THE DEVELOPMENT OF LUTHER'S CONCEPTION
OF LIBERTY AS FOUND IN HIS EARLY
WRITINGS (UNTIL 1521).

being

A Thesis for the Degree of
Ph.D. of the University of Edinburgh

by

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Edinburgh 1924.
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INTRODUCTION

Chapter I.

Through the recognized channels of the mediaeval Church, Martin Luther sought to satisfy the justice of a righteous God. In the endless search for that satisfaction, the characteristic features of his adopted system collapsed. He had exposed himself resolutely to the incorruptible eyes of God; the supports of ecclesiasticism crumbled beneath him and Luther was thrown mercilessly into an abyss of fear and slavery. It was nevertheless, the same sincerity and the same force of religious experience which finally brought him to a consciousness of spiritual peace and a new conception of Christian freedom. In his own experience he had unconsciously transplanted the religious phenomenon "from a complicated meta-physical system - partly inherited from Greek philosophy and partly developed by mediaeval scholasticism - into the fertile soil of religious experience". ¹

In this transplantation, Luther discovered with an extraordinary force of sentiment - that the justice of God is manifested through a Christo-centric gospel of love; that God himself is the absolute causality in the salvation . . .

of the human creature, that perception of God is a question
not for objective meta-physical speculation but one of
subjective life; and, that complete assurance and spirit-
ual freedom are dependent upon a man's faith.

Luther's personality was instinctively ethical and
upon the discovery of these great spiritual truths, his
first impulse was to share them with his fellows. This he
did both in the lecture room and from the pulpit. When,
in October 1517, Luther publicly protested against the
notorious abuses of the Indulgence system, his only concern
was reform within the Church; the posting of these cele-
brated Ninety-five Theses, however, mark the introduction
of one of history's most dramatic struggles in the cause
of human liberty. At first unknowingly, but later, con-
sciously and unhesitatingly, Martin Luther placed his new
conception of Christian freedom in open conflict with
mediaeval ecclesiasticism; he broke the traditional chains
of papal domination and monastic tutelage and led his
countrymen into an atmosphere of natural ethics. Whatever
may be said of his deficiencies and his inconsistencies,
Luther did, at an opportune moment in history, demand for
the individual and for society, that liberty which has en-
abled Anglo-Saxondom to nurture and to cultivate its in-
herent instinct for natural evolution and progress.

Our first concern will be Luther's personal religious
experience, i.e., his emancipation from traditional monasticism and the acquisition of a consciousness of spiritual freedom, (Part I); and, secondly, we will follow him in his early writings - those containing relevant material and written before 1521 - as he places his new freedom in open conflict with mediaeval ecclesiasticism, the result of which constitutes a notable contribution to the cause of human liberty, (Part II).

A preliminary word concerning the historical development of two inter-dependent systems of theological speculation will enable us to understand better Luther's problem and his solution of it.¹

Christian piety, from its inception, contained a double thought of God. God was a mighty judge; he was as well the God of love and pity and unable to witness the suffering of his children. With the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, there came the thought of grace, i.e., the divine desire to rescue his suffering children. Of these fundamental conceptions of Christian dogma, Holl says,

¹Sources used in this preliminary survey are: Hall, pp 2-14 Harnack Bd. 3, pp 816 if; Loofe on "Augustine" in the New Schaff-Herzog Encyl: "Scholasticism" in Encyl: of Rel. and Ethics.
"The unity with which the thoughts of judgment, moral advancement and faith in the goodness of God are bound together, presents the strength of the Christian religion and the inexhaustible problem of its theology." ¹ The thought of judgment remained foremost in the deliberations of the early Church. Attached to it was the belief in the Second Coming of Christ. When, however, he did not appear as expected, there arose in the Catholic Church a new dogma, viz., that the soul is in a transient state between the time of death and that of the Second Coming of Christ. This place of retention was designated 'purgatory'. It remains to this day, the chief consideration in Catholic theology. Before this idea of purgatory had fully developed, the conception of God, under the influence of a Stoic rationalism, grew into that of a theoretical God so far above everything and everybody that he was practically unapproachable. Thereupon, the mercy of God assumed a deeper significance. Tertullian had given the words 'meritum' and 'satisfactio' an apparently righteous foundation and in the Western Church grew the idea and system of merits through stipulated good works.

¹. Hall, p. 3 f.
It was into this double idea of God, the theoretical and the practical, that Augustine injected his contributions to Christian theology, the revival of Paul's doctrine of Grace. Though in Augustine there is a gradual subjection of inherited dogmas to his own conception of the grace of God, his life was unfortunately too short to register a complete victory. "It is inevitable, had time been allowed, that the inherited doctrine of the Church would have gone down before his own doctrine of grace and Augustine would have bequeathed to the Church not problems but a thoroughly worked out system of evangelical religion". 1

The Scholastics now set themselves assiduously to a study of the idea of God but the more attention they gave to its study, the wider became the breach between these two early conceptions, i.e., the theoretical and the practical. The theoretical idea of God was enlarged upon. Then quite naturally developed the thought of an autocratic or an absolute God. It was upon this foundation that Thomas built. To him, God's perfection was sufficient reason for his God's existence and for anything that God wanted to do. Outside of God's being, because of its perfection, there could not possibly be any additional

1. Warfield in "Augustine". Hastings, Encyl. of Rel. & Ethics.
satisfaction. Duns Scotus carried the idea still further. The nominalism of Scotus understood God solely as a self-creative will with a law of contradiction peculiar to himself, thus rendering it unnecessary for him in any circumstance to be bound by anything within or without. That God exerted his power and strength, in behalf of our sinful nature, in the sacraments was an additional proof of grace. God established the natural order and considered it good. To it he submitted himself but his greatness permitted him to act contrary to the law, thus creating miracles. Thomas differed only in that he regarded God as independent of law and thus able to do what he wanted whenever he wanted to do it without being bound by his own created laws.

Now, the practical conception of God found special champions in Abalard and Bernhard of Clairvoux. They discriminated between the intention and the act. The intention was further divided into motives. From this scientific arrangement of perceptions naturally evolved a more complicated system of merits. A successive ascending series of moral actions filled the vacancy between works conformable to one's duty and works bordering upon moral generosity; again, between works ordered and works only advised by God.

The influence which Aristotle continued to exert upon
the higher scholastics carried the whole system to further extremes. Thus, there followed the contention that morality, which was not necessarily Christian but essentially philosophical, has a place in the scale of values. Accordingly, rationalism again dictated a system of morality. A good act earns merit in proportion to the deed. Since God is good, any goodness in a deed will of course be recognized. Ever present also is the inevitable complementary consideration that God can be forced through good works to grant recognition. Though the Franciscans contended that all meritorious actions depended upon the initial 'habitus' of grace, still there remained that indelible impression that a good work demands divine recognition.

The idea of God was thus hopelessly confused. So, too, was the idea of Christian piety. The greater the miracle of God's manifestation, the greater became man's faith. His faith brought with it a corresponding spiritual and psychological satisfaction. The impression that one had to do with something supernatural was ever present. In the Church system, this idea found its natural and practical expression in an exacting system of processions, festivals, elaborate costumes, relics, etc., resulting in a form of demonstrative piety. Merits, confessions, indulgences, masses, etc., marked the way to heaven. The layman became, not unwillingly, dependent upon the priest
and a lower standard of morals followed. Between these two conceptions, the justice of God and the earning of salvation through merits, there may have been points in common but even in the security felt through the Sacrament of Penance and the Sacrament of the Altar, there was no permanence, but ever the same thought that God was demanding still more. The Church was not slow to recognize this feeling of insufficiency and, accordingly, made capital of it. Her educational program had two definite purposes—first, to excite fear in the minds of the people through pictures of purgatory and hell; second, immediately to console them with an elaborate system of indulgences.

Two movements of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to which we shall repeatedly refer are German Mysticism and the Renaissance.

The German Mystics contended primarily that to have love in one's heart simply in order to secure the blessing of heaven is wrong and that one should love God for his own sake. They differed from other mystics in one important particular. Concentrating their attention upon the theoretical idea of God, they taught that there is a 'Seelengrund'; that the souls of men have a common unity with the soul of God. Not memory, reason or feeling but the ground of the soul is permanently divine. Eckart, for example, "starts out with the assumption that there is in
us an unnatural nature - the essence and ground of the Soul. 'There is in the soul something which is above the soul, simple, rather unnamed than named'. 1 The German Mystics made a striking contribution to psychology in their attempt to account for the sub-conscious or the sub-liminal self. At least Meister Eckhart and his followers, the Friends of God 2 - Rulman Merswin of Strasburg; Nikolaus von Löwen; John Tauler; Henry Suso; Jan Ruysbroek; Margaret and Christina Ebner; Henry of Nördlingen; and the great unknown author of the 'Teologia Germanica' - attempted to bring religion home from fruitless speculation to the genuine religious experience of man's own heart and to the understanding of the common people. An estimate of their influence upon Luther will be reserved for a later chapter.

The Renaissance, so far as the movement concerns us, had for its goal, the simplification of Church piety. More generally, it was the achievement of what is termed the modern spirit in opposition to the spirit which prevailed during the middle ages'. 3 That is to say, it concerned

2. Ibid pp 242 ff.
itself, chiefly, with the revival of the Greek and the Latin Classics and of art for the purpose of reinterpreting not science but life. Just as before the middle of the fifteenth century, the humanity of Christ was a disturbing issue, so too, immediately after it, it was difficult to conceive of his deity. As a movement, the Renaissance preferred rather to concentrate upon that which, according to its standard of interpretation, was valuable in the old classical piety. "In Plato and the Areopagite Mystic, it found something approaching extraordinarily near the evangelical ideal". ¹ Since, in these classical considerations, the controlling influences remained non-Christian, there developed a universal conception of religion treated historically and unfolding itself in the arts, especially in the schools of learning. Thus, in the 'sacred languages', which, during those "tumultuous years 476-1400 when barbarians turned Christian and were learning slowly to be civilized",² had been carried by the Eastern and Western liturgies wherever they went, were now to become amenable to the cleansing process of the Renaissance and of practical use. The popes granted twenty-eight charters to as

¹ Hall p.13f.
many universities between the years 1400 and 1506. The Vatican library was founded by Nicholas V (1477) and it immediately became the head of the new impetus given to education in the Catholic Church. The printed Latin Vulgate and the translation of it into most of the European languages were distributed freely. By 1500, ninety-eight complete editions were disposed of. The Scholars in comparing Christianity with the ancient religions, determined to give answer to the question, "What is there of reality in Christianity?". After a thorough examination of the sources of the New Testament and the Church fathers, they declared school theology to be subtle sophistry and considered the worth of the ceremonies of the Church as doubtful. They compared the consecration of Church relics to the pagan veneration of the gods. So, too, the fundamental doctrines of the Church were tested. While, however the Renaissance advocated freedom of opinion and affected in many respects the thought of the Church and her institutions, it did not put into the hearts of men a new fire

1. A most interesting collection of many of these editions is to be found in the "Lutherhalle" museum, Wittenberg, including a small family bible in Latin, handwritten, in black and red ink.
and a new zeal for evangelical truth.

Movements can best be studied through the personality of their leaders. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Erasmus personified all that was best in the Renaissance. There was something in common between Erasmus and Luther; there were more considerations, however which separated them. Both were concerned about liberty but they operated from different angles. Luther rightly regarded Erasmus as the greatest intellectual leader of his age and, during the early days of the Reformation, he was eager to unite their energies against a common foe. Both aimed at the restoration of evangelical doctrine. Both condemned the domination of Aristotle and of Aquinas in theology. Both placed reason against authority. But Luther was not content to confine his ideas of reform to the limitations of humanism. Though his appeal was in part to the intellect, he was first and last concerned about the soul of the common man. As Luther's points of emphasis became clearer, both he and Erasmus realized that a united effort, under the circumstances, was unthinkable. The important consideration for Erasmus, already an aged theologian, was freedom of opinion in educational circles. At some future date, he hoped that the masses might fit themselves to share in the results of the academic discussions among the Universities. Luther, filled
with the energy of youth, had as his dominating impulse, the enfranchisement of 'simple souls'. Erasmus was a great teacher; Luther was a great prophet. Erasmus was voicing the sentiments of men of intense thought; Luther was voicing the sentiments of men of intense feeling. Erasmus lived in the study; Luther lived in the pulpit. Erasmus believed in divine revelation in the form of evolution; Luther goes to the Holy Scriptures for complete revelation which — contrary to his desire — assumed the form of revolution. Erasmus pleads for liberty on behalf of the scholar in his study; his chief concern is truth. Luther pleads for liberty on behalf of the ordinary man; his supreme concern is the divine right of private judgment both in religion and in politics. "The phase of strife between humanism and reform was in sight, for Luther was beginning to feel strong enough to challenge the supremacy of old conceptions and to declare them incompatible with the new. Luther succeeds Erasmus; La Place, Galileo; Voltaire, Descartes; and Huxley, Darwin." 1

After the Liepsic Disputation, two distinct classes rallied to Luther's support, viz., the nominal humanists and the German nationalists. By accepting the support of

1. Murray p. 82.
the nationalists, Luther became the avowed leader of all those forces in Germany which were demanding political liberty, a Germany for the Germans and freedom from foreign political bondage.

Since the crowning of Charles the Great by Pope Leo III in Rome (799), there had been a spiritual supremacy over the political life of the Christian world. The very title, "the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" illustrates the nature of the political bondage to which the German people were subjected during the centuries preceding the Reformation. That is to say, a German Emperor was not the German sovereign of the German monarchy but the Roman Emperor of the German Empire. Though the ancient institution of German royalty had not been abolished, it was practically forgotten during the middle ages. Henry VII, for example, would have been insulted had he been addressed as the 'Emperor of Germany' instead of as 'Emperor of the Romans'. The German Electoral Princes considered it an honour to exercise the functions of Roman Senators. So thoroughly was Germany under the stamp of Rome when the conflict began between the two great elements in the government of the Christian world, i.e., the secular and the clerical, the princes and the priests. The prestige of the German Clergy was enhanced and the authority of the Roman Emperors was decreased during the reigns of Henry I
(919-936) and his son, Otto the Great (936-973). This condition prepared the impending conflict between Emperor Henry IV (1056-1106) and Pope Gregory VII, which resulted in a most humiliating defeat for the Emperor. Nothing that either Henry IV or his successors could do, ever blotted from the minds of the people, the indelible impression that both in the Church and in the state, the Pope is indeed supreme.

With the designation of Roman Kings continuing as a constant infatuation, the German Emperors, instead of developing a distinctively national culture and leading their people into political independence, lost what influence they had upon the priests who were now entirely dependent upon Rome. Neither had they any power over the nobles, whose fiefs had become hereditary, nor did they possess any considerable domains or actual revenue in their imperial capacity. They had nothing but the high sounding titles of successors of the Caesars and of rulers of the whole Christian world.

Though Rudolph von Hapsburg (1273-1291) emancipated Germany for a time from this unfortunate connection with Rome, and though the Electoral Princes in 1338, in their "Election Union" of Rhens, decided that henceforth German Princes would alone elect German Emperors and that the Pope would be consulted neither in the election nor in the
coronation, it remained for the vain and mercenary Charles IV to proceed to Rome in 1347, there to receive the crown from the Pope. The old state of affairs continued. The Councils of Constance (1411-1418) and Basle (1431-1449), the former, ushering in the inhuman wars of the Hussites and the latter, indirectly responsible for the coronation of Emperor Frederick III in 1440, brought additional hardships to the German people. There was really no radical change toward political emancipation by the beginning of the sixteenth century in spite of the facts that Maximilian, the son of Frederick III, upon his election by the Electoral Princes, had assumed the title of both 'the elected King of Rome' and 'the Emperor of Germany', and that he refused to be crowned by the Pope.

The growing and prosperous cities were, however, developing a thinking middle class. Burghers, nobles and priests were discussing public questions from a peculiarly German point of view. Even under the limited reforms of Maximilian it was now possible for the Elector Frederick of Saxony to secure a charter for his new university without appealing to Rome. Singularly enough, Wittenberg became the first German University to be chartered by a German Emperor. There was a restlessness among the middle classes in the German cities, a growing eagerness for emancipation and for independence. It was entirely
appropriate and, yet, strange that the University of Wittenberg, new and insignificant, should now present to the German people, a capable and heroic leadership.

The significance of this spirit of unrest, under the direction of a Luther, to the cause of human liberty cannot be overestimated. It was because Martin Luther championed this, the greatest moral issue of his day, and during a crucial period of the world's history when epoch making invention and discoveries revolutionized accepted customs and traditions, that he is today accepted as one of history's really great contributors to the cause of human liberty. It was surely more than a coincidence that the first quantity of literature from the newly-invented printing press should broadcast Luther's conception of liberty; that the inventions of gun-powder put into the hands of the masses at this particular time, an unanswerable argument against authority; that the European, who for countless centuries had lived in Europe ignorant of the fact that habitations existed beyond the shores of his own continent, should just then discover that there were lands to the West, without the confines of the hitherto all-inclusive Holy Roman Empire, awaiting his initiative and his industry.

"Every great movement, widening the geographical outlook of a people, at the same time widens their intellectual and economic outlook. The Crusades effected this
important service for the Middle Ages, and the colonization of America effected it for the seventeenth and succeeding centuries. It is, indeed, difficult not to speak of such an event as the discovery of America almost exclusively in terms of geography. Yet the moment people completely realized there was another continent where the eagle of the Holy Roman Empire had never flown, that moment the whole structure of mediaevalism was undermined. Columbus discovered a new world beyond and Copernicus announced new worlds above. Scarcely any discovery of the nineteenth century, not even Darwin's had such far reaching effects as these two which made the Reformation inevitable." ¹

The papacy had been a Mediterranean power and German bondage had been with Italy in the South; expansion being to the West, the control of the Atlantic sea-ports became the secret to future political power in Europe. The hope of Germany naturally turned to the North. With the Reformation came German emancipation from Rome; the rise of Prussia followed and Germany developed into a world power.

But it was the ethical aspect of the Reformation which directed and furnished the motive power to the whole movement. In this respect the discoveries of Columbus

¹ Murray p. 43.
and Copernicus and the invention of Gutenberg are secondary considerations. A more important discovery had been made by Martin Luther at the University of Wittenberg in the Autumn of 1512 when he became personally conscious of the spiritual significance of Romans I, 17.

In our treatment of the development of Luther's conception of liberty, relevant material will be taken from those of his works which cover that dramatic period of his life, viz., his Erfurt and first Wittenberg experience to the time of the Diet at Worms. Though Scheel has devoted two volumes to the life of Luther before 1513,¹ his conclusions are necessarily drawn from sources other than the reformer's own writings. There is indeed little previous to this date - a few letters, a receipt and some marginal notes - from Luther's own hand. Comparatively recent finds however, have made the following six years, a most interesting period for speculation by Luther's scholars. His lectures on Galatians of 1516 were discovered in 1877 by a student in an antiquarian book shop in Cologne. In 1885 a sketch of Luther's Whitsunday sermon of 1514 was found in the Zwickau municipal library. Two years later, in the same place, seven books from the reformer's private library

¹ Martin Luther, "Von Katholizisimes zur Reformation", Bd. 1 & 2.
reappeared. The value of this find is not in the books themselves but in the marginal notes which they contain from Luther's pen. New sources, pertaining to the same period, were found in Dresden a few years before the Zwickau discoveries. These had to do largely with some preliminary drafts for his first lectures on the Psalms (1513-1515). In 1899, Herman Vopel found in the Vatican library a copy of the lectures on Romans (1515-16) as well as a notebook, containing the notes of one of Luther's students made during a series of lectures on Hebrews (1517). The most important, as well as the most surprising find of recent years brought to light the original manuscript of the celebrated lectures on Romans after it had lain well preserved and unnoticed by its guardians for many years in the Berlin library. Searches continue to be made both in Germany and in Rome for the lost writings of still an earlier date. Important correspondence with Staupitz, lectures on Aristotle's Ethics and Dialectics, lectures on Titus and the incomplete Commentary on Aristotle's Physics remain to be found.

Excepting his translation of the Bible, Luther did not produce a single massive work. The more than seventy volumes of literature from Luther's pen comprise contributions relevant to the religious and political problems of his day in the form of theses, sermons, letters, tracts and
pamphlets.\(^1\) Since he wrote assiduously, sincerely and without embarrassment or fear, it is possible to trace, in each period of his life, just what he thought, felt and did. His writings are his confessions. They reveal his development far better than his own later reflections upon that development. His enemies have made much of his blunders and his obvious inconsistencies. To deny these would be to misinterpret their significance; to record them is to illustrate Luther's peculiar greatness. Luther, in his later years cautioned anyone who read his works to remember that he, like Augustine had said of himself, was one of those who progressed by writing and teaching and that what success he had attained was due to work, research, and preliminary essays.\(^2\) Because of his remarkable intuition for reality, Luther's errors become for him not stumbling blocks but stepping stones to a larger and a more responsible leadership.

We can best study the story of Luther's unique contribution to the cause of human liberty by following him from his early monastic days as he dramatically blazes his way

\(^1\)In the 'Lutherhalle' Museum at Wittenberg, one is impressed with the contrast between the innumerable tracts and pamphlets from Luther and the comparatively few but massive works of Erasmus.
from the fundamental question, "O wann willtu einmal fromm
werden und genug thun, dass du einen gnädigen Gott
kriest?" to the time when he could pen his immortal
"de libertate Christiana."
PART I.
FROM MONASTICISM TO SPIRITUAL FREEDOM.

CHAPTER II.
Early Influences (1505-1512).

Spiritual peace was not the immediate result of Luther's decision to enter upon a life of monasticism. That the act was one of the important events in his career and that it directly affected his spiritual life, there can be no doubt. Just how his weakened physical condition at this time may have been the 'a priori' precursor of his decision has been fully, and not always impartially, developed by both Catholic and Protestant scholars.

The simple truth is that the boy, Luther, chose to follow that particular path into which the Church directed those seriously disposed. The sudden frights, caused by the prevailing plague, the thunder and lightning storms, in which he had lost his dearest companion, were but the 'accidents' of an experience which resulted in what Holl terms "eine Befreiung." ¹ The act of becoming a monk was the accomplishment of a secret desire through the agency of these terrifying experiences and it, no doubt, gave

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¹ Holl p. 15.
to Luther a sense of spiritual support. In reality, it was his first formal declaration of spiritual values in the monstrous mediaeval system of merits. "Das Gelubde hatte bereits den Wert eines ausserordentlichen Verdienstes!"

