkalden (or Smalcald)

A few weeks after the Wittenberg Concord the pope announced a council would be held at Mantua in May 1537. One of the reasons given for this council was "the extirpation of the poisonous Lutheran heresy." John Frederick immediately believed that it would be wrong to agree to such a council, a council which considered that the teaching to be evaluated was a poisonous heresy from the start. Since Luther and Melanchthon, on the other hand, continued to recommend sending representatives to such a council lest they give the impression that they did not want peace, the elector directed Luther to put his doctrine into articles, *as his foundation* on which he would stand to the end. Then he was to lay those articles before other theologians to be signed. Such a confession could be presented at the council if need be. Luther immediately went to work. He was already able to place his articles before his Wittenberg colleagues and other friends during the season of Christmas. Having gathered their signatures he sent the confession to the elector on the 3rd of January.

It was divided into three parts. The first part summarized "The Sublime Articles concerning the Divine Majesty;" the second part, "The Articles which Refer to the Office and Work of Christ;" and the third part had the heading, "The following sections, or articles, we may assess with learned and reasonable men, or among ourselves. The pope and his government do not care about these. For conscience is nothing to them. Money, honor, and power are everything."

Luther listed those doctrines in which nothing could be conceded; namely, the teaching that we are made righteous and are saved without our own merits, but only by grace through faith. "In regard to this article," he stated, "nothing can be yielded nor conceded, even though heaven and earth and whatever will not remain may pass away. This article contains

everything we teach and live in opposition to the pope, the devil, and the world.

The mass was described as "the greatest and most horrible abomination since it directly and powerfully strives against this chief article." In regard to the discussion of this subject at the council Luther wrote, "This article concerning the Mass will be the entire business of the council. Even if it were possible for them to concede to us all other articles, they would not be able to concede this one. As Campegius said at Augsburg that he would rather be torn to pieces before he would relinquish the Mass, so, with the help of God, I too would let myself be reduced to ashes before I would allow a servant of the Mass, be he good or bad, to be made the equal of Christ Jesus, my Lord and Savior, or to be exalted above him. Thus we are and remain forever separated and opposed to one another. They well understand that if the Mass falls, the papacy lies in ruins. Before they will allow this to happen they will put us all to death, if they can." (Part II, Article II, Paragraph 10) Then he goes on to set forth "the brood of vermin, which this dragon's tail, the Mass, has begotten."

Of the pope Luther wrote, "that he is the true antichrist and contrarian Christ, who has exalted himself above and stationed himself against Christ, because he will not allow Christians to be saved without his power, which nevertheless is nothing." (Part II, Article IV, Paragraph 10) "Therefore," he concluded, "as little as we can worship the devil himself as lord and God, just as little can we endure this apostle, the pope or antichrist, in his rule as head or lord. For to lie and to kill, to destroy body and soul eternally, that is wherein his papal government really consists, as I have clearly shown in many books." (Part II, Article IV, Paragraph 14) To this he attached a reminder that the papists would not allow the smallest portion of this article to prevail at the council.

But at the same time Luther did not regard the articles of the third part this way, as though there were still doubts about them which the council needed to decide. He was not referring to the council as "the learned and reasonable men" in this part's title. He had no expectations that they would busy themselves with these articles. At the end he wrote,

"These are the articles on which I must stand, and, God willing, shall stand even to my death; I do not know how to change or to yield anything in them." (Part III, Articles XIV, XV, Paragraph 3)

In no way did this confession tread as softly as the Augsburg Confession. It is noteworthy that of all of the theologians who signed it only Melanchthon did so with a reservation. He signed it, "I, Philip Melanchthon, also regard the above articles as right and Christian. But in regard to the pope I hold that, if he would allow the gospel, then his supremacy over the bishops, which he possesses otherwise in accord with human law, would be allowed by us also for the sake of peace."

The elector, on the other hand, expressed his unreserved gratitude to Luther for this concise and clear confession. He declared that he would himself confess to it before the council and the entire world.

The advice of the evangelical representatives regarding their participation at the papal council was to be gathered at Smalcald. The elector wanted Luther, Melanchthon, and Bugenhagen to take part in those discussions. The rest of the representatives wanted to bring theologians along as well. The elector and his company arrived at Smalcald on February 7th. Besides the counts and the city delegates about 40 theologians gathered there over the next days. One also had been sent by Caesar, along with a papal legate who carried a letter from his lord.

However, the main concern of the assembly was not in regard to the council, but in regard to the life of the man who stood a notch above them all. Luther had been suffering for some time from kidney stones. He preached in the large city church on February 9th. That same day his pains were again noticeable, but improvement seemed to occur and the whole week passed quietly. The proceedings had not yet begun, and for Luther the idleness became burdensome.

On Sunday he preached again, even though his condition had taken a turn for the worse during the meantime. Now the pains became stronger and stronger. The doctors, one of whom had been summoned from Erfurt,

tried their best. "They gave me drinks," he later related, "as though I were a big ox." External cures were also applied but all in vain. The patient was only getting weaker. It seemed as though his life would end.

Luther himself was prepared to die with quiet submission in accord with God's will. The pains he had to endure were horrible. "If this continues much longer," he said, "I may even go out of my mind. If it were not for faith in Christ, it would not be surprising for me to take my own life with a sword." Still he remained patient and said, "Since we have been the recipients of God's goodness, should we not also accept the bad? As it pleases the Lord so let it happen. Let the name of the Lord be praised. I have often contested against the pope and the devil, and the Lord saved and strengthened me in a wondrous manner. Why should I not calmly accept whatever he may do to me according to his will?"

Through it all his thoughts were occupied with the need of the church. Tearfully he prayed to God that he would preserve the Word after his death. "I am dying as an enemy of your enemies," he said, "a man under the ban of your enemy, the pope, with the result that your enemy will in turn die under your ban." He also expressed concerns for the University of Wittenberg. He was afraid that after his death the unity that existed would be disrupted. The expected separation from his wife and children was oppressing him heavily. He commended them to the elector, who promised to care for them as for his own. But as he was growing ever weaker and had begun to vomit, he cried, "O dear Father, take this little soul into your hand. I will thank and praise you. Move on, little soul, move on in God's name."

Since there was no further change in his condition, the doctors considered it wise to send the patient to Gotha, where aid could be given for his restlessness as well as for a lack of medicine. Luther, the Erfurt physician Sturtz, Bugenhagen, Spalatin, and Mykonius boarded the elector's carriage on the 26th. Another wagon was sent along carrying the necessary materials for medical assistance, especially coal pots for warming towels. They said farewell at the wagon, and Luther made the sign of the cross over

them with the words, "May the Lord fill you with his blessing and with hatred against the pope."

It was feared that traveling in the carriage would cause the sick man pain, and that is what happened. But the jostling up and down in the carriage on the rough road through the hills also caused a different, completely unexpected result. It produced the emptying of the patient which had been missing. "Luther is alive! Luther is alive!" was the resounding in Smalcald not many hours later in front of the house of the papal legate. That was the messenger who had set out from Tambach at 2:00 a.m. with the good news. That same night Luther had written the good news in a letter to Melanchthon and had announced the reversal of his condition while it was still taking place. Luther also wrote to his wife right away. "I was dead and had commended you and the children to God and to my good lord, as though I would not see you again. I was very concerned about you, but I had committed myself to the grave. There have been so many sincere prayers to God for me, which have been offered tearfully by so many people, that it seems to me that I have been born again. Therefore, give thanks to God, and let aunt Lene give thanks to the true Father; for you surely would have lost this father."

Unfortunately that new found improvement would not last. At Gotha the pains recurred with such vehemence that the end again appeared to be near. Once again Luther submitted to dying. He assigned the task of comforting his Kate to Bugenhagen, asked forgiveness of the Wittenberg theologians, especially of Melanchthon, for whatever way he had offended them. He also sent greetings to the elector and the landgrave to tell them that they should not allow themselves to be disturbed by the hostilities of the papists, but bravely carry on in their work for the gospel. He also stated once again that he had a good conscience in regard to his storming against the papacy. "Indeed," he concluded, "I am now prepared to die, whenever my Savior, Christ Jesus, so wills. Nevertheless, I would like to have lived until Pentecost, so that I would still be able to make public in print my harsh accusations, exposing to the whole world the Roman beast, the pope and his kingdom. If God lets me live I will truly do so, and no devil

shall prevent me from doing so. But if I die, there surely will come after me those who will also not present him with a gift. Now I commend my soul to the faithful hand of my Redeemer, Jesus Christ, whom I have preached and confessed to



A Picture of John Frederick "The Magnanimous"

According to a painting by Cranach

the world." Then he made his confession and let Bugenhagen pronounce the absolution to him.

It appeared as though the wish that Luther had expressed at Smalcald, namely, that he would like to have died and been buried in his elector's territory, was going to be fulfilled there at Gotha. But God had decided differently. The next morning Luther wondered why he was still alive. We would soon find him again in ecclesiastical debates.

Already at Smalcald Butzer sent him news from Switzerland along with a letter from mayor Meyer of Basel. Luther replied to this letter in a friendly fashion and promised to do what he could so that a true union could also come to pass between them. At the same time he asked that "the resting birds be not startled." Further discussions with Luther were impossible due to his illness. But Butzer, together with the Augsburg preacher Wolfhart, decided to travel and seek Luther, upon receiving the good news from Tambach. They found him still considerably ill in Gotha. Still, in his serious illness, he willingly permitted a meeting with them. Once again he warned them against hiding things. Moreover he stated that when he would be well again he wanted to be faithful in presenting the Swiss with a treatise. Luther kept his promise even that same year. There were also further negotiations and Luther continued to hope for a good outcome. He did so, until he had to admit that the Swiss did not want to let go of the Zwinglian doctrine, and those negotiations died.

Finally, while still at Gotha, a decisive improvement set in for Luther regarding his sickness. Six stones, one as big as a bean, left him. In the meantime the discussions at Smalcald were quickly concluded. The leaders explained that they were not being served with the sort of council which the pope had proposed. They would have to appear in a foreign country as the accused, and the pope would be both the accuser and the judge. They had requested a free council and would insist upon it. They sent the pope's letter back unopened.

The purpose for which Luther had written those articles was thereby rendered void. However, since there were already a number of signatures

affixed to that fine and powerful confession, the issue was pursued further and others were also allowed to confess themselves with their signatures as adhering to the Lutheran teaching. Some signed while traveling. Most of them signed while they were at the meeting at Smalcald. Thus the confession, which belongs to the symbols of our church, bears the name: "The Smalcald Articles."

What's more, a tract which had been produced by Melanchthon about the primacy of the pope had also been presented for signing and so was recognized by the theologians as a joint confession. In addition the Augsburg Confession and its Apology had been taken up once again. The adjourning of that alliance conference reported, "Our learned men, who have discussed all the articles of our Confession in a Christian manner, agreed on all points as contained in the Confession and the Apology. There is only one article, the one about the primacy of the pope, which they have tabled for the time being." Finally the counts and delegated theologians confessed themselves there to the concord in a formal manner, that concord which had been established with the southern Germans in Wittenberg.

Let us now again return to Luther, whom we had left in Gotha. With special care he was being brought to Weimar by way of Erfurt. There Melanchthon, who was coming from the convention, caught up with him. Jonas and one of Luther's nieces had traveled to meet Luther. In Altenburg they rested at Spalatin's home. On the 14th of March they arrived safely in Wittenberg. Luther remained weak for some time. But before the month had ended he again occupied his pulpit as a diligent preacher for Lent and Easter.

