



July 2002

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MARTIN LUTHER

(This is the first of two articles)

The date is February 19, 1546. Dr. Philip Melancthon is lecturing in the early morning at the University of Wittenberg. His topic is the book of Romans. In the middle of the lecture a messenger bursts in with news; a death has taken place. Dr. Melancthon struggles for self control. At first, he is unable to speak, but finally, his voice faltering, told his students what had happened, breaking out in anguish with Elisha's horrified cry as he saw Elijah ascending to Heaven in the Chariot of fire: "The Charioteer of Israel has fallen."

Who was this "Charioteer of Israel?" Who was the man that John Calvin called an apostle? Who was this man who, as early as 1529, was called a seven-headed dragon and the Devil's Spawn? Who was this man of whom it has been said, "he was the first person since the Apostle Paul to correctly understand justification by faith." Who was the man of which it is said that only two other theologians in the history of the church, Augustine and Aquinas, approached his stature?

This man was Martin Luther, born November 10, 1483 in Eisleben, Germany. The son of a middle-class silver miner. His parents were Hans and Margaret of Eisleben. Luther had a hard youth, without sunny memories, and was brought up under stern discipline. His mother chastised him for stealing a paltry nut, till the blood came; and his father once flogged him so severely that he fled away and bore him a temporary grudge; but Luther rec-


ognized their good intentions and cherished filial affection. He was taught at home to pray to God and the saints, to revere the church and the priests and was told frightful stories about the devil and witches which haunted him all his life.

"The hardships of Luther's youth and the want of refined breeding show their effects in his writings and actions. They limited his influence among the higher and cultivated classes, but increased his power over the middle and lower classes. He was a man of the people and for the people. He was of the earth, earthy, but with his bold face lifted to heaven. He was not a polished diamond, but a rough block cut out from a granite mountain and well fitted for a solid base of a mighty structure. He laid the foundation, and others finished the upper stories." "He was given to zest and enthusiasm, and he had a healthy sense of the incongruous; but he was also merciless in his attacks on others and not seldom vulgar in his demeanor."

In 1501, at the age of 18, he entered the University of Erfurt. In 1502, he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, in 1505 with a Master of Arts. Roland H. Bainton, in his book Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther, says there are three great spiritual episodes in Luther's life and we now approach the first.

July 2, 1505, Luther was returning from a visit with his parents and was nearing the Saxon village of Sotterheim when suddenly a bolt of lightning knocked Luther from his horse. In terror he cried, "St. Anne, help me, I will become a

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monk.” This was the first of Luther’s spiritual crisis’ and he responds by entering an Augustinian monastery. This was done within fifteen days of his vow. His first year at the Augustinian convent at Erfurt was peaceful for Luther, but then he had his second spiritual encounter. When Luther had stopped his studies as a lawyer and went into the monastery “his father almost went mad.”

May 2, 1507, Luther was ordained to the priesthood and was to perform his first Mass. Luther attempted to win his father’s approval by inviting him to be a part of this very sacred service. His father came with several friends to see this very special event. When Luther held the host and was to say, “Hoc est corpus meum,” he nearly fainted. He was so overcome at the power of being able to change the bread to the body and the wine to the actual blood, that again he was filled with terror, this was his second spiritual lightening bolt.

Luther again, recovers from this terror and proceeds with his studies. On October 12, 1512, he became Dr. Martin Luther, Doctor of Theology and begins to teach at Wittenberg University and confronts his third religious turmoil.

“The third great religious crisis that resolved his turmoil was as a still small voice compared to the earthquake of the first upheaval in the thunderstorm at Sotternheim and the fire of the second tremor that consumed him at the saying of his first Mass. There was no heavenly vision, no religious ceremony. The place was no lonely wood in a blinding storm, nor even the holy altar, but simply the study in the tower of the Augustinian monastery. The solution to Luther’s struggle with God came in the midst of the performance of his daily task.”

He taught the Psalms in 1513. In 1515 he taught Romans. And in the year 1516 he taught Galatians. Each of these books were dealing with Luther in his own way as he struggled to know God.

While at Wittenberg as a professor he also assumed the role of village priest. This placed him in the position of seeing to the

spiritual welfare of the people and in the direct path of the Dominican monk, Johann Tetzel and ultimately directly in the path of reformation.

