

4-1-1942

## Luther: A Blessing to the English

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### Recommended Citation

Dallmann, W. (1942) "Luther: A Blessing to the English," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 13 , Article 22.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol13/iss1/22>

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refers to the rage of the Antichrist), saying that it would stand in the Holy Place. Matt. 24:15.

Finally Paul adds that Antichrist "will show himself that he is God," setting forth, demonstrating that he is God, "gibt sich vor, er sei Gott." Not only does he seat himself in the temple of God, usurping that place as though he had a claim to it, but he actually claims divine dignity for himself and on that account demands the reverence that is due to God alone. That to which Christ alone has a claim this infamous person claims for himself. He is not content to call himself God by mere words: by means of signs and wonders, which many will believe, he seeks to prove himself to be God. It is indeed a horrible, repulsive picture which the Apostle paints, and we will have to note carefully and keep in mind all its details in order to recognize the person placed before our view.

L. FUEBRINGER

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## Luther: A Blessing to the English

### IV. A Battle Royal

When the corrupt clergy would do nothing to better the corrupt Church, Luther appealed "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation on the Betterment of the Christian Estate," and many hailed him as the desired champion of the nation and shouted Hosannah! Hallelujah! When, however, in the same 1520 he wrote "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," he published an earthquake and committed the unpardonable sin against the priests, and many cried "Crucify! This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" We are reminded of the account John 6:60, 66: "From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him."

Strange to say, the higher critics thought Luther was not capable of writing this earthquake, and they thought Erasmus was capable of writing it! Imagine this timid man's surprise when he was reported at Louvain as the author of this radical heresy! In June, 1521, he wrote his old patron, William Lord Mountjoy, denying writing any of Luther's works but justifying him in exposing the evils of the times known to all. And on July 5 he wrote Dean Pace there is not a syllable of his in all Luther's books, but he cannot admire enough the spirit in which he writes. And on March 7, 1522, he writes Cardinal Wolsey he had nothing to do with Luther's "Assertion" and "Babylonian Captivity."

On January 21, 1521, Ambassador Tunstal at the world-historic Reichstag of Worms sent Wolsey a copy of the world-revolutionary



book—"There is much strange opinion in it near to the opinion of Boheme; I pray God keep that book out of England."

England's most magnificent cardinal gave the greatest heretic's most heretical book to England's most influential king and begged him to write a reply. Henry felt equal to the task, for he was so great a student of his favorite Thomas Aquinas that Polydore Vergil says he was called "Thomisticus."

Soon Wolsey wrote John Clerk, the king's agent at Rome: "What pain, labor, and studie his Highness hath taken in devising and making a book for the confutacion of Luther's said erronious opinions. . . . the said book is by his Highness perfected, . . . the king's Highness has thus declared himself as the veray defender of Catholique faith [of] Crist's Church as well w<sup>t</sup> his preysence as w<sup>t</sup> his lernyng."

On May 20 Uncle Henry wrote the kaiser, "begging, admonishing, and conjuring His Majesty to root up the poisonous weed of heresy and extirpate both Luther and his pestilent books with fire and sword for the honor of the Holy Church and the papal See and thus take the disgrace from the German nation, otherwise the very strongest fortress of the Christian faith."

On the same day and in the same strain he spurred on the electors. Nephew Karl answered by sending his infamous Edict of Worms of April 19. He was ready to lay down his life and crown to hold up the religion of his fathers and root up the heresy so obstinately held by a single erring monk against all Christendom.

Sir Richard Wingfield wrote Wolsey from Mainz on June 3, 1521: "As to the matter of Luther, the emperor sayde to be ryght glad to know that the Kynge his broder had wele takyn the manner of his proceedings in that behalf, sayenge that wher the sayde Luther had as well prechyd as also wrytten moche false doctryne to the abusion of the grosse and unlernyd people, that it was the parte and office of all princes, and especially his, to do their best for the reformation of his said false doctrine; which thing he trusted to do in such wise as should stand with the pleasure of God, and that the said people might be reduced from such errour as the said Luther may have set them in, and thanked the king most highly for his exhortation and his offered help."

Cardinal de'Medici wrote to Ghinucci about June 7, 1521: "In accordance with Wolsey's prudent advice, the Pope has written a second time to all Christian princes against Luther."

While Martin Luther was making his world-changing speech before Kaiser and Reich, in April at Worms, King Henry in England was writing his famous book against the heretic and on May 21 wrote his Holy Father in Rome: "I most humbly commend



myself to you and devoutly kiss your blessed feet. . . . We earnestly entreated His Imperial Majesty, through our fraternal love for him, and all the electoral princes, to bethink them of their Christian duty and their lofty station and to destroy this pernicious man, together with his scandalous and heretical publications."

"We also used 'the resources of our intelligence' to write against the 'vile books' of Luther and to dedicate this first attempt of our modest ability and learning to your Holiness."

