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## Luther's Connection with the Divorce of Henry VIII of England and the Bigamy of Philip of Hessen.\*

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Everything Midas touched became gold; everything Luther touched became famous.

To understand all is to pardon all, say the French; we merely wish to understand everything and not to pardon anything.

It may help the understanding to recall the historical background.

1. Duns Scotus considered the possibility of polygamy after man-murdering wars and pestilences. The learned Cardinal Cajetan said polygamy was not excluded by divine Law, and in the ancient Christian Church many had two wives, according to the example of the Old Testament patriarchs. Durandus, Gerson, Biel, and others taught the same. On February 14, 1650, a Franconian *Kreistag* at Nuernberg resolved to introduce bigamy in, or to populate, the waste places made thus by the Thirty Years' War, and the Archbishops of Bamberg and Wuerzburg agreed.

2. The power of dispensing. It was considered a historical fact that Emperor Valentinian I, praised by Ambrose and others,

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\* Published by request of the Northwestern Conference of the English District. — The Faculty of Concordia Seminary calls attention to an article which was published on this subject in Vol. IV of the *Theological Quarterly*, the parent publication of the THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, where the following conclusion is reached on page 196: "From all this it appears beyond a shadow of doubt that Luther did not advocate or recommend, but emphatically discountenanced and condemned bigamy; that he did not advise the Landgrave to take a second wife, but earnestly and repeatedly dissuaded that measure; that he never defended the Landgrave's second marriage when, against his advice, it had been contracted and given a measure of publicity; that Luther's opinion as to the admissibility of the second marriage in the Landgrave's case was based upon peculiar circumstances confided to him and never made public either by him or by the Landgrave, and that this opinion was never intended to cover more than the individual case for, and in consideration of, which it was asked; that Luther never uttered a doubt as to the correctness of that opinion while, at the same time, he rejected and strenuously denied the right of bigamous or polygamous marriage."

had two wives and by law allowed the same to others; that Charles the Great had two wives; that Pope Gregory the Great had permitted a double marriage to an Anglo-Saxon; that Pope Gregory IX had in 1240 to 1241 given a dispensation to Count Ernst von Gleichen to live with his new wife, obtained in the Crusades, as well as with the first one, whom he found on his return; that the Armenian Christians still lived in polygamy. Henry IV of Castile in 1437 married Doria Blanca, who bore no children. So the Pope permitted him to marry a second wife on condition he return to the first if the second bore him no children within a fixed time.

Catholic canonists of repute held that the Pope could dispense from even divine Law. Campeggi and Wolsey would not decide, but referred the matter to the Pope, who was the only proper judge of his own powers, and "it was odds but he would judge favorably for himself." In a letter to Henry VIII on October 7, 1529, Pope Clement reserved his right to dispense from divine Law. What a Pope could do perhaps a confessor might do.

3. Princes were held in too high estimation, women in too low. Would people bother about dispensations for a blacksmith? Did people bother much about Catherine, Christine, Margaret?

In 1493 the sailors of Columbus brought syphilis from Haiti to Barcelona, and the troops of Charles VII of France and of Emperor Maximilian I of Germany brought the "French disease" from France and Italy into Germany. An imperial edict of the *Reichstag* of Worms in 1495 speaks of it as that "new and most fearful disease of men arisen in our day called commonly the French evil, unheard of in the memory of man." The contemporary Italian, Franciscus Muraltus, tells us "Popes, kings, princes, nobles, merchants, clergy of all kinds, in fact, all who indulged in licentiousness," became infected.

To have this filthy and fearful disease was no disgrace. Benvenuto Cellini speaks of his case in the most matter-of-course manner. In fact, it was considered to be fashionable; people that did not have it were held vulgar and boorish by the courtiers, according to Erasmus.

Landgrave Wilhelm der Mittlere was an "unclean satyr," who died in melancholia and insanity brought on by the French disease. His wife was so notorious an adulteress that she was called "Frau Venus." These were the parents of Philip von Hessen.

The Egyptian midwives lied for the benefit of the Hebrew boys that were to be thrown into the Nile. Ex. 1, 18. Rahab lied

for the benefit of the Hebrew spies. Abraham lied about Sarah to Pharaoh.

Augustine and Aquinas held such lies sin, but venial sin, and allowed hiding the truth, or dissimulation. Hilary, Chrysostom, Cassian, Origen, Lombard, and others held such benefit lies to be morally right. Others thought it a greater sin to tell the truth than to tell a benefit lie under certain circumstances. To this class belonged Luther. Occam taught that to betray a confessional secret was always a mortal sin; and Luther was brought up in the school of Occam. In his *Babylonian Captivity* of 1520 Luther so detested divorce that he preferred bigamy. The adulterous Aleander gleefully rang the changes on this work into the ears of the adulterous Albrecht of Mainz, the Elector of Brandenburg, and others at the *Reichstag* of Worms in 1521.

Even at this time the sixteen-year-old Philip of Hessen in seeming jest asked Luther about having two wives; but Luther earnestly rebuked him for speaking in such a manner of such a matter.