Chapter 45

Harvest Days during Stormy Weather

Longer threads were being spun in the empire, and new threads were begun, while Luther was tending to some of his duties in Wittenberg. When it became known that the Smalcald League had rejected the papal council, the active papists thought that now was the time for Caesar to be prompted to take action. In order to be prepared to have a united front in such a case, the counts George of Saxony, Heinrich von Wolfenbuettel, and Erich von Kalenberg entered into an alliance, which would later include King Ferdinand and Caesar. The Imperial Vice Chancellor Held, who had begun the whole movement, made an attempt to spur the alliance into open battle. For doing so, however, he fell into some disfavor with Caesar.

Once again the Turk was on the move. The imperial forces could hardly do without the smalcald forces, especially if they should be challenged to open warfare. So what happened was that, instead of going to war against the evangelicals, a new treaty was adopted in France at the beginning of 1539. In connection with this it was hoped that a side discussion might be pursued, aimed at peace regarding the ecclesiastical entanglements.

In addition, a favorable change had developed in the situation for the evangelicals in the dukedom of Saxony. Duke George had been called out of this life on April 17th. Luther had repeated differences with him ever since the imperial diet at Augsburg. They had stood opposed to each other as early as the appearance of both of his writings about that diet, "Remarks about Caesar's Edict" and the "Warning to His Dear Germans". The duke had issued a response under a pseudonym, which Luther had countered with a writing that had been poured out of a salty brew under the title, "Against the Plotter of Dresden." In it he defended himself against the unjust accusation that he was starting a rebellion.

Since his elector had admonished Luther about this sharp writing, Luther let go of the "knots and lumps", which George had still carried with him on his sleeve, and lapsed into silence. When George in 1532 had exiled a large number of evangelically minded subjects from Oschatz* and Leipzig, Luther applied himself to comfort those who had been driven away and those who were still being threatened. (*Footnote: "To Those Christians Who Have Been Driven Away from Oschatz" LV Vol. 8, p. 79)

The duke interpreted this as inciting his subjects, and Luther again sharply replied. This quarrel once again was knocked down. Still, Luther had done something meaningful and had encouraged those oppressed brothers in the faith in Leipzig that God had already removed many of the bloodthirsty oppressors since the Diet of Worms. "Let us patiently wait a little while longer for what God will accomplish before ten years will have passed since the occasion of the Diet of Worms." While the ten years had not yet passed, Duke George had become a corpse. (*Footnote: It is said that while the duke lay dying in his bed he was vainly seeking rest and comfort by calling on the saints. A noble reminded him of his own proverbial statement, "Going straight makes the best message carriers." That noble urged him to go directly to Christ for his refuge and as a result he is said to have called out, "Indeed, so help me, faithful Savior, Jesus Christ; have mercy on me and make me holy through your bitter suffering and death.")

His two sons had preceded him in death, one in 1537 and the other in 1539. Now death had claimed the father so quickly that he had not been able to make his last testament legal and binding. He had meant to exclude his brother Heinrich as his heir. He would assign his estate and his territory to Caesar and his brother Ferdinand, if Heinrich, who was a member of the Smalcald League, would not return to the Roman church and join the Nuernberg Alliance of the Catholic counts. Hence not only was the ponderous enemy of the Lutheran doctrine gone but, on the heels of the death of Duke George, Heinrich now permitted the Reformation to spread throughout the land immediately upon his taking office. Nothing stood in the way.



Herzog Georg „der Bärtige“ von Sachsen, nach einem alten Holzschnitt.

Picture of Duke George, the Bearded
According to a woodcut

The evening before Pentecost Luther preached in the chapel of the Pleissenburg, where he had once debated with Eck. Luther and Jonas had been invited to the "homage" celebration. (The "homage" festival was the swearing in of the people to their new head of government office.) The next afternoon he preached once again in one of the city churches, which had been barred to him during the days of the debate with Eck.

That same year the Electorate of Brandenburg joined the ranks of the evangelical territories. When Duke Erich died in 1540, not only did the Catholic alliance lose one of their members, but his widow welcomed the reformation in Braunscheig-Kalenberg. The countess herself was a dear personal friend of Luther and his wife, and Luther was helpful to her in reforming the church in her lands.

It was not surprising that Caesar would be inclined toward a peaceful rule in Germany under such circumstances. A meeting at Speier to promise a "Christian equality" in religion was thwarted because of an epidemic. Nevertheless, such a meeting was held at Hagenau. Melanchthon was delegated by the elector to attend. But he only got as far as Weimar. From Weimar a letter of the elector came to Luther asking him to travel to Weimar immediately and bring Cruciger with him. Melanchthon had become ill and could not travel farther. Therefore Cruciger was to go to Hagenau and Luther, as the count's advisor, was to await the continued transactions in Weimar.

There was a special reason for Melanchthon's illness. The Landgrave Philip of Hessen, who had not been enjoying a happy marriage with his wife, the daughter of Duke George, had the bad idea of marrying a second wife, a lass from the Saale River area, with whom he had fallen in love; otherwise, he claimed, he could not control himself. He declared that the advice he had received at his confession, which he had received from Luther and Melanchthon through Butzer, was in his favor. He then actually consummated the marriage with Margaretha of Saale on March 4, 1540. Melanchthon, who had been brought there by pretext, was requested to be present as a witness.

Luther had a good conscience about what he had done in this situation. He didn't hide his involvement in this matter, for which he would be blamed as it had taken place at this time. It was also possible for him to justify his actions. But he did not want to do that. "I will," he also wrote soon thereafter, "hold in the strictest confidence what the landgrave disclosed to me through Butzer's confession, even to my own disgrace. It is better to say that Luther acted foolishly ... than for me to reveal the real reason why we yielded to the landgrave." The fact that he did not regard the actions of the landgrave as justifiable he expressed repeatedly later.

This is the way he wrote against Hans Worst. "I know of a lady landgrave in Hessen who lives there and should be called Mrs. and mother in Hessen ... I refer to the duchess, the daughter of Duke George in Saxony. The fact that you counts are, in part, traveling on a road of planks (not as durable as a road of stone), you are responsible for having brought this about with your bad example, etc." So when this entire affair became public knowledge with the dust flying, Melanchthon was plunged into angst and despair at the thought of his role in the matter and because of fear of the consequences, until he finally collapsed under his burden.

The condition in which Luther found his friend Philip was wretched. It seemed as though death had already accomplished its purpose, as though his senses had already ceased and his eyesight had been dimmed. The physician, once again the renowned Sturz, had reached the end of his skills. At this point Luther applied his. He stood in front of the window and prayed with all his might. He grasped all of the heavenly promises of his heavenly Father and insisted that his petition be heard. He received his answer. After he had prayed he again turned to the patient, who was beginning to show signs of life. When Philip asked that they would let him go home, Luther said, "Not at all. You must keep serving our Lord God."

He had food brought to him and ordered, "You must eat in front of me, or I shall put you under the ban." Thereupon Melanchthon ate and recovered further, so Luther could write to his friend Lange, "We found him dead. He is alive through a miracle of God." Melanchthon himself later said that he would have died at that time had Luther not come.

Nothing was accomplished at Hagenau except that new negotiations for a meeting at Worms were being considered. At Worms, indeed, the discussion of religion had been begun, but was again postponed to take place at a diet, which Caesar himself wanted to hold at Regensburg.

We know that Luther considered the efforts toward unity with the papists hopeless. He had expressed that very clearly in the Smalcald Articles. The accuracy of this conviction became very evident again at Regensburg. If ever the hope for a favorable result was evident it was at Regensburg. The main figures in the debate for the evangelicals were Melancthon and the peacemaker, Butzer. On the Roman side were the well intended and, for some time already, reform-minded theologians Pflug and Gropper; even the papal legate Contarini, who was present at the diet, showed himself to be more inclined than the other papists.

It actually did at first seem, for those who did not look deeper into the matter, that things were heading in a good direction. The papists made concessions as never before on a number of important issues. But soon that wagon became mired down and could go no farther. It happened exactly as Luther had predicted in the Smalcald Articles. It was in the articles of the primacy of the pope, of the mass, and the like that the Romans would not yield. At last the evangelical representatives sent a message to Luther for his "Gutachten" for the plan they proposed, to gain his consent if possible.

Luther was once again in pain. Head problems, especially a draining ear, caused him much pain. Yet as always he was available for open and correct advice. Tolerance had been suggested. But Luther wanted to practice only one kind of tolerance, one in which not a single bit of the truth would be conceded or be forced into silence. Efforts for peace had already fallen apart at the diet due to the contrary position, which the Catholic leaders had taken against the joint statements of the theologians. Add to that the fact that the Catholic leaders along with the pope had declined the proposed tolerance request from the evangelicals. The Protestants, on their part, did not yield to the demands of Caesar. Yet one thing was

achieved; the religious peace of Nuernberg was confirmed by Caesar. The fact that this stayed in place at this time was due mainly to that nasty Turk.

Caesar did enter into an expressed agreement with the landgrave. In it the landgrave received full amnesty. He, in turn, promised not to permit the Smalcald League to unite with England or France. Because of this action Caesar aroused great displeasure among the papists. The Elector of Mainz is said to have declared at the time that they were without protection and would have to seek another Caesar for themselves. Truly, Caesar did not protect the papal shock troops when aggressive steps were being taken against those who were believed to oppose a religious peace. One such example was in motion, when the fanatic Duke Heinrich of Braunschweig wanted to enforce one of Caesar's suspended verdicts of the imperial chamber of justice against the protestant Goslar region.

For many years this powerful voluptuary had irritated the landgrave and John Frederick. He had even been accused of starting the fire in the elector's territory. He had made the accusation against Luther that Luther was referring to his own territorial lord as "Hans Wurst," in a blasphemous writing. Luther replied with salty words under the title, "Against Hans Wurst." (L.V. Vol. 29,30, p. 195 ff.) In that writing Luther cleared himself of that accusation but now appended that name to Duke Heinz in person.

Because of this breach of the peace the landgrave chastised Duke Heinrich with a surprise, when he invaded the territory of his opponent, who was waiting in vain for help from Caesar. After a brief siege he captured the duke's main city, Wolfenbuettel, and brought that entire region under his control. The landgrave's court preacher preached the first evangelical sermon in Wolfenbuettel using the text of the unjust steward. The Reformation was imported into the whole area under Bugenhagen's supervision.

No explanation is needed as to how the Protestants would boldly step forth at the next imperial diet at Nuernberg. Nevertheless, they did not succeed with their request for complete freedom to teach and to have

the imperial chamber of justice dissolved. On account of this they rejected Caesar's conclusions of his imperial diet.

Caesar aroused even more displeasure among the Romanists at the next imperial diet, which was held at Speier in 1544. Since France and the Turk were united against him, Caesar knew well from whom he could expect the most powerful aid. He not only consented to continuing a truce with the Protestants, but he also set up the prospect for an imperial meeting, in case a free Christian council would not soon take place on German soil. At this meeting the professionals could bring the religious discord between them to a peaceful conclusion. The relationship between the evangelicals and their Caesar was outwardly more amicable than ever before.

