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*THE OLD THEOLOGY AND THE NEW.

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Mr. President and Brethren of the Board of Directors:

In calling me to the Professorship of Apologetics and Systematic Theology you have created for me a great opportunity and conferred upon me a high distinction. I trust I am duly appreciative of both, and adequately thankful for what you have done.

My task is not irksome, my duties are not drudgery. The subject which I teach fascinates my mind, charms my powers, and evokes my enthusiasm. To walk the raised fields of sacred truth with aspiring young men puts me on my mettle, challenges my spirit, and converts my occupation into my joy.

In signaling my induction into my professorship, I shall attempt a comparison of the Old Theology and the New, with a view to showing that the Old is better than the New.

I begin by saying that Systematic Theology is becoming once more the dynamic center of Christian thought. It is beginning to be seen that the very best apologetic is that harmonious and self-consistent statement of Christian doctrine which articulates with the human soul as the tenon fits the mortice. The facts of nature must be reduced to scientific form in order to satisfy;

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MARTIN LUTHER.

WHO WAS HE, THAT THE WORLD SHOULD REMEMBER HIM FROM
TIME TO TIME WITH PRAISE TO GOD?*

In reply to this question, we answer:

FIRST.—*He was a man with the best sort of German stuff in him.* He was of Thuringian blood—of a race everywhere known for its sturdy simplicity, unconstrained, fresh and joyous temperament—of a race living between the North and South Germans, and uniting in itself many of the noblest traits of the people of each section, having all the reserve power, sobriety and earnestness of the North Germans, and the keen enjoyment of life and cheerfulness of the South German.

He was of peasant stock, but good peasant stock. The Luthers, or Luders as they seem to have spelled their name, of whom he sprang, remain in their ancient home about Mohra, to our own time, a family marked for their large common sense, their deep and powerful feelings, their honest and honorable characters. The day never came when Martin Luther saw any thing to be ashamed of in his ancestry, though peasant. He said, with pride, to Melancthon, "I am a peasant's son; my father, grandfather, all my ancestors, were genuine peasants."

His parents, if poor and uncultivated, were Thuringian peasants of the finest type. They were honest, industrious and pious people; and were ambitious to improve their own and their children's condition for this world and for that which is to come. His father and mother, he said, "worked the flesh off their bones" to bring up their seven children and to give them a

Julius Kostlin—"Life of Luther."

H. E. Jacobs—"Martin Luther, the Hero of the Reformation."

T. M. Lindsay—"Luther and the German Reformation."

Barnas Sears—"The Life of Luther."

J. A. Froude—"Luther."

G. König—"The Life of Luther."

Alex. Bower—"The Life of Luther."

Schoff—History of the Christian Church. Vol. VII."

decent start in life. Throughout many years his mother was accustomed to carry the wood, which they burned as fuel, from the forests on her back.

That they might better their condition, his parents, soon after their marriage, had removed from Mohra, near Eisenach in Thuringia, where Boniface had first preached the gospel to the Germans, to Eisleben, in Prussian Saxony. There their first child was born, one hour before mid-night, November 10, 1483; and was the next day baptized, receiving, in honor of the Saint of the day, the name Martin. Not finding the prospect of bettering their fortunes at Eisleben to be solid, they removed, when Martin was six months old, to Mansfield, the capital of a rich mining district in the Harz Mountains, which came to share with Mohra the honor of being the home of the Luthers. Here, with slow but increasing success, Hans and Margaret Luther waged the conflict with poverty, established a home, and accumulated a respectable little property; meanwhile rearing their children, and giving to their family and themselves a reputable social and civic standing in the little town.

Of strong Thuringian blood, of the best type of Thuringian peasant stock, of parents of somewhat singular piety, energy, earnestness, aspiratious and persistence of effort, Martin Luther seemed to gather within himself the best in all the strains of his descent. God dowered him with gifts mental, emotional, practical, spiritual—made him a giant in common sense, a giant in feeling and willing—made him a poet, an orator, one who could become the voice of Germany, to set forth her wrongs, and the voice of the Lord of Hosts, by the Divine aid, to speak God's word in the German tongue to the German people; and made him of that stuff of which true heroes are made. No better German stuff is found anywhere in any German, than was put into Martin Luther. And, for this reason, in part, we are to recall Luther from time to time, and to praise God for him; praise God that he shows us the potentialities of that nature, which he created in his own image, notwithstanding the ruin into which it has been plunged.

What was Martin Luther that the world should remember him from time to time, with praise to God? We answer:

SECOND.—*He was a man whom Providence put through a fine development, intellectual, moral and spiritual.*

In the discipline through which he was led, hardness, want and self-denial were given a large place. His was a youth with few sunny memories. The house in which the family lived in his childhood was small and poor, the town was in a dreary valley, surrounded by gloomy mountains, marked with heaps of black refuse. He recalled his mother's chastising him for stealing a paltry nut, till the blood came; and his father's flogging him once so severely that he fled away and for a time bore him a grudge. In his later life he thought that his parents had been too severe, and had not studied the differences of disposition sufficiently in dealing with their children. But he saw that they had meant all they did for the best; and that they had been his best teachers of simple integrity and earnest industry.

