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## In Memory of Prof. A. L. Graebner, D. D.

The readers of the QUARTERLY are acquainted with the sad fact that it has pleased Almighty God to remove from a wide sphere of activity our well-beloved and highly esteemed colleague, Dr. A. L. Graebner, professor in Concordia Seminary and editor of the THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY. Dr. Graebner was born at Frankentrost, Mich., July 10, 1849, and died at St. Louis, Mo., December 7 last. Funeral services were held December 11 in Concordia Seminary Hall and in Holy Cross Church, the speakers being Dr. F. Pieper of St. Louis, Mo., Prof. A. Pieper of Wauwatosa, Wis., Prof. J. Schaller of New Ulm, Minn., Rev. C. C. Schmidt of St. Louis, Mo., and Dr. H. G. Stub of Hamline, Minn. Dr. A. L. Graebner was a man of rare parts, a character of great firmness, a scholar of universal learning, a church historian of original research, a master of a fluent, dignified, and lucid English, a laborer of indefatigable energy, a Christian humble and grateful, and ever ready to serve his brethren, a valiant defender of the Christian faith, a champion especially of the *sola gratia* and the *sola Scriptura*, — a TRUE LUTHERAN THEOLOGIAN, whose death, in more than one sense, means a great loss to the Lutheran church of America.

F. BENTE.

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## Dr. LUTHER TELLS HOW THE REFORMATION WAS BEGUN.

In the year 1541 Dr. Luther was provoked by an insipid libel of Henry of Braunschweig to charge once more upon the long-defeated host of Rome, and in his reply to his assailant (*Wider Hans Wurst*) he recounts the origin of the Reformation. The following is a translation of the section in question:—

“However, since he pretends not to know who caused this Lutheran hubbub (as he terms it), I will here publicly state it, not, however, for his minions’, nor for his own benefit, for he knows the cause much better than I do. It was when we were dating our letters A. D. ’17, when a preaching friar by the name of John Tetzel, a great braggart, made his appearance, whom Duke Frederick had rescued from being drowned in a sack in the Inn at Innsbruck by order of Maximilian (you may know it was done on account of his virtuous conduct!). Duke Frederick caused him to be reminded of this incident when he began to inveigh against us Wittembergians; neither did he deny it. This same Tetzel was canvassing indulgences, and sold

grace for money, as dearly, or as cheaply, as he possibly could. At that time I was preacher at our local cloister, and was a young doctor, recently issued from the forge, and zealous and eager in the Holy Scriptures.

“Now, many of our Wittemberg people running to Juterbok and Zerbst after indulgences, and I being ignorant — as surely as my Lord Christ has redeemed me! — of what the indulgences were, just as everybody else was ignorant of it, I began to discreetly preach about how people might engage in something better, which was more certain than indulgences. In like manner I had preached about indulgences before here at the castle, and had gained Duke Frederick’s ill favor thereby, (amongst other reasons) because he loved his memorial church dearly. Now, to come to the real cause of this Lutheran hubbub: I let it pass. Presently I was being made aware of Tetzels preaching horrible, fearful doctrines, a few of which I shall here enumerate. *E. g.*, he claimed that he was in possession of such grace and power from the Pope that, if a person even had committed rape upon the holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, he could forgive this sin upon deposit in his money-chest of a satisfactory sum. Again, that the red cross of indulgences with the papal escutcheon reared in a church, was as efficacious as the cross of Christ. Again, that St. Peter, if he were present, should not possess more grace or power than he. Again, that he would not divide spoils with St. Peter in heaven, for he had saved more souls by his indulgences than St. Peter by his preaching. Again, that, on deposit in his chest of money for a soul in purgatory, such soul would soar heavenward, as soon as the money would chink on the bottom of the chest. Again, that the grace of indulgences was the very grace by which men were reconciled with God. Again, that there was no need of contrition, sorrow, or repentance for sin, if a person would purchase (buy, I should say!) letters of indulgence; and he even sold indulgences for sins yet to be

committed. Such things he perpetrated in appalling number, and his whole object was money.

"I was ignorant at the time for whom this money was intended, when a booklet made its appearance with the coat of arms of the Bishop of Magdeburg imprinted on it, in which the questors were ordered to preach some of the above articles. Then it became manifest that Bishop Albrecht had hired this Tetzal, because of his being such a great braggart; for Albrecht had been elected bishop at Mayence, on condition that he should, at his own expense, purchase (buy, I should say!) the pallium at Rome. For at Mayence three bishops, Berthold, Jacobus, and Vriel, had died in quick succession, and it may have been too great a burden on the diocese to purchase the pallium so often and at such short intervals, it being sold, as some say, at 26,000 guilders, while others claim 30,000; for at such a steep price the holy Father at Rome can sell flax-threads, which ordinarily are not worth sixpence.

