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Peace & Truth

The Magazine of the Sovereign Grace Union

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The Magazine of the Sovereign Grace Union

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Aims and Objects

To further the proclamation and defence of the doctrines of Free and Sovereign Grace.

To print and reprint literature expounding such doctrines.

To encourage publishers to issue such literature and to help its circulation by purchase and distribution to Clergy, Ministers, Christian Workers, Theological Students, Members of Parliament and others.

To hold Conferences and Meetings to re-affirm the old truths in these days of apostacy and declension.

To circulate tracts, pamphlets and books, maintaining the Doctrines of Grace, which may be presented to the Union for that purpose, and to print and circulate such tracts, etc., for which any person, or Society, undertakes to provide the funds.

To raise a testimony against the evils of Priestcraft, Popery, Ritualism, Arminianism, Rationalism, Liberalism and Higher Criticism.

Membership is open to all who are in agreement with the Basis, Aims and Objects of the Union.

Editorial

On 31st October 2017, many will be marking the 500th Anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation. In contrast to all too many, who will be using the occasion to claim that the Reformation is over, we must assert that the great principles for which Luther and his colleagues contended are as important today as they were then, five centuries ago.

The *Formal Principle* of the Reformation, that is to say the source of teaching, is *Sola Scriptura*, the Bible alone, and this principle is under attacks from many different enemies. There is Rome, of course, which still insists that the Bible cannot be properly understood apart from its teaching authority, but the principle of the Bible *plus* something else is held by many groups today, and many of those would claim to be Protestant in some sense.

The *liberal* practically exalts the professor above the Bible; for only the Professor can, on the liberal view, tell us what the Bible actually means, and how the various parts of the books were cobbled together. These professors do not of course speak with a united voice on very much, and so there are a multitude of hypotheses, a multitude of liberal theologies. The one thing on which they *do* agree seems to be that the Bible cannot possibly be our authority. Instead it is the world that is that authority, usually in radical political and social theories, and so we have Marxist theologies, Feminist theologies, and so on and so forth, as if Politics was the power of God unto salvation!

The *traditionalist* exalts tradition, and rather than going to the Bible to test that tradition, goes looking for verses that can be used, out of context, to support it. That was Rome's position five centuries ago, and remains the position of many in Rome, but it is also the position of many who claim to be Protestants. Arminianism is the position of many simply because it is the tradition that they have been taught. It is

a mere tradition of men; yet Protestants like the late Dave Hunt have taught it while saying "I have no tradition." Still others today, who would place themselves firmly against Rome, proudly refer to themselves as "traditionalists" and agree with Rome that man's salvation is ultimately the result of human co-operation with God.

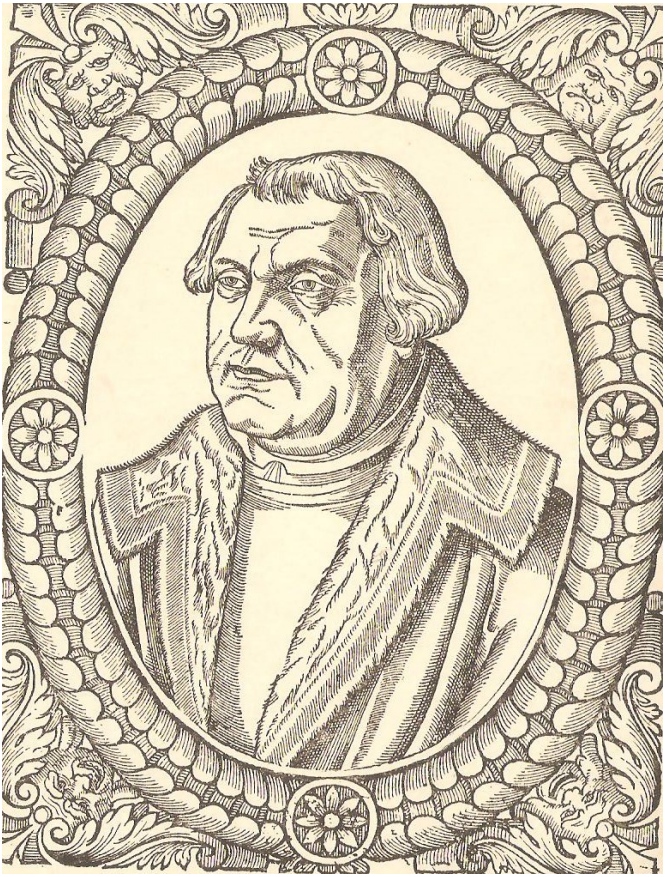
The *mystic* makes his or her own impressions and supposed private revelations from God the final authority. To the mystic the value of the Bible is that it is a sort of point of contact, a channel for personal experiences. Many in the Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches hold this mystic position, either consciously or unconsciously, but they are not alone in it; the Barthian position that the Bible becomes the word of God when the reader encounters God in it is a form of mysticism.

But the Reformation, against those who exalt a teaching authority above the Bible, against those who exalt traditions, and against the mystics, said, "The Bible alone." What the Reformers meant was not that every other book should be thrown away, or that there was no need for teachers, but that only the Bible is infallible; it is above every other book, above every teacher, above every tradition and above every experience. The Psalmist says, "thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (Ps. 138:2), if God has so exalted it, we should have a most exalted view of what he has said.

So, as we celebrate the Reformation, we are called back to the Bible, and to the highest view of that Word which God has spoken, and in which he is still speaking. We are called to examine our traditions in its pure light, and to see it as it truly is, the light of God in a dark world. We should have the highest possible confidence in the Bible, a confidence that we can have in nothing else. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Martin Luther and the Righteousness of God

by Dr. Paul Coxon



[Image: Martin Luther from Beza's *Icones*]

Introduction

When Martin Luther died at Eisleben, on 18 Feb 1546, at the age of 62, he left the world a different place than he found it. For, in the hand of God, Martin Luther was instrumental in initiating the greatest Reformation of the Church since the days of the Apostles,

the reverberations of which are still felt in the present day. Now it is true that in the late middle ages, the world was changing, without Luther's help. In the realm of travel and exploration, for instance, Marco Polo's voyage to the Orient had sparked a new quest for exploration of the East. And in 1492, Christopher Columbus' attempt to reach the East by travelling West had led to the discovery of the Americas and the opening up of the New World.

In their quest for new knowledge, Renaissance artists and scholars were reaching back for their inspiration to the classical civilisations of Greece and Rome. Renaissance Humanists, with their slogan *ad fontes*, "back to the sources," were particularly interested in Greek and Latin classics. Erasmus of Rotterdam published a Greek text of the New Testament along with several of the writings of the Greek and Latin Church Fathers.

The invention of the Printing Press by Johannes Gutenberg around the year 1440 enabled the rapid dissemination of new ideas along with classic works. The Feudal System was at breaking point, under the rise of urbanisation and incipient Capitalism. Due to these same forces, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Roman Catholic Church itself, was being weakened by insurgent nationalism; countries like Spain, France, and England and the German states, were asserting their own interests and making demands that the papacy could not easily resist. Many of these changes, like the printing press and Erasmus' Greek Testament, aided and facilitated the Reformation. But it was Luther who struck the hammer blow that shattered the darkness of the middle ages, because by far the greatest change, one that rocked the Western world, came with the demise of the Papal Theocracy, and the rise of Protestant churches; all initiated by the instrumentality of Luther.

In order to understand this, it is important to understand the stranglehold that the Roman Church had over Christendom in the middle ages and the way that this Roman domination came about. Roland Bainton , in his book *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), divides the middle

ages into three periods: The first was the Period of Dissemination, from 5th to 11th C. where the Roman Church sought to disseminate the Orthodox faith among the Arian and pagan barbarians responsible for the Empire's demise in the West. The high water-mark in this period came with the Coronation of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor on Christmas Day in the year 800 by Pope Leo III. In seeking to permeate every area of society with its faith and ideals, the Church became a great landed institution, possessing as much as half the territory of Germany and France. With land and power, however, came corruption, particularly among the popes and the higher clergy, who became feudal lords over their people. Moreover, the mass conversion of the barbarian tribes, in extending the church, had also served to dilute it.

The second period was that of Domination, from the 12th to the 13th century. This was initiated with cries for the reform of Christendom and these cries were met by a vigorous attempt to Christianize society, led by Pope Gregory VII, who sought to enforce a papal theocracy by means of the church's seven Sacraments:

i) Baptism not only washed away sins, but also admitted the person baptised into the church. By means of baptism, the whole of society came under the dominion of the church.

ii) The Mass conveyed communion with Christ and eternal life. But what Mass bestowed, excommunication could take away. Moreover, the Mass could only be received following,

iii) The sacrament of Confirmation.

iv) Penance bestowed forgiveness of sins, but this could only be administered by the priest.

v) The sacrament of Marriage meant that the Pope was the arbiter of marriage and divorce - as Henry VIII discovered.

vi) Extreme Unction, administered at death, sealed redemption, conveying the person either into heaven, for those who had done exceptionally well, or, for the majority, into the refining fires of Purgatory, where they would receive further cleansing before being admitted to heaven.

vii) Ordination, conferred by priests, made new priest of select

individuals. Since celibacy was by this time enforced, the priesthood could not run in families and thus the exercise of the priesthood lay in the gift of the Roman church.

The upshot of this was that every individual in society (except the Jew, who was tolerated to live, and the heretic, who was not) belonged to the church, and was under the dominion of the church. Moreover, the sacraments operated *ex opere operato* by virtue of the rite performed, irrespective of the virtue of either the recipient or the priest. All this was in time under-girded by the massive learning of the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas, a synthesis between Aristotelian Philosophy and Christianity.

All this meant that the lay person didn't have to think about his or her own salvation; they just had to follow the route prescribed by the Roman Catholic church. They didn't need to understand the Bible, or the sacraments; nor could they, for the Mass was performed in Latin. Moreover, if an individual wanted to accrue further merit, there were pilgrimages that could be made, relics that could be viewed, indulgences that could be purchased and the invocations of the saints. For those who wanted to take heaven by storm and be more sure of their final salvation, the monastic vow and the cowl could be taken. This turned society into a spiritual Feudal system, with the Pope and the clergy at the apex, wielding the power of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the laity at the bottom, in total dependence on the church for their salvation.