In the local school the discipline was equally severe. Nor was it redeemed by affectionate interest or good teaching. He recalled being chastised fifteen times in one single morning; and that his teacher was a stupid dolt. But he learned the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and some Latin and German hymns. From the people about, he learned their proverbial wisdom and their traditional tales. He evidently read voraciously in his childhood his people's folk lore books.

Though at the age of fourteen he was not particularly well advanced, his parents believed that he possessed remarkable gifts, and sent him to the Latin School, kept by the Franciscans at Magdeberg, for a year; and then to a similar school at Eisenach where his mother's kindred lived. As the family was still very poor, the boy had to make his own way while at these schools, by begging, singing in the streets and doing chores. At Eisenach, Ursula Cotta, wife of the richest merchant of the place, who had recently lost a son, was moved by Luther's singing and later by his looks and bearing, to admit him to her table, and to a refined and lovable home. His previous struggles would have crushed a weaker youth; but pressure had developed him.

At the age of 18, in the year 1501, he entered the University of Erfurt. His father had now become well-to-do; and assisted him so that he could give himself unhindered to the acquisition of learning in this the greatest and most liberal university of his day in Germany. His father had destined him to the law; but proposed that he should have first the most complete general education as a preliminary fitting therefor. Accordingly, he took the philosophic courses leading to A. B. and to A. M.; came under the helpful influence of Trutvetter and Arnoldi, the leading professors in philosophy in Erfurt in his day; and under the stimulus of Humanism. The Erfurt faculty was giving fresh impulse to the study of classical antiquity.

The Scholastics and Humanists were friendly there. The Humanists praised the works of their Scholastic colleagues. The Scholastics tried to improve their style by imitating that of the Humanists. Luther had thus different avenues of training opened up to him. He threw himself into his Scholastic course with masterful ardor, but took counsel also how to enjoy the newly revived knowledge of antiquity. He carried the study of Ovid, Virgil and Cicero, in particular farther than was customary with the professed students of Humanism. He did the same with more modern Latin poets. But he aimed not so much to master their mere language and form, as to garner from their pages rich apothegms of human wisdom, pictures of human life, and histories of peoples. He was learning to express weighty and powerful thoughts in powerful if not polished language. He made friends, amongst the Humanists, of Crotus Rubianus, George Spalatin, Eoban Hess, *et al.* Amongst them he made a name for himself as the "learned philosopher," and the "musician."

He was liked socially, kept up his old-time love for music, and "indulged in it merrily with his fellow students." He not only sang, he learned to play the lute. But he was in Erfurt to toil. Such rapid progress did he make that he attained his baccalaureate in his third term; and at the beginning of 1505, took his degree of Master of Arts.

He now began to attend lectures on law, by Herring Goede, then in his prime and giving distinction to the university. Mean-

while, in Luther's religious life, a change was about to come. He was about to cast himself into a monastery. His education was to go on for two score years longer, but always, thereafter, under the control of his religion. He was to be developed into a religious giant who could not be bound by the withes and ropes of the Roman Delilah, whose locks could not be shorn by her, who with the celestial strength and unblinded eyes should pull down the Roman temple.

His religious education began in his humble home. Luther's father was a peculiarly God-fearing man. In his house he would often pray at the bedside of little Martin. He was the friend of godly priests and teachers. His pious reflections remained stamped on the memory of his gifted son till the close of his life. Hans Luther was no heterodox Romanist; but he liked best what was best in the Romanism of his time.

But if his father's religious influence was relatively helpful, there was much to deplore in the impression made upon his child-mind by the whole complex of factors about him. God was represented as a being *unapproachably* sublime, of *awful* holiness; Christ as the *threatening* judge, against whose wrath, as against that of God the Father, man sought for intercession and meditation from the Virgin, and the other Saints." "From Christ men were turned to the Saints to be their patrons; and were taught to call upon the Virgin to bear her breasts to her Son and dispose him thereby to mercy." The Sinner, in trouble about his sins and about the judgment to come, was directed to the performance of particular acts of penance and pious exercises to placate the righteous God. Along with "the doctrine of salvation through the intercession of the saints and the sacramental mediation of priests, and one's own good works," which Luther was taught in his youth, were many gross superstitions, about the power and the works of the Devil, of witches and hobgoblins.

At Magdeburg, Eisenach and Erfurt he found a religion which was worse than the religion in Mansfield. The plagues which, from time to time for half a century back, had visited Europe had thrown a terror over life; under whose impact the monks and leading clergy had reformed religion downward,

making it more gloomy, superstitious and oppressive; more external, more mechanical and more magical. Just as many a youth today finds a worse religion in his university than he does in his home, so Luther. His views of religion derived from learned men at his schools and university were less sane and helpful than his old father's views by far.

