

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

6-1-1955

Johann von Staupitz : his life, his writings, his influence upon Luther

Martin W. Heinicke

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_heinickem@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Heinicke, Martin W., "Johann von Staupitz : his life, his writings, his influence upon Luther" (1955).

Bachelor of Divinity. 894.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/894>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

JOHANN VON STAUPITZ

HIS LIFE, HIS WRITINGS, HIS INFLUENCE UPON LUTHER

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Church History
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

Martin W. Heinicke

June 1950

Approved by:

Thos. Hoyer
Advisor

O. E. John
Reader

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE LIFE OF JOHANN VON STAUPITZ	6
Birth	6
Schooling	7
Interests	9
Monastic life	10
The Augustinian Order	11
As Vicar-General	12
In the service of the Elector	16
The years from 1512 to 1519	20
The last years of his life	22
The regard of contemporaries	23
III. THE WRITINGS OF JOHANN VON STAUPITZ	25
The Tübingen sermons	25
<u>Decisio quaestionis de audientia misse in parochiali</u> <u>ecclesia officis et festivis diebus</u>	27
On Predestination	29
On the Sweet Love of God	31
On the Holy Christian Faith	33
On the Imitation of the Voluntary Death of Christ	37
His writings placed on the Index	38
IV. THE INFLUENCE OF JOHANN VON STAUPITZ UPON MARTIN LUTHER	40
The first contacts	40
Erfurt	40
Wittenberg, 1508	45
Trip to Rome	48
Wittenberg, 1512	49
As Luther's counsellor	53
In matters of God and righteousness	53
In the matter of predestination	57
In the matter of Scripture study	60
As Luther's Superior	62
As Luther's friend in time of controversy	66
The indulgence controversy	66
At Heidelberg	72
Before Cajetan	74
With Miltitz	84
The parting of the ways	90
The meaning of the move to Salzburg	90
The last letters between Staupitz and Luther	95
The last intercourse between Staupitz and Luther	99

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Each person conceives for himself some order of being and meaning. The great adventure of life is the search for such truth and significance as will enable him to accomplish this. His concepts of the nature of the universe, and of the nature of persons and of their relation to the universe provide him with the basis of whatever meaning he can discover in life - his own life and all life."¹ In seeking the meaning of his own life, Luther was led to profess monasticism. He was looking for peace for his soul and the favor of God.

Luther believed that being a monk would enable him in the best possible manner to live a life fully to God and thus satisfy both the wrath of God and the longing of his soul. He diligently performed the monastic services. In later life he often reminisced about the years in the cloister. In 1531 he said: "I was a monk and waked at night, fasting, praying, chastising and tormenting my body, that I might remain obedient and live chastely . . . trying and striving to become like unto Christ that they (I) might be saved." And again in 1533, "I was a pious monk and followed the rules of my order religiously, that if ever a monk should have reached Heaven through monkery, it should have been I, as my fellow monks who knew me well testify." And again, "Being

¹H. N. Wieman and R. Westcott-Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion (Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1935), p. 3.

a monk, I wished to omit nothing of the prayers and often overtaxed myself with my courses and written work, I assembled my hours for an entire week and sometimes even two or three. At such times, I would shut myself up for two or three days at a time, partaking of no food or drink until I had completed my breviary. As a result, my head became so heavy that I could not close my eyes for five nights. I was in agony and all confused. As soon as I had improved, I tried to work on my courses but my head began to swim again. I was so imprisoned in this practice that the Lord had to tear me from this self-torture by violence."²

When thus performing the rules of the Order to perfection, even to over-perfection, Luther had only one object in mind, and that was "God, who was to see how well I observed my rules and lived such a rigid life."³

Luther did not only suffer physically, but also spiritually. Since he did not experience the rebirth he was seeking in monasticism, he became tormented with the thought that he was carnally damned. The peace of soul turned into bitter doubt. He later said: "Every time a little temptation came of sin or death, I was down and out. Neither my baptism nor monastic vow seemed of any avail, as I had lost Christ and His baptism long ago. There in the convent I was the most wretched man on earth, passing whole nights in weeping and feeling that everything was

²M. Luther, as translated by E. G. Schwiebert in, Reformation Lectures Delivered at Valparaiso University (Valparaiso, Ind., The Letter Shop, 1937), pp. 258.259.

³Ibid., p. 259.

hopeless, which condition no one could alleviate. Thus I was bathed in my monkery and had a real 'sweating sickness.' Thanks be to God that I was not consumed in my fever, for I would have been in the depths of Hell long ago in spite of my monastic baptism. For I no longer knew Christ except as a stern judge from whom I wanted to flee yet was unable to escape." At another time he said: "When I was a monk, I believed it was all up with my salvation the minute I had any carnal desires, the stirring of an evil emotion, a sensuous wish, anger, hatred and envy against a brother. For this reason I could find no peace but was perpetually tormented with the thought, 'You have committed this or that sin; you are still a victim of jealousy and concupiscence, etc. You entered the Holy Orders for nothing and all your good works are worthless.' If only I had understood the words of Paul aright, 'For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other (Gal. 5,17)'; then I would not have felt so depressed but would have thought as I do today, 'Martin, you will never be entirely free from sin; so long as you are in the flesh, you will experience the battle with sin, according to the words of Paul. Do not become discouraged but fight that you do not yield - then you are not under the Law.'⁴

This new understanding of the words of Paul and of the Law came as a result of direct study of Scriptures and the guidance of his friend and spiritual father. The course of his religious experience was intensified, given new channels of activity, and enlightened by the acceptance

⁴Ibid., pp. 260.261

of new or reconstructed principles which this friend and advisor offered him. The essence of that experience which Luther underwent was a "change of direction or rapid advancement within the kingdom of religious values rather than a passage from without into a religious realm. A want is supplied, a truth apprehended, a responsibility assumed, a sacrifice made. . . . One becomes a better religious being through a non-moral crisis. Psychologically a new synthesis of the resources of the personality is formed, a synthesis which makes the individual more confident, more victorious, . . . more assured of the divine favor. The individual may realize what has hitherto in all sincerity been interpreted as the true service of God, is in sharp conflict with a new ideal which has made an irresistible appeal. The very foundations of the form of religion on which he has depended for salvation may be threatened with destruction by the appreciation of the fresh sense of divine obligation."⁵

Luther experienced just such an awakening. His early years were spent in a pious home where discipline ruled. Religion was a major influence in his life from the very beginning. His early training and religious environment led him to believe that the commands of God must be fulfilled or God, the Stern Judge, would be ready to condemn him to everlasting condemnation unless His wrath was appeased by his own strenuous efforts to make reparations for his sins. Luther had a very deep sense of his own unworthiness and his inability to fulfill such an

⁵ K. R. Stolz, The Psychology of Religious Living (Nashville: Cokesbury Press., 1937), p. 210.

order. Therefore in seeking the favor of God and peace for his soul he entered the monastery. There, as we saw above, he strenuously endeavored to please God, but found this life of no avail.

Before despair and doubt could completely wreck his mind and life, a new influence entered into his life - a person who was to bring about the new appreciation of God and His Son, Christ. Pointing him to the wounds of Christ and the love of God, taking his mind from the despairing and damning thoughts of predestination, giving him courage and advice when needed, and stimulating him in his search for truth and assurance, was Johann von Staupitz, the Vicar-General of the Augustinian Eremites of Germany, Luther's friend and spiritual father.

CHAPTER I I

THE LIFE OF JOHANN VON STAUPITZ

The early dates and places of the life of Johann von Staupitz are unknown. The names of his parents, the date and year of his birth, the place of his birth are all lost in history. It is known, however, that he was descended from an ancient family of nobles from Misnia. This family moved into the vicinity of Wittenberg in the sixteenth century. Here they possessed much landed property, "in Dabrun und Zerbischen und Wurzen."¹ It is surmised that Johann von Staupitz was born about the year 1460, either at Motterwitz near Leisnig, or Moderwitz near Neustadt an der Orla.² The earliest positive date of his life is the year 1485, the year in which he was matriculated at the University of Leipzig. The records of that University contain the entry "Johannes Stopitz de Mutterwitz." This record also furnishes the indication of the place of his birth.³

The noble birth of Staupitz was one of the great influences of his life. He was at home in court and monastery. His natural talents, his

¹Otto Scheel, Martin Luther: Vom Katholizismus zur Refromation. (Third edition; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1921), II, p. 364.

²Ibid.

³O. Clemen, "Staupitz", The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, edited by S. M. Jackson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1911), XI., p. 71.

social and mental acquirements, his gift of eloquence, a fine outward appearance, earned for him the special confidence of the Elector and the delight of the nobility.⁴

Staupitz was possessed of a great sense of humor. At one time when conducting a service before the high princes of the land he was quoting from Matthew Chapter One, the text of the ancestry of Christ, which was the reading for the day. He erred at the fourteen princes of the tribe of Judah. Both the old Electors of Saxony who were at the service, invited him to a meal after the service. At the table Duke John began and said to him: "Doctor, what happened to the Gospel today?" "My most gracious Prince," said Staupitz, "I had three kinds of people in my Gospel. In the first place were the pious people, and with them there was nothing wrong. Then, the ancient kings, about whom it was also possible to speak; but, when I came to the princes, they were curious people who made me stumble in the Gospel." Then Elector Frederick said: "If you have anything else to ask, you will not find Doctor Staupitz without an answer."⁵

Staupitz received his education at the University of Leipzig. A further notice in the records of that University, namely, one of October 30, 1489: "'N. Stopitz, Master of Arts of Cologne', would seem to

⁴C. Ullmann, Reformers Before the Reformation, Principally in Germany and the Netherlands, translated by Robert Menzies (Third edition; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street, 1865), II, p. 235.

⁵M. Johann Matthesius, Das Leben Des theuren Mannes Gottes Doct. Martin Luthers, Darinnen von seiner Geburth, Lehre, Leben, standhafften Bekämtnisz und seel. Todte nebst ausführlicher Erzählung, was sich merchwürdiges bey der heilsamen Reformation zugetragen, nach der Chronologie gehandelt wird (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1724), p. 367.

indicate that he had also spent a period of time in study at the University of Cologne."⁶ After his matriculation at Leipzig, the events of his life are once more lost. They become certain again in the year 1497, when as Master of Arts and Reader in Theology he entered the Augustinian monastery of Tübingen as a monk. In Tübingen he also attended the University. At this University he was instructed by Gabriel Biel.⁷ Staupitz must have been in attendance at Tübingen University before the year 1495 because in that year Biel died. Biel was "one of the most remarkable theologians of the late Middle Ages. . . . He followed the nominalism of Occam. . . . In anthropology and soteriology a Semi-Pelagian, teaching 'merit depends on man's free will and God's grace;' the sacraments operate not only ex opere operantis but also ex opere operato."⁸ Another teacher of Staupitz at this University was Dr. Summerhart. Staupitz remarked about Summerhart that he would go about complaining: "Quis me liberabit ab ista rixosa Theologia?"⁹

On May 30, 1497, Staupitz was matriculated from Tübingen. On October 29, 1498 he delivered his first lecture as "Biblicus", and a few months later, on January 10, 1499, began as "Sententiar die Vorlesung über die Sentenzen des Lombarden." On July 6, 1500 he was granted

⁶J. Mackinnon, Luther and the Reformation (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1925), I, p. 44.

⁷O. Clemen, op. cit., p. 71.

⁸P. Tschackert, "Biel", The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, edited by S. M. Jackson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1911), II, p. 188.

⁹Matthesius, op. cit., p. 366.

his "Lizenz", and a few days later the degree of Master or Doctor of Theology was granted to him.¹⁰

Staupitz was not too well satisfied with the scholastic training he received in the universities. Therefore he turned from scholasticism to the mystics and then to the Scriptures. Because of the knowledge these furnished him he was led to life and to a condition of inward satisfaction. "So wurde er ein Erfahrungstheologe, ein biblisch-praktischer Mystiker, vornehmlich an die paulinisch-augustinischen Begriffe sich anlehnend. Dies war die Denkart, welcher er Eingang zu verschaffen oder die er zu lebendigerem Bewusstsein zu bringen beabsichtigt war, so weit sein Einfluss reichte. Er verband mit Gelehrsamkeit praktischen Sinn, Frömmigkeit und edle Gesinnung mit Geist, weltmännischer Bildung, Beredtsamkeit und einer anziehenden äusseren Erscheinung."¹¹

Staupitz realized that it was not mere knowledge which made the theologian, "but the whole inward frame of mind, and the confirmation by action of what is known, and thus he became a theologian of experience, a scriptural and practical mystic."¹² He became convinced that religion was not a matter of forms and ceremonies which must be observed, or even of the creed which the church prescribed for its believers, but it was more a matter of a personal, direct, intimate communion between the in-

¹⁰Scheel, *op. cit.*, pp. 364, 365.

¹¹K. Jürgens, Luther von seiner Geburt bis zum Ablassstreite (Leipzig: F. U. Brockhaus, 1846), p. 656.

¹²Ullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

dividual and God.¹³

Already from his early youth Staupitz had manifested a taste for "letters and a love of virtue." He wanted to retire from the cares and activities of the world which his social status entailed and to devote himself entirely to learning. But he soon found that the philosophy, the classics and the study of nature which he received in the schools could do nothing for his eternal salvation. As a result, he turned to theology. In this his main concern was to relate obedience with knowledge. One of his biographers quotes him as saying: "It is vain to call ourselves divines, if we do not confirm that noble title by our lives." His study of the Bible and the writings of Augustine, "the knowledge of himself, the war he . . . had to wage with the deceitfulness and lusts of his own heart, - led him to the Saviour."¹⁴

Staupitz was not bound by ancestral pride in the course of his life actions, but he tried to gain prominence and eminence by his own ability. This for him lay in the field of study. In order to devote his life fully to such study and pious consideration he entered monastic life as an Augustinian monk.¹⁵ Just where he made the profession of monastic obedience is not definitely known. However, the Augustinian Eremites at Munich assert that it was in their cloister that the vow was

¹³A. H. Newman, A Manual of Church History (Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1944), II, p. 45.

¹⁴J. H. M. D'Aubigne, History of the Great Reformation of the Sixteenth Century in Germany, Switzerland, &c. (New York: Robert Carter, 1844), I. p. 147.

¹⁵Ullmann, op. cit., p. 235.

made.¹⁶ The year in which he made that vow is not known.

The Order of the Augustinian Eremites claimed the great St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, as their founder, even though a Rule had not been written by him. The Order was first incorporated in the year 1243 by Pope Innocent IV. It was later confirmed by Pope Alexander IV in 1256. These pontiffs drew together various bodies of anchorites that had been leading a vagrant existence and placed them under the rule of 'Augustine'. Alexander IV gave them permission to wear the cowls and also gave them the privilege of exemption from the jurisdiction of bishops. The Augustinians were not bound to choose abbots, as were other monastic orders, but were governed by superintendents, priors, vicars, and provincials.¹⁷

The Order spread rapidly and flourished. By the middle of the fifteenth century it numbered over two thousand chapters. In Germany the Augustinians had grown into a "powerful organization". At the beginning of the sixteenth century, it boasted of more than a hundred German cloisters. But due to the wealth and prosperity of the Order, decay and deterioration soon set in. The rules were no longer strictly and strenuously observed as they formerly were. Laxity and worldliness were more in style than monastic perfection.¹⁸

Towards the latter part of the fifteenth century efforts at re-

¹⁶Scheel, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

¹⁷P. Bayne, *Martin Luther, His Life and Work* (London: Cassell & Company, 1887), I, p. 148.

¹⁸Mackinnon, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

form of such laxness and worldliness made their appearance. The reform was begun under the impulse of the Brethren of the Common Life. This reform movement had been gathering force ever since the end of the fourteenth century. The cloisters working towards reform once more returned to the strict observance of the rule of the Order. The monasteries of the reform groups became known as Augustinian Observants. These Observant monasteries organized into a separate group and separated themselves from the other Augustinian monasteries which were as yet unreformed. The unreformed were called the Conventuals. Besides separating themselves from the Conventuals, the Observants also severed themselves from the authority of the General Prior of the German Augustinians and determined to be governed by a Vicar-General whom they themselves would elect in regular meetings of the Order. In 1475 the Observant body elected Andreas Proles as their Vicar-General.¹⁹

Staupitz was elected Prior of the monastery at Tübingen in 1498 after being there for only a short time. By 1503 he was Prior of the monastery at Munich. In this position he strongly favored the purification of the monastic life of the members of the Order. In that same year, 1503, at the regular meeting of the order, he was elected Vicar-General of the Augustinian Observant Congregations in Germany.²⁰ As the head of that group Staupitz was resolved to make the best of the monastic life which he shared with the monks. He himself was a "wise

¹⁹B. K. Kuiper, Martin Luther: The Formative Years (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1933), pp. 148.149.

²⁰Clemen, op. cit., p. 71.

and large-hearted man, who had the root of evangelical faith in him."

He wished to do the best he could for the monks in his charge. He insisted that every monk who was mentally capable of the work should be made to read theology and that every monastery under his jurisdiction should possess a Latin Bible which was to be read.²¹

In the administration of the affairs of the office of Vicar-General Staupitz showed much zeal and good intentions. He took an interest in the individuals who came to him with their problems. He once said to Luther that he "wished to govern according to rigid justice, but things would not proceed in that way; then, according to the rules and counsels of my predecessors which also had no success; in the third place, according to the will of God, and with constant invocation of his name, but as little did this answer. At last, in despair of all other plans, I did what I could."²² He was often discouraged in his efforts to find capable and devout men to fill the various monastic offices. Luther quotes him as saying: "We must plough with the horses we have, and he who has none, must yoke his own oxen."²³ However, the main concern of Staupitz as Vicar-General was "the codification and publication of the constitution." This was printed in 1504. It differed only slightly from the old constitution. In this he recommended the study of the Bible

²¹T. M. Lindsay, Luther and the German Reformation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), I, p.34.

²²Ullmann, op. cit., p. 236.

²³Ibid., p. 237.

in every monastery and the spreading and strengthening of the Order.²⁴

Staupitz devoted himself diligently to the interests of the congregations in the Order. He effected a union between his own Order and the Lombard Observant Congregation, thereby greatly increasing the importance of his own group. He planned in the end to unite the Conventuals with the Observants by "combining in his own hand the Saxon provincial priorate with the German vicarate."²⁵ However, this plan led to an intense controversy. Grisar says that this controversy was occasioned by Staupitz who "jeopardized the canonical and disciplinary autonomy of the Observantine monasteries entrusted to his care. . . . The consolidation of the province, which had hitherto been directed by separate provincials, with the monasteries of his own jurisdiction would have greatly extended his authority. He counted upon the support of the General of the Order and increased vigor in the life of the German monasteries, although no noticeable decline had been manifested by them." He sees in this action of Staupitz a personal ambition for power and honor.²⁶

But efforts at reform in the Augustinian Order were also vigorously advocated by the generals of the Order themselves. General Mariano de Genazzano, who was the opponent of Savanarola, very actively worked towards reform in his own Order. His successor, Egidio Canisio of

²⁴Clemen, op. cit., p. 71.

²⁵P. Kurtz, Church History, authorized translation from latest revised edition by John MacPherson (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1889), II, p. 162.

²⁶H. Grisar, Martin Luther His Life and Work, adapted from the Second German Edition by Frank J. Eble, edited by Arthur Preuss (St. Louis, Mo.: The B. Herder Book Co., 1935), p. 51.

Viterbo, was even more active for reforming the Order. In his efforts, however, he found that the representatives of the laxer discipline, the Conventuals, were not desirous for reform. The Reformed congregations also feared that his efforts would cause them to lose the privileges they had.

In order to give the reform movement in Germany a wider scope, Egidio planned, at the end of 1506 or the beginning of 1507, that the vicar-general of the Congregation, John von Staupitz, should undertake the leadership of the Saxon Order in conjunction with his office as vicar and then, as provincial, gradually reform the deteriorating Augustinian monasteries of the Province. On December 15, 1507, Staupitz succeeded in getting a Bull from the German legate, Cardinal Carvajal, which empowered him to unite more than twenty monasteries of the province of Saxony, which had not been reformed, with the Saxon Congregation. At the same time this Bull instructed the archbishop of Magdeburg and the bishops of Bamberg and Freising to suppress all resistance to this measure, with force if necessary, and to deny any opponent the right of appeal to the pope. The attempt to win the Congregation for this plan was at first abortive. On this account Staupitz preferred not to publish the Bull immediately. It was only after the general had appointed him provincial of Saxony on June 26, 1510, and after he had pledged the members of both the Congregation and the Province, under threat of very severe punishment, to obey him implicitly, that he ventured to publish the Bull three months later, on September 30, 1510. Twenty-two of the twenty-nine monasteries of the Congregation then approved the union. The other seven persisted in their opposition, and prominent among these were the two largest and most influential, the monasteries at Nuremberg and Erfurt.