Following the period of domination came the Period of Decline, in the 14th and 15th centuries. During this period the Roman church became the victim of its own success. In weakening the power of the Emperor, the church had strengthened the emerging nation states. In protecting their own interests, countries like France and England forbade the export of their silver and gold to Rome. The result was that the papacy went bankrupt and a successive series of popes resorted to various means to raise finance. Everything was up for sale. As critics pointed out, "Everything in the church ... is sold for

money - pardons, masses, candles, ceremonies, curacies, benefices, bishoprics, the papacy itself" (Owen Chadwick, *The Reformation* [Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1964], p. 19). "The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim 6:10), and so it proved to be in the medieval Church. One of the worst offences was Simony,[1] the purchase of ecclesiastical offices by the highest bidder. Vast sums of money changed hands as unscrupulous men purchased offices in the church. They did so not only for the power and prestige that these offices conveyed, but also for the income that they generated. Men would collect ecclesiastical offices like properties on a monopoly board. And popes and kings would bestow high office as rewards to those who served them. Henry VIII rewarded his physician, a man named Linacre, by making him rector of four parishes, a canon of three cathedrals, and precentor at York Minster, all before he was ordained a priest, in payment for his services (Cf. Chadwick, p. 15).

Even the papacy itself could and did change hands when the right bribes were paid to the right people. The result was that the clergy became secularised with "brawlers, drunkards, adulterers, the immoral and unscrupulous men, many of whom would stop at nothing to obtain and maintain high office" (ibid.). Not only so, but these high officials were often absentee landlords. The curate of the parish starved, while the absentee rector or the Bishop lived in comfort on the stipend of the benefice. Early in the 15th century, of the twenty-two bishops in the French province of Languedoc, only five or six were resident. It was said of Antoine du Prat, a French Archbishop, that he entered his cathedral for the first time when he was carried in during his own funeral procession. Moreover the corruption at the top percolated down to the monks and lesser clerics. There were perhaps three main evils:

1. The enforced celibacy of the clergy resulted in immorality. While priests obeyed the letter of the law and did not marry, they flouted its spirit, taking concubines and mistresses by whom they sired children.

1. Named for Simon Magus, who in Acts 8 tried to buy the power to give the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands.

2. The need to raise finance resulted in fraud. After the Reformation Madonnas were found with needle holes in their eyes to enable them to cry, and levers and wires to manipulate a smile, all dependant upon the amount of money donated to the church. Moreover, the bones of cats and dogs were sold as the holy relics of the saints and there were enough pieces of Jesus' cross to stretch (perhaps) from one end of England to the other.

3. The immunity from prosecution in the secular courts known as Benefit of Clergy[2] meant that the clergy could get away with murder - and often did! A few examples will suffice: a) While pastoral discipline was strictly enforced on the drunkard, priests and monks were publicly found drunken and yet allowed to continue their ministry. b) Acleric known to be guilty of murder often got off practically Scott free. c) Priests kept concubines openly and without rebuke.

Everywhere, during the 15th century, people were crying out for the reform of the church in head and members - BUT reform did not come. Why not?

1. There were too many vested interests. The people who held the power didn't want to lose it. Thus, when the Florentine friar Girolamo Savonarola sought to reform the city of Florence he was burned for his trouble.

2. Would-be reformers (such as Savonarola) were attacking the wrong target. They attacked the immorality and corruption of the church - but these were only the symptoms of the disease! What they needed to address was the disease itself - the church's doctrine. This was why Luther succeeded when everyone else failed. But how did it all come about? Luther's career can be divided into three periods. I. The Preparation of the Reformer. II. Initiation of the Reformation. III. The Expansion and Consolidation of the Reformation.

2. Roughly equivalent to modern-day Diplomatic Immunity, Benefit of Clergy extended to anyone in Holy Orders, and since it was hard to find out who exactly was in Holy Orders due to issues of communication, being able to read was often sufficient proof that somebody was a Cleric.

The Preparation of the Reformer

Martin Luther was born at Eisleben in Germany on 10th November, 1483, the son of Hans and Margaretta Luther. Martin prided himself that he came from good peasant stock - his father and his father's father before him were peasants. Hans Luther, however, had turned from farming to make his living by mining, and had prospered with the help of St. Anne. Luther's parents were both pious and religiously conservative. They were also strict disciplinarians and Martin recalls that his mother once caned him until the blood came, just for steeling a nut. There seems little doubt that they loved their son, however, and Hans Luther had high hopes that Martin would enter the legal profession and support his parents in their old age. To this end he was educated at Magdeburg, Eisenach, and Erfurt.

School was strict and Luther complains that on one occasion he was caned 15 times in the same day because he hadn't done his lesson. School gave Luther a good grounding in Latin and enforced the values of the church. Pupils would learn by heart the Sanctus and the Benedictus, take part in Masses and Processions, and would sing hymns and Psalms, including the Magnificat. Luther lover music and became proficient at playing the Lute. At university he studied the classics as well as Aristotelian Physics, among other things, and his studies equally prepared him either for law of the church. The first of two great crises in his life diverted him from the law.

On 2nd July, 1505, just six months after graduating MA, Luther was caught in a thunderstorm and knocked to the ground by a bolt of lightning. In terror he made a vow, "St. Anne, help me, I will become a monk." That someone should make such a precipitous vow seems strange to us, but not only was Luther particularly sensitive, it seems that from an early age he was in fear of Hell and anxious to placate an angry God. He had seen medieval depictions of the last judgement, Christ sitting on a rainbow, with a lily protruding from his right ear, extending peace to those on his right hand and a sword, proceeding from his left ear, hanging over those doomed to be on his left. He dreaded the words, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (See Bainton,

Here I Stand, 23). There was no better way to escape hell than to take the habit of a Monk. Moreover, he would be able to intercede before God for his family. Within two weeks, he had presented himself at an Augustinian monastery where he was received as a novice. When Hans Luther heard what his son had done he was furious. The one he had struggled to educate, who should support his parents in old age, had given up the law for a monastery.

All went well for a first year, but at the end of that period, he was hit by a second crisis, the saying of his first Mass. This was a terrifying experience. Not only must his vestments be immaculate, and the words be pronounced correctly, but all his sins must be confessed and absolved beforehand. Conscious of his sins and awestruck by the terror of God, he struggled to perform his duty. Luther's father had come to witness the event and Luther rushed across to get some comfort. Naively, he expressed his wish that his dear father would be more reconciled to his being a monk. Hans who had struggled to control himself, burst out, "Haven't you read in the Bible that you are to honour your father and mother, and have left us in our old age to support ourselves." Luther knew the answer, "But I can do you far more good here by my prayers, Besides, I was called in the storm by the voice of God." "Let's hope it wasn't an apparition of the devil," retorted Hans. This and his new duties sent him into an inner turmoil.

Luther felt that God was angry with him and he sought to please God by pursuing good works. But he felt he could never do enough. He fasted for days on end, spent nights in prayer vigils and slept without blankets. So much so that he damaged his health. He would later say that "if ever a monk could get to heaven by his monkery, it was I. If I had kept going I would have killed myself." The problem was that his duties brought him constantly into the presence of a terrifyingly holy God, he was constantly reminded of his own sins, and he could never do enough to satisfy God's demands.

But there was a second way. If Luther could not perform sufficient

good works, others could do so on his behalf. The saints possessed sufficient merits, not only to admit them to heaven, but with enough left over to be bestowed on others. The pope could unlock this treasury of merit, and did so to those who came to view Rome's holy relics. Rome possessed such "treasures" as the bodies of Peter and Paul, Paul's chains, fragments of the holy innocents, and a coin used by Judas to betray Jesus. These articles could remit thousands of years from Purgatory. Pilate's staircase, transported by angels to Rome, was able to release a soul from Purgatory - when the penitent knelt on every step and said a paternoster. In November 1510, Luther was sent to Rome on business of his order. In his free time, he wanted to see neither the Renaissance glories of Greece or Rome, but the relics of the saints. He saw something else, however, that appalled him - the levity and profanity and immorality of the clergy who rattled through their masses, blasphemed the bread and wine and visited the districts of ill repute. Luther kissed every step on the sacred staircase, but by the time he had reached the top he had begun to doubt. "Who knows, he said, if it be true."

A further way in which Luther sought alleviation from sins was by confession. In theory this was simple. He would confess his sins and obtain absolution. In order to remember his sins, he would recite the "Seven Deadly Sins" and the Ten Commandments. In practice, however, he found that however long he spent in confession, and sometimes he would spend six hours at a time, that he could never remember everything and as he would go away, something else would come to mind. Neither could he probe his motives to decide on whether he had sinned or not. Worst of all, there might be sins of ignorance which he could not confess. He drove his confessors mad. "Go away and come back when you have committed murder or adultery or blasphemy," he was told. Luther was learning that man's very nature was corrupt and he needed forgiveness more radical that that which could be obtained in the confession. To probe every sin was a counsel of despair.

A fourth way of salvation that Luther tried was mysticism. In 1511, Luther was transferred from Erfurt to Wittenberg where he would

later teach in Fredrick the Wise's new University. There he met the Vicar of his order, Johann von Staupitz. Staupitz was a mystic and he counselled mysticism. Luther should cease to strive and sink into the eternal abyss of God. Luther was lifted up with ecstasy and then cast aside with feelings of deadness and desertion. He was told to love God - but by now he was beginning to hate God. He later wrote, "I was in the very abyss of despair, so that I wished I had never been created. Love God? I hated him." Staupitz did not know how to advise Luther, but he knew that his young colleague must be distracted from his troubles. So, one day, as Luther was sitting under a pear tree he was informed by Staupitz that he should study for his doctor's degree and teach the Bible in the new university. Luther complained tha t the work would kill him, but Staupitz was not to be put off for "God has plenty of work for clever men to do in heaven." Luther was admitted to the degree of Doctor of Theology on 19th October, 1512.