Of course, the dislike that Caesar held in his heart against the gospel and its adherents soon showed itself. This became evident as early as 1545. He had promised to bring about a free council. Now the pope was once again underwriting a purely papal council at Trident, and the German Protestants were expected to peacefully accept this under the Caesar. How he then, as soon as his hands were free, would throw his Spanish mercenaries against the evangelicals is recorded in the history books. But Luther's eyes did not have to watch. As long as he lived there was rest and peace. The Turk, an enemy of Christendom, and the papal King of France still had to serve the gospel of peace in Germany with their saber rattling as God's global peace protectors.

Chapter 46

Later Life Labors and Battles

Having paid a great deal of attention to the political situations under which Luther spent the last decade of his life on earth, from now on let us turn to the smaller circle of the reformer's friends.

Since it is a certainty that a school needs calmness to thrive and continue to bear fruit, the two full decades of unrest could not have been very beneficial for the University of Wittenberg. The peace of the more recent years had to have been a special blessing for this school. And so it was. Luther personally complained about the disorder which was said to have ruled during the "pope's war." But when the calmer years came, this very important school benefited from the blessings of the peace. The theological faculty received a new status in 1533. During that year for the first time since 1525 doctorates were granted to Bugenhagen, Cruciger, and Aepin. The elector, together with princely guests, attended the celebrations. During the summer of 1535 the fear of a plague was the reason for temporarily moving the university to Jena. But Luther calmly remained in Wittenberg and poked fun at those who fled. He implied that some of them must have had the boils on their school bags, the colic in their books, the scabs on their pens, the gout on their paper, or had contracted homesickness out of their mothers' letters. But the fugitives returned in February of 1536, and the elector marked that year by opening new wells of income for the university. The accompanying charter (for the occasion) stated:

"God in his mercy has let his Holy, Gospel-precious Word be revealed during these last times, through the teaching of the honorable and highly educated, our dearly devout and devoted, Martin Luther, doctor of Holy Scripture, with correct and true Christian understanding for comfort and salvation for all people, for which we shall express praise and thanks to him eternally, and alongside other skills especially the languages of Latin,

Greek and Hebrew by way of excellent ability and diligence of the highly-educated Melancthon for promotion of correct and Christian understanding of the Holy Scripture.”



Luther according to the painting by Cranach

It was Holy Scripture, which according to the statutes, was to remain the central issue for theological instruction, and the interpretation of the dear Word of God would remain Luther's most beloved labor. Yet since his return from the Coburg he was still hindered in many ways from practicing his teaching position due to the weakness of his body. Roaring in his head and weakness of his heart caused him great misery. At times he could neither write nor read and was often close to falling. As a result the elector was very careful to spare this valuable man. He had admonished him at the Coburg to make sure to take care of his health. During the following year he had to submit to rehabilitation for some time at the Pretch Castle with the Stablemaster Hans Loeser as much as that was possible for Luther. When he rode along in a cart for a hunt, he also took his Psalms with him and was doing some spiritual hunting. In 1536 the count released him entirely from his responsibilities of lecturing in regard to theological writings or for any other work at the university. He did this by removing him from the theological faculty. Instead he gave him, and Melancthon as well, an additional salary of 100 gulden.

Nevertheless, Luther continued to interpret books of Holy Scripture before those youthful students as much as his strength allowed. So during 1531-1534 he provided interpretations of selected Psalms, the 2nd, 51^{st*}, 45th, 90th, and the so-called Psalms of Ascent (120-134) which were also published later from notes that had been taken. (Footnote: For the interpretation of the 51st Psalm see LV Vol. 15, p. 61ff.) During the same years he had also lectured on the prophets of Hosea, Micah, and Joel, the interpretations of which were printed later. In addition, we have an extensive interpretation of the letter to the Galatians from those years. It was issued in 1535 from notes that had been taken during his lectures. He even provided a foreword for this commentary. Luther had a special love for his work on this letter. He once said, "That is the epistle to which I am engaged. She is my Kate von Bora." He treated this interpretation with great thoroughness and referred to it as among the best of what he had written about Law and Gospel and the righteousness through faith alone.

After the university's return from Jena, where it had fled because of the plague, Luther began his large interpretation of Genesis. With this he busied himself until shortly before his death. This became his last lecture, and at the same time, his most extensive lecture. It was a treasure chamber in which he again collected the riches which he lifted out of the mines of the Word of God. At first he did not want to let this interpretation be printed. He finally yielded to the pleas of his friends in 1543. Veit Dietrich prepared these lectures for printing from carefully taken notes. The first volume appeared in the spring of 1544 and included a preface by Luther. In it he wrote, "St. Jerome speaks correctly: 'Each one brings to the ark of the Lord according to his possessions, the one gold, silver, and precious jewels, others skins and goat's hair. The Lord needs all of this and allows himself to be pleased with the good will of all those who sacrifice to do so and bring gifts to him, though they do not all bring the same gifts. Therefore I am also satisfied that these lectures of mine are set forth in print for public use, and are being offered and sacrificed to God's temple as goat's hair.'" (See Exodus, chapters 25 to 36 for reference.)

Luther continued his activity in the pulpit along with his activity at his lectern. Shortly after his return from the Coburg he again had to step in for Bugenhagen, who was working at large from October 1530 to April 1532. Since Bugenhagen, in accordance with the Wittenberg pericopes, had been preaching on Wednesdays from the Gospel of Matthew and on Sundays from the Gospel of John, Luther simply continued from where Bugenhagen had left off and interpreted the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7. All these sermons were also taken down in notes and set into print in 1532 (S. LV Vol. 9-11). For his Sunday sermons he interpreted from the Gospel of John, chapter 6:26-8:38. These sermons were published after his death.

He again preached from the Gospel of Matthew when he had to substitute for Bugenhagen who was working for church order in Denmark from 1536-1539. During that time Luther interpreted Matthew 18-24. During those same years, shortly after his severe illness at Smalcald and prior to Bugenhagen's departure around Easter, he preached on John 14-16.

These sermons were published a year later from notes that had been taken. Sermons on John 17, which Luther had preached during Bugenhagen's absence in 1528 and 1529, appeared in print as early as 1530. (Footnote: The sermons on John 14-17, see LV Vol. 19-23) An interpretation of Psalm 110, which he must have delivered in sermons after Easter of 1538, he published personally the same year. (See LV Vol. 29 and 30) In his conclusion of this interpretation he called this Psalm "A special core and quintessence of all of Scripture, the likes of which none other foretells so richly and completely, as it portrays the Lord Christ with his entire kingdom."

Luther substituted for the absent city pastor not only in the pulpit but also in private ministry. With a great deal of personal devotion he made himself available to the sick in the congregation. Even when a plague threatened to break out again in 1538, and talk was again heard about moving the university and many citizens wanted to flee, Luther openly stated from the pulpit that he would remain, preach, and visit the sick, and even a hundred plagues could not cause him to flee. Concerning those who would forsake their relatives, friends, and neighbors, he threatened to burn their wood and let their savings be distributed to the poor.

We might also attribute the completion of his Church Postil as a fruit of Luther's preaching activity. He was still not satisfied with the shape in which that book was available at that time. In 1540 he had another opportunity to take it in hand. During that year the Winter Postil with many changes appeared in a new addition. Three years later he also allowed the other half, enriched by the edition of sermons on the epistles, to be edited by the specially gifted Cruciger.

He also concerned himself with edifying works as he had done earlier, on behalf of the needs of the people. There appeared the interpretations of a number of Psalms. One was the 147th, which he produced during his stay with Hans Loeser. He wrote it down afterwards and had it published. He sent this "noble wild game" as he called it "in its entirety and totality" to Hans Loeser, while he was at the same time keeping it entirely and totally for himself. (See LV Vol. 12, p. 271ff.) During

the ensuing years he issued "Summaries of the Psalms" which were to indicate "for the simple what each individual Psalm wants and of what it is capable." In an interpretation of the 101st Psalm in 1534 he explained about the "worldly state" and especially set forth the duties of the rulers.

When a pious Wittenberg barber, who often conversed with him about religious matters, had come to him seeking directions for prayer, he wrote a tract that same year on "A Simple Way to Pray for a Good Friend, Master Peter, a barber." (See LV Vol. 1, p. 136 ff.) In it he treats the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Creed and shows how a person may structure his devotions accordingly. After he had gone through the Lord's Prayer, he wrote, "This is, simply stated, about the "Our Father" or how I am used to praying this prayer myself. For to this day I suckle like a child, drink and eat like an old man on this Pater Noster. I cannot get enough of it, and for me it is more than the Book of Psalms, which I do love very much. This is the best prayer above all the rest. Stand assured that it presents itself in the way in which the true Master set it up and taught it. It is abomination upon abomination that such a prayer from such a Master should be babbled and rattled to death throughout the world. Many pray several thousand Pater Nosters in a year, and if they were to pray that way for a thousand years, they would actually have failed to taste and pray one letter or tittle of it. In summary, the Pater Noster is the biggest martyr (along with the name and Word of God) on earth, for every person tortures and abuses it. Few find comfort and are cheered by using it rightly."

However, the most important work with which we find Luther occupied in service toward his German people throughout all these years is his German Bible. In his later days we continue to see him striving to improve himself more and more as the interpreter for his beloved Germans. To carry this out he placed an order to Nuernberg in 1535 for all of the nation's books that had appeared recently, including poems, songs, pictures, etc. This was to learn nationwide verbal usage from them.

We had seen him occupied at the Coburg with translating the prophets. After he had finished and seen it printed in 1532, he translated the Old Testament Apocrypha. Luther commented that "they are not to be

held equal to Scripture, but still are useful and good to be read." Thus the enormous task, which had up to this point in time appeared only in sections, was complete. In 1534 the first complete edition was issued under the title, "Biblia, That Is, All of Holy Scripture, German. Mart. Luth. Wittenberg. MDXXXIV." With much diligence and effort had this entire project been reviewed and finally approved for the first edition. But Luther did not leave it at that.

In 1539 we find him in partnership with his friends, occupied with a new review of the 1534 edition. He completed this task in 1541, resulting in the completed publication of the second chief edition. Mathesius, who at that time was his house guest, illustrated with how much attention to detail this important work was being carried out. Several hours before the evening meal the learned associates: Bugenhagen, Jonas, Melancthon, Cruciger, Auroallus, and M. Roerer, who read the corrected work, had assembled at Luther's home. Each one had prepared himself for the text. They brought along their Latin, Greek, and Hebrew Bibles. They then proceeded to go to work. Luther read the translation which he was suggesting after careful deliberation. They then allowed the others to offer their opinions until they had reached agreement regarding the best expressions. Luther gave special consideration to present the Greek and Hebrew text in good and understandable German. For this reason he had once gone to a butcher in order to learn the names of inner parts of the animals correctly. He had several "sacrifices" butchered, and had obtained the names of the different parts. When after work the doctor would invite his friends to the evening meal, the table talk would often revolve around some specific point of their joint work. But even after the first thorough review Luther did not withdraw his hand from the project, and the editions of 1543 and 1545 were still going through several changes. Thus Luther himself treated the German Bible for what it was, namely, the most important work of his life.