In the summer of 1505, the sudden death of a friend, the fall of a stroke of lightning and a severe sickness, forced the question of his standing with God upon him. He had lived an honorable and pure life; but carried about with him nevertheless a profound and awful sense of being a sinner. He resolved to devote himself to a religious life in entire separation from the world. On the sixteenth of July, he assembled his friends at Erfurt, spent with them a jovial evening, and announced that it was his last evening in the world. They remonstrated; in vain. The next day, they accompanied him, with tears to the gate of the Augustinian convent which shut upon him, as all supposed forever. His father, off in Mansfield, almost went mad when he heard of the step. In after years, Luther said that his monastic vow was forced from him by terror and by fear of death and the judgment to come. But never did he doubt that God's hand was in it. He believed that God meant to teach him the worth of ascetic effort, of the current Phariseeism, by his own experience. He devoted all his energies to the supposed duties of his new life. He afterwards said, "If a monk could have gotten to heaven by monkery, I would have gotten there." No one surpassed him in prayer, fasting, night watches, self-mortification, and regard for the minutest rules of monkish discipline. He soon came to be held up as a model of sanctity. But at that very time he was horribly disappointed, for he was still burdened with a gnawing sense of being a heinous sinner, knew he was given to anger, envy, hatred and pride; did not trust God as a God of love and mercy; had no sense of peace.

As time passed, his agony was somewhat relieved by an old monk, who instructed the novices, who tried to teach him that the sinner is justified by grace through faith. He was, further, greatly helped by John von Stampitz, Vicar-General of his order in Germany. He directed Luther from his sins to the

merits of Christ, from the law to the cross, from works to faith, from Scholasticism to the study of Scripture, of Augustine and Tanler. "Thus he was led to the study of Paul's epistles"; and to the truth that the righteousness which passes current with God is not to be required by man through his own exertions and merits; that it is complete and perfect in Christ, and that all the sinner has to do is to accept it from him as a free gift; that justification is a judicial act of God whereby he acquits the sinner of guilt and clothes him with the righteousness of Christ on the sole condition of personal faith which apprehends and appropriates Christ and shows its life and power by good works, as a good tree bringing forth good fruits."

The Pauline doctrine of justification by faith as set forth in the epistle to the Romans and Galatians had never been clearly and adequately understood and exhibited before, since the Apostolic age, even by Augustine or Anselm. The faith which conditions this justification stole into Luther's heart during his years in the Erfurt Convent. He came to understand the doctrine. He hugged the doctrine of justification to his bosom. It was like a new revelation to him. It turned the Bible into a book of light and life for him. It broke the fetters of legalistic slavery. It freed him of his sense of guilt. It led him away from the gloomy self-inflicted penance into the sunshine of God's redeeming love. He had a message now for a sin-burdened world—the old message of gospel salvations, free salvation through Christ.

Meantime, he had been reading not only the Scriptures and the later Schoolmen; he had developed great ability in disputation on Scholastic subjects; had been ordained to the priesthood. When celebrating his first mass, he had been "so overwhelmed by the solemn thought of offering the tremendous sacrifice of the cross for the living and the dead that he had nearly fainted at the altar."

He was a model of conscientiousness in his new office; but God had a larger sphere for him. He was recommended in the year 1508 as a teacher to the University of Wittenberg. Here he was preacher as well as teacher, first of philosophy and, after a little, of theology, and of that theology which is the

"kernel in the nut" and "the marrow in the bones," as he said.

He almost at once became a powerful preacher, in learned Latin in the chapel of the Wittenberg Augustinian Monastery, and in vernacular German in the town church. For he had a message which he knew to be of vast importance, and possessed every gift needed in order to the most powerful and effective speech. His words were living. They "had hands and feet," as he said of Calvin's words.

Those who put him into the Professor's chair in Wittenberg, expected an original and remarkable course of teaching. A theology, new to that age, at once presented itself in the subject which he chose and adhered to in his lectures. This was the Bible—a book which had long been generally neglected by the Scholastic teachers. His first theological lectures were on the Psalms. A few years later he proceeded to an exposition of those epistles which were to him the main source of his new belief in God's mercy—Romans and Galatians. Everywhere he is found setting forth the fundamental principles of the doctrine of salvation, which had taken such hold on him. As the years pass he is seen growing in the masterful comprehension and appreciation of that doctrine.

Meanwhile, his training, mental and religious, had been furthered, in 1510-1511, by a mission to Rome. He had been sent thither on some delicate affairs of his order. In company with another monk and a lay brother, he had traveled on foot, from convent to convent, had spent four weeks in Rome. He had kept his eyes open and learned much, about many things; but particularly about the Roman Church. When he first sighted the city, he fell upon the earth, raised his hands to heaven and exclaimed: "Hail to thee, holy Rome! Thrice holy for the blood of martyrs shed here!" He ran "like a crazy saint," through all the churches and crypts and catacombs with absolute faith in the traditions about miracles of martyrs. He wished his parents dead that by masses and prayers he might quickly deliver them from purgatory in accord with the saying: "Blessed is the mother whose son celebrates mass on Saturday in St. John Lateran." He climbed on bended knees the famous

scala santa, but did it with a protesting conscience, remembering that "the just shall live by faith." Moreover, he heard and saw of the infamous living by churchmen at Rome, their levity, their infidelity, their sacrilege, their reeking immoralities and nameless crimes. He received the impression that Rome, once the holiest city, was now the worst. He returned with enlarged breadth of vision.