More important, however, is the fact that Luther, through this act, had suddenly become the personification of the confused doctrinal heritage of his century. It was the dualism, already discussed, to which he was unconsciously subscribing. He was hopelessly entrapped in the confused theological speculation of a theoretical God and a practical God. Tossed hither and thither, his humility at times would reach the stages of despair and desolation. There is evidence, too, of occasions when his sense of piety approached vanity. 2

For the period of Luther's life previous to 1513, we must be content with a mass of later sources including the interesting 'Tischreden'. As a whole, this material must be treated with some precaution, since it is a reflection

1. Holl, p. 16.
2. "et ex hoc ego stultus non potui intelligere, quomodo me peccatorem similis ceteris deberem reputare et ita nemini me preferre cum essem contritus et confessus; tune enim omnia oblata putabam et evacuata, etiam intrinsecus ib." Holl, Anm. 3, p. 17 (Rom. II, 109, 4 ff)
of age upon youth. Such reflections are naturally influenced by life's climacteric events but, as Loofs suggests, apropos of Luther's later attentive considerations to his early cloister years, "only ill-will can doubt their essential correctness".1 Boehmer is certainly not justified in concluding that "alles, was er später von seinen Zweifeln an der Barmherzigkeit Gottes erzählt, ist pure Flunkerei." 2

By living behind the walls of the Augustinian Monastery could Luther exclude the troublesome world and thus secure the desired peace? To his disappointment, he soon discovered that the world had entered the cloister with him and that the problems of 'earning' peace with God, under the stipulated provisions of the Church, became increasingly complicated. "War ists", he reflected in later years, "ein frommer Monch bin ich gewest und so gestrenge meinen Orden gehalten, dass ichs sagen dar (wage): ist je ein Monch gen Himmel kommen durch Moncherie, so wollt ich auch hinein kommen sein; das werden mir zeugen alle meine Kloster gesellen. Denn ich hatte mich, wo es langer gewahrt hatte zu Tod gemartert mit Wachen, Beten, Fasten, Lesen und andrer Arbeit."3

1. Loofs, p.688, 7f.
Luther's depression was caused not by particular sins but by the consciousness of living constantly in a state of sin. It was his firm conviction that between God and man there exists a standard of justice and that, through remorse and worthy works, the attainment of that justice can be realized. "Im kloster gedacht ich nicht an weib gelt oder gutth, sondern das Hertz zitterte und zappelte, wie Gott mir gnedig wurde. Den ich war vom Glauben abgewicken und liess mich nicht anders duncken, den ich hatte Gott erzumet, den ich mit meinen guten wercken mir wiederumb versunen muste." 1

This much is certain. If Luther, during his novitiate year in the cloister, sought to attain a spiritual peace through the mortification of the flesh, the "order" made no effort to deny him the privilege. The older monks apparently interfered little with his fasts, long prayers, and scripture readings; nor did they forbid him, with sack on shoulder, to beg from the frugal housewives of Erfurt, the necessities of life. Most historians quote Matthesius in his contention that Luther's treatment, at the hands of the Augustinians, brought forth protests from the University of Erfurt where he had formerly been a

1. WA, Bd,47,590.
student and where, no doubt, he left many friends, both students and professors. The accuracy of this statement by Matthesius is questioned by modern scholarship. But whether or not there were protests from his friends, he, himself, repeatedly averred that he was a pious monk; there is no record of his ever having requested any relaxation of the discipline. Neither at the time, nor in his later years did he accuse the Augustinians of treating him unfairly. The consolations of his father confessor and of God meant little to him and, in 1518, he wrote to Staupitz that in these first years 'poenitentia' had become for him the bitterest word in the Scriptures.

The attainment of spiritual peace was for Luther a slow process. He credited Staupitz, in later years, with having given him his first glimpse of the gospel light. However, at the time, he could only reply, "O, Meine Sunde, Sunde, Sunde." Staupitz told him very plainly, "Du bist ein Narr, Gott zurnt nicht mit dir, sondern du zurnst mit ihm". Questions of this type reflect the genial and saintly personality of the Vicar: "Was machst du, mein . . . . . . .

2. Enders, Bd. I 196. 4ff.
Sohn? Weisst du nicht dass uns der Herr selbst geboten hat zu hoffen?" 1 Staupitz further advised Luther that, though he wants to be without sin, he has no real sin and that "Christus ist die Vergebung rechtschaffener Sunde, als die Eltern ermorden.....Du musst ein Register haben darin recht schaffene Sunden stehen, musst nicht mit solchem Humpelwerk und Puppensunden ungeben". 2 Real penitence, cautioned Staupitz, begins only with "amore justitiae et dei." 3 In 1518, Luther remarked that this advice pierced him like an arrow. 4

For Luther, there was inseparably bound with this primitive fear of death, the idea of divine judgment in the future life. We have observed that it was so too in the confused doctrines of the Church. Historians record the series of religious pictures, a part of the educational program of the Church, which so affected him in later years: "The picture on the window in Mansfield Church of Jesus sitting on a rainbow, with frowning countenance and drawn sword in his hand, coming to judge the wicked; the altar-piece at Magdeburg representing a great ship sailing

3. ibid.
heavenwards, no one within the ship but priests and monks who are safe on board; the history of St. Elizabeth blazoned on the windows of the Church at Eisenach.\textsuperscript{1} If these pictures left upon the mind of Luther a deep and permanent impression, so too did the living examples of the complementary ecclesiastical system of Indulgences, - "the Prince of Anhalt, who to save his soul had become a friar and carried the beggar's sack on his bent shoulders through the streets of Magdeburg;...the young Carthusian at Eisenach, who the boy thought was the holiest man he had ever talked to, and who had so mortified his body that he had come to look like a very old man; the terrible death bed scene of the Erfurt ecclesiastical dignitary, a man who had held twenty-one benefices, and whom Luther had often seen riding in state in great processions, who was known to be an evil liver, and who, when he came to die, filled the room with

\[\ldots\ldots\ldots\]

\textsuperscript{1}Lindsay, 198f.
his frantic cries. 1

We would err in supposing that because Luther chose an Augustinian Monastery that he would therefore be taught the theology of Augustine. His teachers at Erfurt really favoured the strictest interpretation of papal absolution. Attrition and the efficacy of papal indulgences were the favourite subjects of John Genser of Faltz who taught at Erfurt until 1507. It is unlikely that Luther came under the direct teaching of John of Paltz who, at the time of the novice's entrance into the cloisters, was already aged and broken in health. He was nevertheless taught the theology of John of Paltz by a colleague, Nathin of Neuenkirchen, under whose direction Luther became an ardent

1. Lindsay, 198f. Of course, Scheel submits (Vol II p.30) that the 'Tischreden' and the early biographies of Luther have together formed out of his cloister years, a drama, a part of which is fiction and another part of which, in its given setting, is historically inaccurate. Scheel's corrections have to do with minor details only and in no wise alter the general psychological lines of Luther's development. In fact many of Scheel's positions, the scholarly merit of which are universally recognized, are to-day still a matter of controversy among German scholars especially Holl, Seeberg, Walter, Köhler and A.D. Müller. Accordingly, where Scheel's positions covering these early years remain disputed points, I have felt it best to follow the hitherto generally accepted account as derived from early sources, notably the Tischreden and Melanchthon's biography of Luther.
student of Biel, d'Ailly & Occam. His concentration upon the nominalistic scholars must have covered the first Erfurt Wittenberg period, i.e., until 1509. During this time, according to Denifle and Loofs, Luther did not possess a working knowledge of the Scholastics; nor was he yet particularly concerned about Augustine.

Luther followed the teaching of Nathin studiously and conscientiously. There was a time when Luther boasted that he belonged to "der Partei Ockams". Unquestionably he carried with him from Occam, as we shall see, the seeds which blossomed into open revolt against Rome. Smith suggests that "Luther's development is largely a history of his enfranchisement from the Occamist theology". This is correct; but so is Seeberg's statement that one of the factors without which the Reformation would have been impossible is Occamism. In order to understand the

2. Loofs, 690f.
3. Enders, I, 64,2ff. Non guod professionis meae studio, ad B. Augustinum probandum trahar, qui apud me, antequam in libros ejus incidisset, ne tautillum quidem favoris habuit
foundations upon which Luther erected his conception of liberty, it is essential that we appreciate the part which Occam played in the reformer's early training.

William of Occam supported the Franciscans in advocating the absolute poverty of the follower of Christ. Together with the Emperor Louis, he contended against Pope John XXII that the poverty of Christ and the apostles is quite as important in the consideration of faith and practise as the principle that the Church and the Pope are independent of the state and the rights of the Emperor. The death of Louis and the reconciliation of the new Emperor Charles the IV with the Pope left Occam practically alone in his contention. Bereft of one friend after another, Occam, nevertheless, successfully championed the cause of nominalism. He openly pleaded that traditional dogma should be subjected to the searching light of modern investigation, thus creating somewhat "of a counterpoise to ecclesiastical positivism" and, as will be noted in a later chapter, made a distinctively new contribution to the study of the relation between secular and ecclesiastical authority. ¹

¹ For "Willaim of Occam", I have consulted Seeberg in Schaff Herzog Encyl. and Loofs in 'Scholasticism' in the same work.
It has been mentioned that Aristotle had conditioned the revival of philosophical and theological learning of the thirteenth century. Thomas Aquinas had undertaken to reconcile Aristotle's theory of the Universe with the traditional platonic-Augustinian realism. Scotus attempted to maintain the ancient realism, though supporting his positions with Aristotelian methods. Owing to the growth of empirical research, psychological analysis and a renewal of the value of reason, the results which were based upon the premises of Scotus could no longer be reconciled and the specific and the particular came to be recognised as the end of nature. When, therefore, William of Occam contended that science has to do only with general concepts existing in the mind and — instead of the Scotus theory that objective existence of universals is deduced from concepts — that no universal is a substance existing outside of the mind, he became the founder of the 'modern' school. That is to say, his doctrine was modern during Luther's academic training.

The influence of this theory upon Luther's thinking is underestimated. It was by following Occam that Luther became convinced that he could do anything which, in his mind, he determined that he wanted to do. For example, he could obey the ten commandments to the letter; he could declare an object to be black though it be white; he could
love God with his whole being; he could save his own soul!

The theory was Occam's; the method for the practical accomplishment of all this, he secured from Bernhard of Clairvoux and Gabriel Biel. Bernhard maintained that even with the meanest of impulses, it is possible, through the careful control and regulation of a prescribed system of conduct, to attain a high degree of emotion and, ultimately, a full realization of the pure love of God. Though Bernhard was a devout supporter of Augustinian mysticism and presented in his writings a working system of the Catholic idea of good works, there was nevertheless something there which approximated the evangelical idea.

Biel, though not a wholehearted follower of Occam, was universally considered an authority in theology. He took the position that a release from eternal responsibility and punishment from sin was possible only when one sincerely hated and detested what is evil. To repent of sin simply thereby to escape the torments of purgatory and hell, according to Biel, is utterly useless. To be sorry and to repent over sins committed can never change the mind of God and, in such cases, penance and absolution between the sinner and the priest can be of no eternal value. The priest and the confessional, therefore, concern but temporary punishment for sin. Nevertheless, if one should, through one's own strength and will-power, follow Bernhard's
psychological system of betterment, Biel regarded it perfectly possible gradually to attain to a perfect indwelling of the immaculate love of God.  

It is now possible, without becoming further involved, to understand just why Luther was so energetic and so un­tiring in the training and the torturing of his soul. He was hopelessly caught in the accumulated entanglement of Church dogma, e.g., of the theoretical God and the practical God. This God - the Occamist God -from whom Luther had hoped to earn the forgiveness of sins and spiritual peace, was a God who likewise, according to the doctrine of the Church, possessed an absolute and arbitrary will, condemning or saving, subject alone to his own discretion. The Occamist God demanded absolute retribution and satisfaction for sins committed or a final reckoning on the Judgment Day. Following Occam Bernhard and Biel, Luther not only believed that complete retribution and satisfaction were within the limitations of human possibility but, to that end, he resolutely set out to make of himself a model of saintship. Day after day, week after week, Luther followed every prescribed duty, prayed and fasted until his emaciation and mental sufferings produced a permanently . . . . . .

1. Loofs on "Scholasticism" in the Schaff Herzog Encyl.
weakened constitution. The anguish and torture which he experienced in this neurotic condition were to him the physical evidences of divine wrath. There were periods of extreme desolation and the God whom at first Luther feared he now began to hate. He had been promised, by Occam and Biel, spotless perfection; instead, they lead him to the important conclusion that the Creator cannot be immediately approached and known by the Creature. In a sense, mediaeval monasticism brought Luther to a hopeless Agnosticism.

Mention has been made that, on occasions, his sense of piety approached vanity. He could say at no time, with a true conscience, however, that he had obtained harmony with God. He had been told - he well knew - that God should be sought in love. But, by artificially arousing himself, he destroyed at the very inception of the act, the possibility of manifesting that love. He had tested thoroughly, the curative remedies of ecclesiasticism, but of the spiritual peace and power promised in the sacraments of Baptism and Penance he knew nothing. He anticipated the new power of Grace as the dogmas of the Church had directed but, when he subsequently realized that he was essentially the same, his spiritual condition became increasingly hopeless. Then, too, by following Bernhard in his discriminations between mortal and venial sins,
between the act and the intention, and, finally, between the original motives, he added to his distress only confusion. No one knew better than Luther that he was ignorant of that repentance of which the theologians spoke as springing from the love of God.

In 1509 Luther began to read Augustine intently. Soon after, the Church father became for him the "numquam satis laudatus". Our information for the period between the autumn of 1509 and 1511 is derived largely from marginal notes written by Luther in several of the recovered books which he read during the second Erfurt experience. The most important notes are in Augustine's 'Confessiones', 'de vera religione', 'de civitate dei', and 'de trinitate' and in Peter Lombard's "Quatuor Libri Sententiarum", contemporary with Luther's lectures on the same.

The notes may be dismissed with brief observations. Though there is no desire to break with scholastic nominalism, Augustine is really deflecting Luther's interest in Occam. Possibly Augustine's most noticeable impression upon Luther's mind at this time was made by his reference to the Incarnation as a divine gift of grace to the believer...

1. WA., 1X, .5ff.
2. WA. 1X, 3f; 15-27.
3. Ibid, 28-49.
for the purpose of granting spiritual life and happiness. It is possible, as Loofs suggests, that this thought was Luther's first step in finding common ground with the Augustinian mystic conception of the 'Logos', i.e., that, while the soul can incorporeally comprehend, it must not reject through its faith - as with Occam - the things of the body.

In a note in 'de trinitate', Luther ridicules the Stoics  and dismisses Aristotle as a narrator of fables. Notice that already Luther is stamping himself as a theologian and not as a humanist. It was the development of this tendency, so early noticeable, which ultimately separated him from Erasmus, Zwinglé and even Melanchthon. Experience, to Luther, is more important than scholarship. Creeds become for him a series of definite beliefs with fixed limitations. Augustine was essentially legalistic; so, too, became Luther.

If the Lombard notes reveal anything, it is the fact that Luther was not yet thinking clearly. He does, however, show a disposition to criticize; and, on the whole, he accepts with quite open consent some of the ideas which

1. WA, IX, 25, 21f.
2. ibid, IX, 23, 7f.
differentiated Lombard from the later scholastics. Scheel is no doubt correct in regarding the Lombard marginal notes as being still nominalistic in their theology,\(^1\) nevertheless, Aristotle and the 'moderns' are gradually slipping into the background; Luther concealed neither his growing contempt for Aristotle \(^2\) nor his enthusiasm for Augustine.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Scheel, Bd. II, p. 436, Anm. 16.
\(^2\) WA, IX, 23, 7.
\(^3\) WA, IX, 29, 6.
CHAPTER III.

From Augustine to Paul (1513-1517).

If Augustine now became for Luther a guiding star, it must be remembered that Bernhard and Staupitz were his comfort during the hour of his greatest need. It was they who directed him again and again to the Cross of Golgotha as the indisputable evidence of God's love. Though Luther was soon to pass Staupitz on his onward march to freedom, the Vicar's advice, in creating for the young professor an altered point of view, was invaluable. The degree to which Luther submitted to Augustine's neo-platonic mysticism can best be traced in the lectures on the Psalter. ¹

The Augustinian mystics had made a conscious effort to neutralize historical Christianity. It is, therefore, significant, apropos of what has been said of Luther's peculiar position in the history of dogma, that in his second series of lectures on the Psalms (1513), he should conclusively reveal that neo-platonic mysticism was now forming the background of his theology. For the first time Luther speaks of things eternal, of turning the attention to things invisible, and of striving to understand...

¹I have for the lectures on the Psalter, followed the lead of Loofs pp 692ff.
the spiritual. The Scriptures have for Luther a double significance; he speaks of the letter and the spirit, the image and the verity, the shadow and reality. For the first time, also, he comments upon faith as being the first element in knowledge. He believes that to be holy one must necessarily be in spiritual accord with the 'verbum'-thus necessitating the subjection of the material to the invisible. The invisible, in turn, he regards as understandable alone through perception and love. And, he concludes perception and love are possible only when we live in them and our invisible selves are literally dipped into the visible.¹

Luther was at last approaching a truer conception of the holiness of God. The expressions which he uses during the Psalter lectures are obviously a bit vague; they were as yet untempered by experience. He is, nevertheless, being freed slowly from the ghost of fear and slavery and, realizing the utter hopelessness of a divided heart, he determines sincerely to conform his spiritual life to the divine Will.

But, more definitely than Augustine, Bernhard and

¹ WA. IV, 10,35 ff - 11,12.
the Scriptures, brought Luther to a faith in the Incarnation. He concentrated more and more upon the remission of sins and justification through divine grace and upon regeneration through faith in the 'Verbum'. This faith, both the gift and the work of God, becomes simultaneously, for Luther, the grace and the pity of God because through it the believer is saved and justified. In this faith, the visible, temporal and material are changed into the invisible, eternal and spiritual; by it all virtues are justified and the flesh is punished, crucified and weakened. Luther is therefore compelled to regard as opposites, to justify himself and to justify God or to be justified by him; to judge himself and to judge God; to be justified by his own works and to be justified by God; the justification of Moses through exterior works and the justification of God; to be justified by his own justness and to be justified by the heart; the law, the letter, the shadow, the night - and grace, spirit, verity, day. These antitheses remain, however, entirely within the Augustinian traditions. There is here recorded a definite step forward but there is yet no contrast between the temporal law of Moses and

1.WA, III, 3-5, 26f.  
2.WA, IV, 352, 13f.  
3.ibid, 300, 14; 301, 2; 312, 37.
the eternal gospel of Christ. Of the Mosaic law, he speaks of the letter which produces understanding and the spirit which speaks through the letter. Indeed, he regards the law, when spiritually apprehended, as having concealed in it the same truth as the gospel which was manifested and brought to light through Christ.

What here is not Augustinian mysticism is, as has been intimated attributed to the influence of Bernhard and a renewed interest in the Holy Scriptures. It is probable too, that Gerson appealed to him strongly at this time. Lindsay suggests that, by Luther's own statement, most of the experimental divines, including Augustine, when dealing with the struggle of the awakened soul, stress the conflict following the temptations of the flesh and that since Luther, during his convent years lived a life 'sans peur et sans reproche', he would naturally be drawn by Gerson who confines himself to conflicts purely spiritual and not by Augustine who had lived for years in a state of sinful concubinage.¹ He was also reading Lorenzo Valla on the Gospels, the writings of Pico della Mirandola, Reuchlin's 'Rudimenta hebraica', and the 'Psalterium Quincuplex' by Lefevre d'Etaples.²

1. Lindsay, Vol I 209f, note 3.
Bernhard, however, remains the dominant note in the Psalter lectures.

Luther came to an appreciation of the spiritual significance of justificatio ex fide sometime between the summer of 1509 and the spring of 1513. He often referred to this, the most decisive experience of his career, but his statements are somewhat confusing. One of the characteristics which Luther possessed - uncommon with great men - was his willingness to abandon quite openly the positions of his preceding years. For example, in 1531, he had no hesitancy in pronouncing judgment on what had generally been recognized as his most brilliant commentary (non putassero primos meos commentarios ad Gallatas adeo infirmos esse) One must be cautious of the same tendency in estimating Luther's judgment on anything. Thus he remarks on one occasion that he came to "einiger Erkenntnis Christi" during his lectures on the Romans. Again in "Von Konziliis und Kirchen" that he came to an independent appreciation of the Gospel during his lectures on Hebrews.

1. All authorities on Luther place the spiritual birth of the Reformation at one or another time between these two dates.
2. TR, I, 136.
3. WA, L1, 519, 24ff.
Authorities regard these references to periods as late as 1517 and 1519 as not wholly incorrect but as indicating approximately just when Luther experienced a full consciousness of the power of the Gospel. At another time, he recalled that upon the receipt of his Doctorate he was ignorant of the Gospel truth (Interum acquisivimus lucem, sed ego cum doctor fierem, nescivi.). That was in the Autumn of 1512. This statement, however, is variously interpreted by Hall, Scheel, Grisar and others. On another occasion, Luther states even more definitely, "solche Lehre und Erkenntnis war so gar unbekannt geworden, dass ich selbst, als ein Doctor, der es ja sollte besser gewusst haben, nichts anders geholten und gelehrt habe, denn wenn ich genug bereut und gebüset hatte, so würden mir die Sünden vergeben." In a sermon, preached in 1537, he remarked, "Ich hab selbes über dreizig jahr diese Konfusion (von Christus und Moses, Gnade und Gesetze) nicht anders gewusst, und hab Gerechtigkeit für Gott durch der Heiligen Verdienst erlangen wollen".

1. WA, XLV, 86.
It is not to be wondered at that few scholars agree as to the exact time of Luther's conscious differentiation between the law and the Gospel. Loofs fixes the event in connection with the lectures on Romans, explaining that it was not until then that Romans I, 17, had any vital significance for Luther. ¹ Hall is now inclined to make much of E.H. Hirsch's discovery that, in the text of the second series of lectures on the Psalter, there are indications of alteration and, from this discovery, he (Hall) argues that the doctrine of justification by faith must be considered the cause of these revisions and not their result. ² Seeberg gives to Staupitz the credit of definitely revealing the Gospel to the comprehension of Luther. ³ Scheel contends that new discoveries are not of sufficient import to change the traditional view among scholars, and that, if viewed with precaution, Luther's own statements are really compatible. ⁴ Nor does Scheel find any reason to doubt Luther's statement as to the place of that enlightenment: Cum semel in hac turri et hypocansto de istis

¹ Loofs, 702f.
² Hall, 197f.
³ Seeberg, Dogmageschichte, Bd IV, 366, Anm I.
⁴ Bd. II, S321.
vocabulis; 'justus ex fide vivit'... 'institia dei'\textsuperscript{1}.

In 1914 Boehmer held that Luther was conscious of the spiritual truth embodied in Romans I, 17 at the time of his notations in the Lombard books and that he must have made the discovery as early as 1509 or 1510. \textsuperscript{2} In the 1918 edition of his book, Boehmer abandons this idea and concludes that the revelation must have dawned upon Luther's mind either late in autumn of 1512 or in the early spring of 1513. \textsuperscript{3}

What, then, is to be deducted from this mass of conflicting impressions? Obviously, it is scientifically impossible to record the daily action of the Holy Spirit upon the spiritual growth of a human soul and one is impressed by the fact that Luther is more willing than his commentators to treat his interpretation of Romans I, 17 as of relative importance. What inconsistencies are apparent in Luther's own statements on this point are due to changing perspectives. Following Holl, Scheel and, now, Boehmer, in part, I regard the most logical consideration of this spiritual enlightenment - a) as having been

\textsuperscript{1} TR. No. 3232, 9,6-12,7.
\textsuperscript{3} Boehmer, p.63 (1918).
revealed in Luther's own soul at some time between his first and second series of lectures on the Psalter, most likely in the Autumn of 1512; b) as having been formally recorded for the first time in the second series of these lectures; c) as having found definite and complete development in his lectures on Romans, (1516).

Luther now realized more than ever that the New Testament contained for him the secret of spiritual peace and power and he accordingly devoted himself assiduously to its study. We must not commit the too frequent error of supposing that Luther's critical treatment of the Scriptures, previous to this time, was of an inferior calibre. After an examination of Luther's lectures on the Psalms, Holl, who is not inclined to flattery, concludes that they contain a knowledge of the Scriptures such as can be equaled only by a Tertullian or an Origen. ¹ With the Bible as a standard, as early as in 1509, he criticizes scholastic traditions and declared that in the Scriptures could be found the solutions to life's greatest problems.²

Though, during the lectures on the Psalter, he questioned

1.Holl, 197f. Luther's method of interpretation is, nevertheless, at times, faulty.
2. Quotes Scripture in criticizing Lombard WA, 1X, 90,23.
the traditional methods of scholarly criticism, his activities in this direction remained rather passive. He advocated thorough research but there is no evidence of his particular interest in the souls of men outside the Cloister walls until in his Roman lectures.