"Assertion of the Seven Sacraments against Martin Luther by the most invincible King of England and France and Lord of Ireland, Henry of that Name the Eighth" came out on July 12, 1521.

The Epistle Dedicatory "To our most Holy Lord Leo X, chief Bishop, Henry, King of England, France, and Ireland, wisheth perpetual Happiness. . . ."

"Although our Learning is not much, nay in Comparison, even Nothing. . . . Yet are we not altogether so ignorant, as not to esteem it Our Duty, to employ, with all Our Might, Our Wit and Pen in the common Cause. . . ."

"If We have erred in any Thing, We offer it to be corrected as may please Your Holiness."

#### To the Reader

"Though I do not rank myself amongst the most Learned an Eloquent; yet . . . I cannot but think myself obliged (would to God my Ability to do it, were equal to my good Will!) to defend my Mother, the Spouse of Christ. . . ."

"Now when the Enemy, (and the most wicked Enemy imaginable,) is risen up, who, by the Instigation of the Devil . . . spews out the Poison of Vipers against the Church and the Catholic faith; it is necessary that every servant of Christ, of what Age, Sex, or Order soever, should rise against this common enemy of the Christian Faith.

"What Plague so pernicious. . . . What Serpent so venomous. . . . O that detestable Trumpeter of Pride, Calumnies and Schisms! What an infernal Wolf is he. . . . What a great Member of the Devil is he. . . ."

"How infectious is his Soul . . . brings to Light (Cerberuslike, from Hell) the Heresies which ought to lie in eternal Darkness. . . ."

"If Luther refuses this [to repent], these Errors and himself . . . may he be burned in the Fire. . . ."

I. Of Indulgences. "How corrupt and rotten his Heart . . . this new Saint. . . . If Indulgences are but mere Impostures, and good for Nothing, then it follows, that not only our Chief Bishop,



Leo X (whose innocent, unspotted Life, and most holy Conversation are well known through the World . . .) is an Impostor; but also all Roman Bishops in so many past ages. . . .

"How much more Reason is there to believe, that this brother-let is a scabbed Sheep, than that so many Pastors were treacherous, and unfaithful? . . . This new Momus, or feigned Deity!"

II. The king defends the Pope's authority as of divine right.

More objected: "Your Grace should be guarded in your expressions, for the Pope, as a temporal sovereign, may one day be opposed to England, and here is a passage wherein you exalt the authority of the Holy See to too high a pitch, which Rome would surely adduce in case of a rupture."

"No, no, that expression is by no means too strong, nothing can equal my devotion to the Holy See, and no language can be sufficiently expressive, in my opinion, to speak my sentiments."

"But, Sire, do you not remember certain articles of Praemunire?"

"What matter, do I not hold my crown from the Holy See?"

The staunch Catholic lord Chancellor held the Pope's authority only of human right—just like Luther at Leipzig in 1519.

IV. "This rotten and separated Member is opposed to transubstantiation.

"This, worse than sacrilegious Caitiff, says the Laity neither alive, nor after Death, will ever receive any Benefit by the Mass. He vents nothing but mere wind . . . an Ape in Purple . . . so blockish. . . . I believe none are so mad as to leave the Church of God, for the Synagogue of Satan" [Luther's church].

V. Of Baptism. "Luther so much commends Faith to us as not only to permit us to abstain from good Works; but also encourages to commit any Kind of Action, how bad soever. . . .

"He makes Faith nothing else but a Cloak for a wicked life."

X. Of Confirmation. "This most impertinent Babler . . . scarce believes anything at all."

XI. Of Marriage. The Church of Christ is by Christ Himself preferred to all the Evangelists. "Luther's impertinent Calumnies. . . . I see, the Miracle that he wrought [changing water into wine, John 2], admonishes us that the insipid Water of carnal Concupiscence, by the secret Grace of God, is changed to Wine of the best Taste. . . . Christ says, Whom God has joined together, let no Man put asunder. O the admirable Word! which none could have spoken, but the Word that was made Flesh! . . . O Word as full of Joy and Fears as it is of Admiration! Who should not rejoice that God has so much Care over his Marriage, as to vouchsafe, not only to be present at it, but also to preside in it? Who should not tremble, whilst he is in Doubt how to use his Wife,



whom he is not only bound to love, but also to live with, in such a Manner, as that he may be able to render her pure and immaculate to God, from whom he has received her? . . . It follows, then, that, in Despite of Luther, Marriage is a Sacrament; though it had not, (as it is) been so called by the Apostle. . . .

"Marriage washes away the Stains of Lust, turns Water into Wine, and procures a holy Pleasure of abstaining, even from lawful Pleasures. I do not perceive what Luther can say to the Contrary; unless it is because Hereticks (as St. Bernard saith) do still, according to their own Fancies, strive who shall exceed others, in endeavouring, with their viperous Teeth, to tear in Pieces, the Sacrament of the Church, as the Bowels of their Mother."

The lyrical and almost hysterical Bluebeard's bastard son by Bessie Blount, the duke of Richmond, was then about two years old.