In addition to this major task we should not leave unmentioned the fragrant smaller flowers which came to bloom in his garden for the church and the reformation during those late summer days of Luther's life. Let's

refer to several spiritual songs. In 1535 the Wittenberg hymnal for the first time offered the hymn, "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come," for which, the Christmas joy of his own little children may well have inspired him. At the same time the tender hymn appeared, "She's dear to me, the precious maid. I simply can't forget her..." in which he sang the praise of dear Christendom. In the summer of 1541, when prayer services were ordered for turning away the Turkish threat, for which Luther also urged "An Admonition for Prayer against the Turk," he also wrote a hymn for church services, "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word." The hymn, "Our Father, Thou in Heaven Above," appeared in 1539. The baptismal hymn, "Christ, our Lord, to Jordan Came," and the hymn, "What, Herod, Foe, Scares You so Much" in 1541; finally, in 1543 he produced "You Who Are Three in Unity" and "From Heaven Came the Angel Host." He rejoiced that others used their gift of poetry in the service of the church. But he also felt himself compelled to place a warning over the title of the preface for his little 1542 hymnal,

"Many false masters do hymns now compose
Beware and discern them and rightly dispose."

While he actively inspired so many in this field the result was that the year he died there were already 47 Lutheran songbooks in use. Nevertheless, even then he remained the choir director above all others.

While Luther was carrying out his task of instruction through the words of his lectures and his publications, he also excelled in his office as defender of the truth. As he did with the trowel, so he also first laid the sword out of his hand when he closed his eyes. (See Nehemiah 4:16-18.) The papists were indeed the first ones to discover repeatedly that he still was in the picture.

To combat the biggest abomination of the papacy, the Mass sacrifice and those who practiced it, Luther produced a writing in 1533 entitled, "Concerning the Hidden Mass and the Ordination of Pastors" (S. LV Vol. 5), in which he delivered powerful blows against both of these bastions of the

papacy as had not been done for a long time. He not only provided proof of how Christendom had been disgracefully betrayed through both of these, but also what was the true celebration of the Lord's Supper and what was the true ordination of preachers in the church and in the spiritual priesthood.

We previously dealt with another powerful indictment of the papacy, "The Smalcald Articles." He offered their publication with a foreword in 1538, so that if he were to die before a council would convene, those still alive could present his witness and confession. At the end of his foreword he lamented, "Oh, dear Lord Jesus Christ, hold the council yourself and deliver those who belong to you through your glorious coming. The pope and his followers are lost. They don't want you."

He raised his voice about the matter of a council in great detail again the following year with his production, "About the Councils and Churches." Here he again expressed his conviction that there would not be a true council under the pope. "Well then," he concludes the portion which dealt with the councils, "if we must despair of having a council, then let that be commended to the true judge and the merciful God. In the meantime we shall promote the small councils and the young councils, pastors, and schools. Let St. Peter's Article promote in every possible way and preserve (*God's truth*) against all the newly condemned articles of faith and the new good works with which the pope has flooded the world." To this he then attached a thorough explanation regarding the question of what the church actually is, namely, the holy people who truly believe in Christ and are made holy through the forgiveness of sins; and how one can recognize it, namely, before anything else, by way of Word and Sacrament and by way of the administration of these means of grace.

Luther then moved on to the school, the citizen's home, and the courthouse for the citizen's protection. These, he said, are the three divine authorities: the authority of the Holy Spirit in the church, the parents in the home, and the power in the government. The illusionary authority of the pope should not be endured alongside these, but be trampled under foot

with the power of the woman's Seed, even if a person has to receive the sting in his heel.

Luther then once again dealt with the doctrine of the church as in the already previously mentioned work, "Against Hans Wurst" (see LV vol. 29,30, p. 195ff) from the year 1541, in which he had desired to respond to the papist who had attempted to scoff at them through their heretic Heinz. Here he again proved that we are the true Church from the facts that we have the true Baptism, the true Lord's Supper, the true old Keys, the preaching office and the Word of God, the Apostles' symbols, the Lord's Prayer and other things which the Church of old possessed. "With this," he then wrote, "we have now proved that we are the true old Church together with the whole Holy Christian Church, one body and one Communion of Saints. Now it is up to you, you papists, to prove that you are the true old Church or are like it. However, this you are not able to do; but I shall prove that you are the new false church." And this he did prove in overflowing measure.

Luther would issue a final powerful writing against the papacy during the last year of his life, his farewell blessing to it. He did so when the pope declared the bitterest accusations against Caesar because of the very favorable imperial decision for the evangelicals in the year 1544. He then declared that the council would be in Trent. In this work, to which Luther gave the title, "Against the Papacy of Rome, Instituted by the Devil," (see LV vol. 25, p. 7ff.) he first wrote for "the most hell-like father" Paul III, a chapter about how his admonition to Caesar Karl and his announcement of the council ought to be regarded, namely, that the first was dictated by murder and a thirst for blood while the latter was a swindler's trick and a miserable juggler's game.

Then he wrote, "But I must stop here or save my response at this point concerning what else I have to say against the letters and the bull. For my head feels weak and I feel as though I might not be able to finish. Still, I have not yet arrived at that point which I had intended to cover in this pamphlet; which I wish to finish first, before my strength will completely leave me. For I have set three projects for myself: One, whether it is true

that the pope, as he boasts about himself, is the chief head of Christendom in regard to councils, Caesar, angels, and everything else; Second, whether it is true that, as he screams, no one can render a verdict against him, judge him, or remove him from office; Third, whether it is true, as he boasts and batters unendingly, that he has brought the Greek empire on us Germans. If I still have some strength, I will return to his bulls and letters and attempt to comb the unkempt long ears of that large, scrubby donkey."

He then answered those three questions thoroughly. In response to the first question he wrote, "This pamphlet has gotten too large under my hand, and, as is said, age is forgotten and fades away. Perhaps the same thing has happened to me. Though the papacy is a demonic abomination of itself and endless, unspeakable filth, I hope I have clearly and powerfully given an explanation to whoever wishes to be informed, (for myself I am sure) regarding the first matter from above I have dealt with. I have answered, whether it is true that the pope is the head over Christendom, lord over Caesar, kings, and the whole world. You have been informed that—praise God—no good Christian conscience can believe that the pope is or can be the head of the Christian Church or the vicar of God or Christ. But instead he is the head of the condemned churches of the very worst bullies on earth, a vicar of the devil, an enemy of God, an adversary of Christ and destroyer of the Christian Church, a teacher of all lies, of blasphemy of God and of idolatry; an arch church thief and robber. Whoever does not want to believe this, let him continue to journey along with his god, the pope. I have herewith done my duty as a called teacher and preacher of the church of Christ, and am duty bound to tell the truth." And after he had also answered the other two questions he ended his writing with the words, "But here I must let it go. If God wills, I shall do better in another pamphlet. Should I die in the meantime, may God grant, that another will make it a thousand times stronger, for the devilish pope is the last evil on earth, and the next is what all the devils can do with all their might. God help us. Amen."

While this work was going to press a new papal document, full of lies, came into Luther's hands, in which was described his death and the

dreadful ghostly spuke of the devil, who was projected next to his corpse and his grave. Luther published this work himself with an epilogue. In it he stated how he had read this angry fabrication with pleasure and how it made him feel smooth in his right kneecap and his left heel, that the pope and the papists hated him this much from their hearts and, if they would not repent, how he would regard their writing such a booklet as a favor ("goennen") for comforting themselves. ("wie er, falls sie sich nicht bekehrten, es ihnen goennte, dass sie zu ihrem Trost solche Buechlein schrieben.")

But Luther remained in battle dress not only against the pope as long as he lived, but also against the "swarmers" and the sacramentarians. It is not true that in his later years he changed his position toward them and regretted his earlier struggles against them. He also wanted to prevent any appearance that he had become one with the Zwinglians. Hence, he issued "A Warning Message to Those in Frankfurt on the Main River to Beware of Zwinglian Teaching." He did this because in 1532 he found out that the Zwinglian doctrine had sneaked into Frankfurt with a Lutheran disguise. He published this work at the beginning of 1533. In it, among other things, he stated, "Therefore this is my faithful advice which I owe before God. It is for you in Frankfurt and wherever else it is needed. Anyone who knows that his pastor publicly teaches the Zwinglian way should avoid him, and instead go without the Sacrament his entire life before he would receive it from him, truly even suffer death and all things on that account. But if the pastor is one who speaks two-tongued, who proclaims by word of mouth that the body and blood of Christ are present and real in the Sacrament, but suspicions remain that he is selling something in a sack and still means it differently than the words declare, then go to him or send your message to him plainly. Let him tell you clearly what it is that he distributes to you with his hands and you receive with your mouth, putting aside what is being believed or not believed in the heart, simply ask what the hand and the mouth here touches." At the same time in this writing he provided an appropriate treatment for Confession of Sins, when he surmised that those preachers were also exerting themselves against the Confession of Sins. Questions of this nature had reached him, and also a telling treatise (*which*

displayed the sacramentarian interpretation) in regard to Confession of Sins.

He wrote in the same vein in regard to a similar situation to those in Augsburg. In it he again decisively rejected any fellowship with the swarmers. He would express the same view in letters sent in his later years. But when the claim that he had bonded himself with the Zwinglians became even louder he issued in 1544 "A Short Confession D. Mart. Luther about the Holy Sacrament". (S. LV Vol. 24, p. 279ff.) In it he wrote, "As I am now heading for the grave, I will bring this witness and this reputation with me before the judgment seat of my dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that in all seriousness I have condemned and avoided the swarmers and the enemies of the Sacrament: Carlstadt, Zwingli, Oekolampad, Stenkefeld (meaning Schwenkfeld.), and their disciples at Zurich and wherever they are. This is in accord with the Lord's command in Titus 3:10: "You shall avoid a heretic, if he has been admonished once or twice, and know that such a person is wrong and is sinning, as one who simply was to be condemned." They have been admonished by me and many others often enough and seriously enough. The books are available in broad daylight. Our preaching is going out daily against their blasphemies and their heresy that is full of lies, which they know very well."

But since the opponents pointed to the situation in the castle church, how the elevation of the host and the chalice had been taken out of the service, as evidence that Luther wanted to show that he no longer held to the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, he dwelt on that issue in the last section. He showed that he had allowed the continuing of this practice earlier, since it still did allow for an acceptable interpretation, because Carlstadt had decried it as a sin. But now, since this practice had fallen away in most Lutheran churches, some special observance was no longer desirable in Wittenberg, and therefore this practice was omitted as a matter of freedom.

A different sort of swarming with which Luther was at odds were the Anabaptists. As early as 1528 he had written a detailed treatise against them, "Concerning Rebaptism to Two Pastors." The reason behind this was

that a preacher from this sect had appealed to him. In this writing he proved the correctness of infant baptism. However, he had also spoken against putting the penalty of death on the swarmers as often happened. But when they in later years, especially through secret dealings, were also seeking to get followers from evangelical congregations, he issued a publication in 1532, "Concerning the Sneakers and the Corner Preachers," which simultaneously became a treatise regarding the need for an orderly call into the preaching ministry. "Therefore it applies as follows," he wrote, "either produce the call and command to you (*which qualifies you*) to preach, or be silent, for preaching is forbidden. For it is called an office, truly, a preaching office. But no one may hold an office without a command or a call."

How necessary a warning against these swarmers was, and to what an end these people would come, when they moved away from the steadfast and firm Word of God to the activity of the swarmers is shown as follows. It revealed itself in a terrifying manner as the Anabaptists at Muenster, where the gospel had previously made an inroad under the "Tailor King," Bockelsohn of Leyden. There the swarmers erected their kingdom by robbing those who did not want to participate in communal property, and thereafter introduced polygamy, and under terrifying obsession forcefully resisted the besieging army of neighboring counts, until that pitiable starved city was captured by assault.