The Erfurters sent Dr. Nathin and Father Luther to Halle to get a *Vorschrift*, or permission to appeal, from the archbishop of Magdeburg through the intervention of the dean of the cathedral, Adolf, prince of Anhalt. But the archbishop undoubtedly refused. Thereupon Nathin and Luther, under orders from their monastery, appear to have set out at once for the conference to which the Franconian district-vicar, Simon Kayser, had invited the dissenting monasteries. This conference was probably held at the Augustinian monastery at Nuremberg. Despite the express prohibition of the Bull, and without obtaining the consent of the Vicar-general Staupitz as required by the statutes of the Congregation, the conference decided to appeal to the pope and to send two of the

brothers to Italy for the purpose.²⁷

The trip to Rome failed to gain the wanted appeal. Upon the return of the delegates the issue was again contested. In April, 1511, General Egidio of the Order was still determined to make a union between the Congregation and those of the Saxon Province. However, Staupitz upon whom all seemed to depend for such a union, began to lose confidence in the ability of the merger to come about. It is true, that at a conference of the Order at Jena in July, 1511, he told the representative of the seven dissenting monasteries "that he could not resign the provincialship of Saxony, but in other respects he made such concessions that they promised to lay his proposals of peace before their monasteries and to act upon them within two months. . . . Like the Erfurt monastery, the Nuremberg monastery also rejected the Recess of Jena, and it did this, as it appears, unanimously. Thereafter Staupitz considered the cause lost, and as early as late fall, 1511, he decided to drop the union project entirely. He carried out this decision at the Chapter at Cologne in May, 1512. Peace was expressed outwardly in the re-election of Staupitz as vicar-general and in the temporary removal of his see to the Augustinian monastery at Nuremberg."²⁸ This final settlement was brought about by the "conciliatory policy of Staupitz."²⁹

Staupitz was not only active in the life of the monastic orders,

²⁷H. Boehmer, Road to Reformation: Martin Luther to the Year 1521, translated from the German by John W. Doberstein and Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946), pp. 58-60.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 78.79.

²⁹Grisar, op. cit., p. 56.

but he was also employed in various ways by his Prince, the Elector Frederick the Wise. In 1502 the Elector called into existence the University of Wittenberg. He dispatched Staupitz to Rome to secure the papal permission to establish the school.³⁰

The chief motive which prompted Frederick to open this University seems to have been a "desire to provide higher teaching within his own dominions, a duty which it was said that the Diet of Worms in 1495 had declared to be incumbent on every Elector."³¹ Another reason may have been, and this seems the correct one, "to rival the university in the neighboring ducal town of Leipzig."³² Here at Leipzig a University had existed since the year 1409 and was under the line of the Albertine rulers. Erfurt was more or less a free city and not too dependent on the Electors of Saxony. So Frederick chose Wittenberg even though it stood

in the midst of sandy heaths, which stretch in flat and monotonous barrenness for many miles around it. . . . Connected with the Castle Church was a well-endowed Chapter or Stift, to the members of which might be entrusted definite duties of teaching. It was in all likelihood Staupitz who suggested that the Augustinian convent could be turned to the same account. . . . It was no unusual thing that a new university should be thus closely connected with the Church, or that the funds for its endowment should be provided by a kind of half secularisation of ecclesiastical revenues. Education of every kind was so completely in the hands of the clergy, that the application of Church lands and tithes

³⁰"Staupitz", Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, editors M^cClintock and Strong (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1894), IX, p. 998.

³¹C. Beard, Martin Luther and the Reformation in Germany Until the Close of the Diet of Worms, edited by J. Frederick Smith (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1889), p. 166.

³²Boehmer, op. cit., p. 50.

to the support of the university teaching was not looked upon as diverting them from their original purpose. Vienna, Heidelberg, Köln, Erfurt, as well as later foundations, Basel, Greifswald, Ingolstadt, and Rostock, were all provided with an income in the same way. At the same time Wittenberg was one of the first German universities which was based, not upon a papal bull, but upon an Imperial charter. In the document, dated July 6th, 1502, which gave permission to teach and grant degrees in all faculties, Maximilian declares the protection of all sciences to belong to the head of the Empire, whose duty it is 'to provide for the happy progress of knowledge, good arts, and liberal studies, that they, drawn from the fountain of Divine Wisdom, may make our subjects more apt to the administration of the common-weal, to foresight in the provision of things necessary to life.' Nevertheless, there was no intention of dispensing with the blessing of the Church. Cardinal Raymond, in an instrument which alludes to the Imperial charter already granted, confirmed the foundation of the University, and, in virtue of the plenary powers entrusted to him by Pope Alexander VI, especially established in it the privilege of granting degrees in Theology and Canon Law. But this did not satisfy the pious scruples of Frederick, and a bull issued by Pope Julius II on the 26th of June, 1507 once more confirmed all that had already been done, and gave the highest ecclesiastical sanction to the endowment of the University out of the property of the Church.

This was chiefly effected by a union between the University and the College of All Saints which had its seat in the Castle Church. Its head was converted into a Dean; under him were an Archdeacon and Canon, each of whom enjoyed a separate prebend or benefice, and each had to undertake fixed teaching duties in the University. They were in all Twelve: three Theologians, four Jurists, five Masters of Arts who had received a philosophical training. Other endowments followed upon this: both Frederick and his brother and successor John kept an open hand to the University which they had founded. In 1508 the statutes by which it was to be governed were enacted; they had been drawn up by Scheurl, who received ten gulden for his remuneration. They did not proceed from the University itself; they were a code of laws enacted by the Elector, upon the advice of his councillors, and imposed by him upon the new institution. They established the University as a corporation, with a Rector at its head, divided into four faculties, each of whom was presided over by a Dean. There were no 'nations'; unconsciously of the coming concourse from all parts of Europe, the founders thought only of a High School for Electoral Saxony and Thuringia. What was peculiar was the institution of four 'studii generalis Reformatores,' the Rector and three others, who were to stand at the head of everything in the Elector's place, and to whom he gave 'supreme and absolute power of every kind.' But this office seems to have fallen into decay before twenty years had passed; probably the dignity of those who held it was overshadowed by the solid authority of Luther and Melancton. The connection of the

University with established religion was drawn very close; the Castle Church was its church; its pulpit the place where the exercises were read; its door the board to which academical notices were affixed. The University was solemnly consecrated to God and His immediate Mother. Augustine was adopted as the patron saint of the whole institution: Paul of the theological, Ivo of the legal, Cosmas and Damian of the medical, Catharine of the arts faculty. . . .

416 students matriculated in 1502 under the rectorate of Martin Pollich. In 1503 this number fell to 390; in 1504 to 271; in 1505 to 127. In 1506 a pestilence compelled the removal of the University to Herzberg, and it was not till 1508 that the number of matriculations again rose to 179. In May 1507 Christopher Scheurl was elected Rector. . . . In theology there are five professors of which three are known to us by name, Staupitz, Pollich, and Trutvetter. In canon law there are seven, Scheurl's name appearing again. There are four teachers of medicine. . . . Amsdorf . . . heads a list of nine philosophical teachers, of whom the second is . . . Carlstadt. How little the University was yet emancipated from old methods of teaching may be inferred from the fact that the former is announced as lecturing 'in via Scoti,' the latter 'in via S. Thomae.' When we come to polite letters we find that Balthazar Phaccus proposes to read Virgil's Eneid, Valerius Maximus, and Sallust's Jugur-Italicus, and a poem of his own on the site of Wittenberg. And that is all. There is no Greek, no Hebrew, no history, and only such physics as philosophy and medicine can provide them. A list of five extraordinary lecturers in philosophy, and as many 'in litteris secularibus' - the subjects of whose instruction are not given - closes the meagre programme.³³

In looking for teachers for his new University, Frederick "consulted with Wimpina and another Leipzig professor, Pollich von Mellerstadt, and ultimately decided to call the latter to be the head of the new school."³⁴ He also had great confidence in the ability and judgments of Staupitz, whom he made Dean of the theological faculty. Staupitz lectured very little at the University because matters of the Order took too much of his time. He was elected Dean of the theological faculty

³³Beard, op. cit., pp. 166-174.

³⁴W. H. T. Dau, The Great Renunciation: Leaves from the Story of Luther's Life (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 29.

again in 1508. On October 18 of that year, at the beginning of the semester, he was still in Munich on official business, and it is very doubtful whether he returned in time to take up his classes. "It is possible that he did not appear in the town at all during his deanship, or that he was there only for brief visits."³⁵ As a professor in the classroom he was "venerated by his students."³⁶

Already when he accepted this second term as Dean he had for some time made up his mind to retire as soon as he found a person qualified to take his place, and someone not occupied so much with outside work so that he could spend his entire time at the University.³⁷

Staupitz used his authority and influence as Vicar-General to gain students for the new University, at least during its first year of existence. He collected promising young monks from many of the monasteries under his jurisdiction and enrolled them as students.³⁸

After his resignation from the faculty in 1512, Staupitz still remained on the most friendly terms with the Elector. He was sent on several missions. One of them took him to the Netherlands to collect relics for the new Castle Church which the Elector had built at Wittenberg.³⁹ The Elector also employed him with great success as his emissary

³⁵Boehmer, op. cit., pp. 51.52.

³⁶M'Clintock and Strong, op. cit., p. 998.

³⁷Kuiper, op. cit., p. 134.

³⁸T. M. Lindsay, A History of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), I, p. 206.

³⁹D'Aubigne, op. cit., p. 190.

in the various courts of the land.⁴⁰

When Luther was established as his successor as professor of theology, Staupitz devoted his time to the duties of his office as Vicar-General. He never was too interested in educational work from the beginning, but preferred to devote himself to visiting the monasteries of his Order. In 1514 he was in the Netherlands. In 1516 he visited the Augustinians along the Lower Rhine and in Belgium. These houses offered a "wide field for the dissemination of his evangelistic principles and for the inculcation of the type of spiritual life that he represented."⁴¹

When he was not making these tours of duty he resided in Munich, Salzburg, and especially in the city of Nuremberg. In this latter city he was in close contact with such men as Christopher Scheurl, Hieronymus Pirkheimer and Albrecht Dürer.⁴² Nuremberg had for a long time been the center of "humanistic life and thought. . . . Here he was always welcomed by a circle of devout and intelligent men . . . who formed themselves into a 'Staupitzian Society', and as such discussed with the utmost freedom, under his guidance, the great questions of life and doctrine that were agitating men's minds. Here Staupitz was looked upon, to use the language of one of the members of the society, 'as a disciple, nay as the very tongue of Paul,' as 'a herald of the gospel and a gen-

⁴⁰Ullmann, op. cit., p. 235.

⁴¹Newman, op. cit., p. 46.

⁴²Clemen, op. cit., p. 71.

uine divine.' 'The foremost people of Nuremberg,' says this contemporary, regarded him as 'the one who should free Israel,' that is to say, should lead to a general reformation of the church."⁴³ This humanistic circle later, under the leadership of Wenceslaus Link, gave Luther enthusiastic support.⁴⁴

He was attracted to Salzburg by "the cunning of cardinal Matthew Lang." He became preacher to the cardinal and his court in 1519. In 1520 he resigned his position as Vicar-General of the Augustinian Order of Germany and joined the Benedictine Order at Salzburg. In 1522 he was appointed the abbot of St. Peter's monastery in that city and took the name John IV, and "subsequently was made vicar and suffragan to the cardinal-archbishop Lang."⁴⁵ He died on December 28, 1524 as a result of a stroke of apoplexy.⁴⁶ He was buried in the small graveyard of the monastery. "A large artistic slab, bearing his coat-of-arms, covers his remains in the chapel of St. Vitus, and an elegant epitaph, composed in the style of the age, proclaims his eulogy. The monastery preserves his portrait as a Benedictine abbot in a little known but fine oil-painting."⁴⁷

Throughout his life Staupitz enjoyed unusual popularity in all strata of society, but especially among the cultured. "He was . . . so close to Frederick the Wise from childhood . . . that he could . . . call

⁴³Newman, op. cit., p. 47.

⁴⁴Lindsay, A History of the Reformation, op. cit., p. 256.

⁴⁵M'Clintock and Strong, op. cit., p. 998.

⁴⁶Clemen, op. cit., p. 72.

⁴⁷Grisar, op. cit., p. 178.

him his dearest friend. He was always welcome in the courts of Berlin and Munich and the petty courts of the counts of central Germany, and he so captivated even the suspicious patricians of Nuremberg . . . that they even thought his preaching was very fine. . . . The fact that as a born nobleman he was well acquainted with court society, and that as a true North German he always remained friendly and courteous when another might have become excited and angry, . . . certainly enhanced the pleasing impression of his personality. But the feeling that he was not motivated by selfish ambition, that after his own fashion he meant well toward everyone, contributed even more to that impression."⁴⁸

Staupitz just couldn't help being kind to everyone who approached him. However, "it was not his nature to pledge himself wholeheartedly to a person or cause." Luther said he was "'too cool and too dispassionate' to do that. . . . 'He could never make up his mind to oppose open violations of the law and merely comforted himself by uttering the pious words, 'God grant us patience!' or the proverb . . . 'Things cannot be right in this world anyhow'; or even brushed aside everything disagreeable with a more or less course jest, for he had a pronounced humorous vein."⁴⁹

He was highly regarded by the men of his day. Erasmus wrote: "'I indeed greatly admire Staupitz."⁵⁰ Carlstadt, in his introduction to Augustine's writing De spiritu et litera, dated November 18, 1517, said

⁴⁸Boehmer, op. cit., p. 102.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 101.

⁵⁰Clemen, op. cit., p. 71.

concerning Staupitz: "Ihm, dem weitblickenden Beförderer der reineren Theologie, dem hervorragenden Prediger, dem unerschütterlichen Verteidiger und Bekenner der Gnade Christi."⁵¹ He was, however, beloved most of all by his pupil and successor, Martin Luther, who "often reflected with great honor about his Preceptor. He again and again referred to him as suum Staupitium."⁵²

⁵¹H. Barge, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (Leipzig: Friedrich Brandstetter, 1905), I, p. 92.

⁵²Matthesius, op. cit., p. 366.

CHAPTER III

THE WRITINGS OF JOHANN VON STAUPITZ

In his literary work Staupitz expressed the Pauline-Augustinian mysticism of which we spoke above. His chief point of view, both in his writings and in his sermons, was, on the one hand, the traditional mysticism which he gained from diverse readings and the Tübingen professors, and, on the other hand, the "fundamental thoughts and sentiments of Christianity which also constituted the centre in that of the Reformers."¹

Together with several letters from the hand of Staupitz, there remain his sermons which he delivered at Tübingen in 1498, five larger works, and later opinions and sermons delivered at Salzburg.

The series of sermons which he delivered at Tübingen were based on the interpretation of the Book of Job. It is difficult to tell in these sermons to what extent the mysticism and practical influence of his Tübingen professors captivated his thinking. He delivered these sermons while he was prior of the Tübingen chapter of the Augustinian Eremites in the summer and fall of 1498. There is no 'modern' theology manifested in them, but they indicate to a far greater extent that Staupitz was following the old ways. They also show that he already in his early years of labor praised the "Barmherzigkeit Gottes." But

¹Ullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

he was at that time, just as he was later in his life, persuaded of the "catholic gospel." The book of Job remained for him the shining example of the great mercy of God. "Zu der Zeit, da Gott den Juden das Gesetz gab, offenbarte er den Heiden an Hiob seine Barmherzigkeit. Das Wort Pauli, dasz die Heiden Gott loben sollen um seiner Barmherzigkeit willen (Röm. 15,9), erläuert Hiobs Geschick. In ihr wurzelt die Ehre Gottes. Sie allein ist es, die uns, die wir nichts Gutes getan haben, stets die 'vollste Zuversicht' verleiht, Gott zu ehren. Er fand in uns keine Gerechtigkeit, die er hätte krönen können, wohl aber Vergehen, die er beschenken wollte. Darum ist er ob seiner Barmherzigkeit wahrhaftiglich zu ehren." This is the beginning of the oldest sermon of Staupitz in which he is conscious of the merciful grace of God.

The story is told that much later a Doctor of Theology who had received his degree at Tübingen, and who was also loved very much by Luther, said that Staupitz "had expounded the book of Job in Tübingen, and that when he was come to the tenth and eleventh chapter, it seemed to him, that Job was tormented more through the exposition of the book by Staupitz than through his own sores. . . . He understood nothing of the meaning because he did not know the fundamental Christian teachings." It seems that Staupitz himself was the author of these words.²

The fact that Staupitz appealed to Paul and praised the grace of God without professing to a different 'gospel' than that of the Catholic Church, was not something out of the ordinary. It was nothing unheard

² Scheel, op. cit., pp. 365-367.

of at the time to preach the mercy of God which saves sinners. Luther himself had been taught and edified with this same preaching in the cloister, as he later recalls. One would not have to abandon his Catholic confession of God when he, with Staupitz, praised the God who pardons sinners even though He finds no righteousness in them. Every late Middle Age theologian knew that man by his own merit could not earn grace and holiness. So Staupitz in these sermons did not in the least prejudice his conscience when he opened his sermons on the Book of Job by praising the mercy of God. It embarrassed him just as little to recognize the law as a component part of salvation, as it did the others of his time. This appears already in his first sermon. The subsequent thirty-three of them followed in the same pattern. "Die Gnadenlehre des mittelalterlichen Katholizismus, die Anschauung von der angenehm machenden Gnade beherrscht die Tübinger Predigten Staupitzens. Durch die 'Würdigkeit der Gnade', durch die 'angenehm machende Gnade' ist man 'würdig' und 'angenehm' vor Gott. Demgemäss kann denn auch kein Akt ohne die Liebe verdienstlich im eigentlichen Sinne sein. Durch die Liebe werden die Akte des Willens 'geformt' und verdienstlich." So these sermons of Staupitz preached in the Tübingen cloister can hardly be thought of as 'evangelical'.³

The maiden essay of Staupitz appeared at Tübingen on March 30, 1500. It is entitled: Decisio questionis de audiencia misse in parochiali ecclesia dñicis et festivis diebus. In three subsequent issues

³Ibid., pp. 367-369.

of this work there was appended a catechetical effort.⁴ It is a very small essay, taking up only "five leves in small quarto. The brief preface . . . written by Father Johannes de Stapuitz Augustinianus, and dated Tuwingen, Anno salutis nostre 1500. Die Penultima marci. Whether the Treatise itself is from the pen of Staupitz is never once directly said. At the end we only read: Vale optime lector. Atque quaestionis p. veritate videndum decisionem legas. parti adherendo saniori veriorque. Ex Tubingen Anno 1500. The whole booklet refers to ecclesiastical matters of an external kind, and is composed in the current scholastic form, with reasons, counter-reasons, and appeals to the most distinguished teachers, Joh. Gerson, Gabriel Biel, Scotus, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventura and others and to canonical law. . . . The matter of the essay is as follows: The question is, Whether the parishioners are, by the laws of the Church, bound to hear mass on Sundays and festivals in their own parish churches? The point is debated with arguments for and against. Towards the end, however, the following propositions are laid down. Conclusio tertia: 'It is reasonable and proper that the parish priests shall not lightly condemn those under their care, who may, on the appointed days, hear mass out of their own parishes, and thereby perform the due service to God. The reason is, because the obligation to hear mass under specific outward circumstances (cum positivis circumstanctis), is founded on positive law, which always admits of reasonable excuses.' Conclus. quarta: 'They act in a danger-

⁴Clemen, op. cit., p. 71.

ous way who supply the people with frivolous excuses for absenting themselves from the mass in the parish church on appointed days.' Conclus. quinta: 'It is an error to suppose, that for any cause, however slight, and having no reference to the divine worship, the parishioners are absolved from their obligation to the Church; for every cause does not invalidate the reason of the law, and when that stands, so also does the law.' Convenience, or personal inclination, ought not here to be an excuse; the only one is necessity. In general, however, the rule is established, That, unless pressing reasons to the contrary exist, parishioners are bound to hear mass in their own Church."⁵ Staupitz does not say anything in this essay that had not been said before. It is nothing more than good catholicism. "Realisten und Nominalisten, Thomisten und Occamisten lieszen sich darin nicht beirren."⁶

In 1517 Staupitz' work on Predestination was printed. This was the publication of a series of Advent sermons, twenty-four in number, which he had preached in Nürnberg on the doctrine of predestination.⁷ It was a Thomistic book. The author saw that the main problem in religion "is not how man is enabled to do good works which will make him worthy of the reward of eternal blessedness, but rather how he can attain to the saving love of God."⁸

⁵Ullmann, op. cit., pp. 244.245.