Thus, in part, had *Providence developed Martin Luther, mentally and spiritually*. He is to be remembered for that fine development and for it, *God is to be praised*.

What was Martin Luther that the world should remember him from time to time, with praise to God? We answer:

THIRD.—*He was a man who lived in one of the greatest of all ages and in the age for him.*

The opening of the sixteenth century was the age of transition from mediæval to modern civilization. The literature and art of classic Greece and Rome were being resurrected and sent on their mission of lifting the cultural ideals of all modern European peoples. The newly invented printing press was spreading to the four winds the thoughts of masters ancient and masters present. For masters had just risen—in literature, like Erasmus; in painting and sculpture, like Raphael and Michael Angelo. Great discoverers were to the fore. Columbus with the aid of the magnetic compass, lately brought into use, disclosed a New World, when Luther was a lad of nine years. Vasco da Gamma sailed around the Cape of Good Hope, opened a new way for trade to the East Indies, and laid the foundations of the sea power of the nations of Western Europe, when Luther was fifteen. Before Luther was summoned to the Diet of Worms, Magellan was far along in his sail around the world. Before the Diet of Augsburg, of 1530, to which the Lutheran Confession was presented, Copernicus had wrought out his work on "The Revolutions of the Celestial Orbs," being himself just ten years older than Luther. The recent invention of gun-powder had revolutionized the art of war, made the peasant the equal of the lord in war, enabled monarchs by means of peasant armies, to destroy the power of feudal nobles, and put into the hands of the people an instrument with which to de-

stroy the tyranny of kings. The science and art of government had advanced. Environments were fitted to provoke to noblest endeavor. More than this, scores of forces had been long working toward a reformation. The corruptions and oppressions of priestcraft, blasting superstitions and increasing intelligence; insurgent sects, such as Albigenses, Franciscans, Beguines and Beghards. Critics of the current ecclesiastical system, like William of Occam, Aegidius de Colona, Dante, Marsilius of Padua; the Gallican Reformers; the Radical Reformers, Wycliffe, Huss and Jerome of Prague; the Mystics; the Humanists—all these, and more forces, were working toward a reformation, when Luther was born, November 10, 1483.

He was born in a *great* epoch, educated under influence most quickening. Into him were gathered all the pent up forces, of that age, demanding religious reform. The product of his age, in no inconsiderable part, he was fitted to become the great leader of his age in religion, turning the currents of European and worldwide history. That was the age for Luther.

That the age was one of the greatest and that he, of good stuff and fine training, was born into it makes it worth while to remember him and to praise God for him.

What was Martin Luther that the world should remember him from time to time, with praise to God? We answer:

FOURTH.—*He was a man sent of God on a great mission.* He was not only a man with the best sort of German stuff in him; not only a man carried of Providence through a wonderful intellectual, moral and spiritual development; not only a man living in a great age of which he was peculiarly suitable to become the leader in spiritual things; he was called of Providence to a great work, sent on a great mission.

When he, in his later years, spoke of his mission, he often represented it as one of uprooting and destruction—like that of a tempest. Nominal Christendom had, for the most part, been delivered over to baleful fear, superstition and priestly tyranny. False Judaism and heathenism had come in like a flood and covered the pure teaching of the Divine Word. They had brought polytheism, idolatry, even fetichism and put them in general possession of the Church. They had brought

perverted and debased ethical and spiritual ideals. They had brought a huge, corrupt, morally nasty and beastly tyrannous, hierarchy with the Pope at its head. Luther's mission was in part to destroy; to smash with the hammer of Thor the mediæval idols; to begin the breaking of the bands of superstition, and servile fear, and bondage to hierarchical and Papal tyranny; to lessen the grip which false Judaism and heathenism had taken upon men.

But his mission was by no means one of mere destruction. His mission was, also, to go after German Christendom, which along with the rest of Christendom, had, pretty generally lost sight of the only way of salvation; and to proclaim that way—the way which is Christ—the way which he personally had found to be satisfactory—the only way for the sinner to get back to God. It was his mission to proclaim, so that all Germany could hear, the doctrine of salvation by faith. It was his mission to proclaim, against the false claims of a pseudo—special priesthood, the universal spiritual priesthood of all believers. It was his mission to proclaim to the slaves of priestcraft and fell superstition the nature of Christian liberty. It was his mission to make Moses and the Prophets and the Psalmists, to make Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Paul, Peter and all the men of inspiration, talk German that could be understood in all corners of his broad fatherland, his mission to make one of the most wonderful versions of the Sacred Scriptures that God has enabled any man to make. It was his mission, incidentally, thus to do more for Germany than any other one German. It was his mission to make such a stand against the powers of the world for truth and for God as to strengthen the men of God everywhere in his own age and in every subsequent age.

That he had such a mission makes it worth while to remember him from time to time and praise God for him.