"The proper study of mankind is man."

XII. Of the Sacrament of Orders. "He shows how well his Mind is composed for Evil. . . . His great Impudence appears. . . . This holy Priest (whereby you may conjecture how chaste he himself is), makes it the greatest Error, and greatest Blindness imaginable, that Priests should undertake to lead a single Life. . . . This most filthy Antichrist compares them to the old idolatrous gelded Priests of the Heathen Sibyls. . . . Every one of his Opinions is more stuffed with Heresies, than the Trojan's Horse is reported to have been with armed Men. . . .

"His denying Orders to be a Sacrament, is as it were the Fountain to all the rest, . . .

"Sacriligious Luther . . . this Jangler . . . that impious Fellow . . . that execrable Scoffer of Sacraments . . . this doltish Divine.

XIII. "Of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction His Madness appears almost in every Place. . . .

"O this happy Age! in which Luther, this new Doctor of the Gentiles, is risen, who will seem himself to follow the Example of St. Paul, by resisting an Apostle to his Face, [Gal. 2:11-14] as not going the right Way to the Gospel of Christ, but (which is more than if he should teach the Gentiles to Judaize) arrogating to himself the Power of promising Grace, and instituting Sacraments; usurping in that the Power of Christ; like the proud and traitorous Angel, who said, 'I will establish my Throne in the North, and be like the most High.' Is. 14:13, 14. . . .

"Luther lyeth . . . Luther comprehends, under the same Lye, not only the Apostle, but Christ himself. . . . Luther under the Pretext of Faith, despises good Works.

"This new Doctorlet, this Saintlet, this Eruditelet! . . .

"The most greedy Wolf of Hell has surprized him, devoured



and swallowed him down into the lowest Part of his Belly, where he lies half alive, and half dead in Death: And whilst the pious Pastor calls him, and bewails his Loss, he belches out of the filthy Mouth of the hellish Wolf these foul Inveighings, which the Ears of the whole Flock do detest, disdain, and abhor.

"If the Pope deserved no Ill, why has this degenerate Son cast a false and undeserving Scandal on his Father? But if any Thing had been done at Rome, which needed reforming; yet if Luther had been (as he would be accounted) an honest Man, and zealous Christian, he should not have preferred his own private Glory before the public Good of all others, nor have desired to have had the Credit of a Scornor amongst the Wicked, laughing at the Nakedness of his sleeping Father, [Gen. 9:22] uncovering, and pointing thereto with his Finger; but contrarywise, would have covered the same, and would have more secretly advised in his own Person by Letters . . . which if Luther had done, I doubt not but the more holy Pope (so well is his great Benignity known to all Men) being awakened, should have blessed his Son Japhet; would have rendered him Thanks for his Piety; and would not have cursed him in his Anger. . . .

"This holy and spiritual Man denies Him [the Holy Spirit] to be any where but in his own Bosom. . . .

"Exalted like Lucifer, like Lightning he has fallen . . . himself a Devil too. . . . Like the old Serpent, he set up Nets of Infidelity, that he might get them to taste the forbidden Tree of harmful Knowledge and to be driven out of the Paradise of the Church (whence he had fallen) onto an Earth bringing forth Thorns and Briars. . . . This one Monklet weak in Strength, but in Temper more harmful than all Turks, all Saracens, all Infidels anywhere."

Henry quotes the Fathers, the theologians, the Old Testament 42 times, and the New 101 times.

On October 2 John Clerk presented this unique product of the royal quill, printed on parchment and bound in Cloth of Gold to Pope Leo in full consistory, calling Luther "a man not illiterate, destroyer of the Christian religion, Idol and vain Phantom, pernicious Reprobate, prodigious Monster, poisonous Serpent, Hydra, viper, raging and mad Dog, filthy villain, stinks with Putrifaction. . . . Socrates . . . was poisoned. Could this Destroyer of the Christian Religion expect any better from true Christians?"

All were filled with joy, and the holy Father responded: "His Majesty, having the Knowledge, Will, and Ability of composing this excellent Book against this terrible Monster, has rendered himself no less admirable to the whole World, by the Eloquence of his Style, than by his great Wisdom. We render immortal Thanks



to our Creator, who has raised up such a Prince, to defend His Church and this Holy See."

Clerk reported: "His Holiness gave the book a great commendation and said there was therein much wit and clerly conveyance, and how that there were many clerks who had written in the matter, but this book should seem to pass all theirs."

On October 5 Leo X, Bishop and Servant of the Servants of God, issued a bull urging Henry "to drive away from our Lord's Flock the Wolves, and cut off with the material Sword, the rotten Members that infect the mystical Body of Jesus Christ. . . . Having found in this Book most admirable Doctrine, sprinkled with the Dew of Divine Grace; We rendered infinite Thanks to Almighty God. . . . We . . . have decreed to bestow on your Majesty this Title, viz., Defender of the Faith. . . . A perpetual and everlasting Monument of your Glory to Posterity. . . . If any one shall presume to make such an Attempt—to act contrary to this Letter—; let him know, that he shall thereby incur the Indignation of Almighty God, and of the holy Apostles, Peter and Paul."