⁶Scheel, op. cit., p. 366.

⁷Beard, op. cit., p. 199.

⁸Boehmer, op. cit., p. 99.

The following review of the book appeared in the Unschuldigen Nachrichten in 1712: "Johanns Staupitz. Büchlein von der endlichen Vollziehung ewiger Fürsorgung. 1517. 4. von neunundthalb Bogen. Diese Schrift, so der bekannte Staupitz lateinisch gefasset und D. Christoph Scheurl deutsch übersetzt hat, ist dem Patricio Hieron. Ebner zu Nurnberg dediciret, und bestehet in 24. Capiteln. Von der Praedestination enthält sie nicht viel, sondern meistens von der Rechtfertigung und mystischen Wercken Gottes in den Gläubigen. Der Glaube wird hoch erhoben cap. 4. Von der Rechtfertigung heist es: Unsre Wercke thun nichts dazu, cap. VI.A.6.b. Dieselbe wird von der Renovation wohl unterschieden, aber mit der Widergebürth noch vermischet, l.c. welches zur selben Zeit nicht zu verdennen war. Sonst ist auch sehr viel Gutes allhier anzutreffen, worunter sich aber auch der Pöptische Sauerteig zuweilen menget. Da soll unter andern Christi Gesetz noch strenger als Mosis Gesetz seyn, aus dem Misz-Verstand des 5ten Cap."⁹

In this work Staupitz sets forth some of the conceptions against which Luther later contended. He traces the "real existence of the life of salvation back to the infusion of love through grace, and he at the same time regards faith in and of itself as yet a dead thing. Love must awaken it to life. He speaks after the manner of the scho-

⁹N. N., Unschuldige Nachrichten von Alten und Neuen Theologischen Sachen, Bücher, Urkunden, Controversien, Veränderungen, Anmerckungen, Vorschlägen, u.d.g. Zur geheiligten Übung in gewissen Ordnungen verfertigt von Einigen Dienern des Göttlichen Wortes (Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Braun, 1712), pp. 1082.1084.

lastic theology, of faith as fashioned (formata) by love."¹⁰

In the following year, 1518, the book Von der holdseligen Liebe Gottes was printed. It appeared with Luther's approbation as follows: "Von der Liebe Gottes, Ain wunder hüpsch Unterrichtung, beschrieben durch D. J. Staupitz, bewert und approbiert durch D. Martinum Luther, beide Augustiner ordenz."¹¹

This work indicates the basis from which Staupitz derived his entire theological teaching. This followed the same pattern as did all the mystics, with whom "love, the love of God from which, through Christ as the medium, the love of men is kindled, God is above all things lovely, the essentially and intrinsically excellent love, and as such, supreme perfection. This love which renders amiable every object on which it lights, must be loved for its own sake, and above all, it is the purest and highest sort of love, including all adoration and true worship of God, all piety and prayer, and being a matter of experience, a man cannot learn it of others, nor by his own natural understanding, nor from the letter of Scripture. The letter of the Old Testament teaches mere law and punishment, and possesses worth only in so far as it conceals within it the Spirit and Christ, and is a stretch from nature to grace, and from self to the spirit. But the mere letter of the

¹⁰J. Köstlin, The Theology of Luther in its Historical Development and Inner Harmony, translated by Charles E. Hay (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1897), I, p. 67.

¹¹W. E. Tentzel, Historischer Bericht vom Anfang ersten Fortgang der Reformation Lutheri, zur Erläuterung des Hn. v. Seckendorff Historie des Lutherthums, mit grossem Fleisz erstattet, und nunmehr in diesem andern Evangelischen Jubel-Jahr (Leipzig: Joh. Ludwig Gleditsch und Moritz Georg Wiedemann, 1717), p. 281.

New Testament also slays, all the more in that it brings Christ before the eyes, and his doctrine into the ear, but not his Spirit into the heart. The true teacher of divine love is the Spirit of the Heavenly Father and of Christ, by whom love is shed abroad in our hearts. God himself, who is love, must take up his abode in the soul, which thence derives strength to do all things, and to keep all the commandments. From this indwelling of the Holy Spirit arises the light of Christian faith, which cannot be attained by the outward study of the Scriptures. From the same source also flow true hope and well-grounded consolation, which we cannot build upon our own works, as, for instance, our love to God, but only on God's love to us, and upon that which he works within us. The love of God is formed in our hearts by Christ, in whom God's unspeakable love to us has been manifested. He is the rock in which the kindling spark of love slumbers, but it does not break forth until elicited by the stroke of the iron, which is the Holy Spirit. But when God strikes the rock in the heart of the elect, fire is emitted, and dead coal becomes alive, the black cinder glows like gold. Love is thus the offspring of love, and our reciprocal love of God of God's love towards us. In this love there are also degrees, and we can distinguish the initiative, the growing, and the perfect. The perfect man is detached from self, and from all things and creatures. Foregoing all coalition and action of his own, he waits only for what God says and does within him, and adheres so closely to God that he is said to be one in spirit with him. The degrees of divine love have a certain order among themselves; but God does not always confer them according to that. It is true that the love of God is, above all things, an enduring operation,

still it does not always remain at the same pitch, but is more or less, according as God sees it to be useful for the person who is its object. Man requires occasionally the withdrawal of love, that he may be made conscious of his weakness, and recognize the only Saviour in God, and magnify him alone; but all things must work for the good of the elect, who are Christ's. Christ belongs to God without mediation, but we, through Christ. Through Christ the elect soul is on such friendly terms with God, that evil, yea, even sin itself, is not merely innocuous, but subservient to its advantage. We ought not, however, to think that on that account we may commit sin. On the contrary, it behooves us at all times to flee from sin with the utmost diligence, for to cover sin with mercy is a work which belongs to God alone. A true mark of the love of God is the fulfillment of his commandments, for love breeds conformity, and makes one heart, one will, and one mind between the lover and the loved. But the surest mark on the true lover of God is, that nothing but God is allowed to dwell in his mind, and all creatures are expelled. If this be the case - if he be set loose from all creatures, forget his own life, merit, and safety, and seek only the honour and the will of God - God is doubtless within him, and he is 'full of God'.¹² This work was very popular and went through several editions. In later years the Anabaptists reprinted it many times.¹³

In 1519 his next work was printed. This was: Von dem heiligen christlichen Glauben. "Faith is due in all rightful things, even by

¹²Ullmann, op. cit., pp. 246.247.

¹³Kuiper, op. cit., p. 142.

one honest man to another, how much more then do we owe it to God and his word, which is truth itself! All understandings must yield themselves captive to it; and all hearts side with it, be the things as high as they may. The divine promises are contained and guaranteed in Christ. Believe that he is the Son of God, and never doubt, or desire at least to believe steadfastly in him, and thereby thou art blessed in him. Those who believe in Christ in whom God has put his word, being taught by God, need no other teacher of faith, may assure themselves of their predestination to eternal life, are justified and renewed, and obtain forgiveness of sin, to which neither confession, nor penitence, nor any work of man, can help them, but only faith in Christ. Without Christ there is no true virtue, reason, or good intention. In him all sin, if followed by repentance, is pardonable. They who are born of God are protected from sinning by virtue of this birth, and not by their virtue, intelligence or strength of mind. Faith in Christ allows no man to continue in himself, but raises him higher, and never rests until it unites him with God. In the first place it unites believers with one another, in such a way that in God they all acquire one heart and soul; and thence arises the unity of the Church. Secondly, God unites believers with Christ in such a way that they become one body with him, he being the head and they the members, and by means of this union Christ sheds his spiritual gifts, yea even himself, into our hearts. Finally, there is still another and higher union, in which God gives the believer to Christ in wedlock, so that they become inseparably one. This is the marriage of paradise. It is the sacrament and seat, that Christ has

taken from us all our sins and infirmities, and has in their stead become to us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, not externally but within us."¹⁴

In a chapter of this small book, entitled "Von der Titelchristen Irrung", Staupitz makes the following significant statements: "'Derjenige glaubt gar nicht in Christum, der nicht thun will wie Christus gethan hat. Eben der Glaube, der dir das Vertrauen in Christum auflegt, der bringt dich zur Nachfolge Christi, der uns in allen guten Werken und Leiden vorgegangen ist und uns ihm nachzufolgen aufgefordert hat, der um unsertwillen gelitten und uns damit das Exempel gegeben hat, in seine Fusztapfen zu treten. Hör der Narren Rede: der in Christum glaubt, der bedarf keiner Werke. . . . Aber der böse Geist giebt seinem fleischlichen Christen ein, man werde ohne die Werke gerechtfertigt, mit Anziehung als habe es Paulus dermaszen gepredigt, wie ihm fälschlich und mit Unwahrheit wird aufgelegt. Paulus hat wohl wider die Werke des Gesetzes . . . disputirt und gestritten und beschlossen . . . der Werke aber, die im Gehorsam der himmlischen Gebote, im Glaube und Liebe geschehen, hat er nie übel gedacht und von ihnen nichts darn das Beszte geredet, ja sie zu der Seligkeit noth und nütz verkündert und geprediget, wovon alle seine Episteln Zeugnisz geben.' 'Christus will das Gesetz, vollbracht haben, die Narren wollen es vertilgen; Paulus lobt das Gesetz, dasz es gut sei, die Narren scheltens, dasz es böse sei, darum dasz sie nach dem Fleisch wandern und den Geschmack des Geistes nicht

¹⁴Ullmann, op. cit., pp. 247.248.

haben.¹⁵

Certain passages from this writing on faith would lead one to think that the theology which he presented is identical with that of the Reformation. Both came during the same period, namely, when the Reformation was having its beginnings and when Staupitz was still maintaining intimate relations with its leaders. In this writing Staupitz makes the strenuous attempt to define his entire theological position. This writing therefore becomes something of a "thoroughly practical tendency." And so it is that the presentation of the doctrine of faith fell into the background of the writing. "His own religious experience and his knowledge of Christian experience in general drove him, indeed, again and again to lay all stress upon it, as over against the assaults of temptation; but in his general theological system, it had not been able to win for itself the proper position, not to suitably adjust itself to those elements which disputed its claim. He fails here to look carefully for that in the subject by which salvation is really and fundamentally appropriated. The whole weight . . . falls simply upon the divine working, which itself produces even this appropriation. It is, indeed, granted that for the inner Christian life the light of faith is the first requirement. But that life itself in reality begins with the love which is born of the love from above, and the presentation of it . . . proceeds at once to deal with progress in love and the perfection of love, by means of which the spirit of the one so loving becomes one spirit with God; faith, meanwhile, is not again taken

¹⁵L. Keller, Die Reformation und die alteren Reformparteien (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1885), pp. 346.347.

into consideration in the first tract. . . . Instead of presenting faith as a positive apprehending and receiving of the objectively presented salvation and Saviour, Staupitz constantly speaks rather of a renouncing of self by the subject, of a simple waiting upon God in complete obedience and perfect resignation, and, finally of a 'perfect empty-making of the spirit.'¹⁶

In the same year, 1519, a second work by Staupitz was published: Von der Nachfolgung des Willigen Sterbens Christi. In this writing one can detect the predominant zeal for an essential inner union with Christ. He speaks of the most complete union, in which the believer and follower of Christ has surrendered himself entirely to God.¹⁷ "Whoever is in Christ through faith, makes it his business to imitate him, first in his life, and then particularly in his sufferings and death." This work was dedicated to a Countess Agnes of Mansfeldt and Heldrungen. In the work he "shows 'How a good man being subjected to the necessity of dying, should deport himself, in order to give to Christ a voluntary life, passion, and death, in return for his suffering and dying.' Here he mainly illustrates the ideas of Paul, that death entered the world by sin, that from the first transgression sin spread itself over the whole race, that Christ has vanquished sin and death, and that his passion and death, to which the victory is due, have also become to us a pattern of how we should suffer and die. 'Die like Christ . . . and without doubt, you will die a good and blessed death. Let all who please learn from St.

¹⁶Köstlin, op. cit., pp. 66.67.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 66.

Peter, or other saints, how to die, or observe how good men close their lives. I will learn the lesson from Christ and from none else. He is the pattern given me by God, according to which I am to act, and suffer, and die. He only it is, whom all men can follow, and in whom holy living, suffering, and dying, are prefigured to all, so that no one can act, or suffer, or die well, unless it be done conformably to him in whose death that of all others was swallowed up."¹⁸

The later writings of Staupitz at first glance would seem to indicate that he had followed the entire teaching of the Reformation, but that all which was lacking was an open and public espousal of the cause, and a denunciation of the errors both temporal and spiritual, which were to be found in the Church. However, his theological views do fall short of presenting the 'intelligent faith' of Luther and his Reformation.¹⁹

Staupitz never did intend to leave the Catholic Church, and he never did leave. He died as an abbot of a Benedictine monastery. It is interesting to note, however, "that his books were put on the Index by the Council of Trent, 1563, and were burnt as heretical with all his correspondence by order of his successor, Abbot Martin of St. Peter, in the court of the convent at Salzburg in 1584." The note in this reference also points out one of the many errors that appear in the papal catalogue of heretical books of 1883, in which the following statement

¹⁸Ullmann, op. cit., pp. 248.249.

¹⁹Kbstlin, op. cit., p. 64.

is made: "Staupitius ist in den Index gekommen, weil Cochlaeus bei dem Jahre 1517 ihn neben Luther als Gegner Tetzels erwähnt. Er ist in der 1. Classe geblieben bis auf diesen Tag, obschon man in Rom oder wenigstens in Trient, jedenfalls Benedict XIV, wohl hätte wissen können, dass er als guter Katholik als Abt von St. Peter zu Salzburg gestorben."²⁰

²⁰P. Schaff, History of the Christian Church (Second edition revised; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), VI, p. 121.

CHAPTER IV

THE INFLUENCE OF JOHANN VON STAUPITZ UPON MARTIN LUTHER

The description of the first meeting between Staupitz and Luther is often presented in a very dramatic fashion by the earlier biographers of Luther. They speak of the drudgery which he at first had to undergo at his entry into the cloister as a Magister. They also tell that the other monks maliciously rejoiced because of the work he had to do, work which kept him from the study of his Bible and the theologians. At times he had to suffer weeks of sleeplessness in order to pray the postponed hours he had missed in the chapel. When Staupitz came to Erfurt, according to these biographers, he immediately noticed Luther's vexation and prepared to bring an end to his troubles. Such intense interest of the Vicar-General towards this 'Laienbruder' aroused the further jealousy of the cloister brothers, and this in turn caused Luther more unrest. The biographers write that it was a general confession to Staupitz which uncovered the state of Luther's soul. This confession was also the "Anlasz und Beginn der Lösung des dramatischen Knotens. Wie ein Vater seinem irrenden Kind ging er ihm nach und wuzzte sein Vertrauen zu gewinnen, bemühte er sich, dem wunderlichen Gedankengang des grübelnden Mönchs zu folgen."¹

It is true that the turning-point in Luther's cloister life was

¹Scheel, op. cit., pp. 70.71.

occasioned by the Vicar-General. It was this final turning away from Catholicism which the biographers and traditions played up in such a dramatic manner. However, they very often factualize a general statement of Luther's or of his contemporaries:

Ob die Schilderung nicht allzu summarisch sei und spätere Aussagen Luthers allzu wahllos verwende, wurde nicht erwogen. Die Hilfsmittel zur Sichtung der Überlieferung liesz man ungenutzt liegen. Was aus chronologischen Gründen möglich oder annehmbar sei, wurde nicht gefragt. Was der verfassungsrechtliche Rahmen, in dem nun einmal auch Luthers Leben stand, wahrscheinlich mache oder nicht, wurde keiner Beachtung gewürdigt oder nur leicht gestreift. Lieber folgte man einem verwilderten Text der Tischreden oder den Angaben jener älteren Biographen, die wenig genug wussten, aber unbefangenen fabulierten, wenn das geschichtliche Wissen versagte. So sprach man denn mit einer Selbstverständlichkeit, die jeden kritischen Zweifel mit dem Tadel der Vermessenheit belegt hätte, von dem blassen und ungehärteten jungen Mönch, dessen Körper die Marter der Kasteiungen und die Last der seelischen Not kaum zu ertragen vermochte. Man erzählte von einem alles Maß überschreitenden Wachen, Frieren und Fasten, von einem übereifrigem Studium, von peinlichen und ängstlichen Forschen in der Schrift, soweit sie überhaupt geöffnet werden durfte, von martervollen Enttäuschungen und neuen Hoffnungen, die doch unerfüllt blieben, von den Qualen der Verzweiflung, die den seelischen und körperlichen Zusammenbruch herbeigeführt hätten, wenn nicht in Staupitz der Retter erstanden wäre, der zunächst den von den Mönchen Schikanirten seinem eigentlichen Beruf zugeführt und dem im Dunkel Versagenden das Licht des Evangeliums angezündet und ihn auf den Weg geleitet hätte, der zu Paulus hinführte und von aller Not befreite. In ungefähr zwei Jahren sieht man Luther aus der Hölle der Verzweiflung in den Himmel der Seligkeit gelangen. Spätestens 1507 steht er in den Anfängen der neuen Erkenntnis, die die katholische Welt aus den Angeln zu heben berufen war.²

It was in the Erfurt cloister that Staupitz and Luther first became acquainted. Just when that occurred is not certain. One can find no proof for the supposition that already in the year 1506 there was intercourse between Staupitz and Luther. "Luther had gained no intimate relations with Staupitz in the first year of his cloister life, at all

²Ibid., p. 70.

events until the summer of 1507."³ One can not say for certain that Staupitz visited the Erfurt monastery in that year, 1505 to 1506. It is probable that he was in Erfurt on July 5, 1504. The following year one can only surmise his visits as far as Erfurt is concerned. On the 24th of April, 1505, Staupitz was in Weimar. A short time before this he had been in the vicinity of Erfurt. So, with reasonable certainty one may assume that he visited Erfurt in April, 1505. However, this was before Luther's conversion to the monastic life. A second visit to Erfurt in that same year would have been impossible. Just where Staupitz went from Weimar is not known. In August, 1505, he was the representative legate of the Ernestines at a court battle with Duke George. This business, which naturally was not the only occurrence of the affair, made a visit in Erfurt between April 1505, and June, 1506, impossible. In the fall of 1506 he was commissioned by the Elector to travel to Rome and procure the papal permission for the establishment of Wittenberg University. Before he left for Rome he could have stopped at Erfurt for a brief visit in the fall of 1506, about the time that Luther took the monastic vow. But historical proof for such a visit has not been found. It has been established, however, that during the novitiate of Luther, Staupitz did not visit Erfurt. At best he could have made contact with him at his profession. But from there on, from the fall of 1506 until April, 1507, there could have been no intercourse between the two. Staupitz was in Italy during these months. At the earliest he could have returned by February, 1507, to report to the

³Ibid., p. 71.

Electors at Wittenberg. But it is also possible that he participated in the general chapter of the Order which convened at Naples in May of 1507. If that is the case then he did not return to Germany until the summer of 1507. Then he could not have appeared in Erfurt until Luther celebrated his first mass, in the summer of 1507.⁴

Therefore, one can not assume a decisive contact between Staupitz and Luther during the latter's novitiate and preparation for the priesthood. If Staupitz visited Erfurt before his trip to Italy, it would seem impossible that with such a hasty visit he could become so intimate with Luther. Officially Staupitz would have no knowledge of Luther before the ordination to the priesthood. The novice was entirely under the supervision of the Prior of the cloister.⁵ It is possible that Staupitz had given permission to the Erfurt Prior to receive Luther into the cloister. Article 16 of the constitution stated: 'Nullus nisi decimum octavum aetatis attigerit annum in congregationem nostram ad ordinem recipiatur absque Vicarii Generalis licentia speciali.' But still it was permissible for the Prior to make this report to the district superintendent rather than to the Vicar-General.⁶ This same constitution, however, threatened the Prior with grievous penalties if he arbitrarily advanced a brother to the priesthood. It was stated: 'Subditum nullum ad sacros ordines sine licentia vicarii generalis promoveri faciat.' For this he required the permission of the Vicar-General.

⁴Ibid., p. 72.

⁵Ibid., pp. 72.73.

⁶Ibid., I, p. 329.