A third kind of opposition which Luther fought in his writings were the Jews, people who were for him, in the sense in which we speak today, are regarded as unbelievers. Their stiff-necked attitude, rejection of the gospel, and their hateful blasphemies against Christ and the Holy Trinity led Luther to three writings in 1543: "Concerning the Jews and their Lies," "Concerning Shem Hamphoras and the Genealogy of Christ," (Shem Hamphoras was a description of one of the names the Jews had invented, to whom they attributed special powers. Christ was said to have performed his miracles with use of those special powers, according to their lies.) and "About the Last Words of David." In these works Luther presented the

truth of Christianity over and against these unbelievers and blasphemers of Christendom.

But more troublesome than these battles were other struggles for the aging fighter. These were the battles imposed on him by those who had stood shoulder to shoulder with him, and who in part wanted to be better Lutherans than Luther himself. We have heard about his battles with Carlstadt. According to Carlstadt Luther had not gone far enough in the war against the pope and his doctrine.

The same thing happened with one of his students, who has been mentioned a number of times already, namely, Johann Agricola from Eisleben. (His actual name was Schneider or Sneider.) He had become the head of the boy's school in his, and Luther's, birthplace. Since he believed that he had been called for a higher purpose, he was not satisfied with that position and would not rest until he had been made a professor at Wittenberg.



Agricola according to a miniature portrait by Cranach in the Wittenberg
University Album, the year 1531

But he had already previously presented himself as a watchman for pure doctrine. When Melanchthon had worked out his visitation pamphlet, he alleged that too much emphasis in that work was put on the law and its effects. He was not even satisfied when the pamphlet appeared in print with a foreword from Luther's hand.

To be sure at the beginning he remained silent and kept himself in friendly companionship with Luther. We have heard how he was taken along to the imperial diet in Augsburg as a preacher. Luther had welcomed him with genuine affection when he moved to Wittenberg, even giving him, his wife and children lodging when he could not immediately find living quarters.

Yet there were others who did not trust this ambitious man. In 1537 it was discovered that Agricola actually sought to bring his idea to the people of Wittenberg that the inner crushing of the presence of sin in man must be accomplished only by the gospel and not by the law. In addition to that he claimed that the law has no place in the Church of the new covenant.

He secretly allowed statements to be distributed, in which he supplied written examples asserting that Luther in some of his writings, though surely contradicted in others, was teaching the same as he. Thus Luther himself saw that he would be compelled to confront him, though it became very difficult for him to do so. As he himself said, he almost died on account of this. Yet, he did this with a number of debates, which he set up as theses against the "Antinomians" or "attackers of the law."

When he appeared at the first debate, Agricola acted as if the matter did not apply to him at all. But then Luther took away from him the permission to lecture on theology, which he had assigned to him as deacon of the faculty. Thereupon Agricola joined in a second debate and Luther

declared himself to be satisfied and even put in a good word for him with the elector. But when it was learned that Agricola's teaching had gained a following, Luther decided that a retraction by Agricola was necessary. He also took a stance against the "Antinomians" in a new disputation. Agricola declared himself ready to retract and asked Luther to issue it for him. Luther did so with a short writing, "Against the Antinomians." In addition to this Agricola also published a retraction which Melanchthon had prepared for him.

So the honest and upright Luther was hurt and disappointed all the deeper when Agricola soon after allowed himself to be involved with hidden attacks against Luther and his writings, which gave evidence of persistence in his old error. Now Luther's trust was exhausted and he no longer spoke to that "false man." However, since new reports about the spread of antinomianism kept arriving, Luther took the opportunity to testify against it both in writing and in speaking. Though he did not mention Agricola by name in this process, nevertheless Agricola believed the blows to have been directed against him and finally handed a formal grievance in to the elector.

But now any holding back on Luther's part came to an end. In response to that grievance he revealed how the impure activity of the "Magister Grikel" had gone on some years already and once more provided proof of how dangerous the teaching of "prideful, foolish talk" is. When a friendly intervention in this matter by the elector did not succeed, a formal examination was commanded. But before it could be set up Agricola withdrew his grievance and followed the advice of Elector Joachim of Brandenburg, who drafted him to Berlin as the court preacher. From there he did produce a satisfactory retraction. But friendly relations between him and the Wittenbergers were not established, and later years would confirm Luther's verdict in regard to Agricola.

Among his colleagues at the university it was the jurists who caused further trouble for Luther, especially the otherwise famous Dr. Hieronymus Schurf. Though he had joined the cause of the Reformation at its beginning, he did not want to let go of the canonical law which had been inherited

from the middle ages. This was in spite of the fact that it contained quite a bit of material which did not agree with the true teaching of God's Word.

Thus, according to canonical law, bonded engagements were valid, even without and contrary to the approval of parents. Luther had spoken out against this problem in a treatise which had been published as early as 1530. In addition, Schurf wanted it to be forbidden that a preacher enter a second marriage after the death of his first wife. He based this view on 1. Timothy 3:2 and kept insisting that it was in harmony with an understanding that had been acceptable during previous ages. Luther had entered into the discussion against this false interpretation as early as 1528.

But Schurf could not be swayed from his intentions. When secret engagements gave rise to a different kind of offense, as even a son of Melanchthon entered into such an arrangement and a similar situation arose in Luther's own household, Luther considered himself compelled to give public testimony against this problem from the pulpit and against the jurists who supported it. He did so for a number of years, repeatedly and sharply. "I am angry," he said in one of such sermons of 1538, "and want to be angry. For they (the "nasty" jurists) are meddling against me inreference to my divine call." This battle against his partners in the faith caused Luther great grief. Yet, a whole year before his death he succeeded in persuading the jurists to give in and the elector himself offered his hand in this matter.

But among those who historically are called Lutherans and took positions on many sides (both defending and opposing sides) but against whom Luther had to offer defense as a protector of divine truth, there is one whom we cannot leave unmentioned. This person is none less than Melanchthon. It is true that in Luther's writings we nowhere find an attack against this highly gifted man, to whom Luther gave so much incredible fondness with friendly and affectionate loyalty. On the contrary, Luther showed him the highest regard to the end of his life. And still, to the question as to whether Melanchthon consented faithfully and completely in favor of the truth to all of the issues which Luther taught and defended, we have to answer, "No!"

We have already seen how his efforts to yield at the diet of Augsburg had raised strong suspicions among faithful Lutherans. That same willingness to give in showed itself again later in regard to the swarmers. Even his correspondence with people, who fought against Luther's teaching, was a special temptation for him, one to which he should not have resigned himself. While we have seen in Luther's behavior a compulsion to take a stand against the undermining effect of the false rumors that he had united with the swarmers, and that he was supposed to have partially yielded to them, Melanchthon was active to the contrary. He wanted to appear as one who would not completely reject the opinions of those who taught differently and who would yield somewhat for the sake of peace. Truly, even more, already during Luther's lifetime he did not take a stand with Luther with full conviction in regard to a number of important doctrinal issues. Doubts had arisen in him about the Lutheran teaching of the Lord's Supper. And, in the working of conversion and justification, he nourished the opinion to give credit to man for some part, even if it were only a small role.

How did Luther react to all of this? To this we must respond: Luther did not discover all of it. How Melanchthon considered Luther's firm stand for all of the truth and how he thought in his own heart about Luther's conflict with the opponents, Luther could have known only if he had read the letters Melanchthon had written to those opponents and how he expressed himself to them. Melanchthon also sought to keep his doubts a secret from Luther. But when Luther did discover an error, he did not allow it to go on. Rather, he would step forward with an open debate against what Melanchthon had presented, reject it as wrong and refute it from Scripture, upon which Melanchthon would retract it; or he would rebuke Melanchthon privately where he had spoken or acted incorrectly. He would prove his error until Melanchthon would give a satisfactory explanation, as had happened until shortly before the end of Luther's life. In one case Luther was already taking steps to write against Melanchthon openly; and it was only through the efforts of the elector to encourage a private discussion at which Melanchthon again gave a satisfactory explanation, so that an open breach was prevented.

If Melanchthon truly had such room for doubt in his heart, as appears to be the case according to his own letters, then Luther must be given credit for his sharp control. For as long as Luther was alive Melanchthon again and again publicly confessed his belief in Luther's teaching. As a result of these confessions and the explanations he received in answer to privately offered rebuke, Luther regarded and dealt with Melanchthon as a rightly believing teacher to the end of his life, though he was also well acquainted with his weaknesses.

While Luther was thus strewing the noble seed of nurturing teaching near and far and made the sowing of weeds difficult, he also repeatedly experienced the fact that not all seed falls on good soil and that the devil is active in trying to take the Word out of the heart. Yet he was also allowed to experience new territories being opened to the gospel. Thus, after the gospel had found a foothold already in other areas in the territory of Archbishop Albrecht, like Magdeburg and Halberstadt, it also happened that



Picture of Justus Jonas according to a painting by Cranach

a road was paved for the gospel at Halle, the favorite city in which Albrecht liked to stay. There the council called Luther's friend, Jonas, to serve as pastor. Soon two other evangelical preachers were installed. Albrecht no longer wanted to stay there and, taking his treasured relics, moved out.

When he had them displayed in Mainz and celebrated them with indulgences, Luther scoffed about this soundly in a "New Newspaper from the Rhine." In it he spoke of the wonderful relics he knew about, which the archbishop was said to have put on display. These included a piece of the left horn of Moses, three flames from the burning bush, a lock from the beard of Beelzebub. In addition the pope had in advance promised ten years of indulgence for anyone who would bring a guilder to his holiness.

At the same time the Naumberg Bishopric was being decided. The elector "as the territorial count and chief patron" planned its occupation so that he would allow Luther's friend, Amsdorf, to be dedicated as the bishop. Luther himself, together with other neighboring preachers, had to conduct the festive dedication of the bishop in the large domed cathedral at Naumberg. What happened first was that the congregation confirmed the choice of the new bishop with a loud "Amen!" Then, after Luther had delivered his ordination sermon, the chosen one was ordained with prayer before the altar through the laying on of hands. To this the congregation sang a "Te Deum" along with the choir. Luther reported on that special occasion in a special writing, an occasion the likes of which had not existed before.

An evangelical bishop was also installed in Merseburg in 1544. Prior to that time the aged Archbishop Hermann of Koeln had turned toward the Reformation and had entrusted the arrangement of his church matters to Butzer and Melanchthon in 1545.

Regrettably Butzer had again acted without an approved form. Melanchthon then withstood a public testimonial that Luther had wanted to issue against him, by explaining that he, Melanchthon, had not written the article about the Lord's Supper in the whole reformation process of Cologne, and that he also had expressed his misgivings to Butzer about his formulation.

The archbishop of Muenster also began to introduce the reformation in his territory. We have earlier taken notice of how this work was being disrupted through the abomination of the Anabaptists in the city of Muenster.

But whereas, as is told, Luther was privileged repeatedly to rejoice that the church of the reformation was extending its boundaries, he also had to see and hear a number of reports that burdened his heart and drew bitter lamentations from him about matters taking place in the cradle of the reformation. We have heard several instances earlier as to how Agricola and others caused problems for him there.