On November 4 the Holy Father wrote his "most dear Son in Christ": "Not We alone, but all Our venerable brethren rejoiced, as though deeming that Luther's impiety had, notwithstanding the divine permission, assailed the Church of Christ, so that to her greater glory she might be fortunate enough to find such a champion and defender. . . . This plenitude of doctrine, overflowing as though from a celestial fountain. . . . What solidity of matter, clearness of method, force of eloquence, wherein the Holy Spirit Himself shows visibly! . . . This extraordinary and unspeakable glory [of the title] which Your Majesty has most mightily merited by Your great efforts." Written by Sadoletus.

On September 19 Cardinal Campegi wrote Cardinal Wolsey he "is overcome with joy at the reading of the king's golden book. All who have seen it say that, though so many have written on the same subject, nothing could be better expressed or argued, and he seems to have been inspired more by an angelic and celestial than by a human spirit. We can hereafter truly call him 'Luther-amostica.'"

A Venetian wrote that King Henry "does not seem a person of this world, but one descended from heaven." On August 23 Erasmus wrote Dean Pace, praising the "zeal, courtesy, and good temper" with which the king had attacked Luther.

On the 27th, Pace wrote Wolsey: "Itt is to Hys Graces grete contentacion and comferte to have understoude att large . . . how lovingly the Pope's Holynesse haith acceptidde hys bokes wretyn agaynst Luther." "The king is very glad to have noted your Grace's



letter that his reasons be called inevitable, considering your Grace was sometimes his adversary hereon and of contrary opinion."

"On the second daie of Februarie," "when he had received the sayd Bull and caused it to be redde and published, he went to his capell to heare Masse."

John Faber wrote the king from Nuernberg, comparing his writing against Luther to the combat between David and Goliath!

Audin declares: "Never did a controversialist, even to this hour, win such laurels of glory as Henry . . . praise daily laid at his feet from Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands, and Spain." The scholastic on the throne felt he had buried the Titan of heresy under a mountain of royal theology and invective, never to rise again.

Seeing his master so unusually joyful, court fool Will Somers advised: "O good Harry, let thou and I defend one another, and let the faith alone to defend itself." The good-hearted German Thomas Murner thought the English king needed help and he was the one able to give the needed help, and so he wrote: "Who is the liar, the king of England or Luther?" Someone told him the king of England wished to see him, and he eagerly rushed over. More asked Wolsey to give the poor fellow 100 pounds and send him home, where he was more needed than in England.

It is practically certain Henry received much help from an "assembly of divines" brought together by Wolsey. The work is printed in an old edition of Fisher's works, with a note the bishop had helped Henry, and More admits having helped the king.

Old Thomas Fuller thinks "it is probable some other gardener gathered the flowers (made the collections,) though King Henry had the honor to wear the posy, carrying the credit in the title thereof." Erasmus wrote "he could never find out by whose labor the king was helped."

The Catholic priest Taunton writes: "When Henry VIII wrote his book against Luther, Wolsey seems to have doubted its use. Perhaps the King's extravagant assertion that Leo's 'innocent, unspotted life and most holy conversation are well known throughout the world' was flattery too strong for Wolsey's common sense."

Collier finds the king "leans too much upon his character, argues in his garter robes, and writes as 'twere with his sceptre. He gives rough language sometimes, treats Luther with contempt, and drives his invective pretty strong upon him."

Prof. J. S. Brewer, the learned editor of the *State Papers*, declares: "The king's book contained nothing, it must be confessed, that could enlighten the consciences of men or shake



the convictions of those who had already adopted the Lutheran doctrines. It reproduced, without novelty or energy, the old commonplaces of authority, tradition, and general consent. The cardinal principles of Luther's teaching the king did not understand and did not, therefore, attempt to confute. Contented to point out the mere straws on the surface of the current—the apparent inconsistencies of Luther, his immoderate language, his disparagement of authority, the royal controversialist never travels beyond the familiar round; and reproduces, without force, originality, or feeling, the weary topics he had picked up, without much thought or research, from the theological manuals of the day. Even his invective is as mean and feeble as his logic. Even when discussing the papal supremacy, he puts on the blinkers with his harness and is as docile and as orthodox as if he had never opposed the publication of a papal bull or refused admission to a papal nuncio."

Sebastian Brant in his *Ship of Fools* brought in a new saint, Saint Grobianus, and Henry attacked Luther under the banner of this "gruffian." The editor of the king's book, however, Rev. Louis O'Donovan, holds Henry "uses language no stronger than had been used in all ages, by saints and doctors, against inventors of novelties." On the other hand, the advertisement of the book admits: "It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that they [the king's writings] breathe too much of the Spirit of Acrimony, and run into a Latitude of Abuse, ever disgusting to Readers of Taste, Moderation and Candour."