"Accordingly, the Bishop had invented this scheme and proposed to pay the Fuggers,<sup>1)</sup> who had advanced the money for the pallium, out of the poor man's pocket; and so he sends his great pickpocket abroad,—who, indeed, went to work with a will!—so that the money soon came dropping, chinking, and jingling into the chest in heaps. Meanwhile, however, he did not forget his dear self. But also the Pope had his finger in the pie, claiming half of the proceeds for his St. Peter's Church at Rome. Thus, these fellows proceeded gleefully and with high hopes to strike at people's purses, and to fleece them. Of these things, I say, I was ignorant at the time.

"I wrote a letter containing the above propositions (of Tetzal) to the Bishop of Magdeburg, urging and requesting him to check Tetzal and to stop the preaching of such unbecoming things, inasmuch as trouble might arise from it.

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1) A famous banking-house in those days.

To do this, I wrote, would behoove him as Archbishop. I can still produce the letter. But I received no answer. In like manner I wrote to the Bishop of Brandenburg, my ordinary, in whom I had a very kind bishop. He replied: I was assailing the authority of the church, and would involve myself in trouble; he would advise me to desist. However, I imagine they both thought the Pope would be far too powerful for such a miserable beggar as myself.

“Accordingly, my theses against Tetzal were issued, which can be seen in print. In fourteen days they spread over nearly whole Germany; for everybody was complaining about the indulgences, particularly about Tetzal’s articles. And while all bishops and doctors held their peace, and no one was willing to bell the cat—for the heresy-hunters of the preaching fraternity had intimidated all the world by the promise of the stake, and Tetzal himself had had some priests jailed, who had taken exception to his impudent preaching,—then it was that Luther began to be extolled as a doctor, there having at last arisen one who would call a halt. This praise did not please me; for, as before stated, I did not know myself what the indulgences were, and the song (which I had undertaken to sing) seemed too high for my voice.

“This is the first, real, and thorough beginning of the Lutheran hubbub, and it was not Duke Frederick who began it, but the Bishop of Mayence <sup>(electoral prince)</sup> through his pickpocket and cutpurse Tetzal, yea, rather through the latter person’s scandalous preaching to the end of stealing and robbing people’s money, therewith, as stated, to purchase his magnificent pallium; and because he would not interfere with Tetzal, although I had warned him, but rather continued stealing more money under the guise of indulgences, and purposed to keep on stealing, with an utter disregard of the truth and the salvation of souls. And this impudent priest, who knows all these things very well, would put the blame on our estimable and lamented prince by dropping

such brazen-faced lies among his minions. Now, if an unpleasant hubbub has thus arisen to these blasphemous minions, to the rakes of Mayence, to their womanish cowards, their crestfallen rogues, and to their whole accursed rabble, they may thank the Bishop of Mayence for it; for he has begun it by his damnable thieving and greed, and through his blasphemer Tetzal, whom he has sent forth and defended. And though *Luther* should not have attacked the blasphemous preaching of Tetzal, matters had at that time reached such a high tension, that *stones and beams* would have had to cry out against it, which would not have caused such a discreet Lutheran hubbub, but a horrible, devilish one; for if they would confess the truth, they should have to acknowledge that they have hitherto been safe under our shield and protection, *i. e.*, under the Word of God; our rioters should have taught them manners in a different way.

“The other cause of this hubbub is the most holy Father, Pope Leo, and his unseasonable bull of excommunication, Dr. Pig and all papists, also some great dunces abetting them, since everybody who could stir a pen wished to achieve knighthood by writing and clamoring against me. But I was in hopes the Pope would protect me, because I had so secured and fortified my disputation by Scripture and by the papal decretals, that I was certain the Pope would condemn Tetzal and bless me; I even dedicated my resolutions to him in a humble letter, and many cardinals and bishops were greatly pleased with my book. For at that time I was a better papist than Mr. Mayence or Mr. Hal ever had been, or will be; and the papal decretals plainly stated that the questors could not by indulgences release souls from purgatory. However, while waiting for the blessing from Rome, thunder and lightning came upon me; I had to be the sheep which had muddied the water for the wolf; Tetzal went scot-free, and I had to suffer being eaten.