However, it was not only those who occupied the office of teacher that gave cause for sorrow, it was also the congregation of hearers who did so, even after a number of things had improved through the visitation. Noticeable problems such as a large amount of self-satisfaction, a lukewarm attitude, and ignorance were evident in response to the wholesome teaching. A covetous pursuit of earthly goods was also apparent. In all seriousness Luther reproved the vulgarity of the farmers, the greed of the townsmen, the lasciviousness of the nobility, and the excesses of the students.

Luther had spoken decisively against usury as early as 1519 in both a short and also in a longer sermon (see LV vol. 13, 14). He did so again in his letter to the nobility, following that up in 1525 with a work entitled "Concerning Buying Activity and Usury." (see LV Vol. 13, 14). Then in 1539, after he had borne witness against the usurers in a sharp sermon, he issued a writing "To the Pastors to Preach Against Usury" (S. LV vol. 13,14), in which he condemned the collecting of interest as sinful. In regard to this testimony, of course, he also expressed his conviction that his book would truly prick the consciences of the small usurers; the gross fleecers of land, on the other hand, would laugh into their fists. But at least he wanted to have given his witness.

It was the same with his attempts to introduce and revise orderly church discipline. There as well he was afraid that his work would serve its purpose to instruct the common man, but the mighty lords would not allow themselves to be treated this way. However, this did not stop him from promoting the exercise of strict church discipline, and he lamented the fact



Picture of Amsdorf according to an old woodcut

that he could not take it as far as he would have liked. During his later years Luther, as he had done earlier, instructed the congregations in the proper use of the ban, including how to exclude and publicly announce the names of impenitent sinners and turn them away from the Lord's Supper. When the forceful imposition of discipline in a congregation was suggested to be transferred to the banning procedure of a consistory, as was first arranged

in the electorate circle in 1539, this was not in accord with Luther's thinking. He wanted to see discipline remain in the hands of the congregation.

But when disorder was starting to hold the upper hand in Wittenberg and Luther could not make headway with his witnessing, he began to make plans to leave the city. However, the pleading and tears of friends succeeded to have him still remain. So he stayed. At the start of the next year, when the elector, prompted by the recess of the imperial diet at Speier, requested from his Wittenberg theologians a general scheme in regard to "Christian Comparison and Reformation on behalf of Religion in General," Luther submitted such a "Gutachten" along with the others.

That was soon followed by his work, "Against the Papacy of Rome, Instituted by the Devil." But even above his scolding of the antichrist, he was bothered by the disorder of the Christians, which was still spreading throughout his city. In addition to the witness he had been giving up to this time, his concern was shown by the fact that he now again, suddenly but in all seriousness, was intending to shake the dust of Wittenberg off his feet.

When reports of the lax and grossly sinful living ("ueppig") in Wittenberg had reached his ears while he was in the midst of a trip for recuperation, he ordered his wife, Kate, to sell his house and possessions. He said he would rather take up the staff of a wanderer and eat the bread of beggars, than at the loss of his irksome labors foul his elderly days with the disorder in Wittenberg.

Only after his colleagues and the mayor, who had been directed to do so by the city council, caught up to him on his trip and promised that they would help him in his efforts against the offense, and the elector also made similar promises, only then was Luther persuaded to get ready to return. The city council, in conjunction with the university and according to the command from the count, now actually adopted rules against the disorderliness which had so burdened the heart of that faithful man. A new visitation also was ordered, for which Luther issued the visitation booklet of 1528 with a new foreword.

Upon his return Luther once more reached for his pen against the enemies of the pure gospel. The theological faculty at Lyon had once again spoken out. They had taken the Roman teaching under their protection with 32 polemic theses against the poison of the Lutheran, Oecolampadian, and other heresies. He now took up this cause against all others. In so doing he once again elevated the majesty of God's Word. The first thesis was, "Everything which a person teaches in the churches or congregations of God without God's Word is nothing less than lies and godless material." The 25th Thesis, "St. Augustine also does not want for his or someone else's books to be regarded, or honored, as equal to Holy Scripture, or that a person should regard his proverbs as articles of faith."

He cut short the chief errors of the Roman church in a concise and keen manner. In between, he took advantage of one more opportunity to demonstrate publicly how he was separated from the error of the Zwinglians. He did so in the 27th thesis where he wrote, "Concerning the Zwinglians and the sacramentarians, as they deny that Christ's body and blood in the highly honored Sacrament are not received physically by mouth, we seriously hold them to be heretics and members cut off from the congregation of God."

In this chapter we have made mention of the last doctrinal and polemic writings of the great teacher. Large was their number, great the diversity of the writings from his hand which had preceded them and had been distributed in countless editions. And there still remained a demand for those which had appeared earlier. Luther took no payment from the publishers or the book sellers, neither during the earlier nor the later years, and so those people realized even more profit through those books.

Gradually the book dealers heard of a wish for a complete edition of the available writings of Luther, and the request for such an edition was also directed to the printers by the theologians. At first, however, Luther wanted nothing to do with it. He was of the opinion that his books had now become excessive. In 1537 he wrote to Capito that with the exception of his book to Erasmus and his Small Catechism, he would like to devour all of his books as was done in the myth of Saturn and his children.

But he finally yielded to the demand. In 1539 the first volume of the German writings appeared, and in 1545 the first volume of his Latin writings appeared in a folio edition at Wittenberg. After the death of the editor eleven German and six Latin editions were to follow the first volumes. Even so many of the Lutheran writings had not yet been included. Luther began the preface for the first part of his German works with the words, "I would prefer to have seen my pamphlets be left behind altogether and disappear. But I cannot defend," he went on, "that without my thanks all my books are desired to be gathered into print to show me a little honor. I have to permit them to risk the cost and the labor for this. Allright then, so let it happen in the name of God except that I plead in a friendly manner, that whoever wants to have my books at this time, let it by no means be a hindrance for him to study Scripture itself." (S. LV vol. 2, p. 178 ff)

He then gave his precious instruction for the correct study of theology by the three rules "Oratorio, Meditatio, and Tentatio (Prayer, Contemplation, Attack [{"tentatio"} can also mean "examine", {or may I venture to suggest "apply"}]) and closed the genuine Lutheran admonition toward humility with the words, "If you feel yourself to believe that you have certainly gotten it right and amuse yourself with your own booklet, teaching, or writing, as though you have really done it correctly and preached it fittingly, and you are pleased that you are being praised before others, perhaps even want to be praised, lest you might grieve and give up; if you are that kind of a person, dear reader, then grab your own ears, and if you grab properly then you will find a nice pair of big, long, rough donkey ears; then completely risk the expense on them and decorate them with golden shells, so that wherever you go people can hear you, point their finger at you and say, 'Look, look, there goes that fine animal that can write such precious books and can preach exceedingly well.' Then you will be holy, more than holy in the heavenly kingdom, indeed, where the hellish fire has been prepared for the devil and his angels. In summary, let us seek honor and be proud, wherever we might be. But in this book the honor belongs to God and to God alone. It is said, 'Deus superbis resistet, humilibus autem dat gratiam. Cui est Gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen.'"

("God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. To whom be the glory forever. Amen.") (Ja. 4:6; 1.Pet.5:5)

Chapter 47

In the Luther Home at Wittenberg

In our contemplation of the great reformer we have come close to the time when he was to leave the Luther house in Wittenberg and not set foot in it again. May we enjoy one more visit to the house, while the man from whom it got its name was still living there.

During the last days of his life the Elector John had consigned the old monastery building to its resident, Martin Luther, as heir and owner. John Frederick had confirmed that act. A very amicable relationship existed between the counts and the Luther family. Luther was often at the count's residence in Torgau, preached there in the castle, and was made very welcome.

The count had raised Luther's salary to 300 guilders, a sum which, according to its current value (in 1883) was equal to about \$1200. (The 2014 value is no doubt thousands of dollars higher!) In addition to this, many groceries arrived as a supplement, flowing regularly into the basement of Mrs. Kate. And besides that, there were monetary gifts from nobles, precious chalices, rings, chains, etc. These also flowed into the housefather's treasury in honor of him. In 1542 he estimated the value of such things in his possession at 1000 guilders. In addition to this he received an honorary salary of 50 guilders from the King of Denmark. His portion of the inheritance from his father was 250 guilders, which his brother Jacob, who received the property, had to pay out to him over time. The city council also occasionally showed its gratitude for the ministerial services he performed, providing the delivery of stones and lime for finishing the building which Luther had received in an unfinished state. Mrs. Kate also made use of the right to brew beer which went along with the home.

Luther expanded the old monastic property by purchasing three gardens and some other acreage. In 1541 he also bought a small house

near his residence. The year before he had acquired some land property between Leipzig and Borna from his wife's brother's wife for 610 guilders. However, he could not pay this amount immediately. In 1542 he estimated his debts, which caused the Mrs. Doctor many a care, at 460 guilders. Through it all Luther regarded himself among the owners of property, and, when in 1542 a Turk tax was assessed, he asked the elector to pay his taxes for him.

The house with all its residents, the garden with its fruit trees, the fish pond and whatever thrived in it, the landed estate with all its animals, the cows, horses, pigs, chickens, bee hives, etc. belonged to the business. This business was that in which Mrs. Kate, under the headship of her spouse, conducted her reliable work without cost to Martin. Luther himself had neither the time nor the special skill to concern himself with those things very much. Here and there he would make certain purchases for the operation of the business. But as a whole he let Kate do as she liked. With reverence to the preferential treatment and love she applied to her small business and property, the doctor called her the Zulsdorf lady, and in a letter addressed her: "To the rich lady of Zulsdorf, Mrs. Doctor Katharine Luther, personally residing at Wittenberg, and spiritually dwelling at Zulsdorf, my darling at hand."

Though Luther's income increased over the course of years, so did his expenditures also grow considerably larger. Not only did he have many an opportunity as a famous man to show hospitality to visitors, who often stayed for quite some time; not only did he continually show his largesse to those in need with more extensive gifts than he actually had available; but the family which lived under his roof and at his table had also grown considerably.

His children, the number of whom we have previously mentioned, increased in 1531 with a son, Martin. Then, in January 1533, came another son, Paul. Finally, in December 1534, there came a daughter, Margarethe.

These five children were Luther's joy as they were growing up. Yet they were also being well disciplined, especially the boys. Luther had once

withheld forgiveness for three days for a wrong that his son, Hans, had committed, until his mother's intercession and that of several friends changed his mind. He said that he would rather have a dead son than an undisciplined son. Since there was a lack of a good boy's school in Wittenberg, Luther hired young theologians as home tutors for his sons. So we have heard that Hieronymous Weller was busy as a tutor in his home while Luther remained at the Coburg. Of Johannes (*Hans*) we know that as a lad he was also assigned for a period of time to an outside teacher and that he became a baccalaureus in 1539. He was later sent to a school in Torgau, and when Luther died Hans studied law in Wittenberg. He would later become the court chancellor advisor at Weimar.

The next son, Martin, studied theology. But he remained at Wittenberg without holding an office, where he died at the age of 33. Paul became an active physician and lived in higher style in various counts' courts.

In addition to these children a number of other relatives always lived in Luther's home. We had previously heard about aunt Lene. She was a treasured member of the family until her death in 1537. In addition, two daughters of Luther's sister lived in his house, whom Luther had welcomed to his home as orphans, namely, Lene and Else Kaufmann. Lene eventually married a university official, Magister Berndt, in 1538. Luther arranged her wedding in his home as though she were his own child. There were also a number of male relatives who became Luther's house companions while they studied at Wittenberg. Besides them he, as well as other professors, also gave room and board to a number of other students, especially older ones for a cost. One of these was Johann Matthesius, who after studying earlier at Wittenberg, returned there in 1540 and became Luther's table companion. After he had become the pastor in Joachimsthal, where he had served as rector after his first stay at Wittenberg as a student, he presented the biography of Luther from the pulpit. These sermons, which were then published, became the first written description of our reformer's life.