It was not till June 1522 that the Saxon monk read the Anglo-Saxon king's book. He felt it not so much as an attack upon himself as "upon my King of heaven."

He did not go berserk and fall into the *furor Teutonicus*, which so amazed Tacitus. In June he told Spalatin he would not use milder language; it was useless to be humble and seek peace; against those that raised their horns more every day he would use his horns. Erasmus asserted Luther had horns and knew how to use them. He did—in July.

On December 13 Dr. Thomas Hannibal wrote Wolsey, Luther has written a book against Henry, full of railing, which he sends. He searched all over Rome but could not find more. "If any mo come, the Pope hath commanded that none shall come to light. I shall take them all, and pay for them and brent them."

Jean Paul Friedrich Richter called Luther's words "half battles." Carlyle called Luther a "Christian Odin, a right Thor." He hammered a vigorous tattoo on the pate of the unlucky Henry VIII.

The world stood aghast and gasped at this duel between the



grand Anglo-Saxon king and the simple Saxon monk. Paolo Sarpi, "the greatest Venetian," wrote: "So great a name as that of the English Henry mixed up in the dispute, and beaten, served to give eclat, to render it more curious, and to conciliate general favor towards Luther." Has the world ever seen the like?

Well, who began the fight? Who began throwing stink bombs?

Erasmus wrote Martin Lipsius of Brussels: "They have begun a tragedy," and to the Elector-Cardinal Albrecht of Mainz: "I think it is their fault if Luther has written too intemperately."

The Union Theological Seminary Library has the rare *Luther in England*, giving Luther's reply in English.

Believe it or not, friends of Erasmus held him the writer of Luther's reply. When the poor fellow protested he had nothing to do with it, Dean Richard Pace of St. Paul's was much relieved. "For this relief, much thanks," said Hamlet.

The burly British bully could not take it. On January 20, 1523, he sent a special herald, Ralph York, to Frederick, John, and George, dukes of Saxony, "come from the same stock as the kings of England," with a long letter complaining of his treatment at the rude hands of their man Luther and asking them to restrain the Lutheran sect, without bloodshed if possible, if not, then with bloodshed.

Anybody, anywhere, with but a spark of brains in his head or one of godliness in his heart could utterly overcome that fellow with his craziness and stop this cursed man from putting the Bible into German.

The herald praised Frederick for his courtesy and complained bitterly of George's shabby treatment. On April 28, 1523, Frederick and John answered they have left Luther to defend himself. Had he been rude, why, they were sorry indeed. For their part they hoped Henry would go against the infidels, to convert them to the Christian faith; and that was that.

On May 9 Duke George answered Henry, Luther's utterly stinking book had been forbidden and the bookseller severely imprisoned. His New Testament had been bought up with George's own money to keep it from the people.

In August Henry also sent a splendid embassy, Harry Lord Morley, Sir William Hussey, and Edward Lee, his almoner, to the kaiser's brother, Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, with the Order of the Garter and compliments for his zeal "against those detestable and damnable heresies of Friar Martin Luther."

Brother Ferdinand wrote he would do everything to restrain the devilish crimes of Luther.

Harry Lord Morley wrote Henry from Koeln on October 4, 1523: "As we can hear, all the country is like to fall from the



right way, for daily nearer and nearer to Flandersward this flame of heresy increaseth, and, without God's help and the assistance of your Grace and other like princes, is likely to subvert all aunsient faith. Luther's books goeth abroad in every place, and his followers also mock and scorn the pope, his cardinals . . . also abominable pictures, among other one I send to your Highness, which I think your Highness will laugh at."

On November 10 he wrote Wolsey: "As touching to Martin Luther, we understand that little mention of him, nor of his fautours, shall be spoken of, forasmoch as by the long sufferance of the princes that heresy is so rooted that, without peril to themselves, it is not to be commoned of; which is great pity, forasmuch as that good religious people be had in derision in all the country, so that these that be fathers affirm that after the death of them that now be in the religious houses, they shall stand desolate for any that intend to enter to them any more."

King Canute threatened the ocean, but the tide kept coming in: King Henry threatened Luther, but his books kept coming in.

Discretion is the better part of valor. He that writes and runs away may live to write another day. The royal bulldog had enough of writing for the present, but he called together his brain trust to gang up against the lone monk. John Fisher, this Goliath, attacked Luther a second time, in a *Confutation of the Lutheran Assertion*, 1523; a third time, in the *Reply to Luther's "Babylonian Captivity,"* 1523; a fourth time, in the *Defense of the Christian Priesthood*, 1524; a fifth time, in the *Defense of King Henry's "Assertion of the Seven Sacraments,"* 1525; a sixth time, *Against Luther and Barnes*, in 1526.

And what said the saintly sage? Short on argumentation but long on vituperation, he shouted: "Now Luther is become a big fox. . . . What do I say . . . a fox? He is a mad dog, a ravening wolf, a cruel bear, or rather all these animals in one; for the monster includes many beasts within him!" Later the king chopped off his champion's head for treason.