“Moreover, they dealt with me according to such refined popish methods that I had been sentenced at Rome sixteen days before I received the citation. However, when Cardinal Cajetan had come to the Diet of Augsburg, Dr. Staupitz prevailed on our good prince, Duke Frederick, to visit the Cardinal, and he obtained the Cardinal’s promise to hear me. Thus I came to Augsburg to the Cardinal, who feigned friendliness to me; but after much negotiating I expressed a willingness henceforth to remain silent, provided also my opponents should be bound to silence. Not being able to obtain this, I appealed from the Pope to the Council and departed. Thus the matter was later brought into the diets, and was frequently discussed; but this is not the place to write about that, for it is too long a story. Meanwhile our polemical writings had reached their most violent stage, until matters have now come to such a pass that they are not ashamed to shun the light and at present to teach many things which they formerly have condemned, and which they could not teach without the aid of our books.

“Now, if a hubbub has arisen from this which hurts them, they must thank themselves for it. Why did they treat matters in such an unreasonable and unbecoming manner, in defiance of all right, truth, Scripture and their own decretals? They may not blame anybody but themselves for it. We propose to have our quiet mirth at their wails, and to twit them with their loss, comforting ourselves with the thought that their hour has come. For even to this day they have not ceased, being such blinded, obdurate, and unreasonable dolts, to treat matters in such a manner as if they would willfully perish. The wrath of God is come upon them, as they deserve.

“For it has now come to light (thank God!) that indulgences are a diabolical lie, and still they will not repent nor think of amending their ways, nor of reforming, but by the empty, meaningless cry, ‘The Church!’ they purpose to defend all their abominations. And if they had commit-

ted no other evil, alone the indulgences would be a sufficient reason why God should condemn to eternal fire and cast them out from among men. Do but consider, dear Christian, firstly, how the Pope, the cardinals, bishops, and all ecclesiastics have filled and deceived the world with their lying indulgences. Secondly, how they have blasphemously called them the grace of God, while, in reality, they are nothing, nor can be anything, but a release from the duty of making satisfaction for wrongs here in time, in other words, nothing. For we now know that this satisfaction amounts to nothing. In the third place, how they have sold them for God's grace by shameful simony and Iscariot practice, while the grace of God must be offered freely. In the fourth place, how they have stolen and robbed money and goods from the whole world, and have done so in the name of God. In the fifth place, which is the most atrocious feature, how they have employed these blasphemous lies to foster a horrible kind of idolatry; for many thousands of souls relying on these indulgences as on God's grace, and dying in such confidence, have perished by the hands of these murderers of souls. For a person trusting in, and building upon, lies is the devil's servant.

“These souls are denouncing woe upon popery, and popery owes them their restoration to God. In like manner they are bound to restore all the money and goods which they have thus stolen; also to restore to God His honor, of which they have shamefully deprived Him by their indulgences. When will they do so? Yea, when are they ever concerned about it? Still, if they will not do so, with what right do they claim the appellation of a Christian Church, and the right to hold and to improve the estates of the Church? Do you call that a church which is teeming with indulgences, that is, with diabolical lies, idolatry, simony, Iscariotism, thieving, and murdering of souls, as was shown above? Well, if they will not do so freely, they must be compelled. There is One strong enough to exact it from



them, even with everlasting fire in hell. Meanwhile we shall not call them a church, but a school of the devil, though all the minions of Hal and Mayence should lose their wits and turn mad on account of it." (*Wider Hans Wurst*. Leipzig ed., vol. 21, pp. 393—395.)

These are strong words, full of burning indignation, spoken in a time that required such words and by a man whom God had fashioned for speaking such words. Thus the prophets would speak of old, fearlessly attacking the frivolities of the day, and their indignation would rise to an appalling grandeur that must have cowed their wicked hearers into timid submission. Thus the loving and meek Savior would hurl His woes against the spoilers of His sanctuary. There is a sublime righteousness in just anger which serves as its best defense against the over-sensitive criticism of a weaker age which, being removed from the scene of danger and unable to fully understand the extent of that danger, has, in a great measure, lost the sense of appreciation for the rugged weapons which the Almighty had forged for our deliverance from that danger. One almost feels ashamed to have had to say this much in defense, as it were, of the work of a man who asks not to be excused for what he has done, but has an abiding claim upon our grateful remembrance and admiration. Were the work of the Reformation to take place to-day, it should still require the unrelenting vigor of Luther's pen. His was a new wine; if it bursts old bottles, so much the worse for the bottles, Matt. 9, 17.

Though devils all the world should fill,  
 All eager to devour us,  
 We tremble not, we fear no ill,  
 They shall not overpower us.  
 This world's prince may still  
 Scowl fierce as he will,  
 He can harm us none,  
 He's judged: the deed is done;  
 One little word can fell him.

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