In August, 1513, he began to lecture on the Psalms, in April, 1515, on Romans, and in October, 1516, on Galatians. It was by his own careful study of the Scriptures that the light of the Gospel gradually began to dawn. The breakthrough probably came whilst studying Psalm 22. There he read the words of Christ, spoken from the Cross, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Luther had felt forsaken by God, but this was understandable, because Luther was weak and sinful, one who had blasphemed the divine majesty. But why should Christ be forsaken? The only answer was that Christ took upon himself the iniquity of us all. Luther began to view Christ not as the terrifying judge who sits upon the rainbow, but as the suffering saviour who bore our sins on the cross. Luther also wanted to understand the epistle to the Romans. But one thing stood in his way, the phrase "the righteousness of God." These are his words:

> I had been captivated by an extraordinary ardor for understanding Paul in the Epistle to The Romans. But up till then, a single word in chapter one v. 17 "In it the Righteousness of God is revealed" that had stood in my way. For I hated the word "righteousness of God." I hated that word, which

according to the use and customs of all the teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically regarding the formal or active righteousness as they called it, with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner.

Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God, with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe the he was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, "as if indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity, by the law of the Decalogue, without having God add pain to pain by the Gospel and also by the Gospel threatening us with His righteousness and wrath!" thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at that place, most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted.

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night , I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "in it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith and this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, He who through faith is righteous shall live." Here I felt I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through opened gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory. I also found in other terms, and analogy, as, the work of God, that is, what God does in us, the power of God, with which He makes us strong, the wisdom of God with which He makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.

And I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the

> the hatred with which I had before hated the word, "righteousness of God." Thus that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to paradise. Later I read Augustine's *The Spirit and the Letter*, where contrary to hope I found that he, too, interpreted God's righteousness in a similar way, as the righteousness with which God clothes us when He justifies us (Luther's *Works*, American Edition, vol. 34, 336f.).

It was those words, "the righteousness of God" and that doctrine, "Justification by Faith," on which the Church stands or falls, that would bring down the mighty power of the Papal Theocracy. This was the first period; our Reformer's preparation.

Initiation of Reformation

The commencement of the Reformation can be traced to the arrival on the borders of Wittenberg of the Dominican Friar Johannes Tetzel, selling indulgences. The Pope controlled the "Treasury of Merit," so it was logical that the Pope could dispense this merit, at a price, for worthy causes. At the time of the Crusades, people who could not participate could purchase indulgences - pardons for not doing their military duty. The money went to such causes as the building of hospitals for the wounded. In 1517, the Pope, Leo X had need of finances to rebuild St. Peter's Basilica. Fortunately for him, Albert of Brandenburg wanted to become Archbishop of Mainz. Not only did Albert already hold two sees, but he was not even old enough to be a bishop. The solution was that Albert should pay the Pope 10,000 ducats for the privilege. This money was to be raised by the sale of indulgences, for the period of 8 years, in all the popes territories.

Tetzel, was not allowed by Fredrick the Wise, Luther's prince, to enter Wittenberg, but the hawker appeared on the borders and people went out to him to purchase them. Tetzel's message was simple. You can buy plenary remission for sins, not only for yourselves but also for your dead relatives in Purgatory. "Don't you hear the voices of your wailing dead parents and others who say, Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, because we are all in severe punishment and pain. From this you could redeem us with a small alms and yet you do not want to do so. Open your ears as the father says to the son and the

mother to the daughter, We created you, fed you, cared for you and left you our temporal goods. Why then are you so cruel and harsh that you do not want to save us, though it only takes a little. You may have letters which let you have, in life and death... full remission of the punishment that belongs to sin." The moment the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from Purgatory springs.

Luther was incensed by this indulgence traffic, but he couldn't believe that either Albert or the Pope was behind it. He wrote letters to each of them to warn them of the evils that were being done in their names. And on 31st October, 1517, he nailed 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg. A t this stage, he was not planning an assault on the Roman Church. The theses were written in Latin, for the purpose of academic debate by theologians. But the tone was certainly passionate. Let me give you an example:

Thesis 1: When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent," He willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.

Thesis 2: This cannot be understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, that is, confession and satisfaction as administered by the clergy.

Thesis 5: The Pope neither desires nor is able to remit any penalties except those imposed by himself.

Thesis 27: They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the coffer, the soul flies out of Purgatory.

Thesis 32: Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.

Thesis 36: Any truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without indulgence letters.

Thesis 50: Christians are to be taught that if the Pope knew the exactions of the indulgence preachers, he would rather that the

basilica of St. Peters were burned to ashes than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep.

Thesis 51: Christians are to be taught that the Pope would and should wish to give of his own money, even though he had to sell the basilica o f St. Peter, to many of those from whom the hawkers of indulgences cajole money.

Thesis 52: It is vain to trust in salvation by indulgence letters, even though the indulgence commissary, or even the Pope, were to offer his soul as security...

Albert sent a copy of Luther's theses to Pope. Leo X decided that the a new General of the Augustinians should be appointed to deal with Luther at the gathering of their order at Heidelberg in April the following year. Luther was due to speak on the theology of Augustine. He was warned not to go, but his prince, Frederick the Wise, promised protection. Luther traveled to Heidelberg by foot, but to his amazement he was received as the guest of honour. Meanwhile, a printer had circulated his theses throughout Germany.

Luther felt the need to justify himself before the general public and in 1518 he published an *Explanation of the 95 Theses*. Moreover, Luther's knowledge was increasing and he learned from Erasmus' Greek Testament that the Latin Vulgate's translation of Matt 4:17, "do penance" should really be translated as "repent." Thus, the church's sacrament was not Scriptural! Luther's mind began to turn increasingly to the early church, prior to the dominance of Rome. Moreover, hearing that he was under the ban, he preached against the ban, saying that though it could affect fellowship with the Roman church, it could not affect one's private communion with God. Meanwhile, Since the Augustinians had let him down, Leo turned to the Dominicans. Sylvester Prierias, Master of the Sacred Palace at Rome, drafted a reply to Luther. In this he switched the focus from indulgences to the ban and to the prerogatives of the Roman Pontiff, declaring that whoever did not accept the decrees of the Pope as the infallible rule of the church was a heretic.

Prierias accused Luther of being, "a leper with a brain of brass and a nose of iron." Luther, in reply, ridiculed Prierias, who had not quoted a single Scripture. Moreover, he continued to affirm the fallibility both of popes and councils. This was enough for Leo, who gave Luther 60 days to appear before him at Rome and to answer charges of heresy. But Luther was not to go to Rome. Through the interventions of Frederick the Wise, Luther was to be tried on German soil. As an initial step, Luther was to appear before Cardinal Cajetan in private session at the Diet of Augsburg. Unknown to Luther, Cajetan had been instructed by Leo either to get Luther to recant or to bring him back to Rome in chains.

Leo also wrote with similar instructions to Frederick. Luther appeared before Cajetan three times between 12th to 14th October, 1518. On each occasion he was asked to recant, because he had gone against the authority of the Pope. Luther protested that he should not be condemned "unheard or unrefuted." Moreover, there was not yet an official church policy on indulgences, and he should not be condemned on a matter that was not firmly established. On being warned that the cardinal had power to arrest him, Luther escaped from Augsburg by night on horseback. He subsequently began to examine the history of the papacy, and he found many historic writings which persuaded him that the Pope was not *by divine right* supreme head of the Church. He wrote an account an account of his meeting with Cajetan, in which he attacked the doctrine of papal supremacy and infallibility. Meanwhile, what Luther had said concerning the doctrine of indulgences had obviously stuck a chord with Cajetan, because on 8th November, 1518, the papal bull *Cum Postquam* (probably written by Cajetan himself) decreed upon indulgences. Ironically, it was very moderate in tone, acceding to many of Luther's demands. If this bull was an attempt to win Luther back to the fold, however, it had appeared too late, because by now Dr. Martin had already moved on to deny the sacrament of Penance and the divine right and infallibility of the Pope. The battle lines were set.

But the Pope hesitated in trying to extract Luther from Germany to Rome by force. It was calculated that even with an army of 25,000 it could not be done. Moreover, the Pope was looking to Frederick the Wise to aid him in a war against the Turks. Thus Leo attempted a charm offensive, awarding Frederick a "golden rose" which he sent by a nobleman, Charles von Miltitz. Miltitz also reasoned with Luther to write to the Pope in reverence and submission, though without retracting anything. As things turned out, however, Luther was soon to be driven further away from the fold by his encounter with John Eck Professor of the University of Ingolstadt. This debate took place in Leipzig in July 1519, in the presence of Duke George the Bearded, Duke of Saxony. It was officially between Eck and Carlstad, Luther's ally and colleague at Wittenberg, but Duke George, who wanted to hear Luther for himself, allowed him to join the debate.

Eck was a formidable opponent, and Luther prepared thoroughly for his encounter with Eck. Luther had previously asserted that the papacy was a human invention, established only in the papal decretals of the past 400 years. Now, he must examine these decretals afresh. As he did so he came to a frightening conclusion - the papal decretals corrupt and crucified Christ, and as such they showed the Pope to be the anti-Christ, or at very least his apostle. Eck came to the debate with the sole intention to demonstrate that Luther was indeed a heretic and he found a convenient way to prove his point. The debate centered on the papacy - whether it was of divine or human institution. Luther argued that in primitive times many churches had denied the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiff. Indeed the Greek fathers had never accepted a Roman primate. Were they all wrong? Eck saw his opportunity, accusing Luther of being of the same mind as John Wycliffe and John Hus, both condemned by the Roman Church as heretics.

Martin had been taught from an early age that Huss, who had been burnt at the Council of Constance, was an arch heretic, and he vehemently protested that he was no Hussite. Later, however, he resorted to the university library, to read the Acts of the Council of Constance, at which Hus had been condemned. When he returned

to the debate, he was forced to admit that "Among the writings of Hus, there were many which were plainly Christian and evangelical, which the universal Church cannot condemn." Duke George bellowed out, "A plague upon it!" The debate lasted for 18 days, and would have gone on, had not Duke George brought the proceedings to an end. By February 1520, Luther was ready to admit to his colleagues , "We are all Hussites without knowing it. And St. Paul and St. Augustine are Hussites."