Thomas Wolsey "was incontestably the greatest churchman England ever had, the most disinterested and the noblest ecclesiastic of his century," said Anthony Wood long ago and so also recently Father Taunton. He was the pope's legate and the king's lord chancellor, most powerful in Church and State. Seb. Giustiani despatched to Venice in 1519: "Wolsey is the man that rules the king and the whole kingdom. At first he said: 'His Majesty will decide'; later: 'The King and I,' or 'We'; now: 'I shall decide.' He is seven times more powerful than the Pope himself."

We read "the great God and Cardinal" got out an elaborate



*Confutation of the Lutheran Assertion.* He had Vice-Chancellor Bullock of Cambridge write *Against Luther on the Babylonian Captivity*. He appointed Johan. de Coloribus, an outlander, a Black Friar, one of the learned doctors of Oxford, to write *A Tract Against the Doctrine of M. Luther*. He recommended Thomas Brinknell of Oxford to the king as "one of the most fit persons in the university to encounter Luther." He encountered Luther in "a learned piece commended for a good book." The king appointed John Roper, one of the eminent theologians of Oxford, to write *A Tract Against the Doctrine of Martin Luther*. Richard Kederminster, "the most pious and learned Abbot of all his time in England," wrote *A Tract Against the Doctrine of M. Luther*. John Holyman, "a most stout champion of his time in his preachings and writings against the Lutherans," wrote *A Tract Against the Doctrine of M. Luther*. So did Johannes Rintonus. John Batmanson wrote *A Tract Against the Doctrine of M. Luther* — which he retracted.

It seems the king asked Dr. Edward Powell of Oxford to reply to Luther. On November 3, 1522, the learned man wrote Walsey he had begun *The Immunity of the Church* and sent a part, promising to send the rest if approved. It is likely in his *Propugnaculum, The Defence of the Papacy and of the Seven Sacraments against Luther, the famous Friar and Eminent Wiclifist of 1523*. It is a dialog between Luther and Powell on 1. the Pope; 2. the Sacrament of the Altar; 3. The other sacraments. There is added a list of heretics whose errors Luther followed and a long list of errata. His Oxford praised it highly and spoke honorably of him to Bishop Audley, and "the king was extremely pleased with Powell's management." It was held "the best performance so far published."

Anthony Wood called More "one of the greatest prodigies of wit and learning that England ever before this time had produced." For Dean Colet he was "the one genius of England." Erasmus thought his "Democritus" was "sent into this world for the sole purpose of making witty jests," whose "heart was whiter than snow, and the like of whose genius England never had and never will have again." In our day Hollis thinks it not an exaggeration to call him "the first and greatest and most lovable of all Englishmen."

It seems the king forced this "Demosthenes" into the fight on Luther. "Nothing could have been more painful to me than to be forced to speak foul words to pure ears. But there was no help for it."

Be that as it may, the "foul words" flowed freely and painlessly. By way of argument he called Luther an "ass, a liar, a cursed beast, a drunkard, an evil angel of Satan, a plain limb



of the devil, a manifest messenger of hell, an apostate, an open incestuous lecher," and mocked at "Friar Luther and Cate Callate, his nun, lusting together in lechery. Luther and his counselors disperse themselves throughout all the wagons, vehicles, and boats, the baths, eating-houses, and barber-shops, the taverns, brothels, bake-shops, privies, and houses of ill-fame; in these places they diligently observe and write down on tablets whatever the wagon driver has said basely, or the slave servilely, or the drunkard wickedly, or the parasite scurrilously, or the harlot petulantly. . . . When they have done this for several months they stuff the whole nasty mixture of reviling, scolding, scurrility, jeers, petulance, filth, dirt, mud mire, and dung into the fetid sewer of Luther's breast," and the rest is so vile it cannot be printed nowadays.

Erasmus was disgusted with the filth—and he was not squeamish. Professor J. S. Brewer, the learned editor of the *Letters and Papers* and the *State Papers*, is not fair to Luther and reveres the "pure and gentle" More, but he must call this book "foul and scurrilous . . . vulgar and offensive raillery, destitute of all wit and humor."

Erasmus is the greatest scholar of all ages, says Drummond. As early as July, 1520, at the famous Field of Cloth of Gold, King Henry spoke to the Dutchman "about writing against Luther." Next year the royal author sent the *Assertion* with a letter to the loyal scholar by Dr. William Tate. On January 9, 1523, Erasmus wrote Willibald Pirkheimer of Nuernberg, "the first citizen of Germany," according to Hutten, that King Henry urged him to cross swords with Luther and did it so vehemently that he feared the king would take it ill did he not comply. "Even the subject of his work *On Free Will* was suggested by Henry," and "from Fisher Erasmus borrowed much," says Prof. Preserved Smith.