What was Martin Luther that the world should remember him from time to time, with praise to God? We answer:

FIFTH—*He was a man who executed nobly the mission on which he had been sent.*

In 1515, Pope Leo X. wanted money, nominally to rebuild St. Peter's Church in Rome. He proposed to raise the money by the sale of indulgences. Spain, France and England, permitted the sale within their limits. Germany, under the weak rule of Maximilian, admitted the indulgence hawkers within its bounds. Leo divided Germany into three districts, and committed the sale of indulgence in one of these districts to Albrecht, Archbishop of Mainz. This worldly-minded ecclesiastic was to receive as his commission one-half of the proceeds from the sale of indulgences within his bounds. He was deeply in debt to the Fuggers, rich bankers of Augsburg, from whom he had borrowed thirty thousand gold florins with which to purchase his pallium from the Pope. The agents of the Fuggers everywhere accompanied the Archbishop's preachers of indulgences that they might receive the Archbishop's share in the sales. The chief of these preachers was John Tetzel, an avaricious, dishonest, immoral man, who had basely prostituted not ignoble natural powers and considerable learning on the altar of his lusts. He traveled about in his journey with great pomp and circumstance, commending his wares. "He was received like a messenger from heaven." People of all ages and conditions, marched to meet him, singing songs, ringing bells and flying flags, and accompanied him to the Church where he would preach on the merits of his indulgences. The common people embraced eagerly this rare offer of salvation from punishment.

It may be proper to explain that in the language of Rome *indulgence* is a term for remission of the temporal (not the eternal) punishment of sin, on condition of penitence and the payment of money to the Church; that the practice of indulgences grew out of a custom of certain Teutonic barbarians of substituting the payment of money for the punishment of an offense. The Church approving of the custom as tending to save bloodshed; and, after a little, adopting its like as a substitute for satisfaction in the sacrament of penance; that the Roman Catholic sacrament of penance consists of three elements—contrition of the heart, confession with the mouth and satisfaction by good works, such as prayer, fasting, almsgiving,

pilgrimages, ascetic works, all of which are supposed to have atoning efficacy; that the Romans hold that God forgives only the eternal punishment due to sin; that He alone can do that; that there is also a temporal punishment due to sin; that the sinner himself must bear that either in this life or in purgatory; that these punishments are under the control of the priesthood and especially of the Pope; that they may be substituted by money; that such is the power of the hierarchy and the Pope, that they can take money as a substitute for the suffering yet due on the part of persons now in purgatory.

Tetzel so preached this doctrine as to represent money as almost omnipotent to remove every dreaded consequence of sin. He urged the people to buy these passports to heaven for themselves; and to assist their friends in Purgatory to leave that place at once. He cried: "Why stand ye idle? Do you not hear the voice of your parents, and other departed friends calling to you, and saying, 'Take pity upon us. We are suffering horrible punishments and torments, from which you can deliver us by a trifling alms, and you will not?'"

"At the very instant that the money rattles at the bottom of the chest, the soul is liberated from purgatory and flies to heaven.

"O hard and careless people! With twelve groats you can deliver a father from purgatory, and you are ungrateful enough not to save him? Though you have but a single coat you ought to strip it off and sell it, in order to gain so great a grace."

In 1517, Tetzel came into the neighborhood of Wittenberg, debauched the consciences of many of Luther's flock, who came before the confessional; and, without the slightest show of repentance, expected absolution on the ground of the indulgence tickets which they showed. As Luther had already, in the summer of 1516, preached against trust in indulgences, he was greatly stirred by the evil. He deliberated seriously, consulted no one, but, "following an irresistible impulse," posted at twelve o'clock, October 31, 1517, on the doors of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, ninety-five Theses on the subject of indulgences, and invited a public discussion, fixing the day therefor.

He had laid the axe at the root of Mediaeval Roman Catholicism. No one appeared to dispute with him; but "history undertook their disputation and defence. The theses were copied, translated, printed and spread as on angel's wings throughout Germany and Europe in a few weeks. They seem queer and half Roman Catholic articles to us. They say nothing of faith or justification, which already formed the heart of Luther's theology. They do not protest against the Pope or the Roman Church. They imply distinctive Roman beliefs. When republished in his collected works late in his life, he wrote: "I allow them to stand, that by them it may appear how weak I was, and in what a fluctuating state of mind, when I began this business. I was then a monk and a mad papist, and so submersed in the dogmas of the Pope that I would have readily murdered any person who denied obedience to the Pope." Notwithstanding their semi-Roman Catholic form they contain the living germs of a new theology. Evangelical repentance of the New Testament stripe is put into the place of Mediaeval penance. In order to the remission of sin, there must be, he teaches, genuine repentance which will express itself in works of charity, benevolence and righteous living. Whoever neglects these, and depends upon the purchase of indulgences will bring upon himself the Divine anger. Running through the theses are the thoughts, of human depravity which necessitates life-long repentance, and the full and free grace of God in Christ, which can be appropriated by faith. Running through them also is an unconscious contempt for the authority of the priesthood and Rome. Luther had begun his mission of demolishing idols.