'Justificatio', the word which, a few years before, he had hated, now became for Luther the key to Paul's epistle to the Romans, if not to the whole New Testament. The book which brought Luther to spiritual freedom became for him a fifth gospel. Now, between the intimations of his new discovery in the Psalter lectures and the record of the full significance of that discovery in his lectures on the Romans, he was obliged to make some necessary readjustments in his previously adopted conception of the justice of God. Luther fortunately realized that such readjustment was really necessary before Romans I,17, could be of any practical service to him. It will be remembered that even his devotion to Augustine did not remove from the background of his thinking the confusion between the theoretical idea of God and the practical system of earning the justice of that God. Continuous meditations upon both the law and the Gospel had failed to make Romans I,17 compatible with this inherited conception of God. It was as though an observing Providence had waited patiently until the professor had 'fought the good fight' necessary
to qualify as one of the Church's great reformers and as
though it were now opportune to reveal to the future
reformer, the electrifying truth in Paul's words. It was
only then that Luther grasped the significance of the
Reformer's idea viz., that, since the justice of God is
revealed through the Gospel, that same justice is neces­sarily 'passive' and, further, that this compassionate God,
the father of Jesus Christ, really justifies through the
faith of the believer. Thus, for Luther, 'justificato'
now becomes the most beloved word in the Scriptures and
quite naturally Luther turns to the man to whom he is
indebted for his new freedom. Having completed his lectures
on the Psalter, Luther, in the spring of 1515 concentrates
his attention upon Paul's letter to the Romans. A more
searching study of Augustine is now noticeable but of much
greater importance is the influence of the German Mediaeval
mystics.

There is no doubt that the basic ideas upon which he
was now building were clarified and strengthened under the
double influence of Paul and the German Mystics. The
annihilation of the natural man, as found in mysticism,
naturally affected his own idea of self-denial, carried
over from monasticism, and no doubt conditioned his later
conception of the old and the new man. 1

1. WA. I, 153.
Mysticism, as well, commended the thought of the utter sinfulness of man as contrasted with the all-goodness of God.¹

Few elements have divided the field of Luther scholars as that of the influence of the German Mediaeval Mystics upon the evangelical faith of the reformer. Some authorities speak of the German Mystics as the fore runners of the Reformation; others maintain with equal assurance that there is nothing here in common with the Reformation idea. To determine whether or not this particular school of mysticism directly or indirectly affected the creative growth of the Reformation germ in the soul of Luther, requires more than a mere acceptance of his own statement.

In the "Theologia Germanica" the popular catechism of German Mysticism, which Luther in 1515 regarded as the book above all others which had yet come into his hands, "in which he could learn or wish to learn more of what God, and Christ, and man and all things are" it is important that we ascertain if, and what, there is in common with the later Luther.

These South-German Mystics, Meister Eckhart, Johann Tauler, his pupil Suso, and others, presented the first

¹Sermon July 27, 1516, WA I, 102,25.
protest of the German mind against the Judaism and the formalism of the mediaeval Church. It is not an exaggeration to regard their works as an attempt to reclaim religion from fruitless speculation and to bring it within the limitations both of personal spiritual experience and of the understanding of the common people. "In all things perceive thine utter nothingness and fasten thy thoughts upon God" was the cardinal doctrine of Tauler's life.¹ and the principle which caused him to insist upon the anomymous publication of his works. Indeed, were it not for the fact that in the 13th chapter of the 'Theologia Germanica' we read, "Tauler has said, etc.," this Catechism whose author remains unknown, might be regarded as one of Tauler's anomymous publications. The date of the work has been fixed at about 1350 and its spirit of publication is surely in harmony with its teaching of self-subjugation. Just one year previous to the posting of his celebrated Ninety-five Theses, Luther caused the 'Theologia Germanica' to be printed in German and he wrote the already referred to testimonial in the preface pages of that publication. Historians usually refer to this little book in a passing sentence. The facts, however, that Luther was its translator

¹Rufus Jones "Studies in Mystical Religion". pp 274ff.
and sponsor, and that during his lifetime the book passed through nine separate editions, warrant for it a more thorough consideration.

A.D. Müller contends that Luther received his first reformatory stimulus from Tauler and that the 'Theologia Germanica' brought him to the Reformation. A double question naturally presents itself. What is the 'sumnum bonum' in the 'Theologia Germanica' and is there here any initial contribution to the Reformation idea? The unknown author of the 'Theologia Germanica' quotes Dionysius in the latter's epistle to Timothy, "For the beholding of the hidden things of God, thou shalt forsake sense and the things of the flesh and all that the senses can comprehend and shalt take thy stand upon an utter abandonment of thyself and enter into union with him who is, and who is above all existence and all knowledge." Believing such a condition quite possible, the author continues that this may happen to a man frequently until, becoming accustomed to it, he is able to look into eternity whenever he chooses. The 'sumnum bonum' in religious experience is thus attainable, according to the 'Theologia Germanica' by being led upwards from a state of sin which is selfishness to a

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state of godliness which is unselfishness. These are, thus, three psychological stages involved in this evolution to the perfect state:

a) Perfection, which includes contrition and sorrow for sin through full confession and hearty amendment.

b) Enlightenment, which involves abstinence from sin, the practise of virtue and good works, and the willing endurance of all manner of trial and temptation.

c) The union belongs to such as are perfect and it is consummated by pureness and sinlessness of heart, by love and by contemplation of God.

Commenting upon Saint Paul's statement, "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away", the author describes "that which is perfect" as a Being, comprehending and including all things in Himself and His own substance, without which and besides Whom there is no true substance and in Whom all things have their substance. Attempt as one will to explain away the obvious pantheism by attributing to Locke's philosophy the responsibility for changing the interpretation of the term 'substance' from its Athanasian Creed and Pauline sense to the modern interpretation of 'stuff' or matter.  

1. Kingsley in his preface to the English translation of the Theologia Germanica (from the German) by Susanna Winkworth, 1854.
the blunt fact remains that the 'sumnum bonnum' in religious experience, according to the "Theologia Germanica" is 'absorption by faith' and not 'justification by faith'. Furthermore, there is no attempt here, or with Tauler, to break with the inherited system. It is the Catholic doctrine of grace and knows nothing of "justification by faith".

Below, in his book of 1917, contending that the mystics brought Luther to the Reformation, declares that Ritschl's position, which opposes this theory, is antiquated, and that Ullman's theses, which declare that before the Reformation, there were reformers, are correct. Those who discover in the middle ages, either in the Renaissance or in German Mysticism, roots of the Reformation, support their position by declaring as evangelical, mediaeval principles which are not justification by works and which fall within the limitations either of Augustinianism or German Mysticism. Of course, as we have previously noted, there were tendencies to reform but it does appear to me that Scheel, Hall and Ritschl are justified in their position that to criticise the abuse of a practise is not yet a Reformation, nor are those people reformers who attempt merely to deepen piety. The seed of Luther's new spiritual growth came neither from the Renaissance nor from German Mysticism but from the first chapter of Romans. Already in his first series of lectures on the Psalms

1."Ursachen der Reformation."
Luther had given expression to the consciousness of the evangelical idea. That was in the winter of 1513-1514. It was not, however, until 1515 that Luther became interested in German Mysticism. That it influenced some ideas which he had already held is admitted. Pullan, however, errs in declaring that "Luther prepared the way for Pantheism" in Germany, 1 for, in the mysticism of absorption as taught in the "Theologia Germanica", there is nothing in common with Luther's matured doctrine of justification by faith. Indeed we shall observe that just as he had previously discarded the Scholastics, so, too, a few years later he was to completely abandon the Mystics.

The lectures on Romans record Luther's maturing thoughts on justification, original sin, knowledge of salvation, predestination and free will. They assist us in better understanding his progress, both to the time of these lectures and in his more important treatises of 1520. We shall examine relevant reflections on these subjects in the order indicated. 2

1 "Religion Since the Reformation", p.8.
2 Instead of using the Vulgate translation, particular verses commented upon will be quoted from the Authorized Version of 1611 and for the text of the lectures, Johannes Ficker's "Luther's Vorlesung über den Römerbrief (1515-16)" will be used. Part I contains "die Glosse" & Pt.II "die Scholien".
a) Justification by faith. "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Romans II, 13). Luther comments that though one may do the works of the law, if he is but a hearer of the law, without a subjective love or affection, he remains unjustified before God. The doers of the law, i.e., those who in grace have become the conquerors over evil inclinations, are seen as just before God and are therefore justified. Righteousness, in the sight of God, according to Luther, is the same as to be justified by him and, accordingly, a man is not seen by God as just because he is righteous but because he is esteemed as righteous. ¹

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered" (Romans IV, 7). Luther calls to the attention of his students the fact that Paul is here cautioning the Romans that righteousness, in the sight of God, is reckoned not through works but through forgiveness and that without this divine valuation, no one is justified. To be declared just is then the same as to be forgiven of one's sins through Christ. Luther claims, following this thought, that the lawyers and philosophers have misinterpreted the terms 'justitia' and 'injustititia' in speaking of

¹Ficke 1, 19, 13f; 20, 1-4; 20, 15-17.
them as conditions of the soul. He insists that both of these terms refer more properly to the declarations of God and that a man remains a sinner and unjustified until, realizing the lack of his justification, he desires God's justice through his mercy. ¹

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith, it is written, the just shall live by faith." (Romans I 17) This verse, with which Luther had been acquainted as early as his lectures on the Lombard Sentences, and, through which he had attributed a new enlightenment in his lectures on the Psalms, now becomes the center of his whole system of thought. Its significance for Luther is manifestly clearer and more definite than in his Psalter lectures. 'Justificatio ex fide' becomes for him the very foundation of our salvation. The very fact that the justice of God is apprehended, not in virtue of that by which a man is righteous but alone in virtue of that by which he has been justified, is enough for Luther to conclude that the manifestations of divine justification follows upon a Christo centric faith. ²

"We conclude, therefore, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans III,20).

¹ Ficker, II,112, 3ff; III,10ff. Corollarium.
² " II, 14,9ff.
Luther uses this verse to support the position which he has just taken, viz., that justification is not dependent upon the works of the law and that the fact that these works are being performed, neither assists in, nor is necessary to, justification before God. ¹ He continues, in commenting upon "Therefore by the deeds of the law then shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans III,20) to emphasize the hopelessness of depending upon works and the necessity of a living faith.²

But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh, on this wise, Say not in thine heart: Who shall ascend into Heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down from Heaven)" (Romans X,6). In order not to appear unbelieving in regard to the Ascension of Christ, Luther suggests that a believer should not speak of "Who shall ascend to Heaven?"; the word which he must believe is nothing else than 'Christ died and arose'. ³

The relation of his new conception of faith, prophecy and law, is definitely stated in his remarks upon "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the

¹ Ficker I, 35, 1lf. sine adiēctorio et necessitate operum legis.
² Ficker II, 89,1 Igitur mistificatio requirit non opera legis, sed vivam fidem, que sua operetur opera.
³ Ficker II, 240,22 ff.
seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans I,3); and, "What shall we say then, is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet'" (Romans VII, 7). Of the former verse he says that the whole Scriptures, particularly the Prophesies, are to be understood entirely through Christ; 1 Of the latter, he remarks that those who understand the Gospel as anything except 'good news' do not understand it at all, and that those who have transformed the Gospel into a law have made out of Christ a Moses. 2

"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another" (Romans II, 15). From our conscience come only thoughts which accuse us, for before God our works are nothing, says Luther. We excuse ourselves lightly because we easily please ourselves. He asks, what other use have we of conscience except that, being converted, it directs us in our knowledge of the law? Just such thoughts of self-complacency testify that we have done good and that we

1. Ficker, I, 4,19f.  
have left evil undone. But we have, therewith, not done enough for God nor have we fulfilled the law in its entirety. He inquires, "just where do we take shelter?" His answer is, "only through Christ and in Christ." But when the heart, in believing in Christ, accuses us and reminds us of evil works, we cast ourselves at the feet of Jesus and cry, 'Here is One who has done enough: this One is just; He is my protection; He died for me; He gives me of His justification and assumes the responsibility of my sins. Luther concludes by declaring that since Christ gives of His justification, the believer becomes, thereby, justified.

**b) Original Sin.** Luther's position in these lectures, on the doctrine of Original Sin is that the inherited inclination to sin remains with man always and that, consequently, like justification the forgiveness of sins is constantly required.

Upon "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered" (Romans 4:7), Luther regards even those in the household of faith as innately sinners and declares that they really appear as such in their own...

1. Ficker II, 43,31ff.
estimation, though outwardly, i.e., in the sight of God, they are justified not through works but alone through His Mercy.¹ Wonderful, then, says Luther, is the mercy of God, for He sees us as both sinners and as non-sinners.² Luther criticises the scholastics for 'dreaming' that just as the actual sin is removed, so is eliminated also the original sin, as though this inclination to sin were done away with in the twinkling of an eye. He then appeals to the Church fathers and proves that, on this particular doctrine, their teaching was contrary to that of the scholastics. He confidently quotes Augustine,³ who declared that sins are remitted in Baptism, i.e., they remain but are not put to account.⁴ Guilt, Luther asserts, was thus never entirely removed and the necessity for forgiveness remains constant.⁵ His comment upon "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (Romans V,14), continuing his appeal to the Church fathers, is that they

2. Ficker II, 105,14f.
3. vgl. Loofs 705 Anm. 3.
5. Ficker 124,30f.
(the Church fathers) correctly understood that original sin is the sinner himself, i.e., the very law of the flesh. 1

c) Certainty of Salvation. Throughout the lectures on Romans Luther occasionally maintains the opinion that certainty of salvation is impossible, i.e., it is impossible for a man to determine whether or not he is saved. He seems to be unconvinced concerning the certainty of justification and his doubts arise as well on the subject of election. By the summer of 1517, however, his views were expressed with greater clarity and, as we shall see, seem at times to be a reversion of his attitude in the Roman lectures. At this later date he declares with notable confidence that in grace, through the blood of Christ, a man may be cleansed from sin and consciously experience a definite spiritual peace. It should be said that this question of certainty of salvation, involving, as it does, Luther's idea of 'Rechtfertigung' is a much disputed point among Luther Scholars. 2

Commenting upon "Even the righteousness of God, which

1. Ficker. 144,14ff. 0
2. Differences are due to the fact that Hall, Scheel etc., interpret the orthodoxy through Ritschl and Walther and his followers. see Luther's 'Rechtfertigung' through Melanchthon.
is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference" (Romans III,22), Luther declares that though we may believe, we can never know if we are justified (nunquam scire possumus, an instificate simus, an crédamus) and, though we are certain that we believe in Christ, we are yet uncertain whether or not we believe in all of his words. Because of this uncertainty, he seems to conclude that faith in Christ remains also uncertain. 1 Referring again to Romans, IV,7, he continues that though it is desirable to be made just through Jesus and, though a man is justified because Christ does not hold him to account for his sins, it is still impossible for the penitent to know when he is justified since justification comes alone "ex Deo". Though God declares a man righteous, that man can never know it; he can continue to pray and to hope. 2

To the verse, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"(Romans VIII, 38,39), Luther attributes a particular revelation.

1.Ficker II, 89,2ff.
2.Ficker, 104,13ff.
Unless, as in this case of Paul, i.e., a special revelation, Luther remains convinced that no one can be certain of his election according to the general law, (nullus tamen certus est, se esse electum, lege communi). ¹

It was not until in 1517, as has been indicated, that Luther adopted the Pauline position. Then, contrary to his teachings on Romans, he believed that the consciousness of sin could be eliminated through faith in Christ and that in Him we are given that victory. He is certain that without Christ it is impossible for man to undo his earlier sins and to escape the torments of the future. Indeed unless a man really has Christ, Luther says, fear and trouble await him at every turn. If, however, in faith, the sinner realizes his condition, his sins are washed away, and, through the same faith he is brought to rest and peace. Faith thus becomes, for Luther, justified grace, which in turn, through the Sacraments, cleanses and renders worthy.²

   d) Predestination and the free will. In the year

   ¹ Scholae Denifle I. 709, A.2.
   ² Commentary on Hebrews, Denifle, 679f, A.1.
1515 Luther declared that the destiny of a man's soul depended entirely upon himself; that it could be lost or saved through the decision of his will. At that time, this was Luther's conception of the free will. It was a will thus free, like the man, to accept or reject the divine law. The fact that punishment should come is the responsibility of the will for God desires to save and it is impossible for God to save contrary to the desire of the human will. This was his position in 1515.

In the lectures which we are now considering, his views on the free will and predestination change radically. Commenting again upon Romans III, 22, Luther regards only them good who do the works of the law through grace. It is thus not the works upon which they depend but upon justification alone. Who works in this spirit, he thinks, continues to long after grace and is grieved that he is a sinner. In his reference to Romans IV, 7, he accuses the Scholastics of holding to the theory that justification is conditioned by the quantity and the quality of the moral consciousness in the will, which is dangerously near what he himself did a year before. He becomes even more confident when in commenting upon, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose" (Romans VIII, 28). Here, unless a man stands directly in grace,
there is no possibility of acquiring justification. To support so daring a statement, Luther again appeals to Augustine who regarded the will to be more enslaved than free. He declares as absurd, the Pelagian error that to him who does what lies in his power God will certainly grant grace, and charges that the entire Church has been sapped through a faith in this false teaching. 1

His poignant comment upon "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh" (Romans IX,3), is that we cannot hope to possess or attain God unless everything positive in us becomes negative. 2 About the same time he made a somewhat similar remark in a marginal note after Tauler's words, "so schlahen die wellen auff das schiff." He comments that he who does not stand in grace, goes under. Man wants to know and see what happens and why it happens, therefore, is the saying,"turn your eyes away from me." Indeed, he concludes, we write masses and limitations and would instruct God wherein and how far he should nurture us. Though we stand in faith God will work through us, he believes, only when we are not eager to understand

1 Ficker II, 323,10ff.
2 " II, 219,22ff.
just what he does, thus leaving our faith secure and our will desireless. ¹

Both in the ninety-seven theses of September 1516 and in the celebrated Ninety-five Theses of October 31st, 1517, Luther's thoughts on predestination were more definitely expressed. In the former he submits that the will of man, without grace, is not free but a slave, ² in the latter, that when man does what is in his own strength to do, he sins for he can of himself neither desire nor think. ³ The surest guiding preparations for grace, Luther thinks, is, therefore the eternal election and predestination of God for from the human standpoint, there is only unreadiness and resistance against grace in the very anticipation of it. ⁴

Since the first part of this work is intended merely to trace those qualities in Luther's development which contributed to his spiritual freedom, criticism of his rather extreme views of the enslaved will will be reserved for another chapter. It is enough to record here that the most important advances made during the lectures on Romans

¹ Marginal note to Tauler, WA, IX 102,15ff.
² WA. I, 147,36.
³ WA. I, 148,14.
⁴ WA, I, 225, Theses 29,30.
was the adoption of this doctrine. Instead of the position of the previous year on the free will, i.e., that a man is really the master of his own fate, the conviction that self holds the will captive becomes for Luther, as it had been for Paul, a great consolation. The doctrine to which he had previously subscribed, he unhesitatingly discards and henceforth regards it as the most dismal fatalism.

Since man's nature confers upon him the freedom to do wrong but, according to Luther, provides no similar power to do right, he is convinced - no doubt with the aid of German mysticism - of the complete corruption of human nature. Convinced of that fact he immediately grasps the idea that the grace of God cannot be resisted. 1 His other conclusions, e.g., the doctrine of predestination and the certainty of salvation, obviously follow.

Freedom has, thus, for Luther a far different significance than it had in 1515. He had spoken so much then of the power of the will in striving for happiness and in building personality. Now he declares that those doctrines of the Church, e.g., fear of punishment, hope of eternal reward, striving for rest with God, the desire for holiness etc., which supported these impulses are equally as selfish

1. Ficker II, s108; 3 143ff.
in motive as the human desire for happiness. Christ becomes the personification of freedom. Luther observes the Son of God departing so far from His self that He is ready, for the love of the Father, to give Himself into eternal damnation, if that would be the Father's will.

A propos of what has been said of German Mysticism, it is significant that Luther did not stop at self-denial and thus drift into calm indifference to morality. He is convinced, rather, that the distinguishing features of a positive morality are fulfilled only when man regards himself as a tool of the Lord and permits himself to look upon all of his deeds as actions performed to the glory of God. He definitely sets himself against the half-unwilling will of Nominalism and is prepared to follow his new light.

Justification, itself, assumes a somewhat different significance. Belief in the forgiveness of sins becomes more definitely the basis of that doctrine. The goodness of God, revealed through grace, so shames the sinner that he becomes disgusted with his narrow, perverted, selfish will, and, after following upon what appears to be an inner contradiction, there emerges a passionate impulse to live in complete harmony with God. The man is thus justified and simultaneously, there is divinely created a will, which, according to Luther, is truly free. Freedom founded upon this relation to God is naturally contrasted with
the freedom spoken of in the law. In the lectures on the Psalter Luther stated that in the monastery, through obedience, the simplest deed was of the highest spiritual significance. This same principle has now, an entirely different application. Whether the deed be great or small, its spiritual value, according to his new interpretation, cannot be determined by the degree of obedience to a dogma or an ecclesiastical order but alone on the basis of divine love emerging from a joyful will. Divine communion - and not divine absorption - reorganizes the impulses of the will and new goals, hitherto undreamed of, appear. The will, in its peculiar Christian freedom, is thus, for Luther, superior to law because it is nurtured by love which is the very essence of God.

No doubt to a disinterested person, who may perchance have heard him in 1515 and again in 1516, Luther must have lived and taught as a different man. His general outlook upon life had completely altered. In his lectures on the Psalms, it is true that he criticised somewhat, but his absorbing interest then was in scholarly research and in a practical rearrangement of recognized ecclesiastical problems. In the lectures on the Romans, for the first time in the class-room, he exercised a genuine concern for the spiritual welfare of his fellow man. Bishops and the Church, nevertheless, still retain, in Luther's system of
thought, an absolute right to condemn false teachers regardless of how much such teachers may protest that they have the real truth. Those who urge upon the Church their individual convictions, he regards as self pleasing and the personification of vanity, subjecting without exception to their own opinions and selfish purposes.  

Thus, when Luther begins to attack the outer legality of the Church, it was not out of a mere disposition to grumble. He had personally reached a state of spiritual freedom by uncovering what he believed to be the spiritual treasure of the Church, viz., the doctrine of justification by faith. I would not depreciate the value already placed upon his discovery of the significance of Romans 1:17, as recorded in his lectures on the Psalter; it appears, nevertheless, that as he concludes his lectures on Romans, he is beginning to experience personally, that about which he, and others before him, had ceaselessly talked, viz., spiritual peace and quiet. When Luther reflects upon his terrible cloister experiences in Erfurt and the hopeless

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1. Ficker II p.248ff.
state of the Church, he can conceal neither his sympathy, nor his brotherly love, for the great masses in spiritual bondage.

Specific works and ecclesiastical systems begin to lose their significance for Luther in his new conception of spiritual values. Though he continued to think highly of monasticism, it is evident, from his concluding lecture on Romans, that he criticizes no longer after the manner of a monk but as a man who had at last found himself. Yet, in spite of the many abuses and errors within the Church, he continues to love it and to teach a careful observance of its objective ceremonies. With fables, pictures, anecdotes and German proverbs, he endeavored to present faithfully to the German mind a clearer interpretation of ecclesiastical Latin and Greek. If at this

1. "Churchmen in high places were constantly unmindful of truth, justice, purity, self-denial; many had lost all sense of Christian ideals; not a few were stained by pagan vices. The temper of ecclesiastics like Bembo and Bibliena, shown forth in the comedies of this later cardinal as they were acted before the Roman court and instituted far and wide, is to us not less incomprehensible than disedifying. LeoX, although certainly not an unbeliever was frivolous in the extreme; Clement VII drew upon himself the contempt as well as the hatred of all who had dealings with him by his crooked ways and cowardly subterfuges, which led to the taking and pillage of Rome." Barry (a Catholic Authority) in 'The Renaissance," Catholic Encyl.
time, he criticized the Indulgence system, it was neither
the Indulgences, nor the system, but the excessive charges
demanded for them and the practise of their distribution.
It was neither the fast nor the mass to which he objected
but to the abuse of either; not the worship of the saints
but the superstition involved in the adoration of the
saints. The critical vein in his reformative temperament
is already unmistakeably manifested but the idea of revolt-
ing from the Catholic Church is foreign to his thoughts.
PART II.