The bastard Bishop Cuthbert Tunstal, whom Erasmus praised for his love of learning, besought Erasmus "by Christ's Passion and glory . . . yea, and the Church itself prays and desires you to engage in combat with this Hydra . . . Proteus . . . atheist . . . hell-dog . . . who will ask for the abolition of Jesus Christ."

In spite of Luther's manful plea to keep the peace, Erasmus broke the peace with his "Diatribes." Erasmus gave much to God's grace but a little to man's free will. The great wit, who always jeered at the scholastics, had not wit enough to see himself was nothing but a pitiful scholastic. The first German Jesuit, Peter Canisius, looking at Erasmus' "philosophy of Christ" formally, called it not inaptly "the theology of Pyrrhus." Luther, judging it from the material side, says Erasmus has made "a gospel of Pelagius."



Luther did not deem Erasmus' book worth a reply, but Camerarius thought it should be answered, for the sake of the cause. He persuaded Kate to persuade her husband to reply with his *Enslaved Will*, in which he gives nothing to man and all to God. He held it his best work, with the Catechism, in a letter to Capito. A. Freytag edited it, calling it a great deed, a "Grosstat." Sodeur describes it roundly as "a dialectic and polemic masterpiece."

Its words have hands and feet. The manifesto of the Reformation. The heart of his gospel—and God's Gospel. Augustus Montague Toplady, who wrote "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me," held it "a masterpiece of polemical composition," and T. H. Murray, Litt. D., of Dublin, called it "one of the books that changed the face of history."

The king and others egged Erasmus on to keep up the fight, and the poor scribe was driven to retort with his *Hyperaspistes* in two parts. The Catholic Hollis calls it nothing but "mud slinging," and Luther treated it with silent contempt.

Luther's work was translated by Henry Cole, with slight alteration from Edward Thomas Vaughan, corrected by Henry Atherton.

What a spectacle! All of the king's papal paladins with their large battery of the heaviest guns fired broadsides of volumes across the channel against the lone Luther. And the lone Luther went on from conquering to conquer in the enemy's country. Christian II of Denmark, brother-in-law of the great kaiser, was the guest of Lucas Cranach in June 1525 and told Luther the King of England now favored the Gospel and got Luther to write the king. On September 1 Luther did so for the sake of the cause.

"What impels me to write, abject as I am, is that your Majesty has begun to favor the evangelical cause. . . . This news was a true gospel, i. e., tidings of great joy, to my heart. Wherefore in this letter I cast myself with the utmost possible humility at your Majesty's feet and pray and beseech you, by the love and cross and glory of Christ, to deign to leave off your anger and forgive me for what I have done to injure your Majesty, as Christ commands us in His prayer to forgive each other. . . . Meanwhile may the Lord increase your Majesty as He has begun and make you favor and obey the Gospel with all your soul, and may He not let your royal ears and mind be filled with the pestilent songs of those sirens who do nothing but call Luther a heretic. Let your Majesty think for yourself: how much evil can I possibly teach who teach nothing but faith in Jesus Christ. . . . This is the head and foundation of my teaching, on which I build and teach love of one's neighbor, obedience to the civil magistrates and mortification and



crucifixion of the body of sin, as Christian faith prescribes. Why am I condemned before I am heard? Is there not great need of reforming the abuses and tyranny of the Pope's followers, who teach other doctrines repugnant to these, looking only to tribute, luxury, gluttony, and even the kingdoms, principalities and all the wealth of the world?

"Your most serene Majesty sees how many princes in Germany and how many cities and how many wise men take my part and by God's grace cleave to the evangelical faith, by Christ's singular blessing purified by me. To which number may Christ add your Majesty and free you from these tyrants of souls. . . . I hope with all my heart sometime to be able to congratulate your Majesty on this miracle, and may the Lord Himself, in whose name and by whose will I write, cooperate with my words that the king of England may shortly become a perfect disciple of Christ, an adherent of the evangelical faith and Luther's most clement lord. Amen."

Luther wrote Link: "At the persuasion of the king of Denmark I wrote a suppliant and humble letter, in high hope and with a simple and candid heart."

The crowned scribbler again took the royal quill to attack the monk.

In the preface he tells his subjects he is bound to care for their spiritual as well as their temporal weal, and there is special need of it now. "For we doute not that it is well knowen to you all that Martyn Luther, late a frere Augustyne, now ron out i Apos-tacy & wedded, hath not only scraped out of the asshen and kyn-deyed agayne all the embers of those old errours & heresies hytherto; but hath also added some so poysoned pointes of his owne, so wretched, so vyle, so detestable, provokyng men to myschefe, encoraging the world to syn, preachyng an unsaciate lyberte, to allect them withall." He goes on to tell how he wrote "after hys meane learning" against Luther on the seven sacra-ments, against which Luther wrote with anger and fury, nothing answering. Then, ashamed of himself, he wrote the following letter, which he had printed, "and also fell into devyce with one or two leude persons—[—Tyndale—]—borne in this our realm, for the translatyng of the New Testament into Englysshe, as well as with many corruptions of that holy text as certayne prefaces and other pestylent gloses in the margentes for the advancement and setting forthe of his abhomynable heresydes entyndyng to abuse the gode myndes and devotion that you oure derely beloved people beare toward the holy scrypture & to enfect you with the deedly corruption and contagious odour of his pestylent errours." By advice of Wolsey it shall be burned!