As Protestants, when we see pictures of, or actually see Saint Peter’s Cathedral, we should rejoice. The building of this magnificent edifice was by Pope Leo X. It was begun in 1506 by Pope Julius II and completed in 1626. Pope Leo X needed money to continue working on the cathedral and began to tell people that they could be relieved and forgiven of all sins, for themselves and their dead loved ones by bringing indulgences. An indulgence was a part of the sacrament of penance. According to Rome, there were some people who lived such holy lives, that they had more merits than they needed to get to heaven. This is called, “supererogation.” You could purchase some of their extra merits for yourself or those in Purgatory. Indulgences were the bingo of the sixteenth century.

Luther was incensed that Tetzel would sell people indulgences and imply that they had plenary forgiveness of sins. The famous day of October 31, 1517 is when Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg. The title of this theses was “Disputation to Explain the Virtue of Indulgences.” They are not a protest against the Pope and the Roman church or any of her doctrines, not even against indulgences, but only against their abuse. They expressly condemn those who speak against indulgences (#71). They imply a belief in Purgatory and they never mention faith and justify

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Our Purpose...

**The Purpose of
Reformed Discipleship Ministries
is to bring the truth
of the Reformation
to a discipling ministry...**

ON A PERSONAL NOTE...

As the summer approaches and I look back on the past year with all of the events, I would like to get you up to date on what has been going on. Kay and I have lead seven different Bible studies during the year and have enjoyed all of them. These studies consist of the following:

- One group is studying the Book of John each Monday morning.
- Two different studies are studying the Life of Christ (A course I taught at seminary).
- One study is covering the Westminster Confession of Faith
- Two different studies are covering the basic issues of theology.
- One group is studying the History of the Reformation.

Kay and also meet 10-12 people each week for M2M. Again this is a different topic for each of the people involved. Some are reading different books of the Bible and we are having quiet times with them. We are helping some couples with Husband/Wife issues. Others we are helping with their children.

We have also spent considerable time in pre-marriage counseling and have enjoyed this very much.

This summer I have several objectives. The first is to read new materials. This is necessary for me to be able to continue to teach and train others. Some of these new materials are:

Henry VIII and his court. (This helps in teaching Reformation Church History).

A three volume set on the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. (This also helps with church history).

I will also be preparing new materials for study and teaching in the fall. This consists of: Evangelical Ethics: (This covers areas of Abortion, Euthanasia, Homosexuality and Just War).

Kay and I will also be traveling to some of the ministries in which we are involved, and we would covet your prayers. You can see there are many areas that need prayer. Take your pick, but please pray for us.

Talk to you soon,
Louis

***If you will contact me with your questions at:
louishill@rdm.org
I will attempt to respond to them in future newsletters.***

TRUTH*matters*



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MINISTRY *update:*

The Hills were God sent to us. They have been excellent role models and mentors. Their fervency to dig deep into the riches of God's truth captured us immediately. Through the teaching and time that they have devoted to us, we have learned much about the sovereign, merciful, just, loving, and holy God, who works all things to our good and His glory. They have encouraged us in our growth and gifts in Christ, so that we too can be used of God in the lives of others. What a holy, holy, holy Father!

Randy And Nanette Wyatt

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Historical Facts



The Fraud of Constantine's Donation.

Donation of Constantine:

Probably written about the middle of the eighth century, it purported to be from early in the fourth century and by the Emperor Constantine. It described the latter's conversion, baptism, and miraculous healing from leprosy through Pope Sylvester I, and said, that out of gratitude he was making over to the Pope and his successors his palace in Rome and the "city of Rome and all the provinces, districts, and cities of Italy or the Western regions."

It was revealed during the Papacy of Eugene IV (1431-1447) that the Donation of Constantine which gave the Roman church authority over civil government was a forgery. In 1440 this was proven by Laurentius Valla. Valla called it "contradictory, impossible, stupid, barbarous and ridiculous."

It had been a firm belief for centuries and the Roman Church had held dominion over all government under this so-called Donation.

It was illegal and it was the only title the pope could show of his temporal power over the civil government. This so-called donation marked the change to worldliness among the clergy.

As the "Vicar of Christ" the Pope is supreme over the state. He confers the sword which the prince wields. As the body is subject to the soul, so princes are subject to the pope. Constantine's Donation made the Pope, in fact monarch over the Occident (western world).