LUTHER'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CAUSE OF HUMAN LIBERTY.

CHAPTER IV.


In 1517 Martin Luther expressed publicly and formally some of the conclusions which he had so laboriously reached. That, in these first public protests against ecclesiastical authority, there should be a laboured reserve, is not to be wondered at for they were made at a time in history, when, whether by ballot in the East or by edict in the West, the price of individuality was ostracism.

There is no doubt that Luther had already suspected that, through an uninterrupted series of accumulated laws, the Church had thwarted the very purpose of its existence, for, repeatedly, during the six months previous to the posting of his Ninety-five Theses, he criticized the prevalent ecclesiastical cultivation of piety, both from the pulpit and in the lecture room.¹ He had preached to his congregation against the paganism contained in the Churchly adoration.

¹ Sources in support are from Loofs 715ff.
of the saints\(^1\) and, to his students, he had deplored that many of the promises of Indulgences were unreasonable and that the Pope and the priest, so liberal when temporal help for the Church is concerned, were immoderately cruel when they did not grant, through Indulgences and in the name of God, more or as much on behalf of souls.\(^2\) In a sermon preached July 27th, 1516, he had asserted that Indulgences, though they represent the merits of Christ and the Saints and therefore to be accepted with all veneration, have become, nevertheless, one of the worst means of covetousness.\(^3\) He had denied that the Pope was able to release anyone from the punishments of purgatory through the authority of his position and had insisted that such an act could be performed alone through the intercession of the whole Church.\(^4\) Exactly one year before the appearance of his Ninety-five Theses (October 31st, 1517), Luther, in a sermon, had deplored the proclamation
of Indulgences because he regarded true inner penitence, i.e., of the whole Christian life, as desiring 'satisfaction' not through Indulgences but alone through the Cross (ideo non petit indulgentias, sed cruces). And, on January 1st. 1517, he had criticized the Church for neglecting to teach a sound doctrine of faith and a justification which is subjective and spiritual. Personally, Luther was nearer a break with Rome than his formal theses indicate.

We must not overlook the fact that before Luther made his formal declaration of opposition to the prevailing ecclesiastical hierarchy, he made a sincere effort to reform theological scholarship. On September 4th. 1517, Luther issued ninety-seven theses against Aristotle and the Scholastics. This act was the result of a deliberate effort to establish the study of the Bible as the center of all Christian education and to break the hold of Scholasticism upon ecclesiastical scholarship. It was his first formal effort to carry his ideas of reform beyond the immediate constituency of
Wittenberg University. That Luther confidently expected to raise an important issue in the intellectual world is obvious, for the theses were printed and widely distributed. They were received, however, with but a passive interest and today specialists alone are acquainted with their contents.

In fairness to Aristotle, it must be said that he had been taken - obviously, without his consent - from his historic setting and was made the foundation for the elaborate superstructure of mediaeval scholasticism. There is no doubt that Luther not only failed to appreciate Aristotle's unique position in the thought of the day but that, in his furious utterances against the Greek philosopher, he as well did Aristotle personally, a considerable injustice. Today, no one doubts either Aristotle's sincerity of purpose or the fact that he was one of history's notable contributors to human knowledge. Nevertheless in the reforming movement of the Sixteenth Century, not alone in theology but in science and philosophy, Aristotle was the personification of all those forces which were as a stumbling-block to progress. "In bidding men turn from the speculation to the scrutiny of nature, Bacon bade them rise against Aristotle. In bespeaking a new lease of life for metaphysics, on the plea of wedding metaphysics, to fact, Descartes repudiated the authority of
Luther's continuous attack upon Aristotle must be regarded, therefore, not as a 'per se' denunciation of Aristotle but rather as the evidence of an ever-widening breach between the future reformer and mediaeval scholasticism.

We appreciate the significance of Luther's contribution to the cause of human liberty only if we fully comprehend the tremendous forces of bondage with which he had to contend. Accordingly, it is necessary that we pause to examine in detail the Sacrament of Penance and the institution of Indulgences.

From the Tertullian conceptions of 'meritum' and 'satisfactio' grew important thirteenth century distinctions. These distinctions, in turn, conditioned the theological traditions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. 'Satisfactio', which in the ancient Church involved prolonged fasting, almsgiving, freeing of slaves, etc., was a public sign of heart felt sorrow. It was generally accepted as well pleasing to God and as sufficient evidence of sincere repentance. The ancient Church, i.e., the congregation, was seriously interested in repentance for the soul's sake. It received the

2. Main sources used - Lindsay pp 216-222; Bohmer pp 78-82; Smith pp 36-39.
confession and regulated the amount of satisfaction required from the repentant.

When, however, danger of death through illness prevented the faithful and sincere repentant from fulfilling the requirements of the satisfaction imposed by the congregation, the particular satisfaction specified might be exchanged for another. Indeed, if there existed no doubt of the sincerity of the repentance, the severity of the satisfaction might be reduced. Such adjustments of satisfactions in emergency cases mark the beginning of a new system. Then, too, the congregation transferred to the priest the responsibility both of hearing confessions and of administering suitable satisfaction. Thus private confession replaced public confession. In order to facilitate the operation of an increasingly complicated system, uniform lists of peculiar sins and their corresponding satisfactions were printed. These were for the use of the priests and were intended to establish uniformity in practise. The satisfaction, of course, became proportionate in severity to the nature of the sins committed. In the seventh century began the practise of commuting satisfactions and soon a schedule of alternative satisfactions was offered. For example, a penitent might have the option of going on a pilgrimage for ten years; or of living on bread and water for two years; or of paying twelve shillings a year
reversed the usual question concerning Indulgences and asked himself "What was the motive of the Pope and the bishops in granting Indulgences?" His answer to the question presents new material which is especially important in the study of the history of this particular dogma from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries. These particular centuries witnessed the great wars of faith between the Christians and the Mohammedans. The question arose, was a warrior, engaged in the defense of his faith, assured of his salvation? During the first conflicts it was foremost in the minds of thinking people. Now, the Moslem entered battle with the assurance that in the event of death, while thus engaged, the doors of Paradise would immediately open to him. The Christian, however, was in great doubt. When, however, in 853, Pope Leo IV. called the Franks to a holy war, he relieved the faithful of this doubt. He offered, as an inducement for enlistment, the assurance of heavenly reward to those who fell in the conflict. A few years later, in 877, Pope John VIII granted to such warriors of the faith entire absolution from all ecclesiastical offences. These provisions, however, were only for those who fell in battle. As such, they were not Indulgences; they were, nevertheless, the historic omen of the monstrous system which was about to curse the Church.
to the Church. Then there followed a natural disposition to increase the number of alternatives in the "Penitentiaries" (i.e. the books of discipline) and to relax in the severity of ecclesiastical penalties.

With the involved complications, following upon the creation of the system of commutation of imposed penances, there developed gross abuses of the system on the part of the priests. The power to grant Indulgences was accordingly transferred from the priests to the bishops whose ingenious uses of the privilege procured the necessary funds for the erection of many of the great mediaeval Cathedrals. The bishops likewise abused the privilege and because of this, together with the fact that there were obvious financial possibilities involved, the power to grant Indulgences throughout the entire Roman Church was left to the discretion of the Pope. Thus it was that the institution of papal Indulgences had replaced the original system of contrition, confession and satisfaction, as practised in the ancient Church.

In 1906, Adolf Gottlob made an interesting contribution to the critical study of the Indulgence system.  

\[\text{1. Lindsay note I, p. 218; a detailed explanation of the system is available in Schmitz "Die Bussbucker und die Bussdisziplin der Kirche." }\]

\[\text{2. Boehmer p. 76ff.}\]
But the Pope needed soldiers. What of the man who returned from a Christian Crusade to active life? Could not his service be considered as a commuted satisfaction? In 1052, during the war with the Normans, Pope Leo IX answered this question by instituting the Cross Indulgence. The Cross Indulgence provided that a stipulated penance could be mitigated through military service in a Holy war. This interpretation of the Cross Indulgence continued through all of the religious wars until the Holy Crusade of 1095 under Pope Urban II.

There was now a diminished enthusiasm for religious conflicts and the Cross Indulgence lost much of its effectiveness. At this juncture, a new Indulgence was introduced. It granted freedom not only from ecclesiastical punishment but also from the torments of purgatory. Already, under Pope Urban II, the elasticity of the Indulgence system is to be observed. To the old and feeble, if they would secure, equip and finance a substitute for the ranks of the Christian troops, they would be eligible to the same Indulgences as though they were personally enlisted. In the middle of the twelfth century, Pope Eugene III decreed that any member of the Crusading Armies could be released of one seventh part of his penance by the payment of a specified subscription. In 1199 Pope Innocent III recognized in all forms of charity the elements of worthiness
necessary to qualify as a recipient of grace through an Indulgence. The entire system of Indulgences, now received a new interpretation. If earlier the Papacy used Indulgences as a means to secure soldiers, now it employed them quite as effectively as a source of financial income. Thus the faithful were deliberately taxed and the papal court became luxuriously wealthy.

In the thirteenth century religious wars ceased to be the height of ambition for Christian people. Above everything, the financial status of the Church had to be preserved; there being no more promising source of income, the system of Indulgences had to be retained. A continued use of the system, however, demanded new and attractive motives. The Cross Indulgence had outlived its usefulness. What could be done? Pope Boniface VIII, in 1300, solved the problem by establishing a Jubilee Indulgence. Instead of eligibility being conditioned by membership in the Crusading armies, as in the case of the Cross Indulgence, a pilgrimage to Rome was made the new stipulation. Exactly as in the case of the Cross Indulgence one could be exempted from the pilgrimage through the payment of a substantial subscription to the Church. In their respective periods, the development of the two Indulgences was practically the same. Indulgences continued to finance the Church.
There was now a complementary problem for the Church theologians. Could they create a system of dogma compatible with the existing practices of the papacy? Or could they, perhaps, adapt the inherited creeds of the Church to papal practice? Just here the old idea of Indulgences underwent several very important theological changes.

Through the efforts of Alexander of Hales and, later, Thomas Aquinas, the idea of a treasury of merits (thesaurus meritorum) was formulated. According to the new dogma, the faithful are members of one body; their good deeds are the property of all and the sinful can benefit through the merits of the more saintly. Though its definition was a bit vague, in Luther's day the doctrine was well established in the minds of believers. In this treasury of merits were not only the good deeds of the faithful but as well the inexhaustible goodness of Christ. To this treasury the Pope held the key and this particular fact had an important effect upon the significance of the new doctrinal statement. For not only could penances be substituted or mitigated, as heretofore, but, according to the new doctrine, the Pope could sell to the faithful a spiritual equivalent for the 'satisfaction' due from the penitent for his sins.

About this same time, the institution of Penance was declared a Sacrament. The ancient idea of penance had involved contrition (sorrow for sins committed); confession
of those sins to the priest; a manifestation of sorrow in accordance with the prescriptions of the Church through the Confessor; and divine absolution pronounced by the priest. It will be observed, the order was 'contritio', 'confessio' 'satisfactio' and 'absolutio'. When, however, Penance became a Sacrament, the order changed. Under the new arrangement, 'absolutio' followed 'confessio' and preceded 'satisfactio'. No longer, then, is 'satisfactio' the external sign of sorrow anticipating divine pardon for it has lost its former significance completely. In the sacrament 'absolutio'; i.e., the remission of guilt for all sins confessed together with the eternal punishment for those sins, followed immediately upon 'confessio'. Unfortunately for the sinner, the theologians, in their efforts to harmonize the doctrines of the Church with the practice of the Church, declared that, though eternal punishment vanished with the absolution, it remained necessary, because of the inherent justice of God, to experience a temporal punishment for the sins committed. Satisfaction now became merely the temporal punishment for sins, the guilt and the eternal punishment of which had already been removed through absolution. Such temporal punishment if it was not entirely satisfied in this world had to be endured in purgatory. Thus there was the ever present uncertainty as to whether or not one had rendered
null account for the temporal punishment of his sins.
Because of this possibility everybody faced the likelihood of purgatorial punishment. In the hands of theologians, Indulgences became still more elastic. The pains of purgatory, i.e., temporal punishment, not received or otherwise satisfied in human life and not included in the absolution provided for in the Sacrament of Penance, could be expiated by purchasing, through the Pope, the necessary amount of goodness from the treasury of merits. Bonaventura, Alexander of Halles and Thomas Aquinas enhanced the value of Indulgences further by declaring that, in the event that the priest had erred in fixing the quantity or the quality of the penalties imposed, Indulgences really provided for the remission of all penalties following upon absolution, whether or not imposed by the priest.

Another important thirteenth century consideration, bearing upon the efficacy of Indulgences, was the distinction made between 'attrition' and 'contrition'. Both had to do with the sinner's attitude in approaching the Sacrament of Penance. According to the old system, a penitent approached the congregation or the priest in a spirit of 'contrition', i.e., out of a sincere sorrow prompted by love. Under the Indulgence Sacramental system an appeal was made to the apathetic Christian, who, though realizing his sin, could not attribute his sorrow to divine
love. Such indifferent persons, according to the theologians, either through a passive personal sorrow or through fear, may, as well, escape the pains of purgatory. Now, the technical word for this imperfect sorrow was 'attrition'. It naturally followed that attrition warranted more temporal punishment than 'contrition'. Thus, to Christians with convenient consciences, to the indifferent and the wealthy, the purchase of Indulgences became not an undesirable transaction. To the great mass of Christians, the three steps to salvation were attrition, confession, Indulgences.

Just as the Jubilee Indulgence of 1300, created by Pope Boniface VIII and later distributed through well organized agencies by Pope Boniface IX, had established the pilgrimage to Rome as a means of meeting the financial demands of the Curia, so, a century later, the system was carried to further extremes through the institution of another Jubilee Indulgence. This particular Indulgence was designed to free from the torments of purgatory, not only the living but also the dead. Now it was at the time that this particular Indulgence had received its widest publicity and when the Fuggers of Augsburg were the bankers for the holy business in Germany, that the papal agent, John Tetzel, by the authority of the Pope, painted in the most terrifying language the agonies of purgatory.
before masses of the superstitious faithful in Germany. Thus, in this great financial campaign, meant primarily to provide sufficient funds for the completion of St. Peter's Rome, Tetzel, relying confidently upon the afore mentioned creedal creations of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries could shout: "Hört ihr nicht sehr kühnen und beredten Monches eure toten Eltern schreien und rufen: 'Erbarmt euch doch mein. Wir sind in schweren Straf und Pein, daraus ihr uns mit geringen Almosen eretten könnt.'" The campaign spirit was embodied in the slogan, "Sobald das Geld im Kasten klingt, die Seele aus dem Fegefeuer springt." 1

It was in opposition to such a system that Luther was now about to place his new views of 'justificatio ex fide'. The chains of ecclesiastical dogma which for generations had imprisoned the spiritual life of the faithful were at last to be broken. It is only when we recall Luther's early training that we appreciate how peculiarly well qualified he was for the task which awaited him. Then, too, we noted in his lectures on the Romans that with his new conception of the Gospel, there came a brotherly interest in his fellow man. Realizing fully, as only Luther could,

1. It is not to be deducted that repentance had no part whatever in Tetzel's preaching.
the horrifying details of this ecclesiastical bondage as it affected the individual believer, interest in the spiritual welfare of his brother man now developed into a heartbroken love and, following upon the comparative failure of the ninety-seven theses, Luther definitely resolved to sponsor the cause of the people. This he determined to do not behind closed University doors but by taking the \\
\\ninto his confidence and by pleading their cause against both the errors of mediaeval scholasticism and the abuses of a self-seeking Church. When, therefore, with an interest which was primarily ethical, Luther called the attention of the world to the abuses and the misuses of both the sacrament of Penance and the system of Indulgences, he unconsciously instituted a reformation which was destined to affect the cause of human liberty in every phase of political, social, industrial and spiritual life.

The Ninety-five Theses (Oct. 31, 1517).

The Ninety-five Theses mark both the conclusion of Luther's personal struggle for spiritual freedom and the beginning of a great revolution in accepted religious thought. In the Theses there is no attempt to criticize either the Sacrament of Penance or the institution of Indulgences. Luther strikes alone at their abuse and
misuse. The Theses do, however, inject something definitely new into the thought of the day, an element which in its natural maturity, goes far towards demanding spiritual emancipation for the individual. Luther, while approving sacramental confession to the priest, demands the spiritual interpretation of repentance and accuses the Church of not taking Christ at His word by not regarding penitence as a means of grace. It was this position which Luther was expected to recant before Cajetan at Augsburg. But in a sense, too, the idea was a very old one, for already the ancient Church had considered spirituality in repentance as fundamental to Christian piety. Luther realized this and now definitely deserted Aristotle and the Scholastics, whom he had heretofore strenuously criticized, and concentrated his attention more and more upon Augustine and the Bible. The historic ties which united him with the Church fathers were thus uncovered and upon them he depends for much of his confidence in the future.

Deeply concerned now about the spiritual welfare of the masses, the thought of the papacy seeking lucre in the name of religion naturally became unbearably offensive to Luther's new spiritual consciousness. His protests, however, are not in the spirit of revolt. He commends heartily the traditional use of Indulgences and urges the bishops and curates to receive their commissions of
apostolic pardons with all reverence for these remissions granted by the Pope are by no means to be despised; they are clearly declarations of divine remission. God, he says, remits no man's guilt without at the same time subjecting him to the authority of his representative, the priest, and, anyone who speaketh against the truth of these apostolic pardons are to be anathema and accursed (sit ille anathema et maledictus).

But, while he thus proclaims his loyalty to the institutions of the Church, he is none the less severe in his criticism of the abuses of these institutions. No doubt with a picture in his mind of the multitudes of poor artisans and toiling peasants being tortured by the cajoling oratory of Tetzel and his kind, Luther ironically remarks that when the money clatters in the chest, gain and avarice may be advanced but the true suffrage of the Church is dependent alone upon the will of God and then inquires why the Pope, whose riches exceed those of the wealthiest of the wealthy, does not build the Baslica of St. Peter with his own money rather than with that of the poor

1. WA. I, 236, 35ff - Thesis 69.
3. WA. I, 233, 23f - Th. 7.
4. WA. I, 236, 39f - Th. 71.
5. WA. I, 234, 29ff - Thèses 27&28.
believers. At any rate, he continues, these Indulgences do not insure salvation for no one is certain of his own contrition, much less of the securing of the plenary remission. He regards those who teach otherwise and say that these pardons from the Pope are the inestimable gift of God, by which the purchasers are automatically reconciled to God, as eternally damned; for vain indeed, he says, is any hope of salvation through letters of pardon, even though a commissary - yes, the Pope, himself - were to pledge his own soul for them (ipse suam animam pro illis impignaret).

In Luther's ingenious arraignment of the Pope, he condemns the papal attitude to Indulgences as unchristian. In magnificent irony Luther suggests that if this attitude were really Christian, he is quite certain that the Pope in his acclaimed authority would empty purgatory for love's sake and because of the soul's supreme need, instead of reclaiming an infinite number of souls for the very weak reason of supplying money for the erection of a Basilica. Nor does Luther regard it in harmony with Christian ethics that for the sake of money an impious man and an enemy of

1. WA. I, 237,17f - Thesis 86.
2. WA. I, 234,35ff; 235,1ff - Theses 30-33.
3. WA. I, 236, If Thesis 52.
4. WA. I, 237,22f - " 82.
God is permitted to redeem a pious soul which loves God.  

He has thus both supported the system of Indulgences and exposed the abuses of that system. But so much might have been expected from any one of many spiritual leaders of the Church who were concerned about the rights of the individual within the limitations imposed by accumulated ecclesiastical doctrines. Luther, however, went further. Contrary to the interpretation of mediaeval scholasticism, he submitted that the Pope can create no Indulgence which involves more than a remission of ecclesiastical penalty.

The Pope, Luther insists, has neither the will nor the power to remit penalties other than those imposed by his own authority or by the canons (quas arbitrio vel suo vel canonum imposuit) 2 and, therefore, when the Pope speaks of plenary remissions of all penalties, he does not mean of all but only of those imposed by himself (sed a seipso tantummodo impositarum). 3 Preachers of Indulgences, he says, of course, err who declare that by purchasing Indulgences from the Pope, a man is free and safe from all punishment 4 for the grace granted through these pardons has respect alone to the penalties of sacramental

1. WA. I. 237, 29ff - Thesis 84.  
2. WA. I, 233, 18f - "  5.  
3. WA. I, 234, 15f - "  20.  
Another startling contention, contrary to the papal claim, is that the Pope has no jurisdiction over the dead and that canonical punishment cannot be commuted into purgatorial punishment. The priests act wrongly and injuriously, he declares, when they, in regard to the dying, reserve the canonical penances for purgatory for the dying are already dead to the canon laws and quite justly are released from them.

Nor does Luther permit the Pope the right to remit the guilt of sin; this, he claims, is done alone by God. The Pope, accordingly, has no power to remit any guilt except as he declares it to have been remitted by God or, at most, by remitting cases reserved to himself (casus reservatos sibi) in which cases guilt would remain, were his power abused. Furthermore, Luther regards the true treasure of the Church, not the merits of Christ and of the Saints but the Holy Gospel of glory and the grace of God (Verus thesaurus ecclesie est sacrosanctum evangelium glorie et gratie dei).

Not only did Luther confine the sphere of Indulgences to ecclesiastical penalties, deny to the Pope jurisdiction over the dead, and question the doctrine of the treasure of the Church; he as well made a very practical application of his new conception of the Gospel and demanded for repentance a spiritual interpretation. This is nothing short of a plea for rational religion on behalf of believing Christians. His position was that since Christ said 'repent ye' (penitentiam agite), he meant that the whole life of the believer should be penitence (omnem vitam fidelium penitentiam esse valuit)¹ and that this word is not to be given the priestly interpretation of 'to do penance'. This inner penitence, Luther says, naturally produces mortification of the flesh and continues till our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.² Indeed, in the light of the true Gospel, Luther claims that, instead of the abundance of pardons relaxing punishment and causing men to hate it, true contrition loves punishment.³

Brotherly love and good works he regards as the natural sequence of a contrite heart because by a work of love, love increases and the man becomes a better man.

1. WA. I. 233,10f - Thesis I.
2. WA. I. 233,16f - " 4.
3. WA. I. 235,16f - " 40.
It is different in the case of pardons for by them a man becomes not better but only freer from punishment. Letters of pardon, thus, become unnecessary, the one essential to Christian faith being true repentance; for, in the first place, every Christian who experiences true compunction has plenary remission of pain and guilt without letters of pardon; and, in the second place, every Christian, whether alive or dead, has a part in all of the benefits of Christ and the Church which are given to him by God and without letters of pardon.

It is objected that a continuous perpetuation of repentance has a tendency to produce artificial neurasthenia and a complementary spiritual and mental fatigue. It must be remembered that Luther's age knew nothing of the deductions of the comparatively modern science of psychotherapy. For this reason it is the more noteworthy that later in his "de libertate Christiana" he should carefully

2. WA. I. 234, 35f - " 36.
3. WA. I. 234, 37f - " 37; "Wenn These 30, 31 ein nachklang von Luthers früheren schweren Kampfen waren, so steht in These 36, 37 der Luther vor uns, der auf dem Weg zum festen innern Frieden ist." Wernle p. 12, 25ff.
guard against a too intensive introspection. It is manifestly unfair to raise objection to Luther's severe concentration upon repentance without considering simultaneously his equally severe doctrine of the illimitable grace of God. Indeed, to do otherwise is not to understand the whole Luther. Both in denying the doctrine of the treasure of merits and in demanding the right of spirituality in repentance, Luther had now publically declared his conviction, not alone in the capacity of a University professor but more as one who had sympathetically sensed the spiritual wants and cravings of his time, that the individual believer, by divine right, should be liberated from an ecclesiastical system of piety which was as artificial as it was mechanical.