Sir Thomas More, in his *Responsio ad Lutherum*, attacked this position of the Reformer. King Henry of England attacked Luther's book most savagely point after point, but he and his advisers did not say a single syllable about this point of bigamy—certainly very remarkable. Did this point later influence the English king to ask for a papal permission to have two wives?

In a sermon on Genesis of May 31, 1523, Luther says it is not to be argued that Lamech did wrong. A sermon in September defends Abraham with Hagar.

When a man of Orlamuende with a leprous wife, advised by Carlstadt, asked the Elector for permission to take another, Luther on January 27, 1524, wrote he knew of no Scripture forbidding polygamy. But it was scandalous, and Christians do not create scandal.

On November 28, 1526, Luther advised Philip of Hessen against polygamy, "because there is no word of God for it, . . . unless it might be a case of high necessity, such as that the wife was leprous or kidnapped."

On December 9 he, in similar strain, advises Joseph Levin Metzsch and Pastor Clemens Ursinus on March 21, 1527.

In April, 1528, Luther published *Theses on the Bigamy of Bishops* and held 1 Tim. 3, 2 forbids polygamy and not the remarriage of bishops; so it is taken for granted others may keep their wives.

On June 30 the keen Catholic Cochlaeus wrote Pirkheimer about these theses and said Luther permitted polygamy to the laity.

Since Chrysostom many held this view: Cajetan, Erasmus, Zwingli, Zan of Leyden, Agricola, Pellicanus, Lening, Ochino. The Fourth National Synod of the Reformed Church of France in August, 1563, at Lyons, considered the opinion of the pastors and professors of Geneva that Paul tolerated polygamy because it could not be remedied.

The Catholic theologians, writing the *Confutation of the Augsburg Confession* in 1530, considered a public protest against Luther's theses.

### Henry's Divorce.

As early as 1514 King Henry had thought of a divorce from Catherine. Now that she was forty and had given him no son and had "certain diseases," he again took up the matter in 1526. Papal permits were plentiful in that day for those able to pay. Pope Alexander VI, on December 17, 1498, annulled the marriage of Louis XII of France and Jeanne de Valois, daughter of Louis XI. The king then took Anne of Brittany, widow of Charles VIII, and then the decrepit old king married the eighteen-year-old Mary Tudor, sister of Henry VIII. When Louis XII died, January 1, 1515, Mary married Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. Now, this noble duke had been engaged to Lisle Lisle and Anne Brown, married Margaret Mortymer, divorced her, and married Anne Brown, and then Mary Tudor, and Margaret Mortymer was still living, and on May 12, 1528, Clement VII confirmed the marriage of Brandon and Henry's sister. He was twice a bigamist, thrice divorced; he began by marrying his aunt and ended by marrying his daughter-in-law. James IV of Scotland married Margaret, King Henry's other sister, and dismissed his mistress, Jane Kennedy, but soon after took her back. On the death of James, Margaret married the Earl of Angus, who lived with another woman, and Queen Margaret was also guilty of "suspicious living" with Albany or Henry Stewart. On March 11, 1527, the Pope annulled her marriage to Angus, and Margaret promptly married Stewart, who had also divorced his wife to marry a queen. The stench of Margaret's divorce was so strong that even King Henry had Wolsey write her about "the shameless sentence from Rome" and warn her of the "inevitable damnation of adulterers." Just as scandalous was the divorce of Bothwell from his wife Catherine to marry Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. On the suggestion of John Barlow, then chaplain to the Boleyns, King

Henry, September 12, 1527, sent his secretary, Dr. Wm. Knight, and Wm. Benet, to get Pope Clement's permit to marry again either before or after the formal dissolution of the first marriage. On December 4 Knight wrote he trusted in a short time "to have in his custody as much, perfect, sped, and under lead, as His Highness had long desired."

Sir Gregory Casale and the Prothonotary Gambara were to strengthen Dr. Knight. The Pope was to put forth a bull allowing the king to marry again even within the first degree of affinity. On January 12 and 13, 1528, Pope Clement VII, with Pucci and Simonetta, told Sir Gregory da Casale under seal of confession Henry was to enter a second marriage and at once ask for papal confirmation. On February 12 Stephen Gardiner and Edward Fox were sent for a permit to have two wives, similar to the proposal made by Knight. On March 20, they reached the Pope at Orvieto.

Gardiner threatened that, if the Pope did not agree, England would fall away to the Lutherans. On March 31 Gardiner and Fox report "that the king's highness should first marry" was a papal plan to evade responsibility. "His Holiness is *cunctator maximus*."

Fox returned May 2; Cardinal Campeggi followed in September. On October 23 he wrote the Pope that the king was as good a theologian as any doctor, and "I believe if an angel descended from heaven, he would not be able to persuade His Majesty to the contrary."

Campeggi was to get the queen into a convent, and then the Pope would dispense for bigamy.

Now Sir Francis Bryan and Peter Vannes, an Italian, were sent to