It is possible that this was granted in writing, but it is also possible that it was procured in a meeting with Staupitz, most likely when he was in Erfurt in the fall of 1506.⁷

The novices of the Order were given other duties than the study of theology. It was not until the vow that they were delegated to study and special service. It seems that Luther's state of mind during the first two years of monastic life was left more or less to its own resources with respect to his studies, and, particularly with respect to the state and tendency of his ideas. It was in his third year as a monk that he was struck with terror.⁸

Staupitz,

who had acquired discernment by long experience, easily distinguished the young monk from all his companions. He felt drawn towards him . . . and availed himself of the opportunities his office accorded for gaining the confidence of the young monk. He approached him affectionately and endeavored in every way to overcome the timidity.⁹

He saw the fear that was lurking in the heart of Luther. He sent Luther on several short trips about the country to various parishes and convents situated near Erfurt. Staupitz did this "either to occupy his [Luther's] mind, or for the sake of necessary exercise; or else to accustom himself to preaching."¹⁰ Luther was also entrusted with a number of delicate commissions on behalf of the Order by Staupitz and his

⁷Ibid., II, p. 73.

⁸Jürgens, op. cit., pp. 654.655.

⁹D'Aubigne, op. cit., p. 149.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 157.

superiors. By such methods they made "quiet preparations for his advancement."¹¹

It seems as if Staupitz had more or less of a presentiment that Luther would accomplish much in the world. He had heard of an old Roman rumour that an Eremite would seize the crown of Rome. He once said in jest to Luther: "I have thought, that if it is an Eremite who will do this, I know very well that it will be an Augustinian monk."¹²

Some hold that the intimate relations between Staupitz and Luther began already in the year 1508 when Luther was called to Wittenberg to continue his theological studies at the University and also to lecture.¹³ However, as we shall see below, this was not very likely. As professor at the University Luther became a colleague of Staupitz.

Whether he was directed by Staupitz himself or by his Order to take upon himself this office is not clear. [Note: According to Melancthon he was requested by Staupitz.] According to Luther himself his transference from Erfurt to Wittenberg was the result of a 'sudden' resolution, apparently on the part of his superiors, and may have been due to an urgent request for assistance on the part of Staupitz. At all events it proved to be a momentous step in his early career, since it brought him into close touch with one who, on his own confession, exercised a marked influence on his early religious development. That Staupitz had already a particular in-

¹¹Lindsay, A History of the Reformation, op. cit., p. 205.

¹²J. J. Beck, Luthertumb vor Luthero, Das ist: Theologische und Historische Auszführung Auff die zwo Fragen: 1. Wo unsere Evangelische Kirche vor Luthero gewesen sey; 2. Ob unsere liebe Vor Eltern und alle bey etliche hundert Jahren hero im Papstthumb Abgestorbene ewig selig worden? In welcher mit gnugsamen Fundamenten und Gründen dargethan und Sonnenklar erwiesen wird dasz unsere genandte Lutherische Lehr eben die Bralte Recht Catholische Prophetische und Apostolische Lehre und mit nichten eine Neuerung sey wie sie biszanhero von dem Gegentheil mit ohngegründetem Vorgeben beschmizet und vor aller Weit auszgeruffen worden (Frankfurt: Johann Beyers, 1658), p. 157.

¹³Mackinnon, op. cit., pp. 124.125.

terest in him and that his object in bringing him to Wittenberg was to help him in his spiritual conflict . . . is merely conjecture.¹⁴

Staupitz' object in bringing Luther to Wittenberg may also have been "to take him out of himself and give him an engrossing occupation in the midst of new scenes."¹⁵

When Luther arrived in Wittenberg he found that he was not entirely a stranger to his fellow-professors. He was well acquainted with Staupitz, with his former teacher Trutvetter, and with others on the faculty. The men who were to be his colleagues were men who were impressed with the new learning, but as yet were so engrossed in the traditional scholastic methods of thought that there was nothing to distinguish them. Humanism and the 'new theology' had not as yet gained root among them. "Staupitz, Trutvetter, Scheurl, Gbde, Pollich, had none of them broken with the past, either consciously or unconsciously; all we can say of them is, that they were men not incapable of movement and willing to turn their faces towards new light. . . . It was the life of Erfurt over again, before the new humanism had laid hold of it."¹⁶

Luther arrived in Wittenberg during October of 1508 provisionally to fill the chair of the Augustinian Order in the faculty of arts. He was twenty-five years of age, and it was indeed an honor for him to be called. But with that honor there were also grave responsibilities.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 126.

¹⁵A. C. McGiffert, Martin Luther, The Man and His Work (New York: The Century Co., 1911), p. 34.

¹⁶Beard, op. cit., p. 175.

From the very start he had to apply himself vigorously to his task.

He felt like a student facing the terrible ordeal of hazing. In the first place, he had to lecture on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics for a full hour, at two o'clock, four times a week, and he had to lead the student disputations three evenings a week. At the same time he had to continue his own studies in the theological faculty, attending at least two hours of lectures on each of the four days of the week. In addition, he had to take part in the recitations and disputations of the theologians. His load probably became even heavier during the summer semester. For after he had been made baccalaureus biblicus on March 9, 1509, he was obliged to undertake another course of lectures in addition to the one in the arts faculty. This additional lecture series was on a number of chapters of the Bible, assigned to him by the theological faculty. Meanwhile he was undoubtedly required to attend the recitations and disputations under both faculties just as he had before. He succeeded in finishing his theological study in the fall by passing his examinations on the Sentences. Before delivering the required inaugural lecture, however, he was suddenly called back to Erfurt. This first year at Wittenberg was, therefore, a year of unusual industry for Brother Martin. In a letter to John Braum in Eisenach, dated March 17, 1509, he complained about the grind, particularly in philosophy. He found little pleasure in philosophy anyway. He would have preferred trading it for theology from the very start - for the Occamistic theology which 'delves into the kernel of the nut, the core of the wheat, and the marrow of the bones.' For in Wittenberg Luther had again encountered the great exponent of this theology, Jodocus Trutvetter, who had fallen into disfavor among the Erfurters. When Luther wrote this letter, he was burdened with so many tasks of one kind or another that he actually had to steal time to write it.¹⁷

As we said above, it is doubtful whether the year Luther spent at Wittenberg, 1508 to 1509, enable him to come into intimate relations with Staupitz. During this year, as in previous years, business of the Order kept Staupitz on the road and away from his duties in the classroom most of the time. It cannot be shown that he stayed in Wittenberg for any length of time during the year 1508 to 1509. During the summer semester of 1509 he was once more almost constantly occupied with the affairs of

¹⁷Boehmer, op. cit., p. 52.

the Order outside of the city of Wittenberg. One can also see that the marginal notes of Luther's text-book on the Sentences have no trace of the influence of Staupitz in them. Especially significant is the section on predestination, in which field, as we shall see below, he received most beneficial instruction from Staupitz. "As far as can be determined, he returned to his monastery in Erfurt in October, 1509, with the same spiritual outlook with which he had left it a year before."¹⁸

The following years which Luther spent in Erfurt witnessed the greatest struggle in the controversy of the proposed union in the Order fostered by Staupitz. This controversy developed to such lengths by 1510 that the seven monasteries dissenting to the union decided to send delegates to headquarters in Rome and gain an appeal to the merger. The main force behind this movement were the brothers at Erfurt. It may have been possible that Staupitz had desired to have Luther return to Erfurt in 1509 to try to smooth things over for his policy.¹⁹ However, Luther's "attitude toward Staupitz during this controversy in the Congregation . . . would not suggest that his personal relations with the vicar-general were as close as his own account of their mutual friendship would imply."²⁰ In December of 1510, Luther accompanied another delegate to Rome. The mission was a failure and he and his companion returned.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁹H. E. Jacobs, Martin Luther, the Hero of the Reformation 1483-1546 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900), p. 38.

²⁰Boehmer, op. cit., p. 53.

This controversy within the Order held a meaning for Luther also, "not only for his inner development but also for the progress and outcome of the Reformation, was the fact that the termination of the controversies meant his transfer back to Wittenberg in the summer of 1511."²¹ Even though the mission failed the Erfurt monks continued their opposition to Staupitz. A short time after his return from Rome Luther was convinced by the accomodating policy of Staupitz that it was quite inadvisable to continue the quarrel among the monasteries. This view alienated him from the majority of the Erfurt monks who heatedly maintained their 'rights.' Lang, however, shared Luther's view. The friction between the monks which followed this difference of opinion would explain the resolve of these two to have themselves transferred by Staupitz to Wittenberg. The fact "seems to have been that the controversy had become by this time largely an academic one, and that Luther had good reason to dissent from the meticulous spirit of the majority of his brethren at Erfurt."²²

Luther's re-transfer to Wittenberg came in 1511. There he continued his studies at the University. Early after Luther's return Staupitz urged him to take the degree of Doctor of Divinity. The conversation between the two in which this subject was brought up was held in the monastery garden under a pear tree. Here the monks were accustomed to spend the time prescribed for their recreation. Staupitz was also in the habit of doing this when he was in Wittenberg. One day,

²¹Ibid., p. 80.

²²Mackinmon, op. cit., p. 145.

shortly after the elaborate ceremonies of September 16 and 17, 1511, during which the doctor's cap was conferred upon four Augustinian Eremites, he was sitting under this tree talking to Luther. He said to him: "Herr, Magister, you must become a doctor and a preacher; then you will have something to do." Luther said: "I had all of fifteen arguments ready with which to decline the offer of Doctor Staupitz . . . but it did not help. I finally said: 'But I shall die in all this!' He answered: 'Well, Our Lord God runs a very great business, and He can also use wise people up there!'"²³

The advice of Staupitz prevailed and on October 16, 1512, St. Luke's Day, Luther was admitted by the faculty as a Doctor of Divinity, and on October 17 he was invested with the insignia of the doctorate by Andrew Bodenstein.²⁴ More than a year had elapsed between the command of Staupitz and the final conferring of the degree upon Luther. This delay was probably due to the lack of funds necessary for the degree. The fees were "50 gulden for ordinary candidates and 17 gulden for mendicant monks." Staupitz, who was required to pay this as Vicar-General of the Order, was unable to meet the requirements, probably, because of the lavish ceremonies connected with the advancement of the four Augustinians to doctorates on September 16 and 17 of the previous year. Staupitz then appealed to the Elector who was "willing to give only when

²³M. Luther, Luthers Sämmtliche Werke (Frankfurt a.M. und Erlangen: Heyder & Zimmer, 1854), LIX, p. 186. (Hereafter to be foot-noted as Luther, Sämmtliche Werke).

²⁴M. Michelet, The Life of Luther Written by Himself, translated by William Hazlitt (London: George Bell and Sons, 1898), p. 18.

he had the assurance that it would contribute toward his own salvation or help his new university." He would not provide the required funds unless Staupitz promised him that "for the rest of his life, Martinus would be responsible for the lectureship on the Bible in the theological faculty which formerly appertained to him (Staupitz)."²⁵

After he received his doctorate Luther became a member of "the Wittenberg Senate, and three weeks later succeeded Staupitz as Professor of Theology."²⁶ At the time every professor of theology in the Order was required to preach and every preacher was required to have studied theology. Staupitz therefore demanded that Luther assume the office of preacher. The appointment of the preachers of the Order was one of the duties of the Vicar-General.²⁷ But greatly as Luther later loved preaching, he was loath at the beginning to take it up. Staupitz practically had to force him to undertake the work. Years afterward while talking to one of his young students at the University, who was also loath to preach, Luther told him of his own unwillingness to begin the work when asked by Staupitz.²⁸

It was during Luther's second appearance at Wittenberg that the intimate relationship and deep friendship between the two began. At Wittenberg Luther was at the same time a pupil of Staupitz. As members

²⁵Boehmer, op. cit., p. 84.

²⁶Lindsay, A History of the Reformation, op. cit., p. 208.

²⁷Boehmer, op. cit., p. 83.

²⁸Luther, Sämmtliche Werke, op. cit., pp. 185.186.

of the same Order, they both lived in the same monastery. Here Luther lived in daily contact with Staupitz when he was in the city, "bound to him by the ties of common monastic and scholastic interests, spiritual kinship, and mutual friendship."²⁹ Staupitz possessed a "deep, direct sense of religious need and of the fountain of pure grace and love revealed in God, understood the art of guiding the distressed conscience."³⁰ He was often quite puzzled by Luther's manner of expressing himself, and at the inner self-torment he was experiencing. Staupitz did not have Luther's "profound sense of the terribleness of sin, and of the utter corruptness of human nature. But Staupitz had a very sympathetic heart. He did what he could to relieve the mind, the agonies of which he never was able fully to fathom."³¹ Not only were the words of Staupitz of benefit for the development of Luther, but also his very character. Before this time Luther had before his mind the picture of an angry God. The word "Father" to him carried with it the idea of severity. But Staupitz became to Luther, as it were, a second father. In the lovable personality of this man Luther saw kindness and love as the predominant characteristic quality in the concept of fatherhood.³²

Just to what extent Staupitz was able to aid Luther in the struggles of his soul cannot be said for certain. Staupitz lacked the ability to penetrate the fiery depths of Luther's soul and find the real cause of

²⁹Kuiper, op. cit., p. 142.

³⁰Kbstlin, op. cit., p. 68.

³¹Kuiper, op. cit., p. 120.

³²Ibid.

the unrest. He did, however, offer his support as a practical Christian who had fought his own way to a peace of soul. In his counselling Staupitz made more or less of an appeal to "the common sense of conscience."³³

Probably of greatest importance for Luther were three counsels of Staupitz. He impressed upon Luther, in the first place, that a love for God and righteousness was not the end and completion of true penitence, but the beginning. Secondly, he sought to lead Luther away from the distressing thoughts of predestination. Lastly, he urged Luther to become well acquainted with the Scriptures and become a "good textualis et localis."³⁴

With respect to the first problem Staupitz pointed out to Luther that the whole penitent practice was "based on a mistaken principle. Penitence ought to spring from the love of God and His righteousness, not to be regarded as the means of attaining them by penitential works. This was an impossible undertaking and could foster only the sense of failure with resultant self-torment and misery. The love of God is rather the beginning than the goal of true repentance."³⁵ Luther acknowledged this counsel very readily in the letter he addressed to Staupitz on May 30, 1518. This letter accompanied his "Resolutions", or explanations, to the Ninety-five theses. He wrote:

I remember, dear Father, that once among those pleasant and wholesome talks of thine, with which the Lord Jesus ofttimes gives

³³Beard, op. cit., p. 162.

³⁴p. S. Watson, Let God Be God! An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther (London: The Epworth Press, 1947), p. 19.

³⁵Mackinnon, op. cit., p. 128.

me wondrous consolation, that poenitentia was mentioned. We were moved with pity for many consciences, and for those tormentors who teach, with rules innumerable and unbearable, what they call a modus confitendi. Then we heard thee say as with a voice from heaven, that there is no true penitence which does not begin with love of righteousness and of God, and that this love, which others, think to be the end and the completion of penitence, is rather its beginning.

This word of thine stuck in me like a sharp arrow of the mighty, and from that time forth I began to compare it with the texts of Scripture which teach penitence. Lo, there began a joyous game! The words frolicked with me everywhere! They laughed and gamboled around this saying. Before that there was scarcely a word in all the Scriptures more bitter to me than 'penitence', though I was busy making pretenses to God and trying to produce a forced, feigned love; but now there is no word which has for me a sweeter or more pleasing sound than 'penitence'. For God's commands are sweet, when we find that they are to be read not in books alone but in the wounds of our sweet Saviour.

After this it came about that, by the grace of the learned men who dutifully teach us Greek and Hebrew, I learned that this word is in Greek metanoia and is derived from meta and noun, i.e., post and mentem, so that poenitentia or metanoia is a 'coming to one's senses,' and is a knowledge of one's own evil, gained after punishment has been accepted and error acknowledged; and this cannot possibly happen without a change of heart and our love. All this answers so aptly to the theology of Paul, that nothing, at least in my judgment, can so aptly illustrate St. Paul.

Then I went on and saw that metanoia can be derived, though not without violence, not only from trans and mantem, so that metanoia signifies a changing of the mind and heart, because it seemed to indicate not only a change of heart, but also a manner of changing it, i. e., the grace of God. For that 'passing over of the mind,' which is true repentance, is of very frequent mention in the Scriptures. Christ has displayed the true significance of the old word 'Passover'; and long before the Passover, Abraham was a type of it, when he was called a 'pilgrim', i.e., a 'Hebrew,' that is to say, one who 'passed over' into Mesopotamia, as the Doctor of Bourgos learnedly explains. With this accords, too, the title of the Psalm in which Jeduthum, i.e., 'the pilgrim', is introduced as the singer.

Depending on these things, I ventured to think those men false teachers who ascribed so much to works of penitence that they let us scarcely anything of penitence itself except trivial satisfactions and laborious confessions, because, forsooth, they had derived their idea from the Latin words poenitentiam agere, which indicates an action rather than a change of heart, and are

in no way an equivalent for the Greek metanoia.³⁶

Luther did not at the time fully grasp the meaning of the term and everything that was connected with it. As he wrote above in the letter, he came to a fuller understanding through the study of Scripture, especially the writings of Paul. However, the counsel of Staupitz did contribute "materially to assuage the torment of conscience which the Sacrament of Penance had caused him."³⁷

Staupitz had early and thoroughly understood the insufficiency of human works and virtuous exercises towards winning salvation and availing before God. According to Luther he would tell him: "I have vowed to God more than a thousand times that I would be pious, and did not keep it. I will therefore not place myself under such an oath that I will be pious, for I can never keep it, and then I will never lie."³⁸ He also told him:

I have very often vowed, in fact, daily, that I would be more pious, and to that I confessed and pledged my word that I would better my life . . . but I found no success in that, and yet my earnestness was sincere; just as it was with Peter when he swore to live after Christ; I will never make God a liar. There is nothing I can do now so I will wait until God will come to me with His grace. If He does not, then everything is lost. For the will of man either makes him bold or fills him with despair, since man can never fulfill the Law of God.³⁹

A short time after Staupitz left Wittenberg he wrote Luther in

³⁶M. Luther, Works of Martin Luther with Introduction and Notes (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Co., 1915), I, pp. 39-41.

³⁷Mackinnon, op. cit., p. 129.

³⁸Luther, Sämmtliche Werke, op. cit., XLVIII, p. 201.

³⁹Ibid., LVIII, pp. 214-125.

answer to the latter's letter:

You want to be without sins, and yet you have no real sins. Christ is the forgiveness of true sins, such as murder of parents, open blasphemy, contempt of God, adultery, etc., those are the real sins. You must keep a register in which you record all the real sins if Christ is going to help you; you must not condemn yourself with your bungling and imaginary sins and make a sin out of every breaking of wind.⁴⁰

Staupitz gave Luther the advice to register his sins because he thought that by this means he could drive from Luther's mind "the idea that he was a grievous sinner. . . . He hardly observed that the real cause of Luther's inner distress was not so much fear of hell as the yearning for certainty of forgiveness."⁴¹ This catalogue of sins was perhaps that to which Luther referred in a letter to Spalatin, written in 1514:

Thus was my Staupitz wont formerly to console me in my sorrow. Thou wishest, he said, to be a sham sinner, and to have Christ as a sham Saviour. Thou must accustom thyself to the thought that thou are a real sinner, and that Christ is a real Saviour; the doings of God are neither unreal nor absurd; He is not jesting with us in sending His Son and delivering Him up for us.⁴²

For the forgiveness of his sins Staupitz pointed Luther to Christ.

"One must contemplate the man called Christ." He showed him that this involved believing in Christ who died on the Cross for man's sins. He was himself of the opinion that the death of Christ was not sufficient for the atonement of sins, but that man had to supplement the death of Christ through one's own merits; the same view that was held by his former teacher Biel. These words of Staupitz, however, "succeeded in

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 182.

⁴¹Boehmer, op. cit., p. 107.