Finally, we have Luther's old servant, Wolf Sieberger, who lived for one more year after Luther's death. He was a constant member of the

family. Luther considered this good natured, though somewhat lazy and slow, house companion as very trustworthy. Once, when this servant had built himself a bird trap, Luther came to him with a written complaint, which the pious and honorable birds had delivered, the birds his servant had wanted to catch. In it they had petitioned Luther to forbid his servant, to whom they had done no wrong, to pursue their freedom and lives with his old net, or at least to admonish him to scatter kernels on his trap in the evening and then not to get up before eight in the morning. Otherwise they intended to petition God so that he would take him to task, with the result that he would catch frogs, locusts, and snails in his trap during the day, and at night the trap would be covered with mice, fleas, lice, and bedbugs, so that he would forget about them.

Luther lived as the house pastor of this large family. He dedicated himself faithfully to the Christian instruction of these house companions. He explained the Catechism for them, sang and prayed with them. "When I get up in the morning," he said, "I then pray the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and some Psalms with my children."

When in 1532 his failing health did not permit him to preach at church as much as he had been doing previously, he began to preach in his home on Sundays to his house companions. These sermons, which he continued until 1534, were then published in two different editions from the notes of Veit Dietrich and Deacon Roerer, supplemented with sermons which Luther had preached at church. And so Luther's House Postil came into existence.

Luther especially enjoyed spending Christmas Eve in the warmth and affection within the cheerful circle of his own family. Conversations and songs about that festival, through which so much joy was prepared for all people, had become a part of their evening.

Many edifying words also flowed from the lips of the father of the house at the dinner table. It would happen that either during the meal or right after the meal he would interpret parts of Scripture. This is the way in which his interpretation of the 23rd Psalm and the 8th Psalm came to be,

taken from Deacon Roerer's notes and printed later. (See LV Vol. 15, p. 7ff.) Furthermore he gave an interpretation of Matthew chapters 8-18, which he recommended to Hieronymus Weller to help him for his theological readings. Luther himself published them later in their entirety, along with comments on the first chapters of the book.

The doctor was not always in the mood for talking when he came to the table. When he did not speak there was silence. Then, when he noticed that they were sitting there so quietly, he would suddenly lift his head and ask a question, "What's new?" or, "You prelates, what's new in the country?" Then conversation would go on. Or he would bring a book along to the table and look into it for a while. Soon he would come upon something that pleased or displeased him and he would bring it up before the others and add some comments. Then the table companions would also ask questions. The doctor would either answer them or he would discreetly turn them back to the person. Such "Table Talk" on all kinds of different subjects was collected by friends and students who heard them, and collections of them later also appeared in print. Some of these were falsified as they were handled by unqualified people.

Sometimes he would also let the entire table company be transformed into a choir, either while still at dinner or immediately after. In general there was a lot of singing in the Luther house, in which Luther would participate with his fine tenor voice or with his lute, which he had learned to play at Erfurt. He valued music as a noble and a valuable gift from God, which enlivens the heart and makes the work of the devil difficult. Therefore he insisted that music play its part in schooling. He recommended friendly conversation and cheerful song as fitting measures against troubled thoughts.

Because of his many tasks Luther found little time for various recreational games. But it pleased him when the young people in his house could be so occupied. He even allowed a bowling alley to be built for them, and at times he would watch them when they were using it. He even once rolled the first ball, and when he missed he allowed himself to be laughed at. But then he gave the laughers something to think about, how in life, like

in a bowling alley, many a person thinks he can do something better than the others and could knock down all nine pins, but then miss everything.

In general Luther would not take special care of his body, which pointed back to his strict life as a monk. In eating and drinking he was moderate. He enjoyed clean and solid plain food. Only for a festive occasion would he provide something special like a fine cut of venison, even though he preferred pork and sausages for himself. Again there were times when he would forget about eating altogether for several days when his work was overwhelmingly urgent, or he would be content with a little bread and salt which he had in his little chamber.

In regard to his health Luther himself once said in his interpretation of Genesis, "Our Lord God gave me a healthy body until I reached fifty." But from that time on he was being visited with different kinds of physical suffering. Indeed, in the course of time he had been blessed with a stately stature. He still kept his upright stature, the lifted face, the fire of his dark falcon-like eyes until his hair had turned white. During the later years of his life there was not a single year during which he did not have to endure mild or heavy pains in his body. The headache with which he had been already burdened at Coburg was always a problem for him, almost paralyzing him. This was especially the case in the morning hours, so much so that, for example, it was difficult for him to preach the morning sermon. Furthermore, he would suffer from diarrhea, then from boils, and soon his suffering from stones made his existence a bitter one. There was an opening in his leg which was being kept open artificially by the physician after it had healed. It was broken open again and seemed to give him some relief in his head and chest. The result was that during his last years he often had to defer from his lectures at the university. Indeed, it even happened that he had to turn around on his way to the lecture hall. It also happened that he had to step down from the pulpit before he had completed his sermon. On different occasions we heard him say that he was reaching the end of his life and would soon end his journey. That thought did not frighten him. He longed to leave this evil world, just as he had longed to leave Wittenberg at times.

Sickness also visited other residents in the Luther house. Mrs. Kate repeatedly had to take to her bed because of an intermittent fever. In 1540 she was close to death as a result of a miscarriage. She recovered slowly, and Luther wrote to Jonas, "My Kate is beginning to drink and eat with pleasure. She crawls around benches and tables with the help of her hands and is learning to walk." In 1543 she again became severely ill with a high fever. We are also told about children's sicknesses. In 1540 there once were ten household children dangerously ill at the same time.

Death also tore gaps into Luther's family. We had reported earlier how Elisabeth, the first daughter, died during her first year of life. The daughter Magdalena, who was born the year after that loss, was growing up as a gentle, believing child to the joy of her parents. The father, who could say of her that she never made him angry, was especially attached to this child with great affection. But as Luther returned home from a relieving journey in 1542, he found his "Lenchen" very sick. Since the child had a strong longing for her brother Hans, who was attending school at Torgau, Hans had to come home. The father was watching her life's strength ebb away with a trusting submission to God's will. "I love her very much," he said, "but, dear God, if it is your will that you want to take her to heaven, I shall be happy to know her to be with you." The departing child was also satisfied under God's guidance. When her father spoke with her shortly before her death, "Precious Magdalene, my little daughter, you would like to stay here with your father and also go to the other Father," she answered, "Yes, precious father, as God wills." She took her leave while her father was weeping on his knees next to her bed, asking God to deliver her.

When she lay in her casket, Luther said, as he was looking at her, "Oh, dear little Lene, you will rise again and will shine like a star, yes, like the sun." But since her casket had turned out to be too short he said, "The best is too small for her, because she has now died. I am, indeed, happy in spirit, but according to the flesh I am very sad. The flesh does not want to come along. Taking leave vexes a person very much. It is a wonder to know for certain that she is at peace and well, and still to be sad." To the friends

who were expressing their sympathy he said, "You should be happy about this. I



Magdalene Luther, according to the Picture by Cranach

have sent a holy one to heaven, indeed, a living holy one. Oh, if only we would have such a death; such a death I would also appreciate at this very hour." He comforted his grieving wife with the words, "Dear Kate, think where she has gone. She has gone well." Later he said, "If my daughter Magdalena should become alive again and would bring the Turkish kingdom with her, I would not have it. Oh, she has traveled on well. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. He who dies that way has eternal life for certain."

To Jonas he wrote, "You must have heard that my dearest daughter Magdalena has been born again into Christ's eternal kingdom. And though I and my wife should only be happily thankful for her blessed departure, by which she has escaped the power of the flesh, the world, the Turk and the devil, still the power of natural love is so big that we cannot accept it without sobbing and groaning from the heart."

And when Hans, who was also grieving for his sister, wanted to come home again from Torgau where he had returned, the father comforted him as well and urged him to stay where God had directed him through his parents. He urged him to overcome his agony as a man and not cause his mother's heart to be even heavier.

In actuality, Lenchen had not lived in vain for this current world and the world to come. She herself can serve as a shining example for our children in her living and dying. Indeed, all Christian parents may take her "precious father's" attitude--his tender heart at the deathbed, casket, and grave of his little Lene, and his Christian mind, which elevated itself even above the hard pain of farewell, and his comfort to his household companions--as our model.

More than a decade before Lenchen's death, on June 30, 1531, Luther's mother had also left this world. In thinking of his father, the son had also sent a letter of comfort to her during her last sickness, the conclusion of which was as follows, "The Father and God of all comfort

grant you a firm, cheerful, and thankful faith through his Holy Word and Spirit, that you may blessedly overcome this and all troubles, and at last taste and experience the truth as he himself says, 'Be comforted. I have overcome the world.' I herewith commend your body and soul to his mercy. Amen. All your children and my Kate are praying for you. Some are crying and some are eating and are saying, 'Grandmother is very sick.' May God's grace be with all of us. Amen.

Saturday after the Ascension of our Lord, MDXXXI. Your dear son,

Mart. Luther." (See LV vol. 8, p.52)

The same year in which he had to bury his Lenchen Luther also drew up his will and had it witnessed by Melanchthon, Cruciger, and Bugenhagen with their signatures. In it he bequeathed to his dear and faithful "Hausfrau" Katherine the Zulsdorf residence and the small house in Wittenberg, along with his cups, chains, and other valuables. For this she was to take the debt of about 450 guelders, which he still owed, upon herself in case he had not paid it off while he was still living. He wanted to provide for her in this way so that she would not have to look to the hands of the children, but that the children would look to her hands, that they would honor her and would be subject to her, as God had commanded. (See LV Vol. 8, p. 139)

This showed the loving relationship which existed between Luther and his Kate. She was an understanding woman who knew her husband and always was concerned for him with her whole heart. If he was grumpy or sad she would quickly invite Dr. Jonas or Magister Philippus to dinner, and there would be friendly discussions which brought cheer to the much plagued man. She also knew how to personally bring him comfort. To be sure, he once had to give her credit for the good in her actions and her speech. "I have to," he said, "have patience with the pope. I have to have patience with the swarmers. I have to have patience with those who are dragging their feet. I have to have perseverance with the rabble. I have to persevere with my Katherine von Bora." But, on the other hand, he also said that, like Philip Melanchthon and Dr. Pommer, his wife also comforted

him with God's Word so that he was satisfied and felt that God himself was speaking. Even at the difficult time of the contagious plague, when Luther stayed in the city and the university moved away, Kate faithfully remained in

good spirits with her husband. He was very pleased with her good management, even though he liked to tease her about it, such as when he addressed her in his letters: "My Lord Kate;" "My dear lord Kate," or when he was writing this at the head of his letter, "My friendly dear lord, Kate, Lady Luther, lady doctor and lady preacher at Wittenberg;" or when he wrote to a friend, "My lord and Moses Kate humbly greets you." He also called her "Lady Caesar" and "Lady King."