The Theses stirred up a commotion over all Europe, attracted at length the attention of the elegant but godless worldling, Pope Leo X., who endeavored through legates and bulls to get Luther to retract; but the bold monk would agree to do so, only on condition he were proven wrong by Scriptures. They drew forth in opposition to Luther some of Rome's most stalwart defenders—amongst these Dr. Eck, professor of theology at Ingolstadt in Bavaria, "a man of great learning, wellstored memory, argumentative skill, ready speech"—with whom

Luther was engaged in debate at Leipsic between July 4 and 13th, 1519. In this debate, Luther maintained that the view, that the Pope is the successor of Peter and the vicar of Christ by divine right, "is contrary to the Scriptures, to the ancient church, to the Council of Nice—the most sacred of all councils—and rests only on the frigid decrees of Roman pontiffs." In the course of the debate he came to hold that even ecumenical councils may err, having been led to see that he held, himself, views for which John Hus had been condemned and burnt as a heretic by the so-called ecumenical Council of Constance.

This disputation at Leipsic was of vast importance. Not only did he there attack the essential character of the papacy, and that other Romish idol, the infallibility of General Councils; he was discovered to himself and to the world as at war with Romanism. Before, he had fancied himself a good Romanist. Now he has crossed the Rubicon. Henceforth, his guides were the holy Scriptures, his private judgment and his faith in God "who guides historic movements in spite of all sinful opposition to His own glorious ends."

Under *severe mental anguish* he is driven to the conviction that the Papacy is anti-Christian and the chief source and support of abuses in the Church. He attacks it as the chief instrument and creation of Satan. Between July and October, 1520, he issued three effective reformatory booklets. In the first of these, the "Address to the German Nobility," he brings out the doctrine of the universal spiritual priesthood of believers, and the non-existence of any true special priesthood in the Christian Church; he thus "abolished the distinction between higher (priestly and monastic morality) and lower morality, gave sanctity to the natural relations, duties and virtues, elevated the family relation as equal to virginity; promoted general intelligence, and sharpened the sense of individual responsibility"; he called on the nobles to reform the Church; and pointed out twenty-seven particulars wherein it needed reform.

The second of the booklets was "the Babylonish Captivity of the Church." In closing the "Address to the Nobles," he had said, "I have another song still to sing concerning Rome. If they wish to hear, I will sing it to them, and sing it with all

my might." The Babylonish Captivity was that song, or rather, as he says, the prelude to it. In this work he attacks the sacramental system of Rome, by which Rome endeavors to control all life from birth to death. He teaches that by this system, Rome brings into captivity all the people. He represents Rome as the modern Babylon. He prepared the book for the thoughtful, and it cut away one of the pillars on which Rome rests.

The third of these booklets, was that on the "Freedom of a Christian Man"—his last letter to the Pope, a jewel amongst his works, a noble treatise on a noble subject, representing Christian freedom not as freedom *from* Christ, but as freedom *in* Christ, and containing a beautiful summary of Christian freedom.

He had been fulfilling his mission of destruction. He had been battering down the special priesthood idol, and the idols of the sacramental system; and he had been re-erecting biblical ideals of life, the Christian and of God. Meanwhile, the Papal bull of excommunication, prepared some months back, was about to be delivered to him; and in response, with his hammer of Thor, he was about to strike the papal idol another blow. On the 10th of December, 1520, he burned the Pope's bull of excommunication together with a copy of the canon law, at the gates of Wittenberg, in the presence of the doctors and students of the university and a great concourse of people. He thus declared his implacable opposition to the Mediaeval system, and his contempt for the Pope.

The Pope urged the young Emperor, Charles V., to put Luther under the ban of the Empire. This Charles would have done, but the German princes, mindful of papal extortions and tyranny, persuaded the Emperor not to condemn Luther unheard. He was therefore summoned before the Diet of Worms, there to answer for himself. All along the way to Worms he was greeted with enthusiasm. As he approached Erfurt, his *alma mater* went out in a great procession to meet him, and welcomed him with a speech from the rector. Men here and there warned him of his danger. He was informed that his books had already been condemned by the Emperor. A councilor of the Elector, Frederick the Wise of Saxony, re-

minded him of Hus's fate. He replied, "Hus has been burned but not the truth with him. I will go on, though as many devils were aiming at me as there are tiles on the roof." And so, on the 17th of April, 1521, he appeared before the Diet. On his way into the hall where the Diet sat, the famous warrior, George von Frundsberg had clapped him on the shoulder, and said: "My poor monk! My poor monk! Thou art on thy way to make such a stand as I and many of my knights have never done in our toughest battles. If thou art sure of the justice of thy cause, then forward in God's name, and be of good courage—God will not forsake thee." He had had to wait for two long hours in an ante-room. When admitted an official put to him in the name of the Emperor two questions, "whether he acknowledged the books (pointing to them on a bench beside him) to be his own, and next whether he would retract their contents or persist in them." Luther's counsel here exclaimed, "Let the titles of the books be read." They were read out. Among them were some entirely inoffensive works, e. g., a commentary on the Lord's Prayer.