⁴²M. Luther, as quoted in Beard, op. cit., p. 162.

confusing Luther and driving him to 'begin to compare his words with the words of Holy Scripture.'"⁴³

At first Luther could not grasp the full meaning of these words because of the old doctrines he had been taught, namely, that God could pardon a sinner only when that sinner had done everything in his power to merit such forgiveness. But here Staupitz failed to help him because he continued to adhere to Biel's principle. Therefore Luther's conception of Christ and His death was different from that of his counsellor. He did not see Christ's life and death as a "revelation of the love of God, as Staupitz did, but rather a manifestation of the 'unalterable sternness of God with sin and sinners.'" Even though Luther later did hold a different view of the Cross than did Staupitz, he never did forget that it was Staupitz who first pointed him to Christ, the Crucified Saviour.⁴⁴

The second important counsel to Luther was the advice of Staupitz in the problem of predestination: did he belong to the elect or to the damned? Luther was not satisfied with the Occamist doctrine of predestination that some were predestined to salvation and the rest to damnation. When he took up the Augustinian view of predestination he realized a new kind of fear, for in this he saw himself standing helplessly before a

Being of Force who could be moved to grace or disfavor neither by human desire nor human acts, so that he himself had absolute-

⁴³Boehmer, op. cit., pp. 104.105.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 105.106.

ly no power to change the fate to which he was destined from all eternity; indeed, that he was not even able to determine whether he belonged to the elect or to the reprobate.⁴⁵

Much later Luther wrote of the despair that filled him when beset with such thoughts:

No tongue can tell, no pen can write what a man suffers in such moments. . . . If this suffering were to last for only a half-hour, yea, only the tenth part of an hour, he would be utterly destroyed and his bones would turn to ashes. At such a time God in his wrath appears dreadful beyond all imagination. And like God, so the whole creation. No flight is possible. There is nothing that can comfort. Everything ceases.⁴⁶

When Luther confessed such problems to Staupitz, the latter first put him aside with the retort: "I do not understand what you are saying." Luther was accustomed to hear the identical answer from his other confessors. He later said of this:

I thought that I was the only one who had ever experienced these 'spiritual temptations' and I felt like a dead man. Finally, one day as I sat at a table, sad and downcast, Staupitz asked me, 'Why are you so sad?' I replied, 'Oh, where can I go?' Then he said, 'Oh, you do not know why it is necessary (for you to be thus tempted). Otherwise, nothing good would come of you.' He thought of course, that I was a scholar, and that if I were tempted I would become proud.⁴⁷

Staupitz failed to understand Luther's problem because he himself had never experienced anything like it. At a later confession, however, he began to suspect just how deeply and seriously Luther was troubled with this problem. He then advised Luther:

If you want to meditate about predestination, then begin with the

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 97.

⁴⁶M. Luther, as quoted in Boehmer, op. cit., p. 98.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 103.

wounds of Christ, for then all meditating about predestination ceases and falls. On the other hand, when one indulges in continued meditation, then Christ, His Word and Sacrament is nullified. I forget all, what Christ is and what God is when I think such thoughts, and then begin to consider God a villain and a jailer. So then, believe the Word, in which God has manifested Himself, and abide by that. If you believe that you have the correct plan for your salvation and blessedness. But in meditating about predestination we forget God, and the 'Laudate' ceases and the 'Blaspheme' begins. For it is in Christ that all treasures lie hidden, and without Him they can not be had.⁴⁸

What exactly did Staupitz mean by this counsel? Was it that Luther's problem in this manner would be completely solved? No, otherwise he surely would have expressed the same sentiments in his book on that subject (Predestination, 1517). He merely made use of the situation. He wanted to stop Luther's preoccupation with the problem causing him so much fear. Luther himself said a chance word now and then would take him completely out of his troubles and bring him peace. So here, too, the visions of hell were displaced by the image of Christ. Then the anxiety over predestination disappeared for a time. "As an earnest, practical mystic, and a sympathetic personality he applied the healing casuistry of monkish practice to Luther's suffering and opened Martin's eyes to a simpler conception of grace than he had thus far held. . . . It was his therapeutic religious personality, rather than the novelty of his theological ideas, that was of such beneficial effect on Luther."⁴⁹

Luther was so relieved with the peace of soul which this counsel

⁴⁸Luther, Sämmtliche Werke, op. cit., LX, p. 160.

⁴⁹R. H. Fife, Young Luther. The Intellectual and Religious Development of Martin Luther to 1518 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 141.

furnished him that he often spoke of it. In a letter to Count Albrecht of Mansfeld, December 8, 1542, he said:

He was one of those stuck in such thoughts and temptations, and that if Doctor Staupitz, or rather God through Doctor Staupitz, had not helped me out of them, I would have drowned in them and gone into hell.⁵⁰

The third important counsel was the advice to become well acquainted with Scriptures. Staupitz was accustomed to say to Luther: "It is necessary for one to study the Holy Scriptures and God's Word with great diligence and in all humility, and that we also earnestly pray that we may not go astray from the truth of the Gospel."⁵¹ He likewise told Luther: "It would be doubtful and dangerous, were we to trust to our own strength; for it may easily happen to us to fail and go astray, even in that which we know best and understand. . . . It is therefore of the greatest necessity that we should study with diligence and all humility the Holy Scriptures."⁵²

And so for the study of Scriptures Luther found in Staupitz a

timely counsellor, confirming his inclination and exhorting him to endeavor to gain a thorough textual and local knowledge of the Word of God. From the way in which Staupitz . . . speaks of the letter, not only of the Old Testament, but the New as well, presenting it in contrast with the spirit as killing, we might be led to fear that he had not only been driven beyond the limits of human and scholastic learning to the Word of God, but had also fallen into the error of fanatical, spiritualistic conception of the Holy Spirit, exalting himself under such supposed illumination above the firm foundations of the divine Word. As evidence to the contrary, however, we recall the weakness which he displayed in

⁵⁰Luther, Sämmtliche Werke, op. cit., LVI, p. 39.

⁵¹Ibid., LVII, p. 146.

⁵²Ullmann, op. cit., p. 249.

shrinking from a decisive support of the evangelistic doctrine as against the ruling ecclesiasticism, and the fact that all his devotion to the Scriptures did not suffice to equip him with valor and fortitude for the conflict when once the open breach had been made. Yet, sensible of the dangers to which the unaided powers and opinions of men are exposed, his pure religious feeling kept him bound in humble submission to the written Word. . . . Impelled by this feeling, he faithfully maintained this high estimation of the Scriptures as opposed to all human traditions and all scholastic arts and sciences, just in so far, however, and just as long as he could do so without engaging positively in the great conflict. Thus he at one time quoted approvingly to Luther a saying of the Elector Frederick the Wise, to the effect that all sermons which deal in such traditions and such subtleties and refinements are beyond measure frigid and weak, and that the Scriptures alone by their majesty and power, without any help from us, cast down all opposing bulwarks and compel recognition as a voice from above. It was in this spirit that Staupitz at that time influenced Luther; and he observed with amazement the rapid progress of his pupil in the life of study thus commended, regarding him in consequence as superior to all others.⁵³

Thus, in his counselling, Staupitz led Luther along quite the same paths as those of Bernard, pointing Luther to the wounds of Christ, to cease his anxieties about predestination, and encouraging him to cling to the Scriptures. On the other hand he urged Luther to realize that he was a sinner before God, that he could gain fellowship with God only through personal trust in God, and above all convinced him that "he must cease torturing and tormenting himself in accordance with the prescription of Biel in the endeavor to gradually transform his natural self-love into the pure love of God by the systematic training of his ideas and feelings." Yet Staupitz never was quite able to entirely rid Luther of all his fears, but he did make Luther feel that he had a desire to

3 things
Staupitz
pointed
Luther
to

⁵³Kbstlin, op. cit., pp. 70.71.

help him and listen to his problems.⁵⁴

Luther was very apt to "overestimate the help he had received from them [those through whom God had helped him], than to underestimate it."

Very often, too, he would overestimate the help which he received from Staupitz in conquering his fears and troubles. He had even given Staupitz the idea that he was one of the 'forerunners' of the Gospel.⁵⁵

However, it was through Staupitz and these counsels that Luther turned from his despair to a brighter and more hopeful outlook concerning his place and meaning before God.

After his resignation from the position as Dean of the Theological Faculty of Wittenberg, Staupitz once more devoted his time to the visitation and upbuilding of the Augustinian monasteries in Germany and various surrounding countries. He still, however, maintained his close connection and friendship with Luther. He continued to guide and direct Luther not only in his troubled spirit but also in the government of the Order as his Superior.

It was probably through the influence of Staupitz that Luther was elected to the position of sub-prior of the Augustinian monastery at Wittenberg already in May of 1512.⁵⁶ A short time later he was placed in full charge of the theological instruction in the monastery, also by Staupitz.⁵⁷

⁵⁴H. Boehmer, Luther in Light of Recent Research, translated by Carl F. Huth (New York: The Christian Herald, 1916), pp. 100.101.

⁵⁵Boehmer, Road to Reformation, op. cit., p. 107.

⁵⁶Mackinnon, op. cit., p. 145.

⁵⁷McGiffert, op. cit., p. 50.

During his frequent visitations to distant cities and countries, Staupitz ordered Luther, his junior in office, to perform the necessary duties of the office. On May 1, 1515, Luther was elected to the office of rural vicar. This occurred in the chapter meeting of the Augustinians held at Gotha under the presidency of Staupitz. At this meeting Luther preached the sermon at the opening assembly in which he treated of the contrasts which had developed within the various congregations, namely, as a Catholic author states, "the 'little saints' and their calumnies against the monastic brethren who disagreed with them in matters of discipline. With extreme acerbity, and employing the crudest and most repulsive figures of speech he scourged their criticism of others as inspired by love of scandal and malevolent detraction."⁵⁸ It seems, however, that the majority of the brethren were in agreement with Luther since he was elected - again probably through the influence of Staupitz. Luther was thirty-one years old at the time. His duties consisted in the superintendence of the affairs and the interests of eleven monasteries, under the supervision of Staupitz.⁵⁹

In 1516 Luther quitted his chair of theology at the University for a while to fulfill other duties of the Order which Staupitz had confided in him. He had charged Luther to visit the monasteries in his district while he himself was absent on business elsewhere. This order permitted Luther to gain a much better idea of the interior life of the cloisters

⁵⁸Grisar, op. cit., p. 61.

⁵⁹McGiffert, op. cit., p. 50.

in the area. One can see from Luther's letters and other accounts that he gained much from this visitation. One of the main things he stressed with the heads of the monasteries was that the brothers diligently study the Bible and live according to it. The brothers in all the monasteries he visited now saw in Luther "die Zeichen eines herrlichen Werckzeuges Gottes." He himself found that for the most part the monasteries were ardent followers of the Gospel, and that many of them possessed and taught the doctrines of Augustine, namely, the necessity and completeness of the grace of God and the inability of man.⁶⁰

During these two years of visitations he held a number of conferences with Staupitz concerning the monasteries he visited. He met with him on August 8, 1516, at Himmel-Pforten and there they decided that John Lang should assume the honor of Licentiate.⁶¹ In that same year, they met at Grimma and there they received the "first detailed information about the shocking activities of Tetzel" and the indulgence traffic.⁶²

The visitations completed Luther returned to Wittenberg to resume his duties as professor of theology. After being back for only a short time he heard that the Elector was intending to promote Staupitz to the

⁶⁰V. E. Löscher, Völlständige Reformatiōns-Acta und Documenta, oder umständliche Vorstellung des Evangelischen Reformatiōns-Wercks, mit Einrückung der darzu dienlichen, theils noch nie gedruckten, Nachrichten, So dasz dieses Werck zugleich vor Theologische Annales dienen kan (Leipzig: Johann Groszens Erben, 1720), I, pp. 351.352.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Dau, op. cit., p. 26.

office of a bishop.⁶³ He wrote to Spalatin

urging him to use his influence against the plan, on the ground that the vicar-general was much too good for the position. 'Those happy times are gone by when it was a fortunate thing to be a bishop. Now there is no more miserable place, with its reveling and carousing after the manner of Sodom and Rome. You see this well enough when you compare the life and work of the old bishops with those of our day. The best of them are immersed in public wars, while their homes have become a very hell of insatiable greed.'⁶⁴

Luther also accompanied Staupitz to the dedication of a new monastery at Eisleben in July of 1515.⁶⁵ During the procession through the streets on Corpus Christi Day, Luther walked beside Staupitz who carried the sacred host. He suddenly was overcome with fear at the nearness of the Body of Christ. In later life he spoke of the event: "I was once terrified when Doctor Staupitz was carrying the sacrament in a procession at Eisleben. I confessed that to him. He [Staupitz] said to me: 'It is not Christ, for Christ never terrifies; he ever comforts.'⁶⁶

As Staupitz' personal friend, Luther also spoke in his behalf before the Elector. At one time Staupitz had incurred the displeasure of the Elector and Luther wrote to his Lord pleading the cause of his friend:

It has also been told me, gracious lord, by the prior at Erfurt, who had it from your grace's confessor, that your grace is displeased with Dr. Staupitz, our dear and worthy father, because of something he has written. When he was here and visited with your

⁶³Tentzel, op. cit., p. 170.

⁶⁴Luther, as quoted by McGiffert, op. cit., p. 71

⁶⁵Grisar, op. cit., p. 61.

⁶⁶Luther, Sämmtliche Werke, op. cit., LVIII, pp. 140.141.

grace at Torgau, I spoke about it to him and expressed my regret about your displeasure, and although I could not discover that he thought of your grace in any way but the most affectionate fashion. He remarked finally, 'I do not believe I have ever done anything to displease my most gracious lord except to love him too much.' Therefore I beg you, gracious lord, in his behalf and partly at his suggestion, that you will count on his good will and faithfulness as in the past . . . ⁶⁷

During this period of intercourse between Staupitz and Luther one can still detect most manifestly that personal friendship and complete confidence. Each seemed to know and realize what the other wished to do. Each seemed willing to give all possible aid to the other when such aid and advice was needed.

On October 31, 1517, Luther nailed the Ninety-Five theses to the Castle Church at Wittenberg. Thus the Reformation claimed a public notice. The indulgence controversy, against which the theses were directed, was its primary cause. Staupitz is also made to play a part in the ensuing controversy. Cochlaeus makes the assertion that Albert of Mainz intended to grant the sale of the indulgence to the Augustinian Order which had been so zealous before in defending the doctrine of the indulgences. He, however, was persuaded to give the sale to the Dominican Tetzel, who had already shown his able salesmanship with the Teutonic Knights. As a result the Augustinians became enraged, especially the leaders, Staupitz and Luther.⁶⁸ Pallavinci informs us that Staupitz was a "warm adherent to the cause of Luther, and . . . that

⁶⁷Luther, as quoted in McGiffert, op. cit., p. 58.

⁶⁸H. C. Lea, A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church (Philadelphia, Pa.: Lea Brothers & Co., 1896), III, p. 399.

it was supposed to have been at his instigation that Luther first opposed himself to the promulgation of indulgences."⁶⁹ Staupitz himself had been one of those who had sharply spoken against the abuses connected with the sale of indulgences. Luther later appealed to the fact when he was defending his own conduct.⁷⁰ In his Table Talk, Luther also quotes Staupitz as saying: "When I undertook to write against the gross error of indulgences, Dr. Staupitz said: 'What, would you write against the pope? What are you about? They will not permit you to do this!' 'But suppose they must needs permit it?' replied I."⁷¹

Staupitz did think in accordance with Luther with regard to the abuses of the sale of indulgences. However, from what is known, it appears that Luther acted quite independently when he undertook the direct opposition. In the letter of May 30, 1518, which accompanied his "Resolutions" he wrote:

While this thought was boiling in my mind [poenitentia and metancia], suddenly new trumpets of indulgences and bugles of remissions began to peal and bray all about us; but they were not intended to arouse us to keen eagerness for battle. In a word, the doctrine of true penitence was passed by, and they presumed to praise not even that poorest part of penitence which is called 'satisfaction', but the remission of that poorest part of penitence; and they praised it so highly that such praise was never heard before. Then, too, they taught impious and false and heretical doctrines with such authority (I wished to say 'with such assurance') that he who even muttered anything to the contrary under his breath, would straightway be consigned to the flames as a heretic, and condemned to eternal malediction. Un-

⁶⁹W. Roscoe, The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846), II, p. 120.

⁷⁰McGiffert, op. cit., p. 80.

⁷¹Luther, as quoted in Michelet, op. cit., p. 21.

able to meet their rage half-way, I determined to enter a modest dissent, and to call their teaching into question, relying on the opinion of all the doctors and of the whole Church, that to render satisfaction is better than to secure remission of satisfaction, i.e., to buy indulgences. Nor is there anybody who ever taught otherwise. Therefore, I published my Disputation, in other words, I brought upon my head all the curses, high, middle and low, which these lovers of money (I should say 'of souls') are able to send or to have sent upon me. For these most courteous men, armed as they are, with very dense acumen, since they cannot deny what I have said, nor pretend that in my Disputation I have spoken against the power of the Supreme Pontiff. That is the reason, Reverend Father, why I now regretfully come out in public. For I have ever been a lover of my corner, and prefer to look upon the beautiful passing show of the great minds of our age rather than to be looked upon and laughed at. But I see that the bean must appear among the cabbages, and the black must be put with the white, for the sake of the seemliness and loveliness.

I ask, therefore, that thou wilt take this foolish work of mine and forward it, if possible, to the most Excellent Pontiff, Leo X, where it may plead my cause against the designs of those who hate me. Not that I wish thee to share my danger! Nay, I wish this to be done at my peril only. Christ will see whether what I have said is His or my own; and without permission there is not a word in the Supreme Pontiff's tongue, nor is the heart of the king in his own hand. He is the Judge whose verdict I await of the Roman See. . . .⁷²

Likewise in Luther's letter to Staupitz dated January 14, 1521, he wrote that Staupitz had told him he had begun the work in the name of Christ. The letter is as follows:

In the name of Jesus!

Greetings! When we were in Augsburg, venerable father, you said among other things concerning this affair: 'Remember, brother, that you have begun this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;' I have this word, not as coming from you, but as being spoken to me through you, and I keep that word in my memory.

Likewise I now also counsel you in the same words: May you remember that you spoke them to me. Up until the present time

⁷²Luther, Works of Martin Luther with Introductions and Notes, op. cit., pp. 42.43.

things seemed to be in jest in this affair, but now there arises something before us that is very serious. As you also said: 'If this is not begun by God, then it is impossible that it will succeed.' This is definitely now in the hands of God and no one can deny that. But who can help now? What can one think? The stir that is raised is so great that it seems it will not subside until judgment day. That great is the excitement on both sides.

Still, it does not stand the same today with the papacy as it did yesterday and earlier. Even though they ban and burn books and threaten to kill me, there is still something extraordinary before the door. How lucky the pope was when he could with power and assaults bring about peace in the Church. How he wishes he could now use that power to bring Luther to his death. I have also burned the books and the bull of the pope. I did this at first with trembling and with much prayer, but now I am very happy that I did it, in fact, more happy about that than any other action in my entire life, since those things were more pernicious than I at first thought.

Emser writes in German against me at the instigation of Duke George, who rages against me. At his court there are quite godless things spoken against me, and he goes about with assaults and murder in his dealings.

I have been summoned in a letter from the Elector to appear before the Emperor. The Elector counselled me not to go, as did also other of my friends. But God knows what is going on. Our vicar, Wenceslaus Link, has gone to Nürnberg. Teschius is at Grimma. He should have left there by this time. May God be with him. With us everything is well as formerly. Employing very sharp comments against the pope Hutten has attacked the bull.

My writings have been thrice burned: at Louvain, Cologne, and at Mayence; at the last place they were burned with great derision and great danger to those who burned them. Thomas Murnar has also written violently against me. But I have no concern about these 'Barfüszler' and the Leipzig 'Esel'. Farewell, my dear father, and pray for the word of God and for me; I am lashed and dashed about in these floods of affliction.

Martin Luther, Augustinian.⁷³

Such words of Luther would seem to indicate a situation different from

⁷³Martin Luther, Dr. Martin Luthers Sämtliche Schriften, herausgegeben von Dr. Joh. Georg Walch (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), XV, p. 2422. (Hereafter this work will be foot-noted as Luther, St. Louis ed.)

that of the old biographers and place this affair entirely in the hands of Luther with no influence by Staupitz. However, Staupitz certainly did exert an influence upon Luther here, not in an outward or direct kind, but in a more indirect and deeply spiritual manner.⁷⁴

Staupitz did, however, become quite involved in the controversy. As Vicar-General of the Order he was ordered to remonstrate with Luther and urge him to cease his attacks. When Leo finally saw that he would have to use his personal interference in the controversy he at first wanted "to soothe and pacify Luther, than to irritate him by severity to further acts of disobedience." He then wrote to Staupitz, through Gabriel Venetus, that he was to endeavor by all means to reconcile the erring brother under his charge through means of "admonitory letters, written by some persons of integrity and good sense, which he did not doubt would soon extinguish the newly-kindled flame."⁷⁵

However, Luther persisted in his teaching and through Staupitz, as was mentioned above, sent an explanation of his theses to the pope. Because he forwarded this letter through Staupitz some are inclined to include Staupitz among Luther's followers in this affair. In reality, his attitude was "hesitating - being partly suspicious and anxious, and partly encouraging and confirmatory - because he still believed that it was merely a question of a protest against ecclesiastical abuse."⁷⁶

⁷⁴Ullmann, op. cit., p. 251.