Luther also understood the value of her tender concern for his physical health. When he, as was often the case, had to be absent on a journey, he faithfully wrote to her and reported how he was doing. He would mention that her kitchen and storeroom was much more of a compliment to him than the service he was getting elsewhere, even though such service was richer than what he received at home. So he wrote in 1540 from Weimar, "Grace and peace, dear chaste Kate, gracious woman of Zulsdorf and by whatever other name your grace is known. I, as one submissive to your grace, want you to know that it is going well for me here. God be thanked for this." That same year he wrote to her from Eisenach, "My gracious, chaste, Katharine, Lady Luther von Bora and Zulsdorf near Wittenberg, my sweetheart, grace and peace. My dear chaste and lady Kate! Your grace should know that we, praise to God, are in good spirits and health here." He liked to sign as he did in this letter, "Your sweetheart, M. Luther," or, "Martinus Luther, your sweetheart at heart."

And whenever he expected to soon return home to the circle of his loved ones Luther loved to relate this to his dear Kate with much joy. Just such an announcement was contained in the last letter which he would write to her. The beginning of it was as follows: "To my friendly dear lady of the house, Lady Katharine Luther von Bora at Wittenberg. Grace and peace in the Lord.

Dear Kate, we hope to come home
again this week, God willing."

But God was not willing.

Chapter 48

Going Home

On November 10, 1545, Luther celebrated his birthday for the last time. As in previous years he invited his Wittenberg colleagues to dinner for this happy family celebration. But after the meal and before they went their own ways, Luther spoke personal and sincere words of admonition to his friends. He expressed his fear that he anticipated things would look dim in Germany following his death. "Therefore pray," he said, "pray often after my death." Then he turned to Paul Eber, who at that time was still working in the philosophy department, and said, "Your name is Paul. I therefore now admonish you that following Paul's example you are to make every effort to firmly preserve and defend the teaching which he proclaimed."

When he brought his lectures about Genesis to an end eight days later, he did so with the words, "This now is the dear Genesis. May our Lord God grant that others will carry it out better after I am gone. I am no longer able. I am weak. Pray to God for me that he grant me a good and blessed last hour."

Already in October of that year Luther, along with Melanchthon and Jonas, had made a journey to Mansfeld, where he had spend the years of his boyhood. The counts of Mansfeld had asked him to help solve a quarrel which had been going on between them for some time already. The elector had granted permission for the journey in response to their request, though he would have preferred to have spared the weary Luther. But since the first attempt had failed, and Luther had volunteered himself to continue the mediation, he once again traveled to Mansfeld with Melanchthon. It was around Christmas and during bitterly cold temperatures. "The eight days which I will allow for this will not be too long," he wrote to Count Albrecht, "although I have much to do so that I may lie down in my casket with joy after seeing my earthly lords getting along and keeping their hearts friendly

and humble." But since Melancthon was very ill at that time, he hurried home again before his mediation had reached the desired conclusion.

On his journey Luther preached at Halle, but cut it short because of the severe cold. When he returned to Wittenberg and a theologian needed to be assigned to attend the religious discussion at Regensburg, he asked the elector not to bother Melancthon with that "worthless and meaningless colloquy." He thought Philip would be more useful in Wittenberg than at the colloquy, and the younger theologians should also have to face the enemy. Hence Meier was entrusted with that assignment.

When Meier went to take his farewell from Luther, it is reported that he found a message written on the door of his study, "Our professors should be examined about the Supper of the Lord." When Meier asked what those words meant, Luther answered, "What you read of them and how they state it. When you will return home and I as well, an examination will have to be set up for which you and others will be needed." But when Meier protested that he was holding in full harmony with the truth, Luther solemnly admonished him. He told him that if he and the others were serious, they should speak freely and plainly about what they believe, otherwise they would not be worthy to be called students, let alone teachers.

Luther was also thus minded in the last sermon he preached in Wittenberg. His text was the Epistle for the 2nd Sunday after Epiphany. He used sharp words to warn against the sacramentarians and against all so-called lovers of reason in matters of faith. "Till now," he said among other things, "you have heard the true, actual Word. Now take heed against your own thoughts and intelligence. The devil will kindle the light of reason and rob you of your faith, as has happened to the Anabaptists and the sacramentarians.

So during the last days of his life Luther recognized very well from which direction the greatest danger would threaten and so was also mindful to prevent it as much as he possibly could. What was later being reported and since has been repeated in countless books, that Luther had recognized

that he had gone too far in regard to the issue of the Lord's Supper and that he had confided to Melanchthon and others before his last journey that if possible they should correct this, is complete fiction. The lie is disproved by Luther's own words.

Along with what has just been stated, the following words testify how little Luther ever thought of regretting his complete disavowal of the Zwinglians and their partners. Luther directed them to a friend, who had reported to him the hostility of those people against him, only a few weeks prior to his death. "For me," he wrote, "that one beatitude of the Psalms suffices, 'Blessed is he who does not walk in the counsel of the sacramentarians, nor stand in the way of the Zwinglians, nor sit in the seat in which the people of Zurich sit.'"

On the day on which he preached his last sermon in Wittenberg, he described his frame of mind with the words, "Old, laid aside, sluggish, tired, cold, and now also one-eyed, I write to you, my dear Jakob, as one who had hoped that true rest would be granted to him as to one who has died. "Still, he did not take advantage of getting as much rest as he might have enjoyed. He had promised the counts of Mansfeld to resume the postponed peace negotiations in January. Thanks to Luther's concerns Melanchthon remained at home, while he, together with his sons and their house tutor, was under way again six days after his last sermon in Wittenberg. He was delayed in Halle, where he had dropped in on Jonas for three days because of floating ice and high water. He wrote about this to his wife, who had let him go on this journey, but with deep concern. (LV 8, p. 136 ff.) He also preached again in Halle. He said to his friends in that city, "We are mighty good partners who eat and drink together; but there will also be dying at some time. I am now traveling to Eisleben and shall help the counts of Mansfeld, my earthly lords, to get along with each other. I know those people, how they think. Since Christ wanted to reconcile the human race with the heavenly Father so that they could get along with each other, he accepted the part of the entire undertaking which meant he would have to die to achieve it. God grant that it will be the same for me."

On January 28th Jonas accompanied his old friend as he continued his journey. Near the Castle Giebichenstein they crossed the still dangerous Saale River. At the boundary of Mansfeld they were joined by an honor escort of over 100 travelers and were led into Eisleben. Most likely in order to exercise his body because of the cold, Luther walked for a stretch. After he had begun to perspire he again took his place in the wagon. He soon became so chilled because of the icy wind that, before they reached the city, he became victim to dizziness and difficulty in breathing, and there was already concern for his life. In Eisleben, where the counts of Mansfeld had been waiting for him, they had to immediately rub him with warm towels at the inn, and so the attack passed.

Luther's quarters were in the Drachstedtischen House, which belonged to the city and was occupied by the city's secretary. Here the affair of the counts was expected to be conducted. Luther made every possible effort toward settling it. After a very promising beginning they had come to an almost complete standstill, and so Luther asked that the elector be requested to call him home again. It was his opinion that those lords would then be more manageable. Already on the 7th of February "he wanted to grease up the wagon" in his anger. But an encouraging continuation of discussions set in again during the following days, and when the electoral recall actually arrived, nearly all points had been cleared up.

In the meantime the condition of Luther's health seemed to have improved. He had a good appetite for eating and drinking. He also slept restfully after a friendly evening conversation with Jonas, Aurifaber, and the counts' court preacher Coelius, and went to bed at 8:00 p.m. or even a bit earlier after an intense evening prayer. He preached four times during those days. In addition he ordained two preachers and attended Holy Communion twice. He preached his last sermon on February 14. (LV vol. 23, 24, p. 236 ff.) Rich with fullness of thought, he testified that the power of the glorious Spirit had remained, not at all weakened, although the weakness of his earthly shell forced him to stop. He concluded with the words, "This and much more was to be told about this gospel, but I am too weak. We want to leave it at that. May our dear God grant his grace that

we receive his precious Word with thanksgiving, increase and grow in the knowledge and faith in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and remain firm in the confession of his Word until our end. Amen."

Mrs. Kate was fearfully waiting for news from her spouse and he did not let her wait in vain, but sent forth five letters to her in 14 days. In the longest of these, dated February 7, he gently reproved her for her worries and encouraged her to trust in God. (LV Vol. 8, p. 165 ff.) He did the same on February 10th. In that letter he could still write, "We are, praise God, in good spirit and healthy, except that the issue at hand causes us displeasure, and Dr. Jonas has been bothered by a wounded thigh that he accidentally bumped against a trunk. (LV vol. 8, p. 168 ff.) So great is the envy among the people that he would not favor me alone to have a bad thigh. Herewith commended to God! We would like to depart and journey home, should God so will it. Amen, Amen, Amen. On the day of Scholasticism, 1546.

Your holy willing servant,

Martinus Luther"

The circumstances about his own injured thigh, as he mentions, requires its own explanation. The physician had laid a fontanel on the open sore, which was to be kept open through a special biting (penetrating and smarting "Aetzsalbe") salve. But Luther had left this salve at home, and the leg had almost completely closed at Eisleben. He therefore wrote to Melancthon on February 14th that he should send the same salve to him. He also wrote to his wife that same day. He sent her brook trout, which countess Albrecht had given to him in gratitude. Along with this he reported about his three sons, who were still being well cared for by his brother Jakob, and about the positive continuation of the discussions. "We hope," he wrote at the very beginning, "to come home this week, God willing," and farther along in the letter, "We have supplies here to eat and drink like lords and we are being waited on nicely, actually too nicely."

This was Luther's last letter to his Kate. (LV vol. 8, pl. 169 ff.) It is noteworthy that he wrote nothing about the salve to her, while on the

same day he asked Melanchthon to send some to him. He had become noticeably uneasy about his leg healing and wanted to spare his wife at home new worries. Actually, Dr. Tatzberger considered the neglect of the fontanel the cause of his unexpected death.

On February 16th and 17th the last articles of reconciliation were tended to, which pertained especially to the income of the churches and the schools. Luther's condition was such that on the morning of the 17th the lords asked him to no longer involve himself in the negotiations but to allow himself to get the rest which he had needed for some time already. He did that. He only gave his signature yet in regard to the stipulations, most likely the last signature by his hand.

Luther spent the forenoon partly on his leather bed and partly walking back and forth while talking with Jonas and Coelius, and partly in conversation with his God. "I was baptized here in Eisleben," he said once, "How would it be if I should remain here?" For the noon meal he was still entertaining his dining companions with edifying discussion. Before the evening meal he felt a fearful pressure in his chest. He permitted himself to be rubbed with warm towels and experienced some relief. He then still ate the evening meal with the others in the dining room, which was situated a stairway below his small chamber.

The discussions with which he seasoned the meal were about dying and rising again and about the congregation of the blessed in heaven. After the meal he again went to his small chamber. Magister Coelius, along with both of his younger sons, who would spend their nights with him as long as they stayed at Eisleben, together with their house tutor and Jonas followed him.

As was his custom he again prayed before his window. Coelius then went downstairs and Aurifaber came up. The doctor then said, "It is again becoming painful and fearful in my chest." Again he was rubbed with warm towels. A home remedy of the countess was also being used. Count Albrecht gave it to him personally. The doctor then lay down on the leather bed and slept peacefully for an hour.



Luther im Jahre 1546, nach einem Cranach'schen Holzschnitte.

Luther in 1546 according to a woodcut by Cranach