By now, Luther was becoming famous. In 1519, John Froben, a printer of Basel, had collected together Luther's *95 Theses*, his *Explanation of the Theses*, his *Answer to Prierias*, and *Sermons on Penance and the Eucharist* all into one volume. Copies were not only circulating in Germany, but 600 had gone to France and Spain, and several hundred to Switzerland, and hundreds more to Brabant (a Duchy of the Holy Roman Empire located in the Low Countries, today subsumed into Belgium and the Netherlands) and England. These made him the acknowledged leader of the Reformation movement. Even from Rome he was receiving secret letters of support. And Luther was adding many more writings to those already published.

The Pope could no longer dilly dally over what to do and Leo decided that it was time for decisive action. On 15th June, 1520, he published the bull, *Exsurge Domine*, "Arise O Lord," condemning 41 errors of Luther, commanding the faithful to burn Luther's books, and giving him 60 days in which to submit to Rome. The bull was probably written by Eck, who was given the job of publishing it in Germany. This proved far more difficult than he had imagined because Luther had many supporters among the people and among the German knights, and some, Like Frederick, even among the nobility. It took over three months for the bull to reach Luther, but he had heard rumors that it was coming. Ulrich von Hutten, one of the knights, wrote to him in June to advising him that he was "said to be under excommunication." "If it be true," said Hutton, "how mighty you are. In you the words of the psalm are fulfilled, 'They have

condemned innocent blood'... Let us liberate the oppressed father-land. God will be on our side." Another knight, Sickingen, pledged the allegiance of a hundred knights who would support with force of arms. Luther was tempted. When attacked again by Prierias, he replied, in an unguarded outburst, that "If the Pope is so mad, the only remedy is for the Emperor, the kings and princes to gird themselves with force of arms and attack and fight them... If we burn heretics why do we not attack the Pope and his followers with the sword." Luther immediately retracted these words. He said that he "didn't believe in burning heretics or killing Christians." Rather "Our warfare is not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places... Satan is fighting, not against us but against Christ in us. We fight the battles of the Lord." And Luther continued the fight by publishing more and more of his books.

Three of these, stemming from this period are particularly important, regarded among his primary works. In August 1520, came his *Address to the German Nobility*. Luther considered this his "blast of the Trumpet that blew down the walls of Jericho." It was addressed to the Emperor, Charles V. In i t he called upon the Germany nobility, from the Emperor down, to reform the church by virtue of their office. Since the clergy are unwilling to reform themselves, the Princes and Magistrates must step into the gap and impose reform upon them. If the Mayor's house is burning down, you do not wait to ask the Mayor's permission to put out the fire. If the Church is being destroyed, all those in a position to save it must do so . It is impossible to reform the Church in Germany without destroying the Papal power over Germany. Luther said that the Romanists had built three walls around themselves that made them invincible. First, when pressed by kings, they had decreed that the temporal power (power of kings) had no jurisdiction over them. Rather, the spiritual power is above the temporal. Second, when reproved by Scripture, they had declared that, Only the Pope could interpret Scripture. Third, if threatened with a council, they had decreed that only the Pope could call a council. Thus, they have stolen our three rods from us that they might go unpunished.

Luther proceeded to set forth a program of Reform that must be implemented: Papal pardons, exactions, annates (payments made by newly-admitted incumbents consisting of the whole or half of the benefice's income for the first year), wealth and the secular rule of the clergy - whose true role is preaching and praying - must all be abolished. The abuse of excommunication, the idle papal curias, the enforced celibacy of the clergy, masses for the dead, must all be abolished. The number of processions, pilgrimages, mendicants and beggars must be diminished. The curricula of Universities must be reformed with the study of the Bible replacing scholasticism. Laws should be drawn up for the moral reform of society, restraining extravagance, destroying public brothels, controlling bankers and credit. In vindicating the lawfulness of such action, Luther declared the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Moreover, he declared that the Prince has a special responsibility to care for the welfare of his people.

In September 1520 came *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. In this treatise, Luther argued that the sacraments had been enslaved by the church to become the exclusive channels of grace and the sole prerogative of the clergy, by whom alone they could be administered. If sacramentalism is undercut, sacerdotalism is bound to fall. Moreover, by insisting that a sacrament must have been directly instituted by Christ, he reduced the number of the sacraments from seven to two. Only baptism and the Lord's Supper were retained, although he thought that confession was still useful, particularly for the uneducated. In place of a special celibate caste of clergy, he insisted on the priesthood of all believers. In place of the transubstantiation of the Mass, he taught consubstantiation.[1] Rather than sacerdotalism, Luther insisted that God had chosen to reveal himself in three specific ways: Through Christ the Living Word, Scripture, the written Word, and the Sacrament where the Word is manifest in food and drink.

1. The idea of "Consubstantiation" is that the true body and blood of Christ are present "along with" the bread and wine, and so are eaten and drunk corporeally by the Communicants, but the bread and wine remain.

The third important publication of 1520 was *The Freedom of a Christian Man*, published in November. In terms of its appeal to the Christian believer, this is one of the most helpful of all Luther's works, in which Luther sets forth the ramifications of the doctrine of Justification by faith alone, through Christ alone.

The bull reached Luther October, 1520. It was immediately met with a public act of defiance when, on 10th October at nine in the morning, Luther burned the bull, together with books on canon law and papal decretals, in a meadow in front of a crowd of onlookers. When the deed was done, he and his colleagues returned to the town. A great many of the university students stayed behind around the fire. At first they solemnly sang the Te Deum. But they soon turned to jesting, and making a mock bull, they pinned it to a pole and drove through the town, collecting the works of Eck and returned to the fire where they burned them.

On 3rd January, 1521, Luther's excommunication was made absolute. By this time the quarrel was no longer a dispute among monks, or a matter to be debated among theologians, it had moved into the realm of European politics. The Papal Legate complained that "all Germany was in revolution... Nine tenths of the people shout for Luther and the other tenth cry Down with the Pope." Even the peasants were getting involved. If they met a traveller on the road, they would ask him, "Are you for Martin?" If he answered no, they would beat him. It looked as if Germany would take the road that England would later do and establish a German national church. It all depended upon the Emperor, Charles V.

Charles was a young man of just 21 years, who had been elected to his office just three years previously. He was of noble stock and a political opponent of Pope Leo X, who had not wanted him as Emperor. However, there was a problem. Charles was a devout Roman Catholic, orthodox by instinct. Moreover, his power base was in Naples and Spain, which were committed to orthodoxy. Even if he was inclined to support the German cause, which he was not, he could not do so without splitting his realm into fragments. What Charles did do was to offer a safe conduct to Luther to attend the

Diet in the city of Worms. This was to convene on 27th January, 1521, just 24 days after Luther's excommunication. Luther's friends and supporters urged him not to go. After all Hus had been burned at the Council of Constance, even after receiving a safe conduct. Luther said that he would go to worms, "despite the gates of Hell, and though there be as many devils there as tiles upon the roof tops." Luther did not arrive at Worms until 16th April, and his first appearance was on the following day.

He was presented with a pile of his books and asked whether they were his. Having examined them he declared that "All the books are mine and I have written more." He was then asked whether he defended them all or whether he rejected some of them. to every one's amazement he replied, "This touches on God and His Word. This touches on the salvation of souls. I beg you, give me time to think it over." Eck, his opponent (not the German Eck), upbraided him for not being prepared. But the Emperor gave him until the following day. The next day was 18th April, 1521, and at 6.00 PM Luther appeared again before the Emperor in a room so packed that scarce anyone was able to sit, save the nobility. Eck asked him the same question. He replied that the books were all his, but they were not all the same kind. "Some deal with faith and life so simply and evangelically that even my enemies would agree with them." A second class deal with the desolation of the church by the laws of the papists. The Emperor was heard to shout out "NO!" But Luther went on. A third class deal with attacks on private individuals. Moreover, if Luther was shown from the Scriptures that he had been in error, he would be the first to throw his books into the fire!

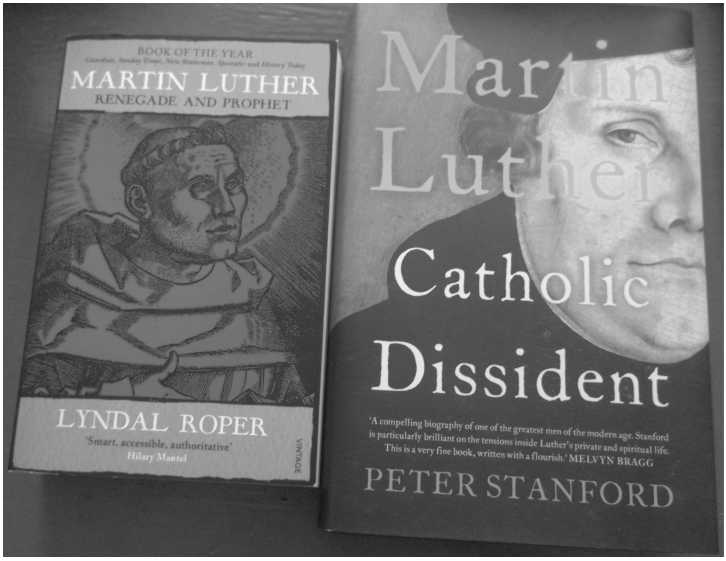
Eck retorted that an appeal to Scripture was one that is always made by heretics. How do you know that your interpretation of Scripture is correct? Are you above the judgement of so many famous men that you claim to know more than they all? He had impugned the most holy orthodox faith, instituted by Christ and proclaimed by the apostles. "I ask you," said Eck, "candidly, without horns, Do you or do you not repudiate your books and the errors that they contain?" Luther agreed to answer, "without horns or teeth." Then came the famous statement that has echoed down the centuries: "Unless I am

convinced by the testimony of Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust in the Pope or councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves) I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything. I cannot do otherwise. Here I stand. God help me. Amen."

The following day, the Emperor pronounced his edict. He regretted that he had so long delayed in proceeding against Luther. He would be allowed to return home under the safe conduct, but from henceforth he would proceed against him as a notorious heretic. One month later, Luther was under the ban of the Emperor, to be treated like an outlaw, and burned or hanged.