⁷⁵Roscoe, op. cit., p. 113.

⁷⁶K. Löffler, "Staupitz," The Catholic Encyclopaedia, edited by Charles Herbermann, et al. (New York: Robert Appellon Co., 1912), XIV, p. 283.

Staupitz complied with this order and notified Luther of the bad impression his teaching was making among the officials at Rome. Luther, in a letter dated March 31, 1518, replied to this charge:

To Staupitz
His father and prior in Christ Jesus

Greetings! Even though I have been occupied with many things, I feel compelled to write briefly to you, my dear father in the Lord. In the first place, I have the strong conviction that my name is odious to very many. Since these fool people have claimed that I have damned the rosary, the crown, the psalter, and other prayers, even all good works. But even Paul was attacked by these who accused him of saying 'Let us do evil, that good may come.' But I have truly followed the theology of Tauler and that small booklet which only a short time ago you had printed by Christian Goldschmied. I teach that men should place trust in nothing save in Christ Jesus, neither in his prayers, or merits, or his own works, since we are made blessed not through our own works but through the mercy of God. From this these persons suck the poison which you see scattered about. But as it was neither good or evil rumours which made me act so, therefore I will not pay attention to it. God will have a consideration of it. It is these same things which bring the hatred of the scholastic teachers against me. Since I give preference to church doctrine and the Bible, they become nearly mad with their hot passion. I read the scholastics with good judgment and not with my eyes closed (as they do). That is what the apostle commanded when he said, 'Prove all things, and hold that which is good.' I do not reject all their writings, and neither do I accept them all. In this manner every chatterbox indulges in making a whole from a part, a fire from a spark, an elephant from a gnat. . . . When it is permitted a Scotus, a Gabriel and the like to have opinions of their own which are contradictory to St. Thomas, and when in return the Thomists are permitted to contradict the entire world, and when among the scholastics there are almost as many sects as there are heads, yes, even more than hairs on one's head, why do they not permit me the same freedom which they claim for themselves? But when God works, there is no one who can stop Him; when He rests, there is no one who can awaken Him. Farewell, and pray for me and for the truth of God, wherever it may be.

Brother Martin Eleutherius, Augustinian.⁷⁷

Luther also assured Staupitz of his willingness to obey his advice

⁷⁷Luther, St. Louis ed., XXI, pp. 93-95.

in everything that did not go against his conscience. When he related these events to his friends in later life, he said:

The reverend father, Dr. Staupitz, my dear friend, and the chief of the Eremites, who was himself convinced of the truth, who loved the Word of God and loathed the impieties and blasphemies of Rome, as soon as he received his instructions from the pope, communicated them to me, and by letters and conversations urged me to reconciliation and forbearance. To do Pope Leo justice, these instructions were written in a manner friendly towards me, breathing the spirit of paternal care and solicitude for the peace of the church. I listened to these instructions; I assured my reverend father of my willingness to obey in all things, save those of conscience and duty.⁷⁸

In April, 1518, the regular chapter of the Augustinian Congregation was held in Heidelberg. The Elector was very reluctant to grant Luther permission to attend because he feared that some fanatic would attempt to take Luther's life. He finally permitted him to go and wrote Staupitz:

Doctor Martin Luther having been summoned by you and other officials of the Augustinian Order to a convention at Heidelberg is ready to obey and to attend the meeting, though we do not willingly grant him leave to be absent from the university. As you once informed us you would make of the man a doctor of our own with whom we should yet be very much pleased, we do not like to have him long away from his lectures, and we hope you will see to it that he returns to us without delay.⁷⁹

Luther went to Heidelberg and stayed in the Augustinian cloister. He was received very well by the Palatinate Count Wolfgang and also by Jacob Simlern, and the steward Hasio. The Count invited Luther, Staupitz, and Lang to a banquet on an evening of the meeting. The count and his court were very hospitable to Luther and showed him the treasures, the armory, and all the beautiful and costly treasures.⁸⁰

⁷⁸Luther, as quoted by Michelet, op. cit., p. 40.

⁷⁹As quoted by McGiffert, op. cit., pp. 105.106.

⁸⁰Tentzel, op. cit., p. 326.

The chapter meeting was opened according to statute by the Vicar-General Staupitz. The fact that Luther was appointed as the presiding official over the customary public disputations held at each meeting, would seem to indicate that the 'Lutheran alarm' was not very great among these Augustinians. As the official of these debates he had to furnish the necessary theses. In these he made no mention of indulgences.⁸¹ The chief business of the meeting was the election of officers. Staupitz was re-elected Vicar-General and Lang was elected District Vicar in place of Luther.⁸² Luther was replaced, not because of the indulgence controversy, but simply because "his term of office had expired."⁸³

The chapter did not officially act upon the indulgence affair. It appears that the charges against him in Volta's letter to Staupitz were presented at the meeting and it was also demanded that he retract his position. However, the majority of the members were "too much impressed by his forcible exposition of his evangelical views to play into the hands of the Dominican enemies either by demanding a retraction or by venturing, in the face of the Elector's explicit wish, to deliver him to Rome as suspect of heresy. They seem to have contented themselves with a promise to send to Rome an explanation of his position. . . ."⁸⁴ Luther complied with the wish of the assembly when in May of 1518 he

⁸¹Boehmer, Road to Reformation, op. cit., p. 207.

⁸²Beard, op. cit., p. 227.

⁸³Boehmer, Road to Reformation, op. cit., p. 209.

⁸⁴Mackinnon, op. cit., p. 48.

sent the "Explanations" together with a letter to Staupitz to forward to Rome.

In the early part of May the meeting was adjourned. Luther left Heidelberg to return to his duties in Wittenberg, but "this time, on Staupitz' orders, he went by wagon."⁸⁵ Staupitz complied with the wish of the Elector to allow Luther to return to the University 'without delay.'

Cardinal Cajetan, the General of the Dominican Order, was commissioned by the pope to examine Luther and his doctrines. He left Rome in June, 1518. His main object was to represent the pope at the Diet of Augsburg. However, on September 11, the pope sent him a message that he was to carefully examine Luther in Augsburg, but to do it in such a manner that he avoided "any disputation, and authorising him at the same time 'to proceed to acquittal or to condemnation, according to the circumstances.'" Elector Frederick ordered Luther to appear before the legate for the examination. On September 24 or 25 Luther set out for Augsburg.⁸⁶

Luther had heard of the purpose for which Cajetan had come to Germany and was also told of the ban which the Cardinal had in readiness in the event Luther would not recant. Thus, when cited to appear before the legate, he wrote to his superior, Staupitz, on September 1, 1518:

⁸⁵Boehmer, Road to Reformation, op. cit., p. 209.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 229.

To the venerable and worthy father, Johann Staupitz, vicar of the Eremites of St. Augustine, his highly-honored patron and superior in Christ.

In the name of Jesus!

Greetings! Do not doubt, my venerable father, that I shall be free to search and treat the word of God. For neither foes, the citation, nor the threats uttered against me move me in the least. I am suffering, as you know, things that are far worse, which compel me to regard these temporal and momentary strokes quite lightly, notwithstanding that I sincerely desire to see the power of the Church to be held in honor. Now, if I am put under the ban by a man, my only fear is that this will give an offense to you, to whom, as I confidently believe, has been given by God a true and faithful judgment in the matter.

You will see that the 'Explanations' and my 'Answers' in one part are quite frank - more so than you may like, besides their being intolerable to the Roman flatterers; but the 'Explanations' have already left the press or else I would have moderated them. But if this Silwester, that rude sophist, is going to continue to provoke me with other tricks, I shall in reply no longer play with him, but shall give reigns to my spirit and pen and show him that also in Germany there are people who understand the Roman tricks, and I hope this happens very soon. Already for a long time and too grievously the Romans through their endless tricks and turns and wiles have been mocking us as dunces and block-heads, and they deceive us not so much with their cunning as they lead us about openly and unashamedly as fools.

For I see that their devising and endeavor is that the kingdom of Truth, which is Christ, should not be the kingdom of truth, because with united fury they plot not to permit the truth to be heard or treated in their own kingdom. I wish to be a part of this kingdom, if not with a faultless life, at least by my truthful tongue and heart, and to acknowledge in truth those things in which improvement must be made. And I observe that the people are sighing for the voice of the Shepherd Christ, and even the young people are glowing with an extraordinary desire for the holy Scriptures. Greek lectures have begun here, and we all are practising Greek in order to understand the Bible. We are also awaiting one in Hebrew, and the Elector is making arrangements for it.

I delivered a sermon at Wittenberg concerning the ban, which was very necessary for the people because of the grievous oppression of the officials against the people. Although all our jurists and theologians approve of this (sermon), it is surprising how great a conflagration the all-too detestable spies have tried to start for me because of it; they began from the words of my mouth

and then framed some doubtful articles from them, which they spread all over and are still spreading for the persecution of my name. Even at Augsburg it is spread among the great men and has embittered many against me. In Dresden I was charged to my face with the sermon, certain articles from it being quoted. Behold, how spitefully they seek me, and how I am hedged in on all sides with thorns; but Christ lives and reigns yesterday, today and forever. My conscience is my witness that I have taught the truth, and when I speak the truth I become all the more hated on account of it. It is the body of Rebecca, in which the children are jostling one another, so the life of the mother is put in jeopardy.

That, as you see, was the reason I published the sermon; that thereby I might oppose those poisonous articles, or shed some light on those things which were not rightly understood. Pray for me, that in this disturbance I may not be too joyful or confident. I pray that God may not impute this to them. They have a zeal for God, as I have acknowledged to them, but it will be entirely without knowledge until Christ illumines them with the same light as we have. May He preserve you for His honor and for the welfare of the Church. Amen!

Brother Martin Luther.⁸⁷

Staupitz feared greatly for Luther's safety if he appeared before the legate. He wrote to Spalatin, the court preacher of the Elector, and asked him to sustain Frederick in his course of actions. The letter, is dated September 7, 1518:

Grace and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ! The things you write about our Martin Luther, my dear friend, sound quite hard, but are made pleasant through your pen since you reveal nothing but love and thus comfort in terrors. He who said that He will be the third where two are gathered in His name, never deceives.

But now since you, your worthiness, are so fervent in love and, as I see, diligently urge others to be the same, therefore one cause for despair, and that not a small one, has been removed. For such unanimous and godly wishes will certainly be heard. At the same time the voice of the Holy Spirit from heaven enlightens and strengthens us: 'If you see the oppression of the poor, and violent preventing of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter, He says, for He that is higher

⁸⁷Luther, St. Louis ed., op. cit., XV, pp. 2394-2397.

than the highest has regard; and there are those which are higher than these, and sovereign over all rules the King of the whole earth, which serves Him.' We must lay hold of the instruments of justice and seek the intercession (or help) of the saints and the godly ones, that the truth is preserved rather than our lives; and if there is no help to be found, then one must serve the King who rules over all the world and we must suffer and even die for the truth even as we must live for the truth rather than for ourselves.

Therefore, oh fellow-disciple of Christ and adherent to the evangelical truth, pray with me that our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world, the truth, the way, and the life of the believers, may Himself be our light and grant us His grace that we in all humility seek Him who is meek, and when we have found Him, constantly and fearlessly praise and confess Him.

Then, I also ask you, admonish your and my gracious Lord, not to grow disheartened on account of the deceitfulness of those who with their serpent-tongues seek to subvert the truth; that he, moreover, does not become terrified at the roar of the lion. For it is written concerning those who have the divine truth as their shield: 'He shall give His angels charge over you, that you do not dash your foot against a stone; you will tread upon the lion and the adder; the young lion and the dragon you will trample under your feet.' Let the Elector have no concern for his friends, Luther, Staupitz, nor for the Order, but only about the truth that it may come to light. Then after the darkness has been dispelled let him provide a safe place where a person might speak freely and without fear, which at times might even overtake a stout-hearted person.

I know how the Babylonian, not to say the Roman, pestilence rages against all those who oppose the shameful abuses of those who sell Christ and His mercy for money. I myself have witnessed a preacher who was teaching the truth, taken by violence from his pulpit, and, although this was on a high festival, taken away in chains in the presence of all the people and thrown into prison. There are others who have witnessed occurrences which are still more cruel.

Up until this time I have not observed the least defect in your eager interest or the protection which the Elector provides. My dear friend, continue in your offices for the highest and eternal truth, that His Highness may remain minded as he is now. For this greater thanks are due you than the two of us, Martin and I, who are indeed two, but one in Christ, are able to give you. Farewell. From our cloister, September 7, 1518.

PRITZLAFF MEMORIAL LIBRARY
CONCORDIA SEMINARY
ST. LOUIS, MO.

Your worthiness' most worthy brother,
Johann von Staupitz.⁸⁸

A week later Staupitz wrote Luther and expressed his fear for Luther's safety. He urged him to discontinue the affair and come to him in Salzburg. The letter is dated September 14, 1518:

In the name of Jesus!

In stead of a greeting I merely say, Possess your soul in patience! There is so much that I would write to you that it would be enough to make a book; but I shall make this brief. It appears to me that the world is enraged against the truth. In times past it was fierce hatred which brought about the crucifixion of Christ, and I see nothing at the present time that awaits you but the cross. If I am not mistaken, there is a verdict coming forth that without the advice of the pope no one is to search the Scriptures to find Christ, as He Himself has positively commanded. You have few patrons, and would to God that they do not keep themselves hidden because of fear of the adversaries. It is my wish, that you leave Wittenberg for a season and come to me, that we may live and die together. That is also the wish of my superior. I close with these words: It is well that as men forsaken we follow Christ, who was also forsaken. Farewell, and come in good health. Given at Salzburg, on the Day of the Elevation of the Most Holy Cross, in the year 1518.

Your brother, Doctor Johann Staupitz.⁸⁹

Luther followed the summons of the Elector and left for Augsburg. He went there, however, with a heavy heart for he expected the worst to happen. He arrived in Augsburg during the first week of October. Since there was no Augustinian monastery in that city he stayed at the Carmelite monastery of St. Anna, where he was treated very kindly. "Two of Frederick's trusted advisers, Dr. Rühel and Philip von Feilitsch, gave

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 551.552.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 2412.

him help and countenance."⁹⁰ Staupitz had promised Luther that he would be present at the hearing if needed to lend his aid and counsel. As soon as Luther arrived in the city he sent a messenger to Salzburg and summoned Staupitz.⁹¹

The first meeting between Cajetan and Luther occurred on October

12. Spalatin gave the following description of the meetings:

On Tuesday he came to the meeting with the prior and two brothers of that monastery, Wenceslaus Link, and also a brother of his own Order. When Luther came to the legate's lodging and entered his room, he found the legate and Urbanus. Luther fell down before the legate, as Urbanus had instructed him. He was instructed to rise. . . . The legate again told him to rise. . . . Having arisen he began to speak since neither the Cardinal nor any one else was speaking, and he thought they remained silent because they were waiting for him to speak. He spoke as follows: 'Venerable father, appointed by His Papal Holiness, and my gracious lord, according to the orders of the Elector of Saxony, I appear here as a dutiful and humble son of the Holy Christian Church, and admit that I such and such statements or controversial theses have permitted to spread; and in submission I am ready and willing to hear what is laid to my charge, and also in what I have erred, so that I might be all the better instructed.'

Then the legate said: 'Dear son, His Holiness, the pope, has given me three articles with regard to your case. In the first place, you are to oppose your former teaching, theses and sermons. Secondly, that in such a manner you retract and never make such statements again. Thirdly, that you completely recant all these things. And furthermore, you are to make an opposition to the following two articles: In the first place, that you said or stated, that the treasures of the indulgences can not be the treasures of the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, that you stated that a man must possess true faith when receiving the sacred Sacrament.'

In the discussion which followed the legate employed all Thomistic arguments in support of his demands, and also opinions

⁹⁰Beard, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

⁹¹M. Meurer, The Life of Luther: Related from Original Authorities, translated by a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (New York: H. Ludwig & Co., 1848), p. 96.

of scholars, and scholastics.

There followed other arguments in which the power of the pope was brought into the discussion, namely, that he is even over a council.

At the first meeting, Luther came to the clear understanding through the various discussions that the legate would have nothing but a recantation.

. . . When Luther returned to his lodging from the first meeting he found that Doctor Staupitz, his Vicar, had arrived in the meantime. Luther explained to him just what had happened and that he was not allowed to make a proper answer or explanation to his writings, but that all he should do, without being heard or vanquished, was to make a recantation. Then Dr. Staupitz thought it best that if he were to survive before the legate, he should present his answer in writing. Luther also thought this was a good idea.

At the second meeting, on Wednesday, Luther came before the legate again, together with three imperial councilors, one of them the dean of Trent, Doctor Peutingen, another whose name Luther could not remember, and Lord Philip von Feilitsch. He had also brought along his notary as witness. Luther began by saying that at the first meeting he was ready and willing to permit himself to be examined openly or even in a debate, and to submit to the knowledge of the Holy Christian Church and to all of those of high estate.

Luther then set forth five arguments in defense of his teaching, but the legate would have nothing but a recantation.

Then Staupitz addressed the legate and asked him to give Doctor Martin a chance to rehearse his answer so that he would not become entangled in it.⁹²

Luther wrote the following report concerning the reception of his written answer by the cardinal:

When he [Cajetan] received this written answer from me he at first despised it and said: 'It contains empty words, but he still would send it to Rome.' Nevertheless he urged me to recant and threatened me with the ready ban, and, when I would not recant, I was to get out and never again come before

⁹²Luther, St. Louis ed., op. cit., XV, pp. 561-564.

his eyes.⁹³

On the following day, Thursday, Cajetan sent for Luther's two friends, Staupitz and Link, and urged them to persuade Luther to willingly recant. These two did all in their power to persuade Luther to submit to the demand of the legate.⁹⁴ However, they were not successful. Staupitz then returned to the Cardinal. He reported that he was overcome with Scripture and he himself did not know what else he could do. He urged the Cardinal to handle the case himself. But the Cardinal replied: "Ego non amplius cum hac bestia loqui. Habet enim profundos oculos et mirabiles speculationes in capite suo." The two did, however, succeed in persuading Luther to write a letter of apology to the Cardinal in which he begged the pardon of the legate for his, Luther's, indiscretion in his conduct. He also promised to remain silent about the matter if his opponents would do the same and in the end begged the Cardinal to receive him graciously as a dutiful son. Yet, he diligently maintained that he could not recant.⁹⁶

Staupitz did not wholeheartedly agree with the manner in which Cajetan dealt with Luther. He did advise Luther to write the letter of apology. He went even so far as to urge Luther to "reconsider thoroughly whether his conscience might not allow him to make the required

⁹³Ibid., p. 585.

⁹⁴Beard, op. cit., pp. 250.251.

⁹⁵Luther, St. Louis ed., op. cit., XV, pp. 588.

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 589.590.

recantation." Yet, he became indignant at the arrogant and violent method in which Cajetan proceeded. He wrote to Elector Frederick on October 15:

The legate from Rome acts, alas, as they all do there. He speaks fair words, but they are all empty and vain. He is intent on making Master Martinus recant. He seeks, by whatever means, to extirpate innocent blood and force recantation. He says that the general of the Augustinian Order has written a letter against Luther and that this is already abroad in the land. Peutingger claims that it is also directed against me. Both of us are to be thrown into prison, and force is to be used against us.⁹⁷

When Staupitz heard of this letter he became afraid that Cajetan was also determined to destroy him and Link with Luther. He thought that plans for such action were already in the making. While the Cardinal was writing "another essay against Luther in the Fugger House, Staupitz hustled about the whole town to raise a loan for Dr. Martinus, for Luther, he thought, could no longer stay in Germany." He wanted to send him to Paris but was unable to locate friends enough to furnish the necessary funds.⁹⁸

Staupitz finally released Luther from his vow of monastic obedience, either to separate himself from the cause or to keep his Order from bearing the shame of a fallen brother. Both he and Link reasoned that they would be thrown into prison and in the end be killed. Since they could not persuade Luther to give the requested recantation they both decided to leave the city before the Cardinal could carry out the supposed threat against them. They left Augsburg and made their way

⁹⁷Boehmer, Road to Reformation, op. cit., p. 240.

⁹⁸Ibid., pp. 241.242.