The Theses, though simply ninety-five strokes at a colossal abuse, were presented for the purpose of inviting academic discussion. Their popular appeal was, nevertheless, unmistakable. That Luther was really indignant because of these abuses and that his Theses represent something more far-reaching than merely propositions for an academic debate can be deducted from his letter to the Archbishop of Mayence, under whose sanction the particular Indulgences referred to, were sold. The letter is of the same date as the posting of the Theses - October, 31st. 1517.

"Papal Indulgences are being disseminated among the
people for the building of St. Peters, and, under your illustrious sanction. I do not condemn, at present, the statements of the preachers who advertise them for I have not seen them but I deplore the fact that the people have deducted from their statements the most erroneous ideas. These unhappy souls actually believe that if they purchase letters of pardon they are assured of salvation, likewise that as soon as their money clatters in the chest, souls will be released from purgatory; in short, that the conferred grace is so great that there is no sin which cannot be absolved thereby, even if (as they say) using an impossible example, a man should violate the mother of God. They, as well, believe that these Indulgences free them from all penalty and guilt... Good God! so are the souls committed to your care, Father, taught unto death, all for which you have a fearful and growing reckoning to pay... What else was there for me to do... except to pray your Reverence, for the sake of our Lord, Jesus Christ, to remove your instructions to your commissioners and to impose some other form of preaching... lest someone should finally arise and disprove them and their statements publicly to the great blame of your Highness. This, I vehemently deplore and yet I fear it may happen
unless there is a speedy redress". 1

Immediately following upon the publication of the Theses, Luther became conscious of the support and confidence of two classes of German folk - the sturdy Germans of the quiet family life and simple evangelical faith; and his none the less sincere compatriots who, at the close of the Middle Ages, had adopted a piety independent of ecclesiastical control or influence. Unlike his experience with the ninety-seven theses, the Ninety-five Theses, through no particular effort of his own, 2 had an unprecedented circulation. They were at once translated and, in a fortnight, the whole of Germany had read them; within four weeks Western Europe had received them "as if they had been circulated by Angelic messengers". 3 Almost over night Luther had become a national figure and the consciousness of the grave responsibility involved in giving expression to the sentiments of many thousands of his fellow countrymen steeled his courage. Indeed, he

2. Luthers mentions in a letter to Christopher Scheurl, March 8th. 1518, that at the time of the posting of the Theses, he had entertained no thought of printing them before first consulting friends and that, at the time, he had certain doubts about them himself, which would have lead him to speak far differently and more distinctly, had he known what was going to happen. - Enders I, p. 615f.
3. Quoted from Myconius by Lindsay p. 230.
realized early that to still his voice would be fatal not only to his own spiritual freedom but to the evangelical faith of the German people.

It was perhaps the lack both of perfect logical order and of a strong theoretical appeal in the Theses themselves which prompted Luther's preparation of the "Resolutiones disputationium de indulgentiarum virtute". The "resolutiones" was a carefully prepared work and was dedicated to Pope Leo X. Luther was eager to have the criticism of the Bishop of Brandenburg before its publication but the considerable delay in the Bishop's reply - his advice was not to print the 'Resolutiones' - together with the slowness of the printers, postponed its actual appearance in print until September, nearly one year after the posting of the Theses.

In the 'Resolutiones, not only did Luther maintain his former position apropos of Indulgences but he now raises the question of the Authority of the Pope and declares that all practices introduced by the papacy or the Supreme Council since the beginning of the thirteenth century are, in the true sense, unorthodox. Furthermore, he boldly

1.WA.I. 522ff.
2.Luther speaks of this delay in his letter to Christopher Scheurl, March 8th. 1518 - Enders I. 166,24ff.
reveals the ingenious and artificial explanations of the scholastic theologians, referred to in the forepart of the present chapter, in their efforts to justify papal practice by the creation of new dogmas.¹

Luther comments further in magnificent irony upon the attainments of contemporary scholasticism in a dedicatory letter ² which accompanied the 'Resolutiones' to the Pope.

"... Now, what am I to do? It is impossible for me to recall (The Theses) and yet I see what violent hatred is kindled against me through this popularity. I come unwillingly before the uncertain and divided judgment of the public. I am untaught, naturally stupid and destitute of knowledge (stupidus ingenio, vacuus eruditione) before an age so rich in literary attainments that it would force Cicero into a corner (ad angulum), who, in his day, lacked not fame and popularity. ... . . .

Now, most blessed Father, I prostrate both myself and my possessions at your feet; revive me or slay me; call me or recall me; approve me or reprove me, as you please (vivifica, occide, voca, revoca, approba, . . . . . . . .

1. WA. I. 620ff.
reproba, ut placuerit). I shall consider your words as those of Christ speaking in you. If my just lot is death; I shall not refuse to die. For the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; blessed be his name forever. Amen. May he ever preserve you. Amen".

Luther was given an early opportunity to recant but since he could not do so conscientiously, he refused and, at the same time, resigned his office as district Vicar.¹ At Heidelberg, in a public debate on justification, he enlarged upon the significance of Romans 1.17, and

1. After the Archbishop of Mayence had received Luther's letter together with a copy of the Theses - their publication had seriously interfered with the sale of Indulgences - he (the Archbishop) forwarded a copy of the Theses, together with some other published works of Luther's to the Pope, Leo, concluding that the Theses were produced in a fit of envy, instructed Gabriel della Volta, General of the Augustinians to quiet the outbursts of the second-rate monk. Luther's old friend and provincial Vicar, Staupitz, was in turn directed by Volta to insist that Brother Martin recant. It was at a meeting of the Saxon province held at Heidelberg April and May of 1518 - Luther was in attendance - that Staupitz, following his official instructions, presented the matter.
emphasized anew his conception of spiritual freedom. 1 With each opportunity for public discussion he became more confident of the convictions he had expressed in his lectures on the Romans.

As late as August 1st. 1516, it was Luther's opinion that the Church, in matters of faith, could err under no conditions and that within the body of the Church, the individual alone is liable to error. 2 However, in a sermon preached May 16th. 1516, he makes a practical application of the contrast between spiritual and material elements, between the real and the ideal, to which it will be remembered, he had given considerable attention in his lectures. Now he was convinced that real communion is invisible and therefrom made the very important deduction that though one may be excommunicated from the visible

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1. On May 18th. Luther writes of the disputation to Spalatin, stating that "the doctors listened to my presentation willingly and in rebutting it used such moderation that I felt very grateful to them. Though my theology seemed foreign to them, they dealt with it effectively and courteously, excepting one young doctor who moved the audience to laughter by saying: 'If the peasants heard you they would certainly stone you to death". - Enders I,192,28ff.
2. WA. III, p.170.
Church by ecclesiastical authority, sin alone can excommunicate the believer from the Invisible Church.\textsuperscript{1} In grasping the truth of the Invisible Church Luther is in company with Augustine and, quite unconsciously, with Wyclif and Hus. In the same sermon he declares that though it is within the power of a priest to deprive a believer of the corporal exterior communion and from worship through the Sacraments, it is not within his power to deprive the soul of spiritual communion with God through faith, hope and love.\textsuperscript{2} Thus, when Luther was summoned to Augsburg to be interviewed by Cajetan\textsuperscript{3} in October of the same year, he was convinced that no ecclesiastical action could in any way affect his membership in the Invisible Church.

\textsuperscript{1}Sermo de virtute excommunicationis, Op.varii argu.II,306 \hfill \textsuperscript{2}Sermo de virtute excommunicationis, Op.varii argu.II,306 \hfill \textsuperscript{3}About the same time that Luther published the dedicatory letter to the 'Resolutiones', the Dominican order - Tetzel was a Dominican - was engaged in correspondence with the fiscal procurator of the Curia, accusing Luther of heresy. After Leo was convinced that his efforts through Volta and Staupitz had failed, he ordered, through the procurator, a formal action for suspicion of heresy. The conduct of the proceedings was left to the General Auditor, Jerome Ghinucci, at whose request Silvester Prierias, the Master of the Sacred Palace, presented his opinion of the Theses. In his memorial - title, 'The Dialogue' - Prierias, a Dominican and a Thomist, stressed, above everything else, papal supremacy and declared that who denies that the Church is infallible and that it has a right to do just what it does, is a heretic. Ghinucci, upon the recommendations of Prierias, issued a summons to Luther specifying
It was not Cajetan's purpose to convince Luther that he was in error, for the Pope had already committed himself to a condemnation of the Wittenberg professor; he hoped, rather, that without paying further attention to what Luther had written, there should be an unreserved incantation, subject alone to a promise of kindly treatment from Rome. The attitude of Cajetan was that of a judge and not that of an advocate; it interested him little whether Luther was convinced of his error but alone whether or not he would recant. The interview throughout, that he appear at Rome within sixty days. Luther replied to the General Auditor but had, at the time, come to no decision as to whether or not he would appear. Now, the fact that the Diet of Augsburg was then sitting and the more important fact that Cardinal Thomas de Vio of Gaeta (Cajetan) was the papal agent at this Diet, caused Leo to change his method of attack. Then, too, the papal legate had had ample opportunity to witness the universal popularity of the Theses and the 'Resolutiones'. Cajetan had also come upon one of Luther's printed sermons in which he had ridiculed the papal ban. The legate concluded that Luther could best be dealt with by summoning him immediately to Rome. He wrote so to Leo. About the same time, the Pope received a letter from Emperor Maximillian pledging his support in this particular case but urging the political necessity of not offending his enemy, the Elector Frederick of Saxony. Cajetan, accordingly, was ordered to interview the monk at Augsburg. Through his friend Spalatin, Luther secured the active support of the Elector of Saxony who declined to permit his subject to appear without a safe conduct from the Emperor. This, finally arranged, Luther arrived in Augsburg October 7th.
both in meetings and in exchanged letters, was complicated and obscure but resulted in revealing the fact that the faith of Cajetan and the faith of Luther were incompatible. When finally Luther succeeded in drawing the Cardinal into debate, Cajetan immediately attempted to close the discussion by deciding its most crucial point, that of the dogma of the treasure of the Church, by quoting Pope Clement as his authority. Of course, the thought of anyone questioning a papal decree was beyond the Cardinal's comprehension. For Cajetan, the decree precluded further discussion; for Luther the decree seemed to involve either a recantation or a denial of papal authority. Though we know that Luther was extremely doubtful about the Authority of a Pope in matters of faith, he was, nevertheless, quite unprepared to base his defense on that particular issue; nor was he ready to acknowledge defeat. He finally prevailed upon Cajetan to permit him to present his defense in writing. This was done at their next meeting, a few days later. After impatiently glancing over the main propositions presented, Cajetan dismissed them with a renewed demand that Luther recant on the basis of Pope Clement's decree which he now read and which affirmed that Christ 'by the merits of his passion acquired the treasure of Indulgences.' At this point, Luther interrupted with the suggestion that, though there was no doubt of Christ having 'acquired' a
treasure by his merits, it was illogical to conclude that the merits are that treasure for the cause is different from that which flows from it. The advantage was now clearly Luther's and Cajetan realized that he had blundered in being enticed into an argument. It was really a blunder of the same nature as that which Luther, himself, later committed at Leipzig. Luther naturally became more confident but confronted with Cajetan's determination to have nothing more to do with him other than to receive his recantation, he despatched a letter to Cajetan and secretly left Augsburg to return to Wittenberg. He reiterates in his letter that, not having been shown wherein lay his error, either to the satisfaction of his conscience or by proof from the Holy Scriptures, he had therefore nothing to recant. The letter is an example of remarkable poise under most taxing circumstances.

"... Now, most Reverend Father in Christ, I confess, as I have never confessed before, that certainly I was indiscreet, too harsh and to irreverent in the name of the Pope... I realize that I should have acted with more modesty, humility and reverence and not to have answered a fool according to his folly. Accordingly, I am sincerely sorry and ask pardon... As for the rest, most reverend and now beloved Father in Christ, i.e., as to the truth of my position, I
would be most ready to recant because of the command and the advice of both yourself and the Vicar, if my conscience in any way permitted it (siullo modoco conscientia mea permitteret). For I know that neither the command, counsel nor influence of anyone should be permitted to make me do anything contrary to my conscience, nor can it. 1

Realizing, as he must have done, that he was now the spokesman for many thousands of believing Christians, he brought into play the psychology of mass leadership and proceeded, from this time onward, to keep the public fully informed of his every important move in the cause of human liberty. Accordingly, upon his return from Augsburg he published the 'Acta Augustana' which was a detailed account of his interview with Cajetan. In the preface he remarked that just as "for a long time they vexed Reuchlin because of some counsel he had given them, now they vex me for proposing questions for disputation." At Augsburg, he says, ironically, he was instructed that to teach the truth is to throw the Church into confusion and that to flatter men and to deny Christ is to pacify and exalt the Church of Christ (scilicet quod veritatem docere idem sit quod . . . . .

1.Enders I, 264,47ff.
Luther became a national hero and the reputation of Frederic's University at Wittenberg was greatly enhanced. It may have been this fact more than his personal convictions in connection with the controversy itself which led Frederic to defend Luther. As has been suggested, Frederic's position, politically, was a very unique one and because of it he played a considerable part in directing the course of the Reformation at several important stages. When Cajetan had failed in his efforts at Augsburg, he wrote to the Elector Frederic requesting that the disturbing monk should be arrested and sent to Rome. But the prestige of Wittenberg University was at stake and Frederic could not see his way clear to surrender his subject. The Pope, eager, at all cost, to preserve the favour of the Elector, changed his procedure once more and sent a special nuncio, Charles von Miltitz, to Germany for the purpose of arresting the heretic. Miltitz seems, however, to have assumed more in his negotiations than his instructions prescribed and he attempted gentler methods. He had confidently hoped...

1. WA. II 6,24ff.
2. Both in the election of a king to the Romans, which was near at hand, and in the imperial election itself.
to secure a recantation from Luther and, with that object in view, arranged for an interview with Luther for January of 1519 at Altenberg.

A letter written by Luther to the Elector at the close of the first day's meeting avers his loyalty to the Church and its institutions and expresses an eagerness to close the controversy to the satisfaction of the parties concerned. It illustrates as well the compromising policy of Miltitz.

"Yesterday Charles von Miltitz carefully directed my attention to errors and offenses against the Roman Church, of which I am supposed to be guilty. I promised that so far as it was possible, I would make amends. I accordingly beg of your grace to give my plan your attention, for in its arrangement, I had in mind your pleasure....

a) I promised that henceforth the whole matter would be dropped and that it would be permitted to die a natural death (und die sach sich selb zu Tod bluten); this, of course, on condition that my opponents also remain silent. . . .

b) I consented to write to His Holiness and, in so doing, to suggest that in my actions, I have been entirely too hasty and too sharp and that it was not my intention to oppose the Holy Roman
Church but only, as a loyal son, to protest against a scandalous preaching ... whereby she (the Church) has become a stumbling block to the people.....

c) I agreed to issue a statement urging everyone to support, obey and honour the Roman Church, indicating that my writings were not meant to be in any way injurious to the Church....

d) Upon the recommendation of Fabian von Feilitsch, Spalatin proposed to leave the case to the Archbishop of Salzburg....This would be satisfactory but I fear that the Pope will not consent to any other judge save himself and I cannot tolerate his judgment.

Miltitz regards the above arrangement as insufficient but, still, he does not demand recantation (es wäre nit genug, und doch nit die Widerufung foderet)" 1

On the following day an agreement was arrived at. Luther states it briefly in another letter to the Elector.

"... We have concluded our negotiations under

two articles: a) that a general inhibition (ein
gemein Inhibition) be agreed upon which will prevent
the matter being mentioned in the future either in
preaching, writing or acting; b) that Miltitz inform
the Pope at once concerning the situation and that
he request that the matter be recommended to some
learned bishop who will hear me and point out the
errors which require recantation. . . And as soon as
I am informed of my mistakes, I am expected to, and
will gladly, recant and do nothing to further
embarrass the honour and the power of the Roman
Church."

Miltitz triumphantly informed the Pope that Luther
was ready to recant. Accordingly Luther was invited by
the papacy to proceed to Rome, at the expense of the Church,
there to make his confession. Whatever may be said of the
good faith of both parties to the Altenberg agreement, the
fact is that neither observed its first provision. Though
Luther's correspondence reveals an eagerness for peace
within the Church, the progress which he had made in the
evangelical faith had rendered the fulfillment of such a
desire quite impossible. The idea of papal supremacy was

inherited by Luther and his correspondence is sufficient proof that he really wanted to believe it. It was the one question which the papal agents, during these early interviews, regarded as unanswerable but, again, despite his efforts to conform, Luther's new conception of the Christian's spiritual freedom was incompatible with this theory. ¹

The problem with which Luther was concerned most during these months was whether or not the conclusions at which he had arrived, both in the lecture room and in the pulpit, could be applied in practice. Then, too, could he honestly recall his denunciations in the Theses and in the 'Resolutiones', apropos of indulgences, and continue to maintain his personal convictions? Of course, no Pope or Council could deprive him of his own spiritual freedom. Luther's primary interest was now, however, not the assurance of his own salvation as in earlier years, but the spiritual emancipation of the masses from the abuses of a self-seeking ecclesiasticism. But genuine Christian faith has always been self-sacrificing. So, contrary to his early training and — witness his correspondence—his

¹. The infallibility of the Pope was not made a dogma until 1870.
desire, the new conception of 'justificatio ex fide' claimed its divine right to question human authority in matters of faith, and Luther set out upon a thorough investigation of the papal pretension to absolute supremacy. "He began to study the Decretals and found to his amazement and indignation that they were full of frauds and that the papal supremacy had been forced upon Germany on the strength of a collection of Decretals, many of which were plainly forgeries." 1

In his unsuccessful efforts to reconcile the accepted position of the papacy with Church history and the Holy Scriptures, his suspicions had been confirmed and he was more undecided than ever concerning the course of his future conduct. Singularly enough, it was during this period of surprising discoveries in the Decretals, and in the course of one of his series of lectures on the Psalter, that John Eck, professor at Ingolstadt, challenged Luther to a public disputation at Leipzig on this very proposition viz., the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff in matters of faith and practice.

The fact that Luther felt justified in accepting Eck's invitation, despite the Altenberg agreement, is indicated

1. Lindsay p. 235.
in a letter written to the Elector Frederic, March 13th, 1519. Note, too, that Luther, realizing fully that he would be called upon to dispute the absolute supremacy of papal power, pledges his continued full submission and obedience to the Holy See.

"... Now God knows that I was most earnest and happy in the thought that the whole affair should come to an end... Indeed I regarded these facts (the Altenberg Agreement) as binding and I permitted Herr Sylvester Prierias' statement to pass by entirely, though there was so much in it that I would have been justified in breaking my resolution. I refrained from doing so, however, even contrary to the advice of friends. So our agreement (Altenberg), as Herr Charles (Miltitz) well knows, remains unbroken, i.e. that I remain silent providing my opponents also remain silent...

Now, however, that Doctor Eck attacks me without any provocation and since he seeks to disgrace not only myself but the whole University of Wittenberg as well, ... I feel that I cannot conscientiously disregard such cunningly devised assaults nor can I permit the truth to be held in such derision (noch die Wahrheit in solchem Spott zu stechen lassen)... For, although in my debate with Doctor Eck, it will
be necessary to dispute Roman supremacy, I shall do so, but with the reservation of full submission and obedience to the Holy Roman See (Allzeit mit Fürbehalt aller Unterthanigkeit und Gehorsam des heiligen römischen Stuhels)." ¹

A possible, but not a probable, peaceful solution to the controversy was thus prevented by Eck's initiative. Already in the preceding year he had contended against Luther in a pamphlet, 'Obelisks' to which Luther replied in 'Asterisks'. As early as in March 1518, Luther knew what to expect if called upon to enter into a public discussion with the professor from Ingolstadt for Eck had referred to him in 'Obelisks' as a fanatical Bohemian, heretical, seditious, impudent and audacious (haereticum, seditiosum, procæcum temerarium), to say nothing of such slight insinuations as, that he was stupid, impertinent, unlearned and that he held the Pope in contempt (quod dormitantem, ineptum, indoctum, tandem summi Pontificis contemptorem). ²

In Eck's debate with Carlstadt, he prepared his thirteenth thesis on the supremacy of papal power; obviously, with Luther in mind. Neither was Carlstadt prepared to debate the point nor was he expected to, for Luther had now devoted months not only in an examination of Decretals but in a careful study of the works of Marsilio of Padua and especially those of William of Occam. It will be remembered that, in an earlier period of Luther's career, he was proud to be numbered among the followers of Occam. Though Luther had gradually freed himself from the spell of Occamistic theology, he now again relied upon Occam - those of his works dealing with the controversy against Pope John XXII - in his preparation for the Leipzic debate. Luther read again Occam's 'Tractatus ostendens quod Benedictus Papa XII nonnullas Johannis XXII, haereses amplexus est et defendit' which publicly accused Pope John XXII of being a heretic, an enemy both of the Emperor and of the King of England, and which ascribed to Louis the right

1. During Luther's stay in Heidelberg, April and May of 1518, Bodenstein of Carlstadt became involved in a controversy with Eck on questions of grace and free will. A public debate was, accordingly, arranged to be held in Leipzig. By common agreement, it was in connection with this debate that Luther was expected to dispute the papal Supremacy with Eck.
to war against the papacy. He must have read also, at this time, the first part of the unfinished work, 'Dialogus inter magistrum et discipulum de imperatorum et pontificum potestate', in which Occam differentiates between Catholic and heretical doctrines; cites Popes as having been heretical; establishes the possibility of error in General Councils; and declares that in such an event, laymen, upon the failure of spiritual tribunals, may bring a heretical Pope to judgment. 1

Now, there can be no doubt as to Luther's personal views, apropos of papal supremacy, when he arrived at Leipzig. So much has been written by Catholic and some Protestant Scholars about Eck's victory at Leipzig that it seems right to examine thoroughly Luther's personal convictions on the subject of papal supremacy before he participated in the disputation itself. Already in the 'Resolutiones' he had declared that at the time of Gregory, the Roman Church did not stand above other Churches, at least not above the Greek Church (romanam ecclesiam esse, qualis erat etiam adhuc tempore E. Gregorii, quando non erat super alias ecclesias, saltem Graeciae) 2 In the

2. WA. I. 571,16ff.
thirteenth of his provisional theses, prepared in February 1519 for the Leipzic debate, he wrote that the claim that the Church of Rome is superior to all others is proved only by the most trivial decrees of the Roman Pontiff during the last four hundred years and that against them are the accredited history of eleven hundred years, the text of the Holy Scriptures and the decree of the Nicene Council, the most sacred of all (Romanam Ecclesiam esse omnibus aliis superioriorem, probatur ex frigidissimis Romanorum Pontificum decretis intra CCCC annos natis, contra quae sunt historiae approbatæ MC annorum, textus scripturæ divinae et decretum Niceni Concilii omnium sacratissimi).1 One month later, in the midst of his preparation, he writes significantly, to his friend Spalatin: "I keep turning over the decrees of the Popes for my disputation and - I whisper it in your ear - I do not know whether the Pope is Antichrist himself or his apostle; so miserably is Christ disfigured and crucified in his decrees (Verso et decreta Pontificum pro mea disputatione, et (in aurem tibi loquor) nescio, an papa sit Antichristus ipse vel apostolus ejus; adeo misere corrumpitur et crucifigitur Christus... ab eo in decretis)" 2

1. WA.I. 161,35ff.
2. Enders, I 450,42ff.
Shortly before the disputation (June 1519), in his 'resolutio super propositione sua (Lipsiensis) Xlll de potestate Papae', Luther regarded the Church as "the kingdom of faith because our king is not seen but believed in (Ideo enim regnum fidei ecclesia vocatur, quod rex noster non videtur, sed creditur);" and that, obviously, those who set up on the earth any other head of the Church, save alone Christ, by that very act, organize a different Church - "a kingdom of the visible presence" (regnum rerum praesentium). Again, in the same month, referring to his thirteenth Leipzic thesis, he insisted that the distinctions of the Church cannot be bestowed upon a private man because there can never be a certainty that that particular person possesses true revelations from the Father. "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church and the Communion of the Saints," precludes any doubting, says Luther, and furthermore it stands as a creedal protest against those who believe that the holy Church is the Pope.