When he departed from Worms, he was advised by Fredrick the Wise that he would be kidnapped for his own protection. On his way home, he was surrounded by horsemen, and taken, still clutching his books, to the safety of the Wartburg Castle. Here, for almost a year, he spent his time, dressed as a knight, disguised as "Junker George." Luther suffered bouts of depression throughout his life but in the Wartburg his depressions intensified. He struggled with doubts and felt oppressed by demons. Legend has it that he threw an inkpot at the devil which stained the wall. Outside, the cawing of the Ravens echoed the groans of his own soul. He joined a hunt, but it revolted him as he imagined the defenceless animal to be the poor souls hunted down by popes and priests and councils. The answer to his depression, however, was not far away. He threw himself once again into his work. he produced several books, pamphlets and sermons, and most importantly, he translated the New Testament into German. He wanted the ploughman to be able to read the Scripture as he ploughed or the weaver as he sat and worked. The whole of the German Bible, would be finished by 1535, and together with the hymns that he wrote, it would be one of the pillars of the German Reformation. Luther's voluntary imprisonment in the Wartburg came to an end in March 1522, and with this commenced the third period of Luther's life.

To be Concluded, D.V. in 2018:1



Two Recent Biographies of Martin Luther

Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet by Lyndal Roper (London, Vintage), paperback, Pp. 577+xiv, ISBN: 978-1784703448. £14.99
Martin Luther: Catholic Dissident by Peter Stanford (London, Hodder and Stoughton), Hardback, pp. 434+xiv, ISBN: 978-1473621664. £20

The 500th Anniversary of the posting of the 95 Theses on the Castle Church door at Wittenberg in 1517 is, unavoidably, something of an arbitrary date for the celebration of the beginning of the great Reformation of the 16th century, but some date had to be chosen, and it is as good as any. One result of the choice of 1517 as the date the Reformation began is that a number of new biographies of Luther have been released. The Preacher notes that "of the making of many books there is no end" (Ecclesiastes 12:12), and where Martin Luther is concerned that is certainly the case; it has been suggested that there have been more books written about Luther than about any other figure of history apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Inevitably

many are of their time and have already passed into oblivion, and not all are worth reading, but these two particularly caught the eye of this reviewer.

Perhaps the best known 20th century biography of Luther is that by Roland Bainton, entitled *Here I Stand*; first published by Abingdon Press in 1950, it is still read today, and with good reason. The Yale Professor was no theological conservative, and yet he told the story engagingly. In the more than fifty years that have passed since Bainton's book first appeared, a great deal of work has been done on Luther, and yet no English biography has superseded Bainton. But reading these two books, I was reminded of Bainton.

While *Here I Stand* is a relatively slim volume of 336 pages in the pocket edition that I have, both of these are substantial volumes, yet they are, like Bainton's work, intended for the mass market and contain illustrations alongside the text. Roper's is the more scholarly of the two, with a wealth of endnotes, which ought to be read; and although Stanford has end-notes, there are many fewer of them, a mere 24 pages as opposed to over 100 pages of endnotes in Roper. Nevertheless, Stanford's book is by no means lacking in scholarship, although it is perhaps pitched towards a less scholarly readership. The two write from somewhat different perspectives, in that Roper is Regius Professor of History at Oxford, and comes from an Australian Presbyterian background, while Stanford is a Journalist and a Roman Catholic, although not a terribly conservative one. The result is that they approach Luther somewhat differently; the Roman Catholic Stanford writes as a modern ecumenical Roman Catholic for whom Luther is an adult discovery, while Rope writes of a man who was an icon, if not one that people really knew much about, in her background.

Both are generally sympathetic to Luther, although by no means uncritical – Luther was a great man, and had great flaws as well as great virtues. They are "warts and all" biographies, but do not fall into the trap of drawing a portrait of the wart and labelling it

"Luther". Roper in particular can be hard to read at times when she repeats Luther's often scatological humour – but that was Luther, and she is careful to note that this is not at all unusual for the era, even if today we would find it unacceptable in a theologian. Luther was also not an easy man to get on with, and Roper details how he could destroy his relationships with others through ill-temper and by allowing theological controversies to become personal. One that she deals with in great detail is his complicated relationship with Andreas von Karlstadt, initially one of Luther's own colleagues, but one who tried to run ahead of Luther in the work of Reformation, and who became involved with the radical wing of the Reformation. From a beloved friend and colleague, Karlstadt became the recipient of much of Luther's characteristic vitriol. Yet time and again, Luther was willing to help him out, even though there was at times little love lost between the two men. Neither man was guiltless, and Roper does not lay the blame on one exclusively, but shows how each caused the other pain.

Stanford's subtitle describes well Luther′s own perception of himself and that which others had of him at the time; Luther regarded himself as "Catholic" in the sense that his teaching was not his new discovery or invention, but the recovery of the Catholic or universal orthodoxy of the Bible and the Church Fathers. At the same time, he dissented from the Western Catholic Church of his era, which he saw had gone astray from that Biblical orthodoxy in its teaching and therefore in its life. He was, in his eyes, a dissident because he was Catholic, while the Church that claimed that name was not; the Reformation was a call *back* to Catholicism in this sense.

There is none of the mean and bitter spirit of the older Roman Catholic writers on Luther in Stanford; Luther's dissent from the Roman Church is represented in theological terms, not as the excuse of a monk who wanted to marry; his marriage is dealt with quite apart from any idea that Luther was driven by lust, and the allegation that Luther married Katharina von Bora because she was already pregnant by him is dismissed as both without evidence and contrary to Luther's known character. He is writing history, not polemic in

disguise, and is quite willing to criticise – often quite harshly – the Roman authorities who ignored Luther's concerns and ultimately precipitated the split.

Roper's subtitle describes Luther as "Renegade and Prophet," capturing both the Roman view of Luther as a renegade monk, and that of his followers that he was a prophetic voice, not in the sense that he was inspired, but in that he spoke the Word of the Lord. Both authors emphasise that Luther was motivated by genuine concern for the Church, and by his love for the Bible; neither gives any credence to the idea that Luther was motivated by personal lusts. Indeed they are both at some pains to point out that even when Luther recognised that clerical marriage was not wrong, he married long after many of his colleagues had.

Both authors are at pains to put Luther in his historical context, a valuable exercise, since when taken out of that context much of what Luther both said and did can be misunderstood; he was a man of his age even as he also transcended his age in many ways. Anachronism, that great bane of biography, is avoided, and if Luther emerges as a strange figure in some respects, it is because we are reminded that he belonged to a strange world, not the world that we inhabit, but the world of the 16th century. Thankfully, although neither is entirely free from psychological theorising (biographers are creatures of their age as well), neither falls into the trap of trying to give a psychological diagnosis of Luther, and the psychological questions are pushed well into the background where they belong; Luther's relationship with his father is an important part of his background, but it is most unwise to attempt to make it the lens through which to examine his whole life and career.

Luther's story has been told many times, it does not suffer from being told again by these two capable and gifted modern writers, both of whom are committed to telling the truth and telling it engagingly. If neither fully shares Luther's theological outlook, both are sympathetic to him as a human being, and that counts for a lot in a biographer; there is no creature more trying to the poor reader than the unsympathetic biographer who dips his pen in bile and shares

his contempt for his subject and all the subject stood for. Roper and Stanford, on the other hand, are neither portraying an angel or a demon, but a man, albeit a great man, and manage it very well.

Luther was an author; this should go without saying, but is often taken for granted by biographers, who spend very little time on Luther's books in consequence. Roper, in contrast, spends a great deal of space dealing with Luther's writings, many of which were polemical, putting them in the context of the pamphlet- and book-wars of the Reformation. If Luther said nasty things about his opponents (and he did), it was because that is how these things were done then; he gave as good as he got, but no worse. Undoubtedly the most troubling of Luther's books to us today are his later writings against the Jews, and these Roper sets in the context of the era; here as perhaps no-where else, Luther's thought failed to rise above that of his age, but he was no anti-Semite, and certainly not some sort of precursor to Hitler as some have suggested. H e must be seen on his own terms, and in his own context, or we shall never truly appreciate him.

Ultimately both conclude, not surprisingly, that Luther was a great man, a hero even. Roper writes, “Luther's extraordinary openness, his honest willingness to put everything on the line, and his capacity to accept God's grace as a gift he did not merit, are his most attractive characteristics” (P. 422). He is “a difficult hero” (ibid.), but he is a hero all the same, and his inability to compromise was more a strength than it was a weakness; his humility was in the right place, in his view of himself, not (as we are urged by so many to put it today) in his view of truth. A man who wanted to see things from every angle and nuance every statement could never have stood before the Emperor at Worms and said “Here I stand, I can do no other."

I enjoyed both of these books, and would warmly commend them to the serious reader (the non-serious reader will be put off by the sheer length of both). As has been said, Roper’s biography is the longer and more scholarly of the two. Perhaps because she is Australian, she is

rather more frank about Luther's scatological sense of humour, and his revelling in the goodness of the physical creation, something that the reader may at times find uncomfortable; while Stanford does not airbrush out these issues, he spends less time on them, because he does not take so much time to go through Luther's voluminous output of writing. On the other hand, as a Roman Catholic, Stanford is rather more concerned with ecumenical issues and our modern world than Roper is, and for this reason, as well as Roper's insistence on putting Luther in his context, I preferred her book to Stanford's, although that is to say it is the better of two good books, not that Stanford's is bad.

We, as Reformed Protestants, have a particular view of Luther that has been formed by the controversies of the 19th century, and by writers coming from our traditions. If we are not careful, we can craft a "Luther" who is not the man as he was, but a sort of plaster saint, ignoring his flaws, but what is worse, losing much of his robust humanity, and ending up with a rather colourless man who could never have done what the real Luther, under God, did. Both of these are books worth our taking the time to read because they are modern people looking at Luther with modern eyes, yet making every effort to look at Luther, and not at some caricature of him, or some image in a distorting mirror. Like Bainton over fifty years ago, they take neither a sanitized Protestant Luther nor a demonized Roman Catholic one, but try to give us Luther as he was. That fresh look is one that is worth taking, because Luther is not just an icon, he was a man, with his own flaws as well has his excellencies. But he was, most of all, "a man in Christ," as Paul characterises the Christian. An old work on Luther's theology was entitled *Let God be God*, when it comes to these biographies, they remind us to let Luther be Luther as well.

Reading these two modern books, we have seen Luther afresh, and found him a man who is, as Stanford concludes, "a man for his own age, but also for every age since, right up to the modern day."