"to Nuremberg, by two different roads, with reluctance and unfeigned sorrow leaving Luther to a fate that appeared inevitable and imminent."⁹⁹

Luther, left to himself, also made up his mind to leave the city. He had been told by Cajetan that he should never appear before him again and since he heard nothing further from him, he made preparations to leave. On October 22, Luther rode to Nuremberg. On this return trip to his home he rode for "Staupitz gave him a horse, and provided him with a guide who knew the country well."¹⁰⁰ Luther really left Augsburg with the intention of leaving the country. Just as soon as the expected bull arrived he intended, as Staupitz had advised him, "to depart for France. Under no circumstances did he wish to continue to be a burden to his prince."¹⁰¹

After his return to Wittenberg he wrote the following letter to Staupitz. It is dated December 13, 1518:

To the venerable and dear father, Johann Staupitz, vicar of the Augustinian Eremites, his most-beloved father in Christ.

In the name of Jesus!

I arrived in Wittenberg happily and healthily on the eve of All-Saints Day, venerable and dear father, but I did return contrary to the expectations of all. I have in the meantime found such shameful decay here that I immediately repented of returning. The Lord have mercy upon us.

The Elector had throughout this affair advised against my pub-

⁹⁹J. Rae, Martin Luther: Student, Monk, Reformer (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1884), p. 204.

¹⁰⁰Michelet, op. cit., p. 52.

¹⁰¹Boehmer, Road to Reformation, op. cit., p. 244.

lishing the acts of the controversy, but in the end he permitted it and now they are printed. In the meantime that honorable legate wrote a letter to the Elector in which he stated that I and you, and my confederates (as he called them) have left without his knowledge, and complains that that was quite deceitful. In the end he counselled the Elector to send me to Rome or else to banish me from his kingdom, so that he, because of a 'little brother', would not bring a stain on his honor. He also said that he will take the case to Rome since he has written to Rome about this deceitful business of mine and has washed his hands of the affair. The Elector wanted me to answer this letter, which I did, and, I believe, I have given him what was due him.

The Elector is greatly concerned about my safety and is very desirous that I should be some place else. I was called to Lichtenberg about this business, where Spalatin held a long conference with me. I told him that if the ban came, I will not remain. He counselled me that I should not so hastily go to France. I am still following his advice. May everything be well with you, my dear father, and commend my soul to Christ. I see, that you have a strong desire to damn me; on the other hand, Christ strengthens the resolution within me not to yield. It happens, it happens according to His holy and blessed will. Pray for me.

I pray you, what kind of nonsense is that going on at Erfurt in that they will not permit the father vicar, the licentiate, to come fully to the degree of Magister? How long, I wonder, will their characteristic ways of insubordination last? For I have not forgotten this that I was once with you and spoke with you as much as I could. Everything is well here at the University, only that the lectures which are the best do not have sufficient time.

Your Martin Luther, a poor man.¹⁰²

In September, 1518, Carl von Miltitz was selected as the papal nuncio to bear the Golden Rose to the Elector of Saxony, together with a bull condemning Luther. However, through ambition he conceived the idea to gain a reconciliation between Luther and the pope. He therefore arranged several meetings with Luther. In the first meeting between the two it was agreed that both parties would cease to preach,

¹⁰²Luther, St. Louis ed., op. cit., XV, 2428.2429.

teach, and discuss the matter of indulgences, and that a bishop would be selected to designate the articles of Luther's writings which were contrary to the church and which Luther was to recant.¹⁰³

On February 20, 1519, Luther explained the results and events of this meeting to Staupitz in the following letter:

To the venerable and dear father, Johann Staupitz, vicar of the Eremites of Saint Augustine, his highly-honored patron and superior in Christ.

In the name of Jesus!

Greetings! How is it that you are so far away from us, venerable father, and will not write the letter for which we are so anxiously waiting. Since you do not write I will break the silence. All of us would like to see you here once more. I believe that my "Acts" which are causing Rome to become angry and full of displeasure have reached you. God through His power designs, pulls, yea, even drives me, and I have no power over myself. I wish to remain at rest and listen to the noise on both sides.

Carl Milititz has seen me at Altenburg and has complained to me that I have drawn all the people to myself and away from the pope. He told me that he scouted in all the inns and found that out of every five people there were scarcely two or three who remained favorable to the Roman party. He came on this mission loaded down with seventy apostolic briefs which directed that I should be brought as a prisoner to the murderous Jerusalem, to the purple-robed Babylon. I learned this afterwards at the court of the Elector. Then while these nobles were desponding, he began to urge me to recant and to give back to Rome that which I had taken away from it.

I desired that he should first of all point out to me those things which I was to recant. For this it was agreed that several of the bishops of Saxony should judge. I named the Archbishop of Salzburg, of Treves, and of Frisia. In the evening he invited me to be entertained at a banquet. Afterwards he gave me a kiss, and we parted. I acted as if I did not understand his Italian trickery and hypocrisy. He has summoned Tetzl and reprimanded him. He has charged him with appropriating ninety gulden from his monthly salary and besides that of keeping three riders and a wagon at the expense of the treasury. This Tetzl has now disappeared, and no-

¹⁰³Boehmer, Road to Reformation, op. cit., pp. 250.251.254.

body knows where he has gone, unless he is perhaps with his fathers.

Eck, that treacherous man, is again dragging me into a new affair, as you can see from the enclosed. The Lord is taking care that I shall not be idle. But Christ willing, this debate will turn out disastrously for the Roman rights and customs which Eck regards as his chief staff of support.

I wish that you could see the booklet which was printed in Basel, in which you can see how certain learned men, Eck, Silwester and the scholastic theologians regard me. The very witty people are calling Silwester 'magirum' (cook of the palace), instead of 'Magister' of the palace. This is because there was a mistake in the printing. They also criticize him with other very sharp observations. Such action will pain the important people of the Romans. I pray that you will pray for me. I have the strong confidence that the Lord will make your heart be troubled because of me. I am a man pictured as keeping company with the suspended, the intoxicated, the gratifiers, the careless and others of like standards. They also decry that which I have printed against the office.

The people of Leipzig have finally given their consent for the debate with Eck. They complain about my hastiness. I wrote to them, but they refused to answer and they wrote another letter that I should recant. I am certain that this complaining has come about because of Duke George. I have written the dean twice already asking what has been done to further the debate, but he has declined to answer me. So these men are continually seeking in a deplorable manner to prevent this debate. Still it seems that Duke George is encouraging it. Farewell, my true father.

Brother Martin Luther, Augustinian.¹⁰⁴

The affair with Miltitz did not cease when they parted after the first meeting. Miltitz felt that his mission was a success. However, in Rome it was discovered that Miltitz had completely misjudged the nature of Luther and the Lutheran affair. Yet, Miltitz continued to perform various missions throughout Germany and Rome to bring about a complete reconciliation. But his actions failed. Luther spoke of

¹⁰⁴Luther, St. Louis ed., op. cit., XV, pp. 2412-2414.

another meeting with Miltitz in the following letter to Staupitz, dated October 3, 1519:

To the venerable and most worthy father, Johann Staupitz,
Vicar of the Eremites of Saint Augustine, his highly-honored
patron and superior in Christ.

In the name of Jesus!

Greetings! I am sending you, venerable father, two examples of my foolish Galatians. I am no more pleased with it than I was at first, and see that it could stand a wide and clear interpretation. But who is able to do everything at once? yes, who can always do much? Still I am confident that Paul is made clearer than he was made before by the others, even though my style is not too satisfactory. The psalter cries out for more work, but I am vexed with a slow printer. Our Elector is again well and at Lochau.

Carl Miltitz, with the consent of the Elector, has invited me to Liebenwerda for next Sunday. He wrote a thoroughly friendly letter (but I know that fox). Just what will happen I do not know. He delivered the Rose at Altenburg in the absence of the Elector, which he, I know not with how much pomp, has taken to Wittenberg.

We have not as yet seen the results of the meeting at Erfurt, excepting the submission of the brothers to Peter and that our prior has not as yet discharged his duties of office while waiting for his successor to take his place, in that he does not believe you regard this meeting of less importance than the meeting at Dresden. Brother Matthias Gruner has come and has become the Procurator. I still do not see what you want done with these books you left behind with me, and I wonder about that quite a bit.

I wish there were more brothers sent to us which are capable. Both the priors in the Netherlands have written to me in a complaining and hopeless manner that nothing was done about this during your vicarship. They say that they would send some, in fact they would come themselves. Nothing has happened about this as yet, even though this letter was written near Easter time, and they are not there as yet.

I have recently received letters from two priests of the Utraquist party in Prague who are very learned in the Scriptures, together with a small book by John Hus. I have not as yet read this. They admonish me, however, to perseverance and patience. They see in my teaching nothing but the pure theology. They zealously follow the manner of Erasmus both in their intent and

manner of writing. The letter arrived here through the court of the Elector, and it is no longer a secret.

You have seen the bold, but very true, theses of Melancthon, or else you will see them soon. Through his answer he has shown us just what he is, namely, a wonder. Christ willing, he will gain just as many people as Martin as an out-and-out enemy of the devil and of the scholastic theology. He knows also the vanity of all people and the rock of Christ. With such a foundation he will have much influence in this affair. Amen!

There are also letters coming from France in which it is stated that Erasmus had said: 'I am afraid that Martin through his righteousness goes into the ground; but concerning Eck, that they have dishonored his name by the addition of a letter, namely, that instead of Eck it should be said Jeck. Jeck has the meaning with the Dutch of 'fool'. Christ is fighting hard for the honor due Him. and those who adore the Leipzig people and Eck and all the learned are very much abhorred and called fools.

The bishop of Brandenburg goes about with a great passion; the good man was unable to do great things, just as Moab. He is supposed to have said that he was not going to let his head remain smooth until he had thrown Martin into the fire just as this fire-brand, which he at the same time threw into the fire. That is how that Eck wind-machine is blowing.

Also, just what is the present relation between the two of us? You are leaving me far too much. I have been sad for you today as a weaned child for its mother. I pray you praise the Lord even in a sinner like me. I hate my wretched life, I stand in abhorrence of death; I am empty of faith and full of other gifts which Christ knows I should much prefer to do without were it not to serve Him thereby.

The Minorites are debating with us in the chapter assembly about the signs of the holy Franciscans and the glory of your Order. They are so successful in their talking that we who before had adored this, now begin to doubt, not so much concerning the signs of the Order as about its condition. The falsehood which they present no more represents the two than it does the truth. It is this condition which they praise overly much, just as the preacher monks do in their praise of the sainted Thomas.

One is tempted in these debates to bring in references to this affair which is spreading its fame over the land. I preached against such actions. Because of this they intended to find fault with me and hoped that I would take issue. I have been lucky in this affair in that they all are so desirous in attacking me that they are beginning to make up doctrines which they can attack as

those of mine. I am sorry, though, that in your entire Order this affair is being made fun of.

There was one who debated at Erfurt who was made Magister at the same time that Lang was. In the morning Peter Fontinus debated with him. The latter attracted me and all the others as a poorly learned man and a fault-finder. He maintained that one must thoughtlessly imitate all the fathers. We would see great wonders from the labors of these Minorites. So these ignorant people make a great stir without any reason. As you can see the Baccalaureate Jacob today made an answer for the bystanders and was superior to both our Magisters. He was very modest in his answers and set the theses straight. He comes from Zwickau, and was trained here in Wittenberg. He has a very pious and a good head on him. So God humbles the proud and hears the low.

Last night I had a dream about you, that you were leaving me while I wept bitterly and grieved; but you waved to me and said I should be still, for you would come back to me. This has indeed happened this very day. But now farewell, and pray for me in my wretchedness.

Brother Martin Luther.¹⁰⁵

A final attempt by Miltitz and Staupitz to mediate with Luther was made at the Eisleben chapter meeting. A chapter of the Augustinian monks had been held at Venice in June of 1519. Staupitz was expected by the other members to be present in order to consult with his Augustinian brethren about Luther and the 'reproach' he was bringing on the Order. He, however, failed to make his appearance. On March 15, 1520, therefore Venetus wrote Staupitz begging him that he use his personal friendship and influence with Luther:

Wherefore we implore you, by your piety and religion and love to God, that if indeed zeal, honour, the advantage of religion and your own Congregation, are things that lie near your heart, to apply all your care, your effort, and your mind to bring Master Martin back to himself, and, with him, to save our order from so great and so wretched a reproach.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 2450-2454.

¹⁰⁶As quoted in Beard, *op. cit.*, pp. 362.363.

Such an order caused Staupitz much consternation. He loved Luther as a son. He felt a certain sympathy for Luther's cause. He wanted to bring him back to ways of moderation, but he also knew that his efforts would be of no avail. He realized that he could not fulfill the responsibility required of him. Therefore, when the chapter held their next regular meeting, on St. Augustine's Day, August 20, 1520, at Eisleben, Staupitz laid aside his office as Vicar-General.¹⁰⁷ Luther wrote his friend Spalatin on May 5, 1520: "Our vicar has set aside our chapter and come to Eisleben on the feast of St. Augustine, and there, as they say, laid aside the burdens of his office."¹⁰⁸

At this meeting Miltitz thought he saw a final opportunity to bring about a reconciliation. "He persuaded the Augustinians . . . to send Staupitz and Link as a deputation to Luther, to ask him to write a letter to the Pope stating that he had never intended to attack him personally."¹⁰⁹ Early in September these two arrived in Wittenberg to see Luther. They found him willing to comply with the wishes of Miltitz. Luther wrote to Spalatin on September 15, 1520:

Nothing was done concerning me at Eisleben except that Carl Miltitz begged the fathers and finally persuaded them that they should send the venerable father Staupitz and the new vicar Wenceslaus Link to me to ask me to write a letter to the Roman pope. I was to acknowledge that I at no time plotted anything against his person. In this manner he hoped to put the affair in good order.

¹⁰⁷Clemen, op. cit., p. 72.

¹⁰⁸Luther, St. Louis ed., op. cit., XV, p. 2458.

¹⁰⁹Beard, op. cit., p. 363.

Even though this plan is not thought much of by me or the fathers, yet we will accommodate the man, who is, perhaps, doing this for his own interests. I shall then write just what is true, that it never entered my mind to go against the pope. For what is there that I could write more readily and with more truth? However, even though I must be careful that I do not deal too roughly with the apostolic chair in the letter, I shall add the necessary salt.¹¹⁰

This meeting requested by Miltitz between Staupitz and Luther, was perhaps the last time that Luther and Staupitz saw each other. They continued their correspondence, but even this method of communication became quite lax. Staupitz was not "bold and heroic. He consequently drew back from Luther and his cause in time, but did not, like Erasmus and many humanists, consent to be used against the Reformation."¹¹¹ His protest against Luther's book "The Address to the Emperor, Nobles, and People of Germany" was perhaps the outcome of the feeling that his remonstrance with Luther would be fruitless. He saw a responsibility expected of him which he realized he could not carry out.¹¹²

Staupitz assumed his duties as preacher to Cardinal Matthew Lang of Salzburg in 1519. It may have been the intention of Lang in inviting Staupitz to Salzburg "to withdraw from the Reformer Staupitz's name and patronage, and thereby to give the Reformation itself the most severe blow. The result, however, was quite the reverse."¹¹³ In Salzburg Staupitz continued his former attachment to the principles of the

¹¹⁰Luther, St. Louis ed., op. cit., XV, pp. 2405, 2406.

¹¹¹M. Clintock and Strong, op. cit., p. 999.

¹¹²Beard, op. cit., p. 363.

¹¹³Ullmann, op. cit., p. 243.

Reformation as is shown in his 'Fast Sermons' which he delivered in the year of his death.¹¹⁴ He brought with him to Salzburg the writings of Luther. These he urged the monks in the monastery to read, and after his death there remained in that monastery a reformatory tradition.¹¹⁵

Even though Staupitz had not been named in the papal bull which condemned Luther, he still was made to suffer for the known sympathy which he held for Luther. With his retirement to Salzburg he had hoped to gain peace for his life and to evade the criticisms and controversies connected with Luther's affair. On the same day that the bull Decet Romanum Pontificem was issued, he wrote to his friend and successor Link at Nuremberg:

To us also has come the roar of the lion [Leo], seeing whom he may devour. For our Very Reverend Cardinal [Lang] has been instructed to compel me to state that Martin's opinions are, respectively, heretical, erroneous, and offensive to pious ears and to reject them in the presence of a notary and of witnesses. But as I am unable to recant and reject opinions which I never asserted, and which are not mine, I begged the lord cardinal to have me excused. I know not what will happen. It would be sufficient to have written this to the Father concerning me, and perhaps to one other. I thought I was going to enjoy peace at last, and now this perplexing trial comes up. I am not able to fly with wings, as I am not distinguished either for learning or for a holy life, and yet I think it the worst impiety to desert the truth. Therefore I shall take the wholesome cup and invoke the name of the Lord. Reverend father, pray give me your counsel and aid. Martin has begun a hard task and acts with great courage, divinely inspired; I stammer and am a child needing milk. Farewell, reverend father, and do not desert me under this dark star at the back of the world. My fellow-captives Mayr and Bessler salute you, desiring to see the face of Your Reverence, and to drink wine together,

¹¹⁴Kurtz, op. cit., p. 163.

¹¹⁵Ullmann, op. cit., p. 243.

which is excellent at Salzburg. They promise to bear adversity with you calmly.¹¹⁶

Staupitz, however, yielded under the papal threats, at least in so far as to declare his complete submission to the pope. This was sufficient to satisfy the curia. When Luther heard of Staupitz' submission, he wrote him on February 9, 1521:

To the venerable and true man, Johann von Staupitz, Magister of Sacred Theology, Augustinian Eremit, his overseer in the Lord.

Greetings! I am amazed, venerable father, that my letter and books have not as yet reached you, as I understand from your letter. I am preaching every other day here since the people are very desirous to hear. In what spirit I am treating the Word of God you can see from that which I am sending you. There has nothing new been taken up against me at Worms, although the papists with extraordinary fury are expressing their ill will against me. Spalatin writes from there that there is so great a feeling against the Gospel that he fears I will be damned without being heard and called.

Emser at Leipzig does not know what shame is, and has written a book against me which from its beginning to the end is but one big lie. It is necessary that I answer this monster who is writing according to the will of Duke George, that conceited man.

I am displeased to hear that you too are attacked by Leo and that you are planning to set aside the cross which you formerly preached as an example to the world. For I very well wish that the wolf will not be satisfied with your answer, since you give in to him more than is right. But now that you have declared that you will receive him as judge, he will interpret this as a complete denial of me and all my actions against which you have spoken. But Christ, who has love for you, will make you see that it is necessary for you to revoke this writing, since he [the pope] has damned everything in this bull which you up until now taught and believed concerning the mercy of God.

Since you know this very well, it seems to me that you cannot appeal to him as judge, who is raging as an adversary against Christ

¹¹⁶Staupitz, as quoted in W. H. T. Dau, At the Tribunal of Caesar. Leaves from the Story of Luther's Life (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 110.

and against the word of grace, without offending Christ. It is your duty to assert this and to reprove him for his wickedness. This is no time for you to fear, but to cry out when our Lord Jesus Christ is damned, stripped and blasphemed. Therefore, as much as you urge me to humility, I will urge you to be proud. You have too much humility, while I have too much pride.

This is, however, a serious matter. We see Christ suffer. At one time, my friend, it was necessary to submit and be silent, but now must we not fight for our dearest Saviour, who gave Himself for us, when He is made a mock of throughout the world? Should we not offer our necks? My dear father, the danger is greater than many would believe. Hear what the Gospel says about this: 'Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father; whosoever will be ashamed of Me, of him will I also be ashamed.'

I am writing to you rather intimately because I fear that you stand wavering between Christ and the pope even though you see that they are most violently opposed to each other. Let us pray the Lord, however, that the Lord Jesus may quickly destroy this son of perdition with the breath of His mouth. But if you will not follow me in this, then let me go and be snatched up; I shall (by the grace of Christ) not keep still before this abomination concerning his abominations.

Your submission has indeed saddened me not a little and has shown me a different Staupitz than the one who was the herald of grace and the cross. You would not have saddened me if you had done this before you had knowledge of this bull and the shame of Christ.

Hutten and many others write strongly for me, and daily there are songs composed which would furnish small delight for that Babylon. Our Prince acts just as constantly and wisely and truly; at his command I am publishing the writing entitled 'Grund und Ursach aller Artikel.'

Philip greets you and wishes you a more joyous spirit. Please greet Doctor Ludwig who has written me a very learned letter. I have no time to write him now since I must tend to three presses by myself. Farewell in the Lord and pray for me.