The significance of the Leipzic debate lies not in what was there decided - indeed, nothing was decided - but in the fact that Eck succeeded in doing what Miltitz had

1. WA. II. 239,28ff.
2. WA. II. 239,31ff.
3. WA. II. 190,5ff; vgl. Loofs 724ff.
attempted to avoid, i.e. he ingeniously brought Luther to a public declaration of his previously arrived at convictions upon papal supremacy. If a verdict is to be rendered on a basis of adroitness in debate, then Eck was decidedly the winner for he had finally brought Luther to a, perhaps, unwilling realization that his peculiar idea of Christian freedom had created an ever widening gulf between himself and Rome.

Early in the debate Luther presented the views, which he had arrived at, as regarding papal supremacy. He supported his position by appealing to the Holy Scriptures and to Church history. The fact that the Council of Nicea, to which he had referred in his thirteenth thesis, declared the patriarchs of Alexandria and of Antioch to be on an equal footing with the bishop of Rome, and the fact that deductions from his studies of Occam and Marsilio brought him to a conviction that papal power was erected upon a foundation of false decretals of the last four hundred years, 1 led him to reply to Eck 2 that the Pope no doubt had the honour of being Peter's successor but that that...

1. The Papacy is really a gradual development from about the Second Century - McKinnon in his lectures on Church History 1922-23.
2. His thesis declaring that the successor to Peter is the Vicar General of Christ.
succession did not involve spiritual power and, therefore, was not of divine right. Furthermore, he contended that Peter's supremacy over the other Apostles was only one of honour and that they were equal in the sight of Christ. The Pope, he said, could therefore claim no more than such honour; nor was he ever universally acclaimed the head of the Church. He then cited, in support, the fact that the Greek Church, which refused to surrender to the Pope, never was a part of the Roman Church, though certainly it had always been a part of the true Church.

Eck tactfully quoted Wyclif, Hus and the Waldensies on the subject of papal supremacy. At first Luther denied, but later was compelled to admit, that there was a similarity between his own views and those of Hus. It is here that the debate has its greatest significance for when he avowed his sympathy with Hus, in the latter's stand at the Council of Constance, he was brought to see that he really believed the heretic to have been condemned unfairly.

Not only had he thus confessed his sympathy with a heretic but he was obliged to reconsider his attitude towards a Supreme Council. Eck, continuing his dexterous

1. WA. II, 264,33ff; 265,1ff.
2. WA. II, 273,25ff.
3. WA. II, 275,6ff; 35ff; 276,1ff.
indictment, assumed that Luther had questioned the decision of the Council of Constance and, obviously, the infallibility of a General Council. Against this assumption Luther protested severely and in his defense pointed out that the Council of Constance had discriminated between the views of Hus — some were heretical, others were erroneous. Finally dropping his reserve and quoting Augustine, Luther ascribes infallibility to the Holy Scriptures. He contended, thereupon, that the Word of God is compromised by any attempt to ascribe infallibility either to the Pope or to a General Council. Both the Pope and the Council are men (Romanus pontifex et concilia sunt homines) and, as such, should be subject to the searching test of the Holy Scriptures,¹ and, calling to his support both Augustine and Gerson, he submitted that a Christian cannot be bound by papal decrees not in harmony with the Word of God, which alone is of divine right.²

What a tremendous step forward — and irretraceable — in opposition to both papal and ecclesiastical authority and in indication of the rights of the individual mind and

¹ WA. II 287,30ff; 288,1ff; 289,2f.
² WA. II 279,23ff.
conscience! In 1517 he had given expression to his new idea of the Gospel as it applied to the abuses of Indulgences. At that time, however, he recognized not only papal authority but he as well supported the institutions of the Church. In the Leipzic disputation he had denied the divine right of the Pope, actively supported Hus and Wyclif, , denied the infallibility of the General Council, and declared the Holy Scriptures to be the only supreme authority in the Church.
CHAPTER V.

THE DEMAND FOR EMANCIPATION FROM THE BONDAGE OF MEDIAEVAL ECCLESIASTICISM.

(In the three Great Reformation Treatises).

Excepting his discovery of the significance of Romans I, 17, nothing affected Luther's career more than the revelations of the Leipzic Disputation. For the first time he realized the practical significance of his new convictions. That he avoided not the inevitable responsibility of continuing his attack upon Rome on the basis of these revelations is a tribute both to his honesty and to his courage. Furthermore, at Leipzic he had definitely stated his position before the German people and before an official representative of the Roman Church. To criticize merely the abuses of ecclesiastical institutions was now no longer sufficient, for he had questioned the authority of the Church itself. If excommunication should come — and come it would — it could affect him only physically for he no longer felt himself bound, either mentally or spiritually, by the chains of ecclesiastical authority and tradition. But for him, a more important consideration was this, that
he saw clearly the secret of mediaeval misrule and misconduct in the fact that the individual believer had been denied his divine right of immediate entrance into the very presence of God.

After the Leipzic Disputation, Luther became an ardent student of the writings of John Hus. Something of his admiration for Hus and his doctrines can be gathered from a letter to Spalatin, written in February 1520. He tells Spalatin that circumstances have now made it impossible to proffer peace without peril to his conscience and that he now realizes, for the first time, that he has been holding and teaching the opinions of Hus. John Staupitz, he claims, did so as well, and, without knowing it; even Paul and Augustine were Hussites to a word. ¹ Luther, at this time, also studied carefully the Donation of Constantine - supposedly a deed of Central Italy from the Emperor to the Pope and conferring to the Roman Curia, the privileges of a general political supervision of the Western World. ² Ulrich von Hutten, a well known humanist, had edited a work written by Lorenzo Valla - also a humanist but of the fifteenth century - which presented conclusively the

¹. Enders, II. 344,9ff; 345,31ff.
². Smith pp 72f.
reasons why the authenticity of this document should be questioned. In another letter to Spalatin, written during the same month, Luther says that he has received, through Dominic Schleupner, Lorenzo Valla's confutation of the Donation of Constantine and then comments: "Good God, the darkness and the wickedness at Rome! And, you wonder at the judgment of God that such impure, coarse and impudent lies not only have lived but have for so long prevailed and that they were incorporated in the Decretals; and, as though no phase of the horror should be wanting, that they should become articles of faith. I am in such a passion (Ego sic angor) that I really doubt not that the Pope is the Antichrist whom the world expects." ¹

Previously, Luther had attracted the attention of the German people through the enormous circulation of his Theses. Now, he became their national hero. Humanists and nationalists alike rallied to his support and the cause of national independence soon became identified with that of spiritual emancipation. Luther personified the loftiest ideals of both parties and together they fought, under his leadership, for "a Germany for the Germans independent of Rome." The temper of this support is

¹ Enders II. 332,28ff.
illustrated in a letter from Hutten, written in June of 1520: "Long live liberty (Vive libertas)! ...They report that you are excommunicated. How great, O Luther, how great you are, if this is true...You understand, of course, that if you now fail, it will be a great injury to the state, yet I know that it is your conviction that it is preferable to die rather than merely to be alive (Vides, si nunc cadas, quae sit publico jactura; nam, ad te quod pertinet, es esse te animo scio, ut malis sic mori quam utcunque vivere)...In me you have a devoted supporter and with me all things will be in confidence...Let us vindicate our common liberty; let us liberate our long enslaved fatherland; we have God on our side. If God be for us who can stand against us?"¹

With the knowledge that the papal Bull of Excommunication had actually been drawn up came an increasing resentment in Luther's attitude to Rome. "My die is cast (jacta mihi alea)", he writes to Spalatin, July 10th, 1520. "Having only contempt for the fury and the favour of Rome, I will never be reconciled nor commune with them. Let them condemn and burn my works; as far as I am concerned, unless the fire goes out, I will publicly condemn and burn the whole papal law, that mire of heresies...But, the Lord, I do not doubt, will perfect his cause either through me, though I be a foul sinner, or through another,"²

¹ Enders II. 409, 1ff; 410, 36ff. ² Enders II 432, 33ff; 47ff.
With this psychological background we can understand how that Martin Luther in 1520 became the logical spokesman for a great people in the cause of spiritual and political liberty. Three years of bitter controversy had now elapsed since the posting of his Ninety-five Theses. Nothing that he might now say could prevent the delivery of the anticipated papal Bull; there was, thus, nothing to be lost by stating his positions clearly. Nor was he yet involved in controversy with fellow reformers, as in later years, when, for the sake of protection against threatened revolution, he felt it necessary to alter his positions in unessential details. In the three great treatises of 1520—"To the Christian Nobility of a German Nation (An den Christlichen Adel deutscher Nation)"; "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church (De captivitate babylonica ecclesiae praeludium)"; and "The Liberty of a Christian Man (De libertate Christiana)"—Luther seems to be lifted beyond the boundaries and the limitations both of himself and of the age in which he lived and presents what many unprejudiced scholars regard as the clearest interpretation of the Christian evangelical idea of life, since Paul. It is also in these works of 1520 that we find his most pertinent contributions to the cause of human liberty.

A brief consideration of the circumstances which brought these Reformation treatises from Luther's pen will
enable us better to understand the full significance of any of the subject matter relevant to Luther's conception of liberty. In "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," Luther assumed the role of spokesman for those elements in Germany which were seriously in earnest about national reform. Of course, many of the abuses and oppressions which he attacked in this treatise had previously received his attention both in the lecture room and from the pulpit. It was, however, the enthusiastic support of the nationalists and the more liberal of the humanists which was largely responsible for the penetrating force of his applications. In the preparation of the treatise he had consulted the writings of Hutten and Rubeanus, Erasmus' Dialogue of St. Peter and Julius II, letters and conversations with friends who had visited Rome, especially Dr. John von Wick, and the Grievances of the German Nation, presented at Augsburg in 1516. ¹ In the dedicatory letter, written to his colleague Nickolas von Almsdorff and dated June 23, 1520, he explains that he decided to transfer his appeal from the clergy to the laity"because the clergy to whom this task was more befitting have become rather careless." ²

¹ Smith p.79.
² WA, V1, 405,15f.
The treatise was addressed to the Emperor Charles and the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, and in the introduction he presents a further reason for his appeal to the laity - "Some remedy has often been presented by councils but because of the craftiness of a few men, it has invariably been ingeniously defeated and the evils have become worse." 1

In September - October of 1520, Luther published "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church". Because the discussion was theological, he wrote in latin. In the Address to the German Nobility, as we shall see, he pleaded for practical reform in Church and state; in this treatise, however, as though climbing over the very ruins of the "three walls" of his preceding work, he boldly enters into the presence of the papal power itself and directs his attack upon the doctrinal foundation of that power, viz., the elaborate sacramental system of the Church. From an attitude of toleration and reform in the Address he comes, in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" to a definite declaration for emancipation from Roman subjection. This fact marks still another step forward in his conception of liberty. He now wishes that that which he had hitherto

1. WA, Vl. 406,20ff.
written concerning Indulgences could be destroyed and that, in its stead, there might be substituted the statement that Indulgences are the evil creations of the flatterers of Rome. \(^1\) He is now certain that the instrument of Ecclesiastical bondage in the hands of Rome has been, and still is, the multiplication of the Sacraments. His personal attitude to the Sacraments is still somewhat uncertain. He is inclined, however, to regard Baptism, Penance and the Eucharist alone as true Sacraments. \(^2\)

In a final effort to effect a reconciliation between Luther and the Roman See, Miltitz ordered, among others, Staupitz and Lenck - successor to Staupitz as Co-Vicar General of the Augustinian Order - to interview Luther with the object of securing his consent to refrain from further personal insinuations concerning the Pope's honour and veracity. The interview, which was held at Wittenberg in September of 1520, resulted in Luther's decision to write a courteous letter to the Pope requesting that the personal equation be not read into his writings and utterances. During the following month Miltitz himself interviewed Luther and the content of the letter was agreed upon. The letter was written during the latter

\(^1\) WA. VI, 497,22ff.
\(^2\) WA. VI, 501,33ff.
part of October but was purposely dated September 6th, so as not to create the impression that he had been frightened because of the official posting of the Bull of Excommunication by Eck in Meissen, Merseburg and Brandenburg near the end of September. In Luther's letter to the Pope, he holds Cajetan and Eck responsible for the whole controversy and assures his Holiness that for him personally he has the highest regard. He is sorely grieved, however, that in the Pope's name and in the name of the Church, poor people continue to be held in spiritual bondage. Against this condition, he declares, he will throw his whole strength as long as he lives. It was to this letter that Luther appended "The Liberty of a Christian Man", In the concluding paragraph of the letter Luther intimates that in his judgment he has presented in this little treatise a summary of Christian life (summa vitae Christianae). The treatise is then dedicated to the Pope in the hope that it might be a good omen for the establishment of peace.

Conscious of the support of both the nationalists and the German humanists, Luther now included in his

1. Smith, 98f.
2. WA. VII, 44,7f.
3. WA. VII, 48,32f.
attack upon the prevailing system of government and its abuses, a demand for emancipation from the spiritual and political bondage of the papal hierarchy. The Address to the German Nobility was really the manifesto of the Reformation. In it the dominant notes are individual liberty and the right of private judgment in ecclesiastical and civic reform. The mysterious power which for so many years had completely dominated Europe and had hitherto prevented reforms within the Church, he regards as purely imaginary. He continues that, as a protection against attack, the Romanists have entrenched themselves with great craftiness, behind three rampart-walls and, from behind them, have actually desolated Christianity. These fanciful walls are: a) that temporal power has no jurisdiction over them but on the contrary that the spiritual power is over the temporal, i.e. the doctrine of the sacredness of a priestly class; b) that the Pope alone may interpret the Scriptures, i.e. the doctrine of papal infallibility; and, c) that the Pope alone may initiate proceedings with a view to reform, i.e. the doctrine of the sole right of the Pope to call a General Council.

Emancipation from this imaginary power demanded that,

1. *WA. VI, 406,21ff.*
2. *WA. VI, 406,24ff.*
first of all, these three walls be destroyed. Someone, he says, has devised that the Pope, bishops, priests and monks are called the spiritual estate and that the Princes, lords, craftsmen and peasants are called the temporal estate. This he regards as a human invention and—propounding his doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers—declares that all Christians are of the spiritual estate, their difference being alone in office, even as St. Paul taught the Corinthians. Quoting St. Peter, "Ye are a royal priesthood, a holy nation". (I Peter II, 9) and from Revelations, "You have made us priests and kings through your blood" (Rev. V, 10), he concludes that between laymen, priests, princes and bishops, i.e. as they say, the temporal and the spiritual estates, there is no difference. They are all really of the same spiritual estate, truly priests, bishops and popes, though not having the same functions. Since the temporal power has been divinely ordained for the punishment of evil and for the protection of the good, according to Luther, that power should now be permitted to fulfil its function throughout the whole body of Christendom, without respect of persons, whether it strike popes, bishops, priests, monks or nuns. It is clear that to

1. WA. VI. 407, 10ff.
Luther the life of a Christian peasant is quite as sacred as that of the Pope himself. In the demolition of the second wall, which he considers even weaker than the first, he defies the Romanists to produce evidence for their pretension, viz.; that the Pope has the sole and infallible authority to interpret the Scriptures. Though the papacy pretends to be infallible in its interpretation of the Word of God and though its position cannot be established by a single letter, it, nevertheless, says Luther, reserves to itself the authority and conjures before the people with impudent words, to the effect that the Pope cannot err in matters of faith, be the Pope good or evil. Luther concludes that it is because of this condition that the canon law now contains many heretical, unchristian and unnatural laws. Again calling Paul to his support, he cautions against permitting the spirit of liberty to be frightened away by the invented words of the Popes and urges that even Popes should be judged, without fear, by what they do and leave undone, 'according to our understanding of the Scriptures'. With the first two walls destroyed, he finds little difficulty in lowering the third. The obvious question presents itself - if the Pope is a

1. WA. VI. 411,8ff.
2. WA. VI. 412,28ff.
wrong-doer, surely the power of calling a Council can be exercised by someone other than the Roman See. The Council of the Apostles, Luther contends, was not called into being by St. Peter but by all of the Apostles and the elders. And, if St. Peter alone would have had the authority to call it, then it would not have been a Christian Council but an heretical 'conciliabulum'. Furthermore, he continues the most celebrated Nicene Council was neither called nor confirmed by the Bishop of Rome but by the Emperor Constantine. After Constantine, many emperors have acted similarly and, yet, says Luther, these same Councils are considered most Christian. His logical conclusion is that, if this power of calling a Supreme Council is given alone to the Pope, then, surely, all of these Councils must have been heretical. Since, nothing in the Scriptures can be found to support the absurd contention of papal infallibility, Luther feels that the Pope should be constrained and punished. 1

Having disposed of the three walls, Luther advocates drastic action by constituted authority - a Council, and, in the event of its failure to perform its duty, the temporal powers - to eradicate an usurped authority and . . . . .

1.WA. V1. 413,17ff.
its intolerable economic as well as religious oppression. In the address to the Nobility, with scathing language, he recites the abuses of the Roman Curia and declares that such a Council has three duties in particular. Its first duty, he says, will be to deal fearlessly with that worldly pomp and haughtiness by which he who boasts of being the Vicar of Christ and the Successor to St. Peter has become more worldly than the world itself. ¹ Secondly, it will be expected to examine thoroughly and deal carefully with the prevailing system of maintaining this corrupt regime, e.g. cloisters, foundations, benefices, the nomination of cardinals etc. ² Thirdly, there must be sweeping measures of retrenchment in the Papal Court itself and thousands of officials, who consume the immense income drawn on innumerable pretexts from Germany, will have to be dismissed. Drastic action will be expected apropos of all expedients of papal oppression, including annates, reservations of the Pope to appointments in certain months, disputed benefices, Pallium money exacted from newly appointed arch-bishops, coadjutors and pluralities in papal appointments, simony and the transfer of appointments under the pretext of 'mental reservation', 'administratio', etc. ³

¹ WA. VI, 415,19ff.
² WA. VI, 416,17ff.
³ WA. VI, 417,22ff.
Luther reminds his readers that such a condition is not only an open robbery, a fraud and tyranny, but it, as well, destroys the body and soul of Christianity. To prevent such misery and destruction, he says, will require the greatest diligence. "If it is desirable that we should war against the Turks, let us begin here where they are the worst. We justly hang thieves and behead robbers but why do we permit the greed of Rome to go unpunished? The Pope is the greatest thief and robber that has appeared or can appear on earth; and all this is done in the holy name of Christ and St. Peter. Who can bear this and remain silent? Practically everything which he possesses has been stolen or secured through fraud, a fact to which all historians testify. . . ." ¹

In following Luther through the three treatises in his continued attack upon the Roman hierarchy and in the practical application of his new theology, I shall attempt to record several phases of his matured ² conception of liberty. From this point of view, Luther assumes the role of an emancipator fearlessly demanding the following: —

¹. WA. VI. 427,13ff.
².'matured' in the sense of being the logical fruition of his earlier development and not in the sense of representing his views of later years.
A. Emancipation from the Yoke of those papal pretenses which in turn have been the foundation for ecclesiastical ordinances destined to enthrall Christendom. In a series of reforms which he submitted in his Address to the German Nobility as necessary and to be undertaken either by a General Council or by the State itself, Luther urges that Priests, nobles and cities should at once forbid their subjects to pay annates 1 to, or to receive benefices 2 from, Rome. He suggests a German Imperial decree to the effect that no episcopal cloak and no confirmation of any appointment shall in the future be obtained from Rome. 3 That the Pope shall have no cause to complain because of being deprived of his authority, he thinks there should be another Imperial decree that whenever primates and archbishops are unable to reach a settlement in matters of faith, such matters should then be submitted to the Pope - but only such and not every trifling matter, as was formerly done. The Pope may then have leisure to devote himself to prayers and study and to the care of Christendom. This reform he regards as necessary since at Rome there is nothing but contempt for the Gospel and for prayer and

1. WA. VI, 427,30ff.
2. WA. VI, 428,12ff.
3. WA. VI, 429, 8ff.
because the Pope, though still regarding himself as Christ's Vicar and the Successor to the Apostles, in his conduct and government, resembles the Apostles about as nearly as Lucifer resembles Christ.¹

Luther strongly insists that the details in ecclesiastical government, e.g. benefices, prebends, etc., as they pertain to Germany, should be treated before the bishops, archbishops and primates of Germany. When it becomes necessary to render judgment in disputes, the primates of Germany, he thinks, should conduct a general consistory including the assessors and chancellors who control the 'signatorus gratiae' and the 'justitiae'. A consistory so constituted could then handle such matters arising in Germany which might be submitted by appeal.² He demands that those oaths be abolished which the bishops, without any right, are compelled to swear to the Pope. Arbitrarily and ridiculously, he says they are decreed in the absurd and shallow chapter, 'significasti' and bishops innocently become mere papal servants.³

Not only do we notice that Luther's plea for reform constantly takes the shape of a demand for a German Council

1.WA. V1. 429,28ff.
2.WA. V1. 431,3ff.
3.WA. V1. 433,10ff.
for Germany but there is a singularly clear note of liberty
and freedom from tradition in his suggested reforms. For
example, he would do away with, at least, a considerable
number of the annual festivals, processions and masses for
the dead; he would abolish all Saints' days, with the
possible exception of those of Our Lady and the Greater
Saints, which would be observed either on Sundays or only
in the mornings in connection with the mass, the remainder
of the day being regarded as a work day; he would have
every community, council or government, with or without
the knowledge or consent of the Pope, abolish anything which
is contrary to the will of God and harmful to the bodies
and the souls of men; he would alter the degrees of
relationship under which marriage is prohibited, e.g. the
so called spiritual relations in the third and fourth
degrees; he would make fasts optional and all foods free,
as declared in the Gospels (Matt. XV, 11), for, he says,
at Rome they ridicule the thought of fasts and they permit
us to drink oil, which they would consider unfit for greas­
ing their boots, and then they will sell to us the liberty

1. WA. VI. 444,22ff.
2. WA. VI. 445,33ff.
3. WA. VI. 446,14ff.
4. WA. VI. 446,27ff.
of eating butter and other things, though the Apostle declares that in the Gospel we have been given freedom in such matters (ICor. X, 23). Miracles pilgrimages, such as have been authorized at Wilsnacht, Sternberg, Treves, the Grimmenthal and Regensburg to extemporized chapels and field Churches must be done away with, Luther declares, for they have been created not to deepen piety but with a view to strengthen avarice and reap financial gain. As it is, he says, those who rule are like the people, i.e. the blind lead the blind. He would, accordingly, advise that the saints be left to glorify themselves, or, let God glorify them; and, as for the people, let them remain in their respective parishes where they will benefit more than at all of these shrines. He would allow to no one man more than one endowment or prebend; he would, for the sake of the faithful, do away with fraternities, indulgences, letters of indulgences and similar institutions; he would prohibit the erection of additional mendicant cloisters and suggests, that, in the event it is impossible to abolish those already in existence, they should, at least, be

1. WA. VI. 447, 5ff.
2. WA. VI. 448, 1ff.
3. WA. VI. 452, 19ff.
4. WA. VI. 452, 27ff.
reorganized into two or three orders. Commenting upon this last suggested reform, he deems it of far greater importance that they should together consider what is necessary for the salvation of the common people than to continuously deliberate upon what St. Francis, or St. Dominic or St. Augustine or any other man maintained, especially, says Luther, since events have not transpired as they expected?