[Image: Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz by Albrecht Durer]

A Letter of Martin Luther to Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz

Editor's Introduction:

Archbishop Albrecht was the younger son of John Cicero, Elector of Brandenburg. After his father's death in 1499, he and his elder brother were joint rulers of Brandenburg, but Albrecht was the junior partner; only his brother was the Elector (one of the princes who elected the Holy Roman Emperor). Seeking higher office, he became a clergyman, and in 1513, aged only 23, became Archbishop of Magdeburg. As alluded to in Dr. Coxon's article above, this was below the canonical age limit, but the payment of a hefty "penalty" allowed his position to be recognised at Rome. The following year he became Archbishop of Mainz, which was all the more important to Albrecht as the Prince-Archbishop of Mainz was not only the honorary Primate of Germany, but one of the Electors; it was a post that put him on a level with his older brother and his late father. It

was his payment for this post that led directly to the Indulgence controversy and the 95 Theses. It is a measure of how little the Papacy thought of the controversy at the time that in 1518 Albrecht was elevated to the rank of Cardinal. The occasion of this particular letter is that Luther had written a book *Against the Idol at Halle*, critical of Albrecht and his immorality and calling the red cross of the Indulgence-sellers an "idol", but had refrained from publishing it in the hope that Albrecht could be prevailed upon to institute reform. Now he writes warning that, unless Albrecht sets a reformation in progress, the book will be published. Albrecht, like many of the higher clergy, kept several mistresses, making a mockery of clerical celibacy, and this is the "disgrace" Luther speaks of in the letter. There are many oblique references in the letter, for Luther had still not given up hope that the Church leaders could be persuaded of the necessity for reform.

This letter is of interest as it shows Luther in the Wartburg still doing his best to deal with the Church's abuses from within. Looking back today, we can see that the decisive break with Rome had already taken place, but that was not at all obvious to anyone at the time.

Martin Luther to his Grace Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz

December 1st, 1521

My services are ever at your disposal, esteemed lord! Doubtless your Electoral Grace remembers that I wrote you twice in Latin. First when those lying Indulgences were issued under your Grace's name (October 31st 1517), warning you against those corrupt, money-loving preachers, and their heretical books. And although I could have traced the whole uproar to your having given your sanction to those books, still I spared your Grace, and the House of Brandenburg, fancying your Highness did it out of ignorance, led astray by false flatterers, whom I attacked as you know. But my faithful admonition was turned into ridicule, and my services repaid with ingratitude instead of thanks.

The other occasion (Feb 4th, 1520), I humbly begged to be instructed by your Grace, in answer to which I received an unkind, unbishop-like answer, referring me to a higher tribunal for instruction. Although these two letters produced no effect, I send a third warning, in German, to see if this perhaps uncalled-for petition may avail. Your Grace has again set up the idol at Halle, which robs poor simple Christians both of their money and their souls. Perhaps you fancy you are safe because I am out of the way, and that His Majesty will extinguish the monk. I do not object; but shall do what Christian love demands, and pay no attention to the gates of hell – not to speak of the popes, cardinals, and bishops. I shall not hold my peace when the Bishop of Mainz declares it is not seemly to instruct a poor monk, who begs to be enlightened, and at the same time knows how to deal with money. The dishonour is not mine, but must be sought elsewhere. Therefore I humbly request that your Grace would prove yourself to be a bishop, and not a wolf, permitting the poor in your flock to be robbed. You know that the Indulgence is sheer knavery, and that Christ alone ought to be preached to the people. Your Electoral Highness must remember out of what a tiny spark this great fire arose – the whole world fancying that one poor beggar was too insignificant for the Pope to meddle with. God still lives, and no-one need doubt that he can overcome the Bishop of Mainz, whose end no one can foresee.

Therefore I openly declare that unless the Indulgence is done away with, I must publicly attack your Grace, as well as the Pope – tracing Tetzel's former excesses to the Archbishop of Mainz, and letting the world see the difference between a bishop and a wolf. If I be despised, another will appear who will despise the despisers, as Isaiah says. And it is time to rebuke the evil-doers, that offence may be driven from the kingdom of God.

I also beg your Grace to leave the married priests in peace, and not rob them of what God has given them, else a cry will arise that the bishops should first take the beam out of their own eyes, etc. So I beg your Grace to take care, and permit me to keep silence, for I

have no pleasure in your Highness's shame and disgrace; but if you are not, then I, and all Christians, must stand up for the glory of God, even though a Cardinal should be plunged in disgrace. I expect your Grace's answer within fourteen days.

If not, then my book against the idol in Halle will appear; and if your Grace's counsellors should try to prevent its circulation I shall use means to hinder this. May God endow your Electoral Highness with grace to do the right. From my desert.

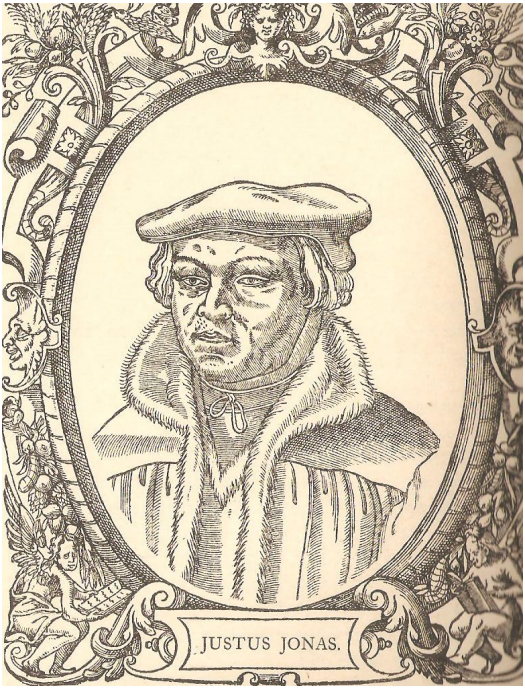
Your Electoral Grace's obedient

Martin Luther

Conclusion

A conciliatory letter from Albrecht arrived on 21st December, but the Archbishop was either unwilling or unable to actually institute the Reform that Luther called for. The relic trade was too important to him, and the selling of Indulgences too essential to his finances. Yet Albrecht was no hide-bound conservative, but an educated Renaissance prince who supported the work of Erasmus and counted many German scholars among his friends. Like few others, he illustrates the problem of the Roman Church in Luther's day , and the reason why the Reformation took the path that it did. The very structures of the medieval Church mitigated against any real reform, and so effective reform required them to be dismantled.

The above letter also shows that even at the time of the Diet of Worms, Luther was more than willing to be conciliatory to the bishops, so long as they did their job. The tragedy is that they did not; instead they refused to listen to him, tried to bully him, and treated him as a drunken German peasant unworthy of their attention. The result was that Reform went ahead without them. In 1541 Justus Jonas, Luther's friend and colleague, preached the first Protestant sermon in Halle, in Albrecht's half-finished Market Church of Our Lady, and Albrecht had to leave the city for good, as it embraced the Reformation. He would not join the Reformation, so he was overthrown by it.



Justus Jonas: A Friend of Luther

by Charles G. M'Crie

Editor's Introduction

Martin Luther was without a doubt the leader of the German Reformation; his rediscovery of the doctrine of the grace of God was the motive power that drove the great movement of the 16th century, and it was his protest against the selling of Indulgences that was spark that began it. Yet Luther did not work alone; he had a great company of men who assisted, both in Wittenberg at the University, and in the neighbouring towns. Having referred to Justus Jonas in the preceding article, it seemed a good idea to give some more detail here. The author, Charles G. M'Crie was the grandson of the biographer of John Knox, and a Free Church of Scotland minister at Ayr. This article, and the portrait, is taken from *Beza's Icones: Contemporary Portraits of Reformers* (London, Religious Tract Society, 1906) Pp. 71-73. The

article is presented as it originally appeared apart from the removal of a couple of references to a previous article in the original book that would, had they been left in, have had the potential to confuse readers.

Justus Jonas, by C.G. M'Crie

A native of Thuringia, the land of the Saxon duchies between Bavaria and Prussian Saxony, Justus Jonas was born on June 5, 1493. He studied at Erfut, where he distinguished himself by his acquirements in civil law and theology. Having taken his degree of doctor, he went to Wittenberg, and there he became the helpful coadjutor of Luther and Melancthon. In 1521 he was called to the pastorate, and at or about the same time, he was appointed Professor and Principal of the University. Learned in jurisprudence and divinity, versed in the administration of affairs, Jonas rendered great service to the Renaissance and Reformation movement in Germany. He was one of the "men of Wittenberg," as Zwingli styled them, who went to Marbur g in 1529 only to find that, while agreed upon fourteen doctrinal articles, they were hopelessly separated from their Swiss brethren on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. In the following year he was one of three theologians whom the Elector of Saxony took with him as his advisors at the Augsburg Diet, and at that famous gathering he stood by the side of Melancthon.

Like his countryman and contemporary, Bugenhagen [John Bugenhagen, 1485-1558], Jonas was often employed in organising Churches, drafting constitutions, and founding institutions. He is credited with having to do with the founding of the University of Jena in Saxe-Weimar, and when the Elector undertook to place the Churches of Thuringia upon a Reformation platform, Jonas as one of those to whom he entrusted the work. After being for some time at Coburg as Court Preacher to the Duke of Saxony, he became pastor at Eisfeld, and there he died on October 19, 1555.

Bugenhagen officiated at the marriage of Luther and Catherine von Bora. Justus Jonas was present on that occasion as one of the

wedding guests. But to him there fell another and still greater honour – he was with the great Reformer at his death. When, in January 1546, Luther left Wittenberg for Eisleben to do the work of mediator in the Mansfeld region, not only his sons, Martin and Paul, but Jonas also went with him. On the night of February 17th there were gathered round the dying Reformer the Count and Countess Albrecht of Mansfeld, the Town Clerk of Eisleben and his wife, in whose house the death took place, the two sons, and Justus Jonas. Early in the morning of the 18th Jonas stooped over his bed and, taking the dying man in his arms, said to him, "Reverend Father, wilt thou stand by Christ and the doctrine thou hast preached?" Luther roused himself to say, "Yes," "And when he had said thus, he fell asleep." For a monumental notice of Justus Jonas there could be no finer, no more fitting words than those employed by Beza when recording the death-bed scene – *In cujus etiam veluti sinu Martinus Luterus animam exhalavit*. [upon whose bosom, as it were, Martin Luther gave up his spirit.]