Your son, Martin Luther.¹¹⁷

Staupitz' answer to this letter of Luther is lost. We may sur-

¹¹⁷Luther, St. Louis ed., op. cit., XV. pp. 2424-2426.

mise what he wrote to him from a letter which he wrote to Link on March 5 of that year:

I am answering our Martin, who, like you, blames my pusillanimity. As you are to me another Peter and Paul, I willingly acknowledge my fault, although I could make a verbal defense. May He who is Wisdom give us wisdom and He who is the Virtue of God give us courage, without whom none are strong and holy. We have no news. We anxiously await what will happen at Worms. The Very Reverend Cardinal [Lang] has tried nothing against Martin in this diocese of Salzburg, and we hope thus to live in peace until we are stronger in faith and filled with the Gospel, when we shall play the man. If news comes from Wittenberg, please communicate it to us. We also shall do what will please you.¹¹⁸

The Archbishop of Salzburg intended to make Staupitz the Abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Peter's in order to completely break the connection that existed between Staupitz and Luther. Luther could not approve of Staupitz' intention to accept the position. In a letter dated June 27, 1522, he again took issue with Staupitz:

Dr. Johann Staupitz, ecclesiastic at Salzburg.

Grace and peace in Christ! Amen! Venerable and worthy father, I have heard from the prior of Nürnberg in a letter and also from the common reports which are so widespread, that you are now an abbot. Since I did not see your letter, I must believe what I hear. In such a like manner, I believe, there were lies concerning us brought to you. Although I can not forsake you with the will of God, yet in my simplicity, I can not completely understand if it is by the will of God that you have become an abbot. It is not clear to me what I should do. I will neither be against your spirit nor condemn you. There is one thing that I would ask of you also in the mercy of Christ, that you do not too readily believe those who defame us, both Wenceslaus and me. For there are those who write that my followers are those who were raised from the brothels and that many offenses have originated from my latest writings. About this latter thing I do not wonder and neither do I fear. We have certainly so conducted ourselves and still conduct ourselves that we teach the pure word of God without a great uproar of the people, which both evil and good could have used. You realize that that is

¹¹⁸Staupitz, as quoted in Dau, At the Tribunal of Caesar, op. cit., pp. 113.114.

not within our power. For we are in a position in which all the godlessness of the mass and the tyranny of the spiritual orders, and all that is contrary to the beneficial teaching has been established. But we are made to follow the words of Scripture and to do what Christ has commanded, namely, that His angels will remove all offenses from His kingdom. It is necessary, dear father, that the kingdom of abominations and of corruptions of the pope and his entire body be destroyed. And he is doing that now, without us, without hands, with merely bare words. His end has come before the Lord. This thing is above our comprehension and understanding. And so it is that I do not concern myself about the great agitation that is going on and that great offenses and abominations arise. But, my father, do not allow yourself to be led astray in these. I have great hope that you will not. You see the counsel and the powerful hand of God in these things. Even though from the beginning the world seemed so frightful and intolerable yet you improved from day to day. Improve also in this thing now which you fear too much. Have yet a little patience. Satan feels his wounds and that is why he is raging so and throwing everything in disorder. But Christ, who is before Him, will trample him down, even though all the gates of hell rage in vain against Him.

Jacob, the prior of Antwerp, has again been taken prisoner, and some say that he and two others have already been burned. For it is certain that he must be put to death because he withdrew his recantation. The sophists make haste in their destruction, which will also come to you on account of the innocent blood which they shed. Amen!

There are also some who hold council how they will burn me, and yet I enrage Satan and his scales all the more daily, in order that the day of Christ may be hastened, who in turn will trouble the anti-Christ. Farewell, my dear father, and pray for me. Greet for me Dr. Hieronymus, the rector Amsdorf and Philippus. Make my excuse to Wenceslaus. He is a just man and teaches the Gospel correctly, which is an offense to the 'holy ones' and the prudent, as you also ought to do.

Your Martin Luther.¹¹⁹

Luther, however, loved his old friend and spiritual father too much to give him up because of his actions. On September 17, 1523, he wrote him once more in the kindest and most affectionate manner:

¹¹⁹Luther, St. Louis ed., op. cit., XV, pp. 608-610.

To the venerable father in Christ, Staupitz, abbot of St. Peter of the Benedictine Order at Salzburg, his superior in the Lord, his Father and teacher.

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus our Lord! Venerable father in Christ! Your Reverence's silence is too unjust. What I am to think about it you can very readily surmise. But even though you love and accept us no more, Your Reverence, nevertheless we can never forget you nor be unthankful to you, since it was through you that the light of the Gospel first began to enlighten our hearts from the darkness. I must say this, however, that we had hoped very much that you would not become an abbot; but now that that has come to pass we must each interpret this move in his own way. I and also your best friends here were sorry that you left us and that you became one with the infamous monster, your Cardinal, to do his bidding. The world can hardly bear the matter any longer and still you must suffer it to come to pass and keep silent. It is no more than a miracle when you stand in such danger and do not deny Christ. We pray and wish that you will free yourself from such a tyrannical prison and return to us, and we also hope that you are thinking about doing this thing. For if I know Your Reverence as well as I do, I can not rime these two things with one another, that you continue to remain in such a position, or if you still are as you once were that you do not withdraw from the present situation. But while we are thinking and wishing the best for you, we still hope for you here even though your long silence makes such hope very feeble.

. . .

So you see, venerable father, how much in doubt I am writing to you, since you for such a long time by your silence have kept us in uncertainty. Yet you should be very certain about the things which we teach and believe. I am also assured that you have not condemned us from your heart, even though we are very much displeased with you. I certainly am not going to give up praying and hoping that you will yet separate yourself from your Cardinal and the papacy even as I am, yes, as you yourself once were. May God hear me and take you and us to Himself. Amen!

Your son, Martin Luther. ¹²⁰

As abbot of the Benedictine monastery Staupitz devoted himself to the theological instruction of the monks and also carefully guarded their souls. There are two deliverances of Staupitz which are of im-

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 610-612.

portance in his years as abbot. In one, in 1523, he "mildly reproached Stephen Agricola for opposing his subjective opinion to the decisions of the Church." The second occurred later in the same year. This one, however, was sharper and in this he advocated the proposal that "heretics must be punished since the sheep must be protected from the wolves, that the adherents of Luther were by the pope's bulls, and the emperor's edicts placed in the position of heretics, that a single proved point of heresy was sufficient to convict, and that Agricola was guilty in many points."¹²¹

In April, 1524, Staupitz wrote Luther:

May Christ help that we may at least live according to the Gospel, which now sounds in our ears and which many carry in the mouth; since I see that multitudes abuse the gospel for the freedom of the flesh. May my prayers, seeing that I was once the forerunner of the holy evangelical teaching, still avail somewhat with thee.¹²²

When he calls himself the 'forerunner of the Gospel' he does that with a certain right, and "he is equally right when . . . he said to Luther: 'You have led us from the husks of the swine back to the pastures of life.'" For one can readily see that in later years of their friendship Luther also exerted an influence upon Staupitz. But Staupitz like so many with mystical inclinations had "allowed himself to be carried away further by it than was really compatible with his religious principles and his nature, and therefore at the end of his life he renounced

¹²¹Clemen, op. cit., p. 72.

¹²²Staupitz, as quoted in Newman, op. cit., pp. 50.51.

his once beloved and respected friend."¹²³

In his later life Luther continually praised the

. . . deep understanding, honesty and sincerity of Staupitz, who, as he said, was at all times a nobleman, never was dishonourable or of a slavish disposition. However, towards the end of his life the Bishop of Salzburg persuaded him to come there. . . . Although I am hopeful for his eternal welfare, as his confession would indicate, yet, we must at the same time pray when we see such an example, that we do not become sure of ourselves and recall to mind what St. Paul warns in 1 Cor. 10:12: 'Who stands, let him take heed, so that he does not fall.'¹²⁴

The letter of Staupitz of April 1, 1524, referred to above, is the last word that we know passed between the two. We have no information how this letter of Staupitz was received by Luther. In this same letter Staupitz had recommended the bearer of the letter with the following words:

My brother, I commend to thee the bearer of this whom thou seest before thee, to make him with thy care and power a pupil of thine, that he may the more speedily receive his degree of Master and be sent back to me. For I have the assured hope that he will bear good fruit and do honor to his study at Wittenberg.¹²⁵

In the records of the Faculty of Philosophy of Wittenberg, "in Matricula I," an entry is found in the year 1524, under the deanship of John Agricola:

In the same year, on the last day of April, m^oxiv, George Fuhrer, of Salzburg, obtained the degree of Master, (a thing which had never before been done) at the urgent request of Dr. John Staupitz, to whom this school owes its foundation, and of Dr. Luther, the champion, not so much of letters, as of the gospel (by the radi-

¹²³Boehmer, Road to Reformation, op. cit., pp. 108.109.

¹²⁴Luther, Sämmtliche Werke, op. cit., LXII, p. 347.

¹²⁵T. A. Kaehler, "Luther's Last Intercourse with Staupitz," The Lutheran Church Review (Philadelphia: The Alumni Association of the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1884), II, p. 151.

ancy of which, God, the Supremely Great and Good, has in these days illumined Germany).¹²⁶

It seems evident that the person mentioned in these records, George Fuhrer, was the person who bore the letter to Luther.

In the University schedule degrees were conferred only at specified times and seasons, and the last part of April was not one of them. This was the first occurrence of such a promotion on that day, and it occurred but very rarely after this. The next one was in 1528. Under the note which was written in the records of April 30, 1524, there is also a note written by someone else which reads: "They who introduced such a precedent have not deserved well of the college." Luther, who was not a member of the Faculty of Philosophy, here used his influence with the members of that faculty to comply with the wishes of Staupitz as soon as possible.

Moreover the words of Staupitz, that Luther should make him his pupil, do not exclude the probability that Fuhrer was even then acquainted with his theology and inclined towards it. Indeed he had been at Wittenberg before, though it was probably at the time when Luther was on his way to Worms, or during his stay at that place, or even during his abode at the Wartburg. Among the Baccalaureates who had come from foreign parts and had been received at Wittenberg in 1521 (John Stob, alias Ginckelyn de Wangen, being dean) was 'Georgius Fyeren Saltzburgensis Winensis (sic!) Bacc.' In the year 1524 he received his degree of Master immediately upon arrival and then pursued his studies with Luther. Whether he was able to return to Staupitz to convey greetings from Wittenberg we do not know.¹²⁷

With this letter ended the communication between two men, Staupitz and Luther, who for years of their lives walked hand in hand in theology

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Ibid., pp. 151.152.

and intimacy, only to find that the differences in their characters proved the means of separation in later life. Staupitz died on December 28, 1524.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

With the death of Staupitz in 1524 there ended a friendship and intimacy which had for so long existed between the 'forerunner of the evangelistic Gospel' and the leader of the Reformation himself. These two, Staupitz and Luther, had spent years of their lives in close harmony and intimate contact; each had influenced the other towards a greater and clearer understanding and experiencing of God and His purposes with men.

Yet, there were obvious differences between the two. Staupitz was a very sensitive individual, yet of a gentle disposition. He continually wished to withdraw from conflict, no matter of what nature it was, and especially if such conflict found the opposing parties unable to come to an agreement. His sensitive character led him to an intended life of seclusion and study in monasticism in his early years. It led him to give up his position in 1512 in regard to the proposed union of the Augustinian monasteries because of the opposition against him. It finally led him in 1520 to leave Luther and his cause and join the Benedictine Order, and in the end to re-affirm his submission and allegiance to the judgments of Rome. In controversial matters he was usually accustomed to express himself in a devotional and mystical manner. He was, however, earnest and sincere in his desire to help whenever he was requested.

On the other hand Luther was possessed with a greater incentive for scientific investigation into the problems which confronted the peace of his soul. When he gained results from such investigation he immediately applied these solutions to his life and actions. He was not satisfied with the answers and solutions he received from his instructors or from the theologians he studied, but had to ascertain the correct and appropriate solution for himself.

One might picture the life and outlook of Staupitz as a "bright morning star in spring," and the life of Luther as a "summer day, labouring with thunder-storms and tempests."^{1 2}

Biographers quite often picture

. . . the one in his quiet cell, calm and contemplative; the other in the presence of kings and crowds, boldly contending for the truth, and surrounded by admiring friends and obstinate adversaries. In the abstract view of things, Staupitz bases all upon love, Luther all upon faith. Staupitz reduces Christianity to the very simplest practical propositions in the doctrine of love; Luther deduces from the doctrine of faith a rich abundance of religious perceptions and theological ideas. The latter executed what the former planned and prepared; did what he foreboded and conceived.²

Staupitz possessed an evangelical spirit, embodying to a large measure the principles of the Reformation championed by his pupil and successor. Yet, he was not really what one might call 'Protestant' in that he feared an open break with the established Church. On the other hand, he also cared little for 'Romanism.' One might compare

¹Ullmann, op. cit., p. 251.

²Ibid., pp. 251.252.

his relation to the Reformation with that of Erasmus. The difference between the two would be that Staupitz "helped prepare the way for it in the sphere of discipline and piety, Erasmus in the sphere of scholarship and illumination. Both were men of mediation and transition; they beheld from afar the land of promise, but did not enter it."³

The theology of Staupitz was a combination of Augustine, Scripture, and mysticism - a devotio moderna.⁴ He was no longer concerned about the ultimate goal of the genuine mystics, namely, that of a union of the part of God enclosed in the soul with the undivided God-substance. Staupitz found the greatest experience of the believing soul in "the mystical union of the soul with Christ, in which there is only a blending of the will and the feelings, but not a temporary suspension of the essential distinction between God and man."⁵

In everything he was seeking that which was practical; his personality was noble, as Luther was later wont to say, and at all times was dignified and engaging in his talks and counsels. The greatest event of his life which claims notice among Reformation students of today is that "he stimulated and encouraged his great disciple, until the latter had developed into a fitness for the mighty work to which he was called of God."⁵ ²⁴

³Schaff, op. cit., pp. 121.122.

⁴Boehmer, Road to Reformation, op. cit., p. 100.

⁵McClintock and Strong, op. cit., p. 999.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barge, Hermann. Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt. I. Leipzig: Friedrich Brandstetter, 1905.
- Bayne, Peter. Martin Luther. His Life and Work. I. London: Cassell & Company, 1887.
- Beard, Charles. Martin Luther and the Reformation in Germany Until the Close of the Diet of Worms. Edited by J. Frederick Smith. London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1889.
- Beck, Johannem Jacobum. Lutherthumb vor Luthero, Das ist: Theologische und Historische Ausführung Auff die zwo Fragen: 1. Wo unsere Evangelische Kirche vor Luthero gewesen sey. 2. Ob unsere Liebe Vor Eltern und alle bey etliche hundert Jahren hero im Papstthumb Abgestorbene ewig selig worden? In welcher mit gnugsamen Fundamenten und Gründen dargethan und Sonnenklar erwiesen wird dasz unsere genannte Lutherische Lehr eben die Bralte Recht Catholische Prophetische und Apostolische Lehre und mit nichten eine Neuerung sey wie sie biszankero von dem Gegentheil mit ohngegründetem Vorzeben beschmizet und vor aller Welt ausgerufen worden. Frankfurt: Johann Beyers, 1658.
- Boehmer, Heinrich. Luther in the Light of Recent Research. Translated by Carl F. Huth. New York: The Christian Herald, 1916.
- . Road to Reformation. Martin Luther to the Year 1521. Translated from the German by John W. Doberstein and Theodore G. Tappert. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946.
- Clemen, O. "Staupitz, Johann von." The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Edited by S. M. Jackson. XI. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1911.
- Dau, W. H. T. At the Tribunal of Caesar. Leaves From the Story of Luther's Life. St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1921.
- . The Great Renunciation. Leaves from the Story of Luther's Life. St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1920.
- D'Aubigne, J. H. Merle. History of the Great Reformation of the Sixteenth Century in Germany, Switzerland, &c. I. New York: Robert Carter, 1844.

- ✓ Fife, Robert H. Young Luther. The Intellectual and Religious Development of Martin Luther to 1518. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1928.
- Grisar, Hartmann. Martin Luther His Life and Work. Adapted from the Second German Edition by Frank J. Eble. Edited by Arthur Preuss. St. Louis, Mo.: The B. Herder Book Co., 1935.
- Jacobs, Henry Eyster. Martin Luther the Hero of the Reformation 1483-1546. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900.
- Jürgens, Karl. Luther von seiner Geburt bis zum Ablassstreite. I. Leipzig: F. U. Brockhaus, 1846.
- Kaehler, F. A. "Luther's Last Intercourse with Staupitz." The Lutheran Church Review. II. Philadelphia: The Alumni Association of the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1884.
- Keller, Ludwig. Die Reformation und die Älteren Reformparteien. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1885.
- ✓ Köstlin, Julius. The Theology of Luther in its Historical Development and Inner Harmony. Translated by Charles E. Hay. I. Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1897.
- ✓ Kuiper, Barend Klaas. Martin Luther. The Formative Years. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1933.
- Kurtz, Professor. Church History. Authorized translation from latest revised edition by John Macpherson. II. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1889.
- Lea, Henry C. A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church. III. Philadelphia: Lea Brothers & Co., 1896.
- Lindsay, Thomas M. A History of the Reformation. I. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931.
- Luther and the German Reformation. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908.
- Löffler, Klemens. "Staupitz." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Edited by Charles G. Herbermann, et al. XIV. New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1912.
- Löschern, Valentin Ernst. Völlständige Reformations-Acta und Documenta, oder umständliche Vorstellung des Evangelischen Reformations-Wercks mit Einrückung der darzu dienlichen, theils noch nie gedruckten, Nachrichten, So dasz dieses Werck zugleich vor Theologische Annales dienen kan. I. Leipzig: Johann Groszens Erben, 1720.

Luther, Martin. Sämmtliche Werke. XLVIII. LVI. LVII. LVIII. LIX. LX. LXII. Frankfurt a. M. und Erlangen: Heyder & Zimmer, 1854.

----- Works of Martin Luther with Introductions and Notes. I. Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Co., 1915.

----- Dr. Martin Luthers Sämmtliche Schriften, herausgegeben von Dr. Joh. Georg Walch. XV. XXI. St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.

Mackinnon, James. Luther and the Reformation. I. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1925.

Matthesius, M. Johann. Das Leben Des theuren Mannes Gottes Doct. Martin Luthers, Darinnen von seiner Geburth, Lehre, Leben, standhafften Bekänntnisz und seel. Todte nebst ausführlicher Erzählung, was sich merckwürdiges bey der heilsamen Reformation zugetragen, nach der Chronologie gehandelt wird. Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1724.

✓ McGiffert, Arthur Cushman. Martin Luther. The Man and His Work. New York: The Century Co., 1911.

Michelst, M. The Life of Luther Written by Himself. Translated by William Hazlitt. London: George Bell and Sons, 1898.

Muerer, Moritz. The Life of Luther. Related from Original Authorities. Translated by a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. New York: H. Ludwig & Co., 1848.

Newman, Albert H. A Manual of Church History. II. Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1944.

Rae, John. Martin Luther. Student, Monk, Reformer. London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1884.

✓ Roscoe, William. The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth. II. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846.

Schaff, Philip. History of the Christian Church. Second edition revised. VI. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916.

Scheel, Otto. Martin Luther. Vom Katholizismus zur Reformation. Third edition. I. II. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1921.

Schwiebert, E. G. Reformation Lectures Delivered at Valparaiso University. Valparaiso, Ind.: The Letter Shop, 1937.

"Staupitz." Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature. Edited by John McClintock and James Strong. IX. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894.

Stolz, Karl R. The Psychology of Religious Living. Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1937.

Tentzel, William Ernst. Historischer Bericht vom Anfang ersten Fortgang der Reformation Lutheri, sur Erläuterung des Hn. v. Seckendorff Historie des Lutherthums, mit grossen Fleisz erstattet, und nunmehr in diesem andern Evangelischen Jubel-Jahr. Leipzig: John. Ludwig Gleditsch und Moritz Georg Wiedemann, 1717.

Tschackert, Paul. "Biel, Gabriel." The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Edited by S. M. Jackson. II. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1911.

Ullmann, C. Reformers Before the Reformation, Principally in Germany and the Netherlands. Translated by Robert Menzies. Third edition. II. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street, 1865.

Watson, Philip S. Let God Be God! An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther. London: The Epworth Press, 1947.

Wiemann, Henry N., and Regina Westcott-Wiemann. Normative Psychology of Religion. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1935.

N. N. Unschuldige Nachrichten von Alten und Neuen Theologischen Sachen, Büchern, Urkunden, Controversien, Veränderungen, Anmerckungen, Vorschlägen, u.d.g. Zur geheiligten Übung in gewissen Ordnungen verfertigt von Einigen Dienern des Göttlichen Wortes. Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Braun, 1712.