There are occasions when he refers to the Pope as Antichrist and at times he is apparently willing to make important papal concessions in his discussions of the feasibility of a national Church. If, in his scheme for a national reformed Church, he was mentally reserving a place for the 'repentant' Pope, McKinnon suggests that such a plan would have been impracticable because the papacy, as historically developed, is incompatible with any strictly national Church involving independence from Rome.

1. WA. VI. 438,14ff.
2. WA. VI. 438,22ff; "About the greatest minds there is an ever fresh receptiveness: they stand close to the sources of truth, and desire no better than to drink and be satisfied: it is a second and weaker generation, accustomed 'jurare in verba magistri', who subject facts to creeds, and will not permit even God to contradict His own servants". Beard. p.405.
3. Lectures on Church History. 1922-3.
B. Emancipation of the temporal power from the domination of the Spiritual Estate. He would have it decreed he states in the Address to the Nobility, that all temporal matters in Germany should be submitted to the jurisdiction of the constituted German temporal authorities and not to Rome.¹ He would have the temporal authorities permit excommunication or expulsion only in matters of faith and religious living.² Except to anoint and crown him at the altar, as a bishop crowns a king, Luther would give to the Pope no jurisdiction over the Emperor.³ His examination of the Decretals, in preparation for the Leipzic Disputation, had already convinced him of the invented fiction in connection with the 'Donation of Constantine'; and now, he examines the chapter 'Solite' in the 'Corpus juris canonici' in which the papal authority is exalted above the Imperial. He regards the claims made in this Chapter as not only excessive but of Satanic invention for the purpose of raising the Pope above God and of bringing in Antichrist. The papal claims in the decretal 'Pastoralis', which declares the Pope to be the rightful heir to the Empire, if the throne be vacant, he regards both childish and absurd.⁴

¹ WA. VI. 430,5ff.
² WA. VI. 431,3ff.
³ WA. VI. 433, 26ff.
⁴ WA. VI. 433,26ff; 434,28ff.
He insists that the Pope has no more right than he, to assume authority over Naples and Sicily and that accordingly these together with the papal pretensions over Bologna, Imola, Vicenza, Ravenna and whatever has been appropriated without right in the Aucontine district and other parts of Italy, must be surrendered. 1

The fact that Luther should appeal to the Nobility and particularly to the Princes in his plan for reform is no evidence of personal political ambition; he realized too well that without their support, the Reformation could not succeed. But, in the acquiring of that support, it must be said that he was carried away by the Marsilio and Occam ideas of the function of the State. He tends to follow Marsilio too far in the latter sacrifice of the individual to the sovereignty of the people - and this fact led to notable consequences in Germany. Luther, however, was a champion and not a prophet; and when he saw his error in later years, he heroically withstood the Princes in an effort to establish the autonomy of the Church but unfortunately was unsuccessful. The Lutheran Church in Germany became and remained under the control of the German state until 1918 and the individual lost to the sovereignty of the State much of its newly acquired liberty.

1.WA. V1. 435,3ff.
Of the period in which the rise of the Anabaptists and the Peasants War brought Luther again to the necessity of seeking the support of the Princes in order to avoid chaos, Lord Acton says, "In thus taking refuge in the arms of civil power, purchasing the safety of his doctrine by the sacrifice of its freedom, and conferring on the State, together with the right of control, the duty of imposing it at the point of the sword, Luther in reality reverted to his original position." ¹ It is a severe statement of the facts and only the extremely prejudiced will agree with Lord Acton that it logically follows that "the notion of liberty, whether civil or religious, was hateful to his despotic nature, and contrary to his interpretation of Scripture."²

Here, again, if one is to be fair, Luther must not be judged by the natural development of circumstances over which he nor anyone else had control. He had clearly illustrated in his Address to the Nobility the nature of the bondage to which they as a people were being subjected and the methods which might be used both to secure independence and to effect a thorough ecclesiastical and civic reformation. He removes the distinction between the peasant

¹. Lord Acton, 'History of Freedom', p. 156.
². Lord Acton, 'History of Freedom', p. 156.
and the priest and includes both within the boundaries of the kingdom and under the law of the land. Such an appraisement of the function of temporal power meant nothing less than that he demanded for the Germans, a Germany free from the domination and tyranny of Rome. In his estimate of Luther's contribution to the cause of political liberty, Murray says, with justice, "His view of all ecclesiastical authority, anticipating Bodin's opinion, excludes every extension of that authority to the sphere of political and civil life. Every one living within the boundaries of any given State is subject to its laws, and is not subject to the laws of any outside body. In fact, mediaeval verity was essentially false: it was a principle of domination destroying the liberty of the individual, and thereby that of the State. By breaking this unity Luther made possible the era of modern nations." 1 Here, again, Luther was following Occam and Marsilio by whom, in his championship of the state against the domination of the ecclesiastical powers, he was largely influenced.

1. Murray, p. 123.
C. For the priesthood, emancipation from the Roman bondage of celibacy. Instead of the simple apostolic system of every town having a minister (Tit. I), blameless and the husband of one wife (I Tim. III), the Roman See, he says, has substituted its own model of priesthood which has forbidden the parish priest to marry. This condition, he continues, has caused so much misery that it cannot be told and has given to the Greek Church cause to detach itself from us; it has brought about endless rupture, sin, shame and scandal. He would advise that liberty be restored and that every man, whether priest or not, be left free to marry or not to marry, and that, in the future, those ordained into the priesthood, under no conditions, should take the vow of celibacy, but should protest to the bishop that he has no right to demand it. Any priest who has been living in secret but faithful concubinage, Luther urges now to take unto himself publicly his lawful wife and to relieve his conscience by casting off any sense of shame. He insists, that whether forbidden or not by the canon or the temporal law, the two are married in the sight of God and that the salvation of their souls is of more importance than the arbitrary and tyrannous laws, which are neither necessary to salvation nor ordained by God.¹

1. WA. V1, 441,7ff.
Every critic of monasticism attempts at some time to estimate the effect of this advice upon an institution which, during those centuries when celibacy was regarded as more holy than marriage and virginity than chastity, embodied for Christendom the highest conception of life. The question has been repeatedly asked, what loss to the race has monasticism been because of its extinction, generation after generation, of those lives which by training were best fitted in religion, culture and refinement to perpetuate a strong and enlightened race? Beard says - "The merit of Luther in counteracting the inherent evil of monasticism was recognized more than a century ago. 'Justus Moser', says Renke, 'reckoned, in the year 1750, that ten to fifteen millions of human beings, in all lands, owed their existence to Luther and his example, and declared that a statue ought to be erected to him, as the sustainer of the human race! This is, after all, only an arithmetic way of looking at it: some may even say, that as weal and woe are meted out, it is not an unmixed good to be born. But to have lifted the load of sin from many consciences - to have reconciled nature and duty, purity and passion - to have made woman once more the faithful helpmeet of God's servants as of other men - to have been the founder of countless sweet and peaceful homes - is no small part of Luther's true glory." 1

1. Beard, p. 144.
It is not within the scope of this work to estimate the immediate effects, both good and evil, of this particular counsel to the monks of his generation. But for Luther, personally, it must be said that his own wedding took place in the house of his future home and in the presence of friends; that, despite the occasional coarseness in his treatment of matters referring to sex relationship - the Germany of his day had not sealed the subject of marriage in unconscious refinement - the sacredness and the purity of his home life was above suspicion. "No shadow of criticism", says Beard, "can rest upon him in that simple home at Wittenberg, where he was as a little child among his own little children and bravely bore, with his true yokefellow, the daily burthen of life." 1

D. Freedom of Conscience. "Whilst Wycliffe and Hus contradicted certain peculiarities of the Catholic teaching, Luther rejected the authority of the Church and gave to the individual conscience an independence which was sure to lead to an incessant resistance." ¹ If one is to appreciate at least in part, this singular contribution to the cause of human liberty, it must be remembered that in Europe, for more than a thousand years the penalty for exercising the divine right of private judgment, apart from ecclesiastical authority of an absolute kind, in matters of faith and practise, had been death — and the death assigned to heresy was by fire. Bayne strikingly illustrates, by citing the immeasurable horror which the burning of Servitus ² excited — and still excites —, "the obvious and infallible criterion of the advance which, under the auspices of Luther, the civilized world has made upon the old persecuting spirit. It is because one drop of blood, shed on account of opinion under Protestant auspices, provokes — naturally and rightly provokes — more astonishment, horror and outcry, than is called forth by a lake of blood, deep enough and broad . . . . .

¹ Lord Acton — 'History of Freedom', p.271.
² Bayne, I think, proves conclusively that Calvin remonstrated against fire as the method of bringing Servitus to his death (p.9, Vol I).
enough to float the British navy, shed by Rome and the Inquisition, that the morning and evening newspapers shriek about Servitus. Every shriek is a testimony to Luther as the man who rejecting the tradition authorized by a thousand years of pious persecution, proclaimed it to be an atrocious and anti-Christian blunder to make the hangman the ultimate resort in theological controversy."  

Luther's attitude toward heretics has radically changed since his lectures on Romans and in the Address to the German Nobility, the use of force is strenuously denounced in matters of faith. Before discussing the case of the Bohemians, he would first of all confess, without any attempt to justify the action of the Council of Constance, that John Hus and Jerome of Prague were burned contrary to the Papal, Christian and Imperial oath and safe conduct, thereby breaking God's commandment and exciting the Bohemians to high embitterment.  

With no desire to defend the error of Hus or to judge his belief - though he has been unable to discover the error - he would only say that, granting Hus was a heretic, as bad as ever he may have been, he was nevertheless burned unjustly and in

1. Bayne p. 9 Vol I - Hus had, however, at the Council of Constance distinctly claimed and defended liberty of conscience.
2. WA. Vl. 454, 22ff.
3. WA. Vl. 454, 35ff.
violation of the commandment of God. Heretics, he thinks, should be overcome with books and not with fire. Indeed, he says, if there were any art in overcoming heretics with fire, the executioner would be the most learned of all doctors and to study would be unnecessary for the strongest would survive. In Luther’s opinion, if the Bohemians are to be united with them and they with the Bohemians, it cannot and should not be done by force, by driving or by hurrying them; he would urge toleration, patience and gentleness. Christ, he says, had to associate with his disciples, suffering their unbelief, until they believed in His resurrection; so, too, the errors and discords in Bohemia should be tolerated until the reinstatement of the Archbishop and until there is sufficient time to unite the whole people into one harmonious doctrine. If he really knew that the only error of the Hussites was that they believe that in the Sacrament of the Altar there is true bread and wine, yet under it the body and blood of Christ, he should not condemn them but leave the whole matter to the Bishop of Prague. It is not an article of faith, at

1. WA. VI. 455,1ff.
2. WA. VI. 455,2ff.
3. Luther believed that, under the circumstances, the Bohemians should be left to elect for themselves a new Archbishop of Prague, subject to the confirmation of two of the neighbouring Bishops.
any rate, that the accidents of the bread and wine are in the Sacrament; this, Luther says is the delusion of St. Thomas and the Pope. It is, however, an article of faith, that in the bread and wine there is Christ's true flesh and blood. Luther would tolerate both positions until they are at one, for, he says, not much danger lies in whether you believe there is or there is not bread in the Sacrament. His object is to remove scruples of conscience so that no one may fear being tried for heresy because of his belief that real bread and wine are present on the altar. Among Christians, he thinks, love is more and more necessary and is more important than the papacy itself; in fact, he concludes with a touch of characteristic irony, it is possible for each to exist without the other. 1 In "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" he recommends that the right of "both kinds" in the Sacrament of the Altar be secured not through force but by the decree of a General Council, thus granting to the individual believer perfect freedom both in his desire for and in his use of the Sacrament, just as in the cases of Baptism and Penance. 2

1. WA. V1. 456,31ff; 457,20ff.
2. WA. V1. 507,21ff.
But not only did he decry the use of force and advocate toleration in matters of faith; he demanded intellectual emancipation and the right of private judgment in matters of practise. The priesthood, for example, this, also in the Address of the Nobility - he would have free to marry or not to marry. That men could serve God with a free will and not in slavery - bound with vows into eternal bondage - he would declare all foundations and convents to be free, i.e., he would permit every man to remain just as long as he wished. 1 Christian souls, he says, should under no circumstances be held in bondage through human customs and laws. 2 Those resident in convents, he would advise that, in the event their superiors should deny to them the privilege of confessing their sins, to whomever they will, they should go to a brother or sister of their own choice, confess, be absolved and comforted; they should then feel free to do entirely what they, under the circumstances, believe to be their duty, never doubting the reality of the absolution. 3

Luther's theory of the free conscience was another

1. WA. VI. 439,33ff.
2. WA. VI. 440,4ff.
3. WA. VI. 444,8ff.
product of his cardinal doctrine of justification by faith and, as Lord Acton suggests, it naturally resulted in the creation of opposition to unreasonable authority. But, as we have repeatedly noted, though the very nature of his doctrine made an open revolt against Rome inevitable, he faced the fact not willingly. For example, in decrying the tyrannical decrees of the Roman Pontiff, apropos of the Sacrament of Baptism, in his treatise, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church", Luther declares that, "for the sake of liberty and conscience, nothing legal can with justice be imposed upon Christians, either by men or by angels, except with their consent, for we are free from all" (Pro hac duntaxat clamo libertate et conscientia, clamoque fidenter, Christianis nihil ullo iure posse imponi legum, sive ab hominibus sive ab angelis, nisi quantum volunt: liberi enim sumus ab omnibus). ¹ But, he continues, even though these tyrannical laws continue to be imposed, "we ought to endure them", preserving above all, however, the consciousness of spiritual freedom. If they should refuse to restore liberty to the Churches of Christ and to encourage the teaching of that liberty, then, Luther says, theirs is the responsibility and they shall be guilty of

¹. WA. V1. 537,12ff.
of all the souls which perish under this terrible bondage.\(^1\)

Luther's profound conviction was that Christ is the King of the Church and that the Kingdom of God and its government, though very real, are invisible. He believed that no man or group of men could be the infallible head of a spiritual order and that every Christian had an equal opportunity, both to share in the boundless privileges of the Kingdom and to direct in its government.

Though no man has made a more far-reaching contribution to the cause of human liberty, it is an error to attribute to Luther any desire to confine perfect freedom within the limitations of private judgment. His doctrine of justification by faith, it will be remembered had involved the dogma of the unfree will, which in turn conditioned his conception of Christian liberty. That is to say, psychologically his will was made to serve his imagination and faith in revealed grace - the Word of God - became supreme; and the Scriptures were for him infallible authority. In his substitution of the Authority of the Holy Scriptures to that of the Church, Luther neither destroyed nor was he inconsistent with, his conception of perfect Christian freedom. For Luther, once an individual has voluntarily

\(^1\) WA. VI. 537,22ff.
chosen to follow in the paths of Christ, his freedom in private judgment in the things of Christ is automatically curtailed by the Word of God and he enters upon - as in the English Prayer Book - "Thy Service which is perfect freedom". Lord Macaulay discerns substantially Luther's position on the right of private judgment: "The Protestant doctrine touching the right of private judgment, that doctrine which is the common foundation of the Anglican, the Lutheran, and the Calvinistic Churches, that doctrine by which every sect of Dissenters vindicates its separation, we conceive not to be this, that opposite opinions may both be true; nor this, that truth and falsehood are equally good; nor yet this, that all speculative error is necessarily innocent; but this, that there is on the face of the earth no visible body to whose decrees men are bound to submit their private judgment on points of faith." ¹ If, only, in later years Luther would have but truly understood the scope of his own principle when his individual views, i.e. his circumstantial views, clashed with those of others:

¹. Quoted by Bayne p. 360, Vol II.
E. Emancipation from the prevailing Sacramental system—its prohibition of 'both kinds' to the laity, its 'opus operatum' idea and the sacrificial conception of transubstantiation.

Luther asserts in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" that when the Roman See denied the Cup to the laity there was then established a bondage, contrary both to the testimonies of Matthew, Mark and Luke regarding Christ's institution of the Sacrament, and to the teachings of St. Paul. 1 Referring to this bondage as both profane and not within the powers of either Pope or Council, he insists upon the right of the laity to 'both kinds' and urges that this bondage be removed by a decree of the General Council.2

In his attack upon the doctrine that the Sacrament of the Altar is an 'opus operatum' mystical performance and a sacrifice, Luther disregards all liturgies and the splendours of visible things and attends solely to the original institution of Christ, both the Gospel record and the Pauline interpretation of it.3 According to the Scriptures, Luther says the Sacrament of the Altar is the testament of Christ (testamentum Christi);4 it is the promise

1. WA. VI. 502,29ff.
2. WA. VI. 506,33ff.
3. WA. VI. 512,26ff.
4. WA. VI. 513,14ff.
of the remission of sins in His own blood ('Testamentum novum in meo', non alieno sed proprio, 'sanguine' quo gratia per spiritum in remissionem peccatorum);\(^1\) it is a sign and memorial of His promise of salvation through faith.\(^2\) Obviously, he concludes, the Sacrament cannot be a meritorious act or an 'opus operatum'; \(^3\) nor can it be a sacrifice for the mass is received and a sacrifice is given. \(^4\) In the mass, Luther maintains, people and priest are alike before God, there being no sacrificial offering by the priest but only the receipt and the distribution of the communion in the Mass. \(^5\)

So, too, in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church", he makes faith an essential part of the Sacrament of Baptism. He would even condition salvation with the divine promise - "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." \(^6\) Salvation, he repeats, comes through faith in the Sacraments and not by works. \(^7\) The word is to him more important than the sign; when, therefore, says Luther, a divine promise is made, faith is essential for both are so necessary to each other that neither can be effective without the other.\(^8\)

\(^1\) WA. VI. 515,14ff. \\
\(^2\) WA. VI. 515,24 ff. \\
\(^3\) WA. VI. 520,13ff. \\
\(^4\) WA. VI. 523,39-524,1ff. \\
\(^5\) WA. VI. 525,6ff. \\
\(^6\) WA. VI. 527,33ff. \\
\(^7\) WA. VI. 530,13ff. \\
\(^8\) WA. VI. 533,29ff.
It was, he says, for the purpose of nourishing this faith that the sacraments were instituted. 1 Baptism signifies for him both death and resurrection. When we begin to believe, according to Luther, we simultaneously begin to die to this world and live with God in eternity. Accordingly faith for him is a death and a resurrection, i.e. a spiritual baptism in which we are submerged and emerge. 2

Luther uncompromisingly maintains that without the sanction of the Holy Scriptures, i.e. without a divine promise upon which faith may operate, there can be no sacrament. 3 He logically concludes that in the want of such authority, it is enough to regard confirmation as a rite or ceremony of the Church. 4 He would consider matrimony as a figure of Christ and the Church, but certainly not as a divinely instituted sacrament. 5 Since the Word of God is incomparably above the Church and the function of the Church is not to establish or to ordain anything in it but only to be established and to be ordained as a creature, 6 he is convinced that ordination, as well, is not a Sacrament and that any believing Christian, certain of his faith, can be assured that all are equally priests

1. WA. VI. 529,36. 4. WA. VI. 550,14f.
2. WA. VI. 534,15ff. 5. WA. VI. 553, 9f.
3. WA. VI. 550,9f. 6. WA. VI. 560,31ff.
with the same power in both the Word and the Sacraments.\(^1\)

As regards the so-called Sacrament of Extreme Unction, he presents conclusive evidence to prove that it contains neither the form, the practise, the efficacy nor the purpose for which the Apostle James intended it.\(^2\)

Just as the sacerdotal and the Sacramental systems were thoroughly Roman Catholic and depended upon each other so, too, Luthers doctrines of justification by faith and the universal priesthood of believers are compatible with his original reformative attitude to the sacraments. As contrasted with the 'opus operatum' idea of the Church toward the sacraments, Luther believed they were but the means by which divine grace may be imparted to the soul through faith.

Already in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church", Luther is uncertain whether there are really two or three sacraments and it is only gradually that he and Melanchthon agree that there are but two. In his 'Von der Beicht ob der Papst Macht habe zu gepieten', in 1521, he would leave all of the sacraments optional to everyone.\(^3\) Faith, for Luther was unconquerable and eternal, and without it the Sacraments become for him empty forms. In these years when

\(^1\) WA. Vl. 566,26ff.
\(^2\) WA. Vl. 570,32ff.
\(^3\) WA. Vlll, p.157.
there was still something of the nationalist about Luther, his faith was so strong that to him even the visible Church was of little consideration. As later, both in his attitude to reason and in his doctrine of the infallibility of Scriptures - verbatim et literatim - so too in his final position toward the sacraments, he abandoned his reformatory policy, in part, in an endeavour to counteract the evil influence of fanatics. Once he had conceived of the Holy Spirit as bound to the Word of God, the two become for him both inseparable and exclusive in their relationship. Not only did he attempt to safeguard the efficiency of the word in his doctrine of infallibility but he placed upon the manifestation of the Holy Spirit an interpretation which, in contrast with his hitherto subjective considerations of faith, was objective. The means of grace which, throughout these three treatises, he regards as nothing more than the Spirit, awakening faith and assuring forgiveness, becomes for him ultimately of such importance that, in this as in other debatable positions, he declares the Scriptures to be literally infallible and unimpeachable. It was then an easy step to justify infant baptism as a means of grace and to demand that the real presence of the body and of the blood be retained as an essential part of the Eucharist. This partial reversion to scholasticism and to mediaeval magic leaves a tincture of the 'opus operatum' idea, despite
his rebellion against it in "The Babylonian Captivity of
the Church." Here, again, in his traditional doctrine of
consubstantiation, the real reformative Luther is lost
under the accumulated relics of religious strife.
F. Emancipation from the hierarchical sacerdotal system. - The essential principle of Christianity in the Roman Catholic Church has always been the nourishment of the Christian life by a Sacramental system through a Sacerdotal order. The Catholic theory is that "Divine grace and help can descend upon human nature only by certain fixed channels, of which a supernaturally endowed class of men have the control; the Protestant idea asserts that the intercourse between the Eternal and the human spirit is absolutely free, and that all its conditions are fulfilled in Infinite Love on the one hand, and on the other in awful aspiration and the passionate desire of holiness... It was from one of these entrenched heights of Christian theory to the other that Luther made the irrevocable transition." ¹

For Luther, the authority of the Word of God is incomparably above that of the Church. To him it is now inconceivable that the Church should establish or ordain any new promises of divine grace not instituted by the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Since the Church, upon its own authority cannot promise divine grace, it follows for Luther that it cannot institute a sacrament and that,  

¹. Beard p. 135.
therefore, the so-called sacrament of ordination is of human invention. ¹ He regards the liberty and glory of Christianity as mocked and ruined by the impious tyrannies of the whole system and counsels young men to seek admission to these holy rites only in the event that they are prepared to preach the Gospel and to believe that they are no better in the sight of God than the laity by receiving the Sacrament of Orders. To offer the mass, he says, is really to receive the Sacrament, and, certainly, anyone can read the Hours; how then, he wonders, excepting in tonsure and vestments, are those who receive the Sacrament of Orders any different from laymen? Continuing to propound his doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers, he asserts that if the Sacrament of Orders is anything at all, it is but a rite by which men are called to minister in the Church. Though he would abolish the Sacrament and though he declares all men to be equally priests, he does admit a clerical order. Indeed all possess the same power in the Word and in any Sacrament whatever, he, nevertheless, considers it unlawful for anyone to use that power without the consent of the community, or unless he were called by a superior, for, he says, that power which is in common to all, no

¹ WA, VI, 560,31ff.
individual can assume unto himself until he is called. He would make of the priesthood a ministry of love, the particular duties of which would be to interpret the Scriptures and properly to administer the Sacraments. This shattering blow to papal tyranny would bring with it, he contends, that joyful Christian liberty in which each shall understand the other his equal, in the sight of God.¹

¹ WA. V1. 566,26ff.
G. Emancipation from the prevailing Penitential system. After repeating the arguments which he had used in the Indulgence controversy, apropos of the differentiation between true penitence and doing penance, he submits that the papal emphasis upon the power of loosing and binding (Matt. XVI, 19; Matt. XVIII, 18: John XX, 23),

ignores both true faith and the fact that Christ created not a priesthood with absolute power but a ministry of penance. By dividing penitence into three parts, contrition, confession and satisfaction, the Romanists, he says, have destroyed the good in each and have substituted only unreasonableness and tyranny. They now teach, continues Luther, that contrition comes prior to faith in the promise, that it is not as a work of faith but as a merit; and confession and satisfaction have been turned into institutions for financial gain and worldly ambition.