Further Editor's Note

In addition to the information given by M'Crie, it is noted that Jonas assisted Luther in his work on the German Bible. A gifted linguist, he also rendered many of the Latin works of Luther and Melancthon into German for the common people, among them Melancthon's Apology of the Augsburg Confession. Jonas also wrote a number of hymns, including a paraphrase of Psalm 124. This was translated by Catherine Winkworth, and is so characteristic of the spirit of the Reformation that the first four stanzas are given here:

I

If God were not upon our side
When round us foes are raging,
Were not Himself our help and guide
When bitter war they're waging,
Were He not Israel's mighty shield,
To whom their utmost craft must yield,
We surely must have perished.

II

But now no human wit or might
His chosen people frighteth,
God sitteth in the highest height,
And He their counsels blighteth;
When craftiest snares and nets they lay,
God goes to work another way,
And makes a path before us.

III

Against our souls they rage and mock,
Exciting great commotion:
As billows meet with angry shock
Out on the stormy ocean,
So they our lives with fury seek;
But God hath pity on the weak,
And Him they have forgotten.

IV

They call us heretics, and aye
Their Christian name are flaunting;
They seek to spill our blood, while they
Their fear of God are vaunting.
Ah, God! that precious name of Thine
O'er many a wicked deed must shine,
But Thou wilt once avenge it.

V

They open wide their ravenous jaws,
And threaten to devour us,
But thanks to God, who rules our cause,
They shall not overpower us;
Their snares He yet will bring to naught,
And overthrow what they have taught;
God is too mighty for them.

Christ Our Great High Priest

By Martin Luther
A sermon on Hebrews 9:11-15

An understanding of practically all of the Epistle to the Hebrews is necessary before we can hope to make this text clear to ourselves. Briefly, the epistle treats of a twofold priesthood. The former priesthood was a material one, with material adornment, tabernacle, sacrifices and with pardon couched in ritual; material were all its appointments. The new order is a spiritual priesthood, with spiritual adornments, spiritual tabernacle and sacrifices - spiritual in all that pertains to it. Christ, in the exercise of his priestly office, in the sacrifice on the cross, was not adorned with silk and gold and precious stones, but with divine love, wisdom, patience, obedience and all virtues. His adornment was apparent to none but God and possessors of the Spirit, for it was spiritual.

Christ sacrificed not goats nor calves nor birds; not bread; not blood nor flesh, as did Aaron and his posterity: he offered his own body and blood, and the manner of the sacrifice was spiritual; for it took place through the Holy Spirit, as here stated. Though the body and blood of Christ were visible the same as any other material object, the fact that he offered them as a sacrifice was not apparent. It was not a visible sacrifice, as in the case of offerings at the hands of Aaron. Then the goat or calf, the flesh and blood, were material sacrifices visibly offered, and recognized as sacrifices. But Christ offered himself in the heart before God. His sacrifice was perceptible to no mortal. Therefore, his bodily flesh and blood becomes a spiritual sacrifice. Similarly, we Christians, the posterity of Christ our Aaron, offer up our own bodies. Romans 12, 1. And our offering is likewise a spiritual sacrifice, or, as Paul has it, a "reasonable service"; for we make it in spirit, and it is beheld of God alone.

Again, in the new order, the tabernacle or house is spiritual; for it is heaven, or the presence of God. Christ hung upon a cross; he was

not offered in a temple. He was offered before the eyes of God, and there he still abides. The cross is an altar in a spiritual sense. The material cross was indeed visible, but none knew it as Christ's altar. Again, his prayer, his sprinkled blood, his burnt incense, were all spiritual, for it was all wrought through his spirit.

Accordingly, the fruit and blessing of his office and sacrifice, the forgiveness of our sins and our justification, are likewise spiritual. In the Old Covenant, the priest with his sacrifices and sprinklings of blood effected merely as it were an external absolution, or pardon, corresponding to the childhood stage of the people. The recipient was permitted to move publicly among the people; he was externally holy and as one restored from excommunication. He who failed to obtain absolution from the priest was unholy, being denied membership in the congregation and enjoyment of its privileges; in all respects he was separated like those in the ban today.

But such absolution rendered no one inwardly holy and just before God. Something beyond that was necessary to secure true forgiveness. It was the same principle which governs church discipline today. He who has received no more than the remission, or absolution, of the ecclesiastical judge will surely remain forever out of heaven. On the other hand, he who is in the ban of the Church is hellward bound only when the sentence is confirmed at a higher tribunal. I can make no better comparison than to say that it was the same in the old Jewish priesthood as now in the Papal priesthood, which, with its loosing and binding, can prohibit or permit only external communion among Christians. It is true, God required such measures in the time of the Jewish dispensation, that he might restrain by fear; just as now he sanctions church discipline when rightly employed, in order to punish and restrain the evil-doer, though it has no power in itself to raise people to holiness or to push them into wickedness.

But with the priesthood of Christ is true spiritual remission, sanctification and absolution. These avail before God - God grant

that it be true of us - whether we be outwardly excommunicated, or holy, or not. Christ's blood has obtained for us pardon forever acceptable with God. God will forgive our sins for the sake of that blood so long as its power shall last and its intercession for grace in our behalf, which is forever. Therefore, we are forever holy and blessed before God. This is the substance of the text. Now that we shall find it easy to understand, we will briefly consider it. "But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come."

We find, then, in this excellent lesson, the comforting doctrine taught that Christ is he whom we should know as the Priest and Bishop of our souls; that no sin is forgiven, nor the Holy Spirit given, by reason of works or merit on our part, but alone through the blood of Christ, and that to those for whom God has ordained it. - M. Luther

Deputation Speaker

The Sovereign Grace Union is pleased to receive requests for its deputation preacher to fulfil engagements when possible. Requests for UK Deputation is welcome from Churches, Congregations and Assemblies and other organisations interested within the United Kingdom. Tuesday or Thursday Midweek Meetings are preferable, although with sufficient notice other days can be arranged.

We use the Authorised Version of the Bible for all meetings and our Deputation Preacher is Pastor Chalan Hetherington from Hemel Hempstead.

A booking form to request a visit can be found on the Website of the Union at http://www.sovereign-grace-union.uk/deputation-speaker, or alternatively write to our Secretary at the address found inside the front cover of this magazine.

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Will all students for the ministry who wish to receive help from the BOOK FUND please contact our Treasurer, whose name and address is inside the front cover of the magazine.

Book Reviews

Banner of Truth Trust

Introducing Tyndale - An Extract from Tyndale's Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue. 103 pp. Pbk. ISBN 978 1 84871 7558.

This small book consists of three sections, the first being an introduction to William Tyndale (1494-1536) by John Piper, in which he stresses, among other things, Tyndale's desire that the Scripture should be accessible, in English, throughout society. Tyndale himself translated the New Testament and large sections of the Old Testament, which led him to martyrdom for the sake of the gospel.

The middle section, which is part of Tyndale's reply to Sir Thomas More, requires perseverance, but yields up its treasures to the serious reader. One particularly pertinent passage explains why, as a translator and biblical scholar, Tyndale preferred certain words to certain other words because of their doctrinal associations; 'congregation' instead of 'church', 'elder' rather than 'priest'. There are other good examples of his choice of words, before he proceeds to discuss the differences between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed position.

The epilogue, on Tyndale's legacy, is by the late Robert Sheehan. He gives ten good reasons for honouring Tyndale, who 'was a gift of God to the people of England. The foundations of our Protestant faith... were laid by him.'

- John Manton

Seven Leaders: Preachers and Pastors by Iain H. Murray, hardback, pp. 279, £15. ISBN: 9781848717398

This latest book by Murray revisits some of the men whom the author has encountered in his reading and work for the Banner of Truth Trust; as such , it may be said to be proudly unoriginal. Murray is not breaking new ground, but mulling over past ministries and seeking to bring the memory of these men and their times to the rising generation. This is not to say that this book, which contains sketches of the lives and ministries of John Elias, Andrew Bonar, Archibald Brown, Kenneth MacRae, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, W. J. Grier, and John MacArthur, is either unnecessary or dull.Some of the sketches in this book originated in addresses to ministers' meetings, and the book is

of particular value to those engaged in the work of the ministry, or interested in theology. In part, this book shows how historical theology ought to be done. Firstly, Murray's work highlights the fact that God uses men, frail men, drawn from every walk of life. Some of the men in this book were trained at colleges; others were raised up without formal study for the ministry – but all were clear that God makes a preacher, rather than man. How affecting is John Elias' comment on the men used of God in the early years of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist revival, that they:

"..used to go into the pulpit as poor, needy and trembling creatures; their dependence for everything was on the Lord. They were very anxious that the people should be benefitted and eternally saved." (p.40.)

As might be expected of Murray, there is a strong and healthy emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the work of the ministry, and also the work of the Spirit in convincing sinners of their sin – Archibald Brown's caution that '[t]o offer a Saviour to the man who is ignorant of his sinnership is to offer him that which he cannot fully appreciate' is a reminder that the gospel is only good news for sinners, and preaching which does not tell people they are sinners, however much it may talk of people 'accepting Christ' is not gospel preaching at all, a theme which surfaces in the chapters which follow. The gospel is addressed to sinners. As Joseph Hart rightly observed:

What comfort can a Saviour bring,
To such as never felt their woe?

Another thread running through this book is the danger of diluting the consistency of Calvinism. In the first chapter, Murray highlights the role of the once influential but now little-known theologian Edward Williams (1750-1813) in producing a modified Calvinism, opposed by John Elias, but embraced by many, which proved the ruin of English theology, paving the way for the inroads made by liberal theology into nonconformity in the English-speaking world. Seeking to promote unity, the followers of Williams let slip their grasp upon the truth. The effects may be seen today.

Dealing with these seven men as preachers, Murray points to the differences between them – a warning for those who expect every

minister to do things the same way. Some of these men preached with notes, others without. Some preached through books of the Bible, where others preached textual sermons. This ought to warn us against bigotry – and it may help preachers not to adopt a technique which suits neither they nor their hearers.