Luther was not prepared for this proceeding. He was in the presence of one of the most august Assemblies of his age. The most notable *civil grandees* of the Empire were there. The most distinguished and powerful *churchmen* of the empire were there. He was perhaps made nervous by the august body. He answered in a low voice as if frightened that the books were his; but that he wanted a little time to form the proper answer to the second question. After a short deliberation the Emperor made answer that of his clemency he should have till the next day.

The next day Luther, again, appeared before the Diet. He was reproached for having wanted time for consideration; and then was asked the second question, in the following form: "Wilt thou defend all the books acknowledged by thee to be thine, or recant some part?" Luther now answered with firmness and modesty, in a well-considered speech. He divided his works into three classes: In one class he had set forth simple evangelical doctrines professed by all. These he could not retract. In another class he had attacked corrupt

laws and doctrines of the Papacy, which had vexed and martyred the consciences of Christians, as all knew, and devoured the property of the Germans. He could not retract these without making of himself a cloak for wickedness. In the third class of his books he had written against individuals who had endeavored to shield tyranny and to subvert Godly doctrine. In these he had, he said, been more violent than was befitting, but he could not retract these without lending a hand to godlessness and tyranny. In defense of his books he could only say in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but, if well, why smitest thou me?" He challenged them to confute him from the sacred writings of the Old and New Testament; said that, if they would do that, he would be the first to burn his books.

Having in his speech rechallenged the papacy, he closed with a warning to the Emperor and the Empire, to beware of endeavoring to promote peace by a condemnation of God's word, and by bringing a deluge of evils upon themselves and the world, he declared that he said not these things to the great personages before him as if they stood in need of admonitions at his mouth but because it was a duty he owed to his native Germany.

The princes held a short consultation after his speech, then the Emperor's spokesman reproved him for having spoken impertinently and not having really answered the question put to him, flouted his demand for confutation from the Scriptures, and told him that his heresies had already been condemned by the Church, and by the Constance Council in particular; and finally, demanded a plain answer without horns to the question whether he intended to adhere to all he had written, or would retract any part of it.

Thus addressed, Luther replied, "I will give an answer 'with neither horns nor teeth.' My conscience binds me to adhere to the Word of God." Popes and Councils have often erred and contradicted themselves. He could not and would not retract anything. It was neither honest nor safe to act against one's conscience.

The commissioner declared that he could not prove that Councils had erred. "I will pledge myself to do it," was Luther's

answer. Pressed and threatened by his enemy he concluded with the famous words: "Here I stand, I can do no otherwise. God help me. Amen."

Thos. Carlyle describes the significance of Luther's conduct here in the following terms: "It was the greatest moment in the modern history of men. English Puritanism, England and its Parliaments, Americas and vast work of these two centuries; French Revolution, Europe and its work everywhere at present: The germ of it all lay there; had Luther in that moment done otherwise, it had *all* been otherwise." Nor is there any measuring the value of his services, to the truth, the Church and to the world, in that great day at Worms, when he, the peasant's son, clad in an humble monk's gown, stood as the champion of truth against error and wickedness in high places. He did change the currents of history that day. Contrast North Europe with South Europe, North Ireland with South Ireland, North America with South America, Protestant regions and Roman Catholic regions and you have the meaning.

As he was on his way back to Wittenberg from Worms, some knights, at the bidding of Frederick the Wise, took Luther captive, carried him to the Wartburg Castle, on the heights above Eisenach, lest he should be captured by his enemies and put to death. Here he lived for about eight months, writing devotional works, and sighing for Wittenberg at first, afterwards employed in a labor of the first importance. Sometimes God shuts a man in that he may do a work nobler than he would otherwise do. Thus he shut John Bunyan in Bedford jail in order to his immortal allegory. Thus he closed the eyes of John Milton that he might write the *Paradise Lost*. Thus he shut Luther in the Wartburg that he might render the sacred Scriptures into German. He translated the New Testament entire while in the Wartburg. The work of translation loomed up in importance as time went on. After his return to Wittenberg, and reassumption of leadership of the Reformation, he continued to bring out part after part of the Old Testament till he had completed it, also, in 1534, when he brought out an edition of the whole Bible. Even after a second chief

edition appeared in 1541, he tried to improve in some points those that followed in 1543 and 1545.

Luther was peculiarly fitted to translate the sacred Scriptures. He excelled in his mastery of the German tongue; and he had the spiritual qualifications which are necessary. Says Hausser, "In order faithfully to reproduce the patriarchal simplicity, the homely and childlike character of the Old and New Testaments, to imitate the poetic strains of the prophets and the Psalms, and again the popular straight-forwardness of the Gospels, requires a vein of congenialty—the spiritual affinity of a mind which has preserved the simple and honest originality of an unsophisticated people. . . . It was precisely these qualifications which Luther possessed. A genuine son of his own people, gifted with all the wealth and depth of the German mind, he could enter into that age of simple national faith; he made its spirit and language his own, and thus acquired the power of translating into German the religious poetic and poetic religious mode of expression.