Luther maintains that anyone who confesses his sins voluntarily, either in private or in the presence of another, - or, again, if he is told of his faults, asks divine forgiveness and amends his life - is absolved from his sins for Christ has bestowed on every believer, in

1. WA. VI. 543,12ff.
2. WA. VI. 544,22ff.
3. WA. VI. 544,26ff.
4. WA. VI. 545,36ff.
in spite of the tyranny of the pontiffs, the right of absolution. ¹

We have treated the question of 'poenitentia' at length in a previous chapter and there observed how that Luther with his new conception of justification by faith, carried the 'metanoia' interpretation of 'poenitentia' into practical religious experience. Lutheran theology contrasts the tenderness of 'metanoia' with the rigidity of 'poenitentia' and places the love of God and righteousness as the beginning rather than the consummation of 'poenitentia'. Luther had this first of all from Staupitz but it was a weary road until he could conceive of the love of God, attested by the life and death of Christ, as grace and not as the reward for meritorious labour. But when he did grasp the significance of 'metanoia', he made it the center of his theology and demanded for the Christian, emancipation from what was probably the most pernicious ecclesiastical system in history.

¹ W.A. Vl. 547,17ff.
H. Emancipation from the mediaeval Church system of work righteousness by the doctrine of justification by faith alone. In "The Liberty of a Christian Man", Luther strikes at the very foundation of the mediaeval system by giving practical application to his new conception of Romans 1,17. It is, no doubt, with a vivid recollection of the personal experiences of earlier years that he declares that good works, done with the hope of securing justification, burden the individual with necessity and extinguish both liberty and faith. Instead of such works being free, he regards them as blasphemy to God, who alone can justify.¹

Pullan,² of the present day, and Mozley, ³ one of the ablest theologians of the nineteenth century, both High Churchmen - "Mozley is largely responsible for the Anglican Luther legend and the ordinary Anglican minister reads Mozley instead of Luther" - ⁴ seem to take particular pains in calling attention to Luther's tendency to Antinomian heresy. Apparently, they understand neither his doctrine of justification by faith nor its characteristic historical position in a system of spiritual religion. Beard, himself

¹. W.A. Vll, 63,10ff.
². Pullan, p.8.
a Unitarian, seems to have better appreciated Luther in his unique historical setting. "When," he says, "the greatest value was being set on mere ritual observance - when the inner pains of repentance were being hidden behind the ecclesiastical form of penance which too often took their place - when benefactions to the Church were accepted in atonement for flagrant sin, and escape from purgatory was to be bought of wandering indulgence-mongers in any market-place - it was a great thing to recall men's minds to the fact that religion is an invisible frame of mind, from which alone can spring actions acceptable to God. This was indeed the antithesis of the New Testament over again, in a shape but slightly altered. Once more there was a ceremonial law, a religion of ritual rights, an intolerable burthen of formal obedience laid upon the conscience of the believer, in opposing to which a spiritual gospel, a consecration of the affections, a service of the heart, Luther might well think that he was following in the footsteps of Paul." 1

Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone as it was presented in contrast with the prevailing mediaeval system of merits, does not exclude morality from his

1. Beard p. 129.
theology. Mozley says "Luther annihilated all goodness in the first instance because it was imperfect." But, he did not; he only emphasized religion and morality as the 'a priori' cause of goodness. "Bona opera non faciunt bonum virum," he pleads, "sed bonus vir facit bona opera, Mala opera non faciunt malum virum, sed malus via facit mala opera" (Good works do not make a good man but a good man does good works; bad works do not make a bad man but a bad man does bad works.) 1 Lord Acton holds that Luther's later saying - "A good tree brings forth good fruit by nature, without compulsion; is it not madness to prescribe laws to an apple tree that it shall bear apples and not thorns" - naturally proceeded from the axiom of the certainty of salvation of all who believe in the Confession of Augsburg. 2 It would be more correct to regard this quotation from Luther as proceeding naturally from the practical application of his doctrine of justification by faith in contradistinction from the mediaeval system of work righteousness.

Luther was quite aware of the fact that his new doctrine would probably be misinterpreted as tending to Antinomianism and he repeatedly guarded against creating . . . . .

1. W. A. Vll, 61,26ff.
that impression. At the very outset of "The Liberty of a Christian Man", he states his conception of Christian personality in the form of a paradox - a) A Christian man is the most free lord of all and subject to none (Christianus homo omnium dominus est liberrimus, nulli subjectus); and b) A Christian man is the dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one (Christianus homo omnium servus est officiosissimus omnibus subjectus) - and insists that in the light of his doctrine of justification by faith, the two apparently contradictory statements are compatible.

Not only is the Christian the lord of all but by virtue of his inner justification he becomes the servant of all. Justification by faith involves, then, a ministering service. In fact Luther recognizes the need of self discipline in the Christian life but urges its practise not as the cause of, but as the result of justification. "Here then the works begin," he says, for the Christian must not rest but be careful to exercise his body through fastings, watchings, labour and other moderate discipline so that it may always be the servant of the spirit and obey and adapt itself to the inner man." 2

In Luther's system of Christian ethics, a Christian

1. WA. V11, 49,22ff.
2. WA. V11, 60,2ff.
has, as well, a very definite responsibility to his neighbour. For Luther, man does not live unto himself alone but for all men upon the earth. Indeed, he says, the Christian man lives only for those and not for himself and, that he may serve others more sincerely and more freely, he brings his own body into submission. ¹ The true Christian, he believes, will apply himself with gladness and love to the works of the freest servitude, serving others voluntarily and for no reward, himself abundantly satisfied in the fullness and richness of his own faith. ² He submits that true love and the genuine truth of a Christian life demands that the good things which are received from God should be made the common possession of all. ³ Then, as though anticipating the voices of his critics, he distinctly says, "We are set free through faith in Christ, therefore, not from works but from the belief in works, i.e. from the presumption that salvation can be secured through works." ⁴

As a precaution against his own followers turning this new liberty of faith into an occasion for license — for, he says, many will think that now everything is for them unlawful and will proceed to show that they are free men

¹ WA. Vll, 64,15ff.
² WA. Vll, 64,34ff.
³ WA. Vll, 64,1ff.
⁴ WA. Vll, 70,14ff.
by their contempt and criticism for ceremonies, traditions and human laws, as though their refusal to fast on stated days, etc. and their scoffing at the precepts of men constituted a Christian life. ¹ — he advises them to be moderate, to walk in the middle path and to condemn either extreme; this, in the spirit of Paul's counsel to the Romans "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth." ²

The Christian, then, according to Luther, realizes, first of all, that the Holy Spirit is the motive power in life, from which proceed all those thoughts and deeds which are pleasing to God. It follows for him, quite logically, that a life thus possessed performs good works spontaneously and as the natural result of its spiritual estate. Not only do good works, so performed, bring unbounded joy to the believer, but reward will have no place in his system of conduct though he continue through life spending himself in service for others. When, therefore, good works, performed in one's recognized duty to his neighbour, lack the warm expression of Christian love, they are, for Luther, as sounding brass. When he recalls that in his own day

¹. WA. Vll, 69,26ff.
². WA. Vll, 70,3ff.
behaviour was extorted largely by the inhibitions of ecclesiastical laws, he would - again, quite logically - attribute any credit for such behaviour not to the individual but to the laws themselves. Little wonder that the decrees of the Roman Curia in matters of conduct appear absurd to Luther in the light of his new doctrine of justification by faith.
I. Spiritual Freedom. In "The Liberty of a Christian Man" Luther insists upon a Christo-centric faith as the one essential to life, justification and spiritual freedom. After strengthening his position with quotations from the Gospels - "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me shall never die" (John XI, 25); and, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (Matt IV, 4) - he says that to preach Christ and to believe in Him is to feed the soul (animam pavisse), to justify it, (instificasse), to liberate it and to save it (liberasse et salvam fecisse). 1

The faith of which he speaks has to do entirely with the inner man; it is subjective and, for Luther, it precludes all thought of a man being justified, liberated and saved through the efforts of outward works or labour. 2 If, in accordance with the old precepts, a man attempts to satisfy the law in every particular so as to avoid condemnation, Luther says, such a man is really brought to nothing in his own estimation and remains utterly helpless in the acquiring both of justification and of spiritual freedom. 3 For Luther, the declarations of spiritual peace

1. WA. VII, 50,33ff; 51,15ff.
2. WA. VII, 51,35f; 52,1ff.
3. WA. VII, 52,36ff.
and freedom are to be found alone in the Gospel and whether or not a man lives in the enjoyment of this inward spiritual peace and harmony depends alone upon his faith in Christ. (Crede in Christum in quo promittuntur tibi gratia, institia, pax, libertas et omnia, si credis, habebis, si non credis, carabis). ¹

In pointing out the efficacy of a Christo-centric faith, Luther is throughout consistently Pauline in his theology. Not only is the Christian man delivered from the necessity of works of justification and the precepts of the law - in fact, the law was not made for the righteous (insto non est lax posita) ² - but, says Luther, his faith continuously honours God and ascribes to Him both truth and righteousness. This idea of attributing to God the credit of being really true and righteous, Luther regards as the highest quality of worship. For in this respect, he says, faith is always loyal and doubts neither the truth, justice nor the wisdom of God and ever provides for all things in the best possible way. When faith unites the soul to Christ and the soul, accordingly, inherits the possessions of Christ, the believer becomes a king in the

¹. WA. VII, 53,3ff.
². WA. VII, 53,30f.
spiritual world and a lord over all things, even sin and death. It naturally follows for Luther that, if this be a true marriage - and human marriages, he says, are but feeble examples of this one great marriage - then all which they possess becomes theirs in common, good things as well as evil things; i.e. whatever Christ possesses, the believing soul may appropriate to itself and regard it as its own and so whatever the soul possesses, Christ may claim as His. ¹ So every Christian through faith is exalted in spiritual power. There is, obviously, no reference here to corporeal power for, according to Luther, the more Christian a man is, the more he is subjected to evils, sufferings and deaths. ² Nevertheless, all of these sufferings and even death become servants of the believing soul and work together for salvation, faith continually operating as the inestimable power and liberty of Christians (Christianorum inaestimabilis potentia et libertas). ³

But not only are Christians kings and the freest of all men; they are also eternal priests (sacerdotes quoque sumus inacternum), worthy to appear in the very presence of God, there to pray for their fellows and mutually to

¹ WA. V11, 54,33ff.
² WA. V11, 57,8ff.
³ WA. V11, 57,22ff.
instruct one another in the things of God. ¹ He quite frankly states that this idea of the priesthood is in marked contrast with the practise of the Church. Between priests, he says, the Scriptures make no distinction and those which the Church designates popes, bishops and priests, the Word of God regards as ministers, servants and stewards.² He refers to the prevailing dispensation as such a pompous display of power and such terrific tyranny that, in these features it out-rivals any earthly government. Priests, he says, regard the laity as something other than Christians and any knowledge of Christian grace, of faith, of liberty, and most of all, of Christ has perished; and the result of this intolerable bondage to human works and laws has been spiritual slavery.³ Such was the 'statu quo' into which he injected his new doctrine of justification by faith and declared the Christian spiritually free.

Now, it was with no thought of disregarding the reality of human weakness nor of doubting the need for self-discipline that Luther taught his new conception of spiritual freedom. No one realized better than Luther that the ideal state of which he spoke was not easily acquired.

¹ WA. V11, 57,24ff.
² WA. V11, 58,16ff.
³ WA. V11, 58,23ff.
Already in his lectures on the Romans he gave conspicuous attention to the terrible reality of original sin. Of the monastic idea of systematically suppressing the will for the sake of saving the soul, he knew enough from personal experience. While artificial suppression of the will ceases in the free man, Luther nevertheless subordinates the will to the imagination. Thus, by voluntary resignation, the Holy Spirit is permitted to direct and control the whole life. This self discipline which he recommends, is for the purpose of training the Christian into a capacity for moral judgment. After the believer is well disciplined, he will be expected, in his new freedom, to exercise the prerogative of private judgment in matters of doubt, the Scriptures being his final authority. Life itself is, for Luther, more to be depended upon than all the inhibitions of the monastic system to properly discipline the will of the Christian. He illustrates this more fully in his Sermon on Good Works, a work which Wernle claims 1 should be classed with his three Reformation treatises. The sermon here referred to is, however, little more than a practical application of his doctrine of spiritual freedom in every day life.

Who, then, is 'wedded with Christ', becomes Christ's and Christ becomes his. His interests and activities are

1. 'Der Evangelische Glaube', Ed I, 349ff.
are naturally Christ's and the believer becomes an instrument - or better, a passage way - through which flow the blessings of God to others. This is of course Pauline theology and Luther, like Paul, saw the necessity of guarding against the possibility of such a life developing into a formal legality of faith and goodness. Here, once more, he emphasizes personal responsibility in the free man. He expects the individual to keep ever in mind the two great fundamental truths of justification by faith, viz, human frailty without Christ and the fact that the believer's life is Christ's indeed. With this caution carefully observed, Luther believes that a conscience, developed along the suggested lines of self-discipline, will operate harmoniously with his conception of spiritual freedom.
No treatment of our subject is complete without some reference to the Reformer's attitude both to authority and to toleration. In the first place, it seems clear that Luther was brought to his extreme position of Scriptural infallibility more by the natural operation of circumstances and as a protection for his cardinal doctrine against prevalent disturbances, than by theological reasoning.

We noted that in his lectures on the Psalter in 1513 he then unhesitatingly maintained the final and infallible authority of the Church. Nor did he question it in the Roman lectures. We observed how that in 1517, he deserted the Scholastics and sought the support of the Scriptures— but, as interpreted by the Fathers of whom St. Augustine was his favourite; there was still no thought of Scriptural authority as over against ecclesiastical authority. The first record of any attack upon the hierarchy is in a sermon preached in February of 1517, but in it he staunchly maintains that the Roman Church possesses the truth and that all Christians must be members of this, the true Church. It was in May of 1518, in his 'sermo de virtute excommunicationis', that the doctrine of the Invisible Church affected his confidence in the authority of the

1. WA. I. 135.
Church. A little later he could assert that a censure of the Church could not possibly cut him off from the real Church, if he were in touch with truth. ¹ When, for Luther, the Roman Church, i.e. the Pope, ceases to be the infallible authority, he appeals, in his 'Appellatio ad futurum concilium universale', from the Pope who is in error to the correct judgment of a future General Council ² and declares that the theories and practises of the Church are in contrast with the principles of the Gospel. When he leaves Augsburg, following his interview with Cajetan, in October 1516, he regards the Decretals as valid only in so far as they conform to the Holy Scriptures. ³ Then, at Leipzig, through the ingenious methods of Eck, Luther was forced to admit his conviction that Hus had been condemned unjustly, which admission in itself signified that he questioned the infallibility of a General Council. He soon after admits that his examination of the Decretals have further convinced him that councils not only err in their definitions of faith but that they contradict each other. Furthermore, when he had examined Hutten's edition of Lorenzo Valla's 'Donation of Constantine', he was brought

¹ WA. I, 680.
² WA. II, 2,36ff.
³ WA. II, 10
to the conclusion that not only does Roman authority at times err but that its very foundation is a fraud. With Luther's previous conception of the Invisible Church upon which to build, it was an easy step to the position that in the true Church, there are Greeks as well as the Romans, heretics like Hus as well as Augustine and the Fathers. The Invisible and true Church, he concluded, must have one faith and one law; for Luther his new conception of Romans 1,17 became the faith and the Holy Scriptures became the law. After the authority of the General Council succeeds that of the Pope and the Holy Scriptures that of the Council, Luther declares in 'The Babylonian Captivity of the Church' that the Bible has become for him the cornerstone of the Kingdom and the infallible authority of the Church. 1

From the time Luther had set up the Scriptures as a standard of judgment there was no reverting but only a gradual increase in intensity of the doctrine. I do not mean that he was consistent with this principle of infallibility in his own criticism of Scripture, for he was not. To support this statement I need only quote Luther's criticism of the Epistle of St. James - "The right text by..."

1. WA. VI. 560.
which to judge its books is whether they preach Christ. Whatever does not preach Christ is not apostolic, even though it had been written by St. Peter or St. Paul. And, on the other hand, whatever does preach Christ would be apostolic even though it proceeded from Judas, Pilate or Herod. But this James only preaches the law and obedience to the law, and mixes the one with the other in a confusing fashion. Therefore I will not admit him in my Bible among the number of true canonical writers. But at the same time I will forbid none to place and esteem him as they please. 1

Nevertheless, from the time he submitted the Scholastics to the test of Scripture to the period of Protestant Schisms and heresies, when he abandoned reason entirely as a constituent part of religion, he gradually entrenched himself deeper and deeper behind the fortification of Scriptural infallibility until, as a defensive weapon against those forces which he had reason to believe were threatening chaos, the Bible became for Luther an infallible and 'verbatim et literatim' authority.

It was the less original minds of another generation who moulded scores of Luther's statements on Scriptural infallibility into a system, which for Lutheran posterity,

even unto the present day, has practically precluded the
application of reason in Biblical criticism. Beard may
justly come to the following conclusion: "But the adoption
of this position (the infallible authority of Scripture)
was the result, not of any calculation of ecclesiastical
expediencies on Luther's part, not even of a calm intellectual
estimate of conflicting evidence, but of a terrible struggle
in the depths of his fiery soul between two principles,
each of which was rooted in his very nature. He saw whither
the free working of his own mind would take him, and he
dared not make the adventure. He used the weapons of faith
to slay reason, lest perchance reason should lure faith
to her destruction. But who can tell what might have been
the effect upon the Reformation and the subsequent develop­
ment of the intellectual life of Europe, had Luther put
himself boldly at the head of the larger and freer thought
of his time, instead of using all the force of his genius,
all the weight of his authority, to crush it?" 1

Any reply to this question will be mere conjecture. The evidence, however, that the Protestant countries of the world are any the worse for having the Bible as their infallible authority in religion, during the last four centuries, is far from convincing. An age with an historical perspective greater than our own, may see in Luther's doctrine of Scriptural infallibility a solution to the phenomenon that, during this period of history, with its obvious limitations - when the responsibilities of liberty were yet unknown and when great nations of pious peasants and artisans were nurtured by a religious literature, spiritual both in its culture and its discipline - those moral and spiritual forces were developed which are prevailing throughout the chaos of our own times. It cannot be denied, however, that Luther's terrific onslaught on reason was harmful in the domain of progressive knowledge. In his later years, he completely abandoned that early rationalistic attitude of his own, without which the Reformation would have been impossible, and seemed no longer to understand that in the enlightened religious mind there could be a progressive revolution on the basis of human experience and thought.
3. In Luther's demand for religious liberty, there is at no time any tendency to anarchy within either the Church or state. His policy was directed along practical lines and he sought for religious communities, the rights of self-government, self-protection and self-determination. Of course, the State-Church may be as intolerant as the Church-state - Luther realized this fact, but too late - as historians of practically every country with an established Church will testify. Religious liberty, involving as it does the toleration of error, is compatible with unity only when truth itself prevails. That is to say, religious liberty is the result neither of ecclesiastical decrees nor of civil enactments and is impossible as long as truth is held captive by the chains of traditional prejudice and superstition.

When toleration advances to stages of sedition, Luther himself, becomes intolerant and on one occasion appeals to the sword against elements which threaten chaos. If, however, we judge Luther not with the twentieth but with the sixteenth century in mind, it will be clear that this spirit of intolerance is not a part of his true nature. When Luther is contrasted with Luther, there emerges a toleration and a charity which are unmistakable. During

1. The state connection of the Church of Scotland is now compatible with the liberty of the Church to govern itself.
the months of 1521 - Luther was a voluntary prisoner in the Elector Frederic's castle at Eisenach - he could write in his "Von der Beicht ob der Bapst Macht habe zu gepieten" that the individual "is at liberty to make use of confession if, as and where he choses. If he does not wish, you may not compel him for no one has a right or ought to force any man against his will. Nevertheless, absolution is a great gift of God. In the same way, no man can or ought to be forced to believe, but every one should be instructed in the Gospel and admonished to believe, though he is left free to obey or not to obey. All the Sacraments should be left optional to everyone. Whoever does not wish to be baptized, let him be. Whoever does not wish to receive the Sacrament has a right not to receive. Therefore, whoever does not wish to confess is free before God not to do so."¹ And, in a letter to Kaupold and others in September of 1521, he writes, "I will countenance neither force nor compulsion. I would commend faith and baptism but no one shall be forced to accept. They should be admonished and then left free to choose."² Murray, in commenting upon the series of eight sermons which Luther preached in Wittenberg beginning Sunday, March 7, 1522, says: "These

¹. WA. V111, 157; translation by Murray p.169f.
². Enders III, p. 236.
sermons all breathed the spirit of that delightful book, 'The Liberty of a Christian Man'. What he wrote so eloquently in 1520 he spoke no less eloquently in 1522. Truth was to be the master motive of men, but truth was to be spoken in love. With Christian freedom must be combined Christian 'caritas'. There was to be charity towards the weak, for faith was worthless without charity. No man, he plainly laid down, has the right to compel his brother in matters that are left free, and among these are marriage, the monastic life, private confession, fasting, images in Churches, and the like. The Word of God and moral suasion must be allowed to carry out their appointed work."

Luther had overthrown a system which regarded religious liberty as attainable through conformity to ecclesiastical authority, by proclaiming through his doctrines of justification by faith and the universal priesthood of believers, the phenomenal idea of individual freedom. Despite his dogmatic temperament, Luther demanded for the individual the right of religion in religion. That the limitations of the sixteenth century prevented a free and sane response to his lead, can be understood. Nevertheless, the struggles of the century - Protestant heresy and ...

sedition were the thorns in Luther's flesh - unconsciously prepared the way for the ultimate triumph of truth and of religious toleration.

Considering, then, that the circumstances under which he lived, largely conditioned the practical application of his conception of liberty, it is quite obvious that Martin Luther would have revolted and, were he alive, would today revolt from any ecclesiastical system which concentrated upon the by-products of Christianity and withheld from its membership, the burning truth that to God alone is the individual responsible in matters of faith and life. I find myself in substantial agreement with Beard 1 in thinking that Luther, were he alive in our day, would breathe the common air of the intellectual world and answer to its inspiration.

1. Beard p.405.
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Eyn Sendbrief an den Bapst Leo, den czechenden.
Epistola Lutheriana ad Leonem decimum.
Adversus execrabilem Antichristi bullam.
Widder die Bullen des Endchrists.
Apellatio ad Concilium repetita.
Warumb des Bapsts und seyner Jungern Eucher...vortrunt seyn.
Assertio omnium articulorum per bullam damnitorum.