This is a most readable and encouraging book. Ministers ought to buy it, and congregations should buy it for their ministers. Not escapism, but solid history, applied to our modern age. God is glorified in Murray's examination of these remarkable men.

- Gerard Charmley

Devoted to God: Blueprints for Sanctification by Sinclair B. Ferguson Paperback, Pp. 277+xiii £8 ISBN: 9781848716902

Sinclair B. Ferguson is an author who is always worth reading, a man with a deep knowledge of the Scriptures and a gift for teaching. It is for this reason that a book from his pen on the subject of sanctification is most welcome. Much modern teaching on the subject is, sad to say, incredibly superficial and unreal, shallow and not really grounded in the Bible; in contrast this book is a work that is focused on Biblical exposition and application of certain key passages in the New Testament. It is, as the subtitle suggests, an orderly, methodical work that takes the reader through the Bible's teaching, eschewing all that is spectacular and showy for that which is deep and real. Ferguson focuses on the importance in Biblical teaching of knowing our identity in Christ and then living out that identity – being what we are, in other words. "As you face life with all its trials, do not lose sight of who you are and what you are for. Be clear about this and you will make progress. Forget this and you will flounder" (P. 7). Hence all true sanctification comes from the gospel; it is not legal, but evangelical. And that means that Christian sanctification is not "self-help", but a matter of divine grace. "The motivation, energy, and drive for holiness are all found in the reality and power of God's grace in Christ" (P. 36). This is extremely helpful, and in stark contrast to much that passes for Evangelicalism these days, where the gospel is seen simply as a door to get us in; a message only for unbelievers, not for believers. Ferguson emphasises the reality; the gospel is behind all of Christian life, and where it is lost sight of, there is only despair at our failure, because it is only in Christ that we are "more than conquerors."

This is an extremely helpful and encouraging book because it is a very realistic book; it is a Christ-centred book, and a book that does not avoid the issue of spiritual conflict. It is well worth reading, especially where the Bible's teaching has been distorted by "Higher Life" and "Second Blessing" errors, and where Sanctification is made a legal and not an evangelical thing. But this is a book for all Christians – for it deals with what we are all called to, our walk with Christ. "Likeness to Christ is the ultimate goal of sanctification. It *is* holiness. It is therefore also the ultimate fruit of being *devoted to God*"(P. 235).

Day One Publications

C.H. Spurgeon's Forgotten College Addresses, edited by Terence Peter Crosby. Hardcover, Pp. 313. ISBN: 9781846255434 £15

Day One have been slowly releasing a series of books reprinting sermons and addresses by Spurgeon that appeared in the *Sword and the Trowel*. In this volume Terence Crosby gives us 25 Spurgeon addresses that have not been collected before. In spite of the title, not all were delivered to the students of the Pastors' College; there are also Communion addresses from the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and several addresses he gave to small companies of believers at Mentone. The majority of the work is however addresses related to the Pastors' College, most of them given at the College's annual Conference. This is vintage Spurgeon, heart-stirring calls to action, sweet meditations on the loveliness of Christ and a deep passion for the Saviour and for the souls of men. Of particular interest to our readers will be the 15th address, 'Preaching the Doctrines of Grace', an address given to the students of the College. It is an exhortation to Calvinistic preaching, and a defence of that sort of preaching. Would that every student for the ministry, and every young minister - and old for that matter - could read such words. This is a very sweet and stirring book; buy it for your pastor if he does not have it already, and buy another for yourself.

C.H. Spurgeon's Forgotten Expositions of Isaiah, edited by Terence Peter Crosby. Hardcover Pp. 355. ISBN 9781846255762. £20

C.H. Spurgeon's conversion was in large part due to preaching from the book of Isaia, and the book is very precious to believers for many

reasons. This volume, the latest in the same series as the volume reviewed above, collects a series of expositions of Isaiah by Spurgeon first published in *The Sword and the Trowel* after his death but never subsequently republished. In addition there are a number of other Biblical expositions by Spurgeon. The *Sword and the Trowel* series was not complete, and so in this book the gaps have been filled with material taken from the volumes of *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* published after Spurgeon's death. The result is then the closest thing we have to a commentary on Isaiah by Spurgeon, and it is, as one would expect, a very helpful work. It is of course a devotional exposition, not a critical commentary, and very suitable for reading as part of one's personal devotions. Preachers will no doubt find seed-thoughts here for their preaching, and any believer will find this helpful in understanding the book of Isaiah.

Judah: From a Sinful Man to the Saving Messiah by Paul E. Brown. Paperback, ISBN: 97818462557. £5

Part of the *People in the Bible* series, this is a little gem of a book. The subtitle gives away Paul Brown's intention in this slim volume, which is to show how the history of Judah in the Old Testament leads us to the Lord Jesus Christ in the New.

In the first part of this book, Brown traces the history of Judah, son of Jacob, as it is told in Genesis, from unpromising beginnings through his confused family life including his relationship with Tamar, through his repentance regarding his brother Joseph. He draws out lessons about the Lord's dealings with sinners, how he brings even the most unlikely people to repentance and faith, and even through man's sin fulfils his purposes. Then he looks at the Tribe of Judah in the rest of the Old Testament, the tribe from which David sprang. The seventh chapter deals with Judah in the New Testament, and of course the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners. Judah was, Brown reminds us, "A saved sinner *par excellence*," and from his story he brings us much comfort and help for sinners today. This is a book that magnifies the grace of God, and as small as it is, a book that can be given even to those who read little. It is simple and full of grace. After many years of ministry, Paul Brown is no longer able to travel far or to preach in person, but his books continue to minister to God's people, and for that we are grateful.

SGU CDs and TAPES

CDs of SGU addresses

The Imputation of Adam's sin to us - Geoffrey Thomas, Aberystwyth
The Imputation of our sin to Christ - Geoffrey Thomas
The Imputation of Christ's righteousness to us - Geoffrey Thomas
The Person, Priesthood and Protection of Jesus Christ (John 18)
- Abraham Thomas
The Life and Work of John Calvin by Gervase Charmley
The Meaning of "All Israel" by Don Underwood of London
Such A Great Salvation by Winston Saunders of Selhurst
What Christ will do - and how by Neil Pfeiffer
Omnipresence and You, by Keith Hoare of Herne Bay
Omniscience, by Paul Relf of Chatham
Omnipotence - Something Understood, by Graham Thrussell of West Sussex
Jacob's Ladder - Dafydd Morris of Wales
God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility - Gary Brady of London
God's Full Sovereignty, our Full Salvation - Timothy Burden of Eastbourne
The Unchanging Gospel - Jeremy Walker of Crawley
John 1:17 - John Saunders of Chichester (AGM 2009 Evening Sermon)
Our Reasonable Service, Romans 12:1 by Alun Higham of Cardiff
Romans 16 by John Saunders of Chichester
The Flood: The creation of a New world by Stephen Lloyd of Gravesend

The Inspiration of Scripture by Christopher Buss
The Authority of Scripture by Leslie Jarvis
The Inerrancy of Scripture by Andrew Coats
The Sufficiency of Scripture by David Levell
Romans 8:1-8 by Fred Rainsford
The Spirit and the Believer ny Alun Higham
Grace Alone by Timothy Burden
Faith Alone by Jeremy Walker
Christ Alone - by John Cheeseman
To the Glory of God Alone by Graham Trice
The Freewill Controversy by Clifford Parsons
Faith and Saving Faith by Tim Martin
Romans 8:28 by Alun Higham

Tapes previously advertised are still available on request from:-
Mr T. Field, 34 Pembury Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2HX
£2.50 + 50p each cheques payable to “Sovereign Grace Union”

Sovereign Grace Union: Doctrinal Basis

The Holy Scriptures

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as originally given, as the inspired and infallible and inerrant Word of God, and as the sole, supreme, and all-sufficient authority in every matter of Christian faith and practice.

The Trinity

One living and true God, Sovereign in creation, providence and redemption, subsisting in three Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – the same in substance, and equal in power and glory.

The Lord Jesus Christ

The Eternal Sonship and the essential, absolute, and eternal Deity, and true and sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ; His virgin birth, death, and burial; His physical resurrection and ascension into heaven, and His coming again in power and glory.

The Holy Spirit

The Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, through Whom the sinner is born again to saving repentance and faith, and by Whom the saints are sanctified through the truth.

The Fall of Man

The fall of mankind in Adam, by which they have totally lost their original righteousness and holiness, and have come under the righteous condemnation of God.

Unconditional Election

The personal and unconditional election in Christ of a multitude which no man can number unto everlasting salvation, out of God's pure grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works in them.

Particular Redemption

The personal and eternal redemption from all sin and the penal consequence thereof, of all God's elect, by the substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Effectual Calling

The effectual calling of all the elect by the irresistible grace of God.

Justification

The justification of sinners by faith alone, through the atoning death and resurrection and imputed righteousness of Christ.

Final Perseverance

The final perseverance in the state of grace of all those who have been elected by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, so that they shall never perish but have eternal life.

In reference to the above, consult the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England, the Westminster Confession, the Savoy Declaration and the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith.

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In This Issue

East Anglia Auxiliary

November 6th, Monday 7:30 PM

Zoar Baptist Chapel, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 2LH

Speaker: Dafydd Morris

Southern Auxiliary

14th September, Thursday 7:30 PM

Bethel Baptist Chapel, Tadworth, Chapel Road, KT20 5SE

Speaker: Sam Mackay. *Subject:* Soli Deo Gloria

Deputation Meetings

February 7th Wednesday 7:30 PM

Ebenezer Chapel Old Hill, Cradley Heath, Birmingham, Station Road B64 6PA

Kent Auxiliary

25th October, Wednesday 7:30 PM

Enon Baptist Church, Chatham , Skinner St. ME4 5RF

Speaker: Graham Trice

Subject: The Priesthood of All Believers

As ministers are willing to travel considerable distances to speak at these gatherings, it would be appreciated if friends and supporters of the Union could be present, if at all possible.

Leaflets announcing the meetings, for display on Chapel notice boards, etc., will be made available nearer the time of the meetings.

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