The Donation of Constantine was a document forged apparently in the papal chancery in the time of Pope Paul I (757-767). It takes the form of a deed of gift by Constantine the Great to Pope Sylvester I, by which the pope becomes the ruler of wide areas.

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atone for human sin.

Stripped to the waists, beating themselves with leather whips tipped with iron spikes until the blood flowed, groups of 200 to 300 (and sometimes up to 1,000), marched from city to city. They begged Christ and Mary for pity, and townspeople sobbed and groaned in sympathy. They performed three times a day, twice publicly in the church square and once in private.

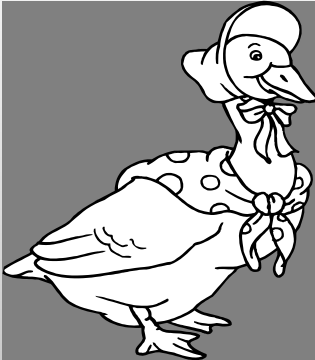
They were organized under a lay Master for usually 33 1/2 days—to represent Christ's years on earth. They pledged self-support and obedience to the Master. They were not allowed to bathe, shave, change clothes, sleep in beds, or talk without the Master's permission.

The movement quickly spread from Germany through the Low Countries to France. Hundreds of bands roamed the land, exciting already overwrought emotions in city after city. Inhabitants greeted them with the ringing of church bells and offered them hospitality. Children were brought to them to be healed. People dipped cloths in the flagellants' blood and pressed the cloths to their eyes and preserved them as relics.

The flagellants quickly grew arrogant and began overtly attacking the church. Masters began hearing confessions, granting absolutions, and imposing penance. Priests who tried to stop them were stoned; opponents were denounced as Antichrists. The flagellants took over churches, disrupted services, ridiculed the Eucharist, looted altars, and claimed the power to cast out demons and raise the dead.

Any time, any place. Especially after the Black Death, medieval society was keenly aware of the suddenness with which death could strike.

MOTHER•GOOSE



Crooked Man

There was a crooked man
and he walked a crooked mile
He found a crooked sixpence
against a crooked stile
He bought a crooked cat,
which caught a crooked mouse
And they all lived together
in a little crooked house.



The history books of Scotland describe General Sir Alexander Leslie as the “little old crooked man with the keen eyes.” This verse is said to be about his exploits with “the crooked sixpence,” Charles I of England (1600-1649). The “crooked stile” would be the border between the countries. They reached a pact and “lived together.” (The Scottish General, however, had kept his best officers on half pay, a wily precaution that proved prudent when in 1640 the crooked sixpence” tried to cross the “crooked stile” again. Eventually, they reached a more permanent treaty.)

SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 22. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to Himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her yet without sin.

Q. 23. What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation.

Q. 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by His Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

Q. 25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God; and in making continual intercession for us.

Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and concurring all His and our enemies.

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cation. These 95 theses were not meant for the common people. They were written in Latin and Luther only wanted to debate the issue of the abuses. It should be remembered that at this point in his life, Luther probably was not a regenerate person. The 95 theses were translated into the common vernacular and overnight Luther was propelled into the limelight.

Visit us on the web!
<http://www.rdm.org>

Encouraging Words

We hope you are enjoying Truth Matters. Our desires are to teach about Christ and the Christian life in as many ways as we possibly can.

This school year has been a great year for Bible studies. We have seen a lot of growth in believer's lives. In a culture that is against the values of God's Word, it is refreshing to be involved with a large number of believers who genuinely desire to live the Christian life. Praise God for these lives!

Here are a few verses on prayer that are especially important to me.

Jer 32:17—"Ah Lord GOD! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee."

Jer 32:27—"Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"

Luke 1:37—"For with God all things are possible."

The statement "for with God all things are possible" is an encouragement to keep going when our society continues to go against the teachings of Scripture.

We have a lot of friends who are going through various trials since 9/11. The same verses are "faith builders" that help us pray:

For jobs

For teenagers in a stressful time in their lives as well as their parents.

For income for those who have had their jobs taken away.

For men and women to have their eyes open to put their trust in Christ.

For health problems that seem unbearable.

For anything –because nothing is impossible with God.

Kay Hill