"Luther took incredible pains. Few of his readers know by what hard knocks the task was accomplished. We still have some of his translation in manuscript. He often struck out a passage as many as fifteen times, until he had found the right expression; and this when he was wrestling with his own tongue." What difficulties he must have encountered in Greek and Hebrew at a time when the helps in the study of them were almost wanting. Once when toiling over the Prophets, he wrote "Good God! what a great and difficult task it is to make the Hebrew writers speak German! They resist it so, and are not willing to give up their Hebrew existence and imitate German barbarism."

As a monk and a bookworm he was aware that he was unacquainted with many things with which the ancient world and the secular world about him were acquainted. At one time, that he might be able to describe the slaughter of beasts for sacrifice, he had some sheep killed for him, by a butcher and the butcher tell him what every part of the animal was called. At another he begs that idioms and happy proverbial expressions be garnered for him by a friend in a distant city.

The results of his titanic efforts was a version with which no other for nearly four centuries can dispute the palm; and a service to German Christianity that can hardly be estimated.

In it Luther created the high German prose style. In it he thus did much to give the Germans national unity; he gave them the unity of tongue. In it he put the Scriptures and religious literature into the tongue of the people. Through it he gave intellectual life to the whole people. By means of it he has done much to keep religious life alive amongst his people down to this day.

Meantime, he had been writing his commentaries, especially that on the Galatians, been expounding and elaborating the doctrine of justification by faith; been teaching and preaching at Wittenberg; controlling the Reform movement there and in its spread throughout North Germany; been elaborating the creed of Lutheranism; been giving his people a hymnology and forms of worship; been battling against Rome; been living his beautiful home life, a model husband and father.

He had made some grievous mistakes, done some sorry work; but on the whole had done gloriously. Time fails us to go into details. He had nobly fulfilled his mission to batter down the idols of Rome, give his people the Gospel, and lead them to the only way of salvation, that by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. In the way in which he wrought out his great mission we see somewhat—much—wherefore we should remember him from time to time.

What was Martin Luther that the world should remember him from time to time with praise? We answer, once more:

SIXTH.—*That he was a man whose work and influence, Providence has protected and made abiding.* Providence prepared in the German Empire of his day a favorable environment for Luther to work in; to set the Reformation agoing in. He would have been cut down in his early career in England, in France, in Spain, in Italy. But in Germany the rule of the Emperor was so feeble, that he could not strike Luther down. Nominally Emperor, Charles V. was really in alliance with nearly three hundred sovereign princes, secular and ecclesiastical, who would aid him in what he wished done if the thing he desired were

desired by them. Enough of them favored Luther to balk all the early attempts the Emperor made against Luther. Besides Providence had placed west of Germany, Francis the First of France, and east of Germany, Sulieman the Magnificent of Turkey, with one or the other of whom Charles the First was usually kept employed in war, all the while between 1521 and 1545. God thus protected Luther throughout his life and protected his work. When he died in 1546, things looked gloomy indeed. The Emperor's hands were freed at length and he and Francis were planning the destruction of Protestantism. But Protestantism had become too well grown, taken too deep root, become too hardy. It could not be destroyed, and Lutheranism has continued to this day the most numerous of all the Protestant bodies.

Should we not recall the man whose work has been thus blessed, protected and made greater in influence with the passing centuries? Should we not remember too that under the stimulus of his example the Reformers in other countries took greater heart; that Zwingli and Calvin and Knox, fought their battles all the more bravely because of the heroism of Luther?

Wherefore should we remember Luther, and praise God for him? Because he was a man with the best sort of German stuff in him; because he was wonderfully developed mentally and religiously, having the blessed Reformation go on first of all in his own heart; because he lived in a wonderful age and in the age which he was peculiarly fitted to serve; because he was given a great mission to fulfill—to break down mediaeval theological prison houses and deliver the captives ecclesiastically—lead men away from the vain effort to save themselves to the only way of salvation—lead them away from the traditions of men to the Gospel of life; because he fulfilled his mission so nobly; and because God has protected and increased his influence so greatly.

Think of him as he debated with Eck at Leipsic. "Of middle stature; body thin and so wasted by care and study that nearly all his bones might be counted; his voice clear as a bell and melodious; his learning and his knowledge of Scripture so extraordinary that he has nearly everything at his fingers' ends;

understanding Greek and Hebrew sufficiently to give judgments on interpretations; with a rich store of subjects for conversation at his command, vast forest of thoughts and words at his disposal; polite, clever, without stoicism or superciliousness; lively and agreeable in society; cheerful, at his ease, with a pleasant countenance, however hard his enemies press him, so that one must believe that Heaven is with him in his great undertaking." So Peter Moselanus painted him. Think of his devotion to truth and duty there. Think of him at Worms, standing against the world, bound to the truth and right and gloriously free therein. Think of him toiling to make the inspired writer talk to the Germans—of all his labors to lead men to the only way of salvation;—let one think of him, of his devotion to truth, to right and to God, and his services in their behalf, he must understand that God is to be thanked from time to time for the gift of Martin Luther; and to be praised therefor. To God immortal, eternal, invisible be endless praise for His grace to the world in the gift of Martin Luther in Jesus Christ. Amen.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.