After Luther's translated letter comes the king's letter, written with the help of Vives and especially Saint Sir Thomas More. Henry asserts the authorship of his book and defends it. Wolsey is too prudent to be moved by Luther's abuse. "And his fatherhood is and shall be in so much more cordyall favoure with me in how much I parceyve him to be the depar in the hatred of you." England is well rid of apostate friars, who, deserting his kingdom and Christ's faith, are wallowing in lust with Luther. Blames him for the Peasants' War. Inveighs against his marriage with a nun. Attacks his teaching of salvation by faith, and free will. Defends the Pope and his court. Refuses his offer to write a book in praise of the king. Advises him to give up his wife, bewail his errors, publicly preach the truth or retire to a convent—twenty-eight columns quarto!

It appeared at once in an English translation—"A copy of the letters wherein the most redoubted . . . Henry VIII made answer unto a certayne letter of Martyn Luther . . . and also the copy of the aforesaid Luther's letter." Richard Pynson, London. (August, 1526.)

On December 27 Duke George acknowledges receipt of King Henry's letter of October 31 and his answer to Luther, sent from Koeln by Hermann Rinck. Intends to do what he can to preserve religion against the Lutheran heresy. Is glad the king has not been drawn by Luther to his sect. Sent the king's answer to Luther on December 23, with letters from himself. Luther answered he had nothing to write back. Hopes his impious doctrine will be removed or restrained.

Emser translated the king's letter and printed it under the title "Luther's Letter to King Henry VIII of England . . . in which he offers to recant." This dirty twisting of Luther's offer to apologize to the king into a recantation of his teaching forced Luther early in 1527 to reply *To the Title of the King of England's Libel*. He confesses, "I am a sheep, and must remain a sheep, to believe that I can pacify such men."

On January 3, 1527, Elector-Cardinal-Archbishop of Mainz, Primate of all Germany, Albrecht of Brandenburg, complimented Henry on his victory over Luther, praises the work for its orthodoxy and unanswerable arguments, and will have it reprinted. He confesses having used the greatest efforts to crush the Lutheran heresy.

On February 5 D. Gregory reports he has given Henry's letter to the Pope, who received it with great ceremony. The cardinals and all Rome burned with desire to read it. The Pope has ordered it to be printed. On April 10 Cardinal Campegi writes in like strain. On March 12 Sir John Wallop writes Wolsey the



king's answer to Luther is in print throughout the country, hears it has been seen in print at Trent. The Pope's ambassador and the Bishop of Trent call it the best answer they ever saw or heard of. On July 13 Luis Vives writes the king he has an answer to Luther's letter which he is ready to publish with the king's notes.

On September 20 the Vice-Provost and Scholars of King's College at Cambridge praised the king for his defense of the faith. If he had not written against Luther, while those whose office it was to sound the trumpet were asleep, a great part of Christendom would have become Lutheran.

Canon Hannibal Grisonius of Istria from Venice wrote the king his book against Luther, which is admired by most learned men, will commend his name to immortality.

Henry himself directed the revels of November 10. "The Kyngis plesyer was that at the sayd revells by clarks in the Latyn tongue shold be playd in hys hy presence a play, whereof insuythe the namys. — First, an oratur in aperell of gold; a poyed in aperell of cloth of gold. Relygeun, Ecclesia, Veritas, like iij. novessis in garemments of sylke, and vayells of lawne and sypers. Erryssy, Falso Interpretacion, Corruptio Scriptoris, lyke laydys of Beeme [Bohemia] impereld in garments of sylke of dyvers collors. The herrytyke Lewtar [Luther] lyke a party frer, in rosset damaske and blake Taffata. Lewtars wife lyke a frowe of Spyers in Almayn, in red sylke. Petar, Poull, and Jamys, in iij. abetts of whyte sarsanet, and iij. red mantylls and heris of sylvar damaske and pelleuns of skarlet; and a cardenall in hys aparell; ij. sargents in ryche aparell. The Dolfyn and his brother, in cottes of velvet inbraudrid with gold, and capis of satyn bownd with velvett; a messyngar in tynsell satyn; vj. men in gownys of green sarsanet; vj. wemen in gownys of cremsyn sarsanet war in ryche cloth of gold and fethers and armyd; iij. Almayns in aparell all cut and sclyt of sylke. Lady Pees, in ladys aparell all whyght and ryche; and lady Quyetnes and dame Tranquylte, rychely beseyn in ladis aparell."

The material and making of the costumes for 48 persons was £62 19s. 2d. Mr. Ryghtwos [Rightwise], Master of St. Paul's school, furnished the boys for the play.

Oak Park, Ill.

(To be continued)

WM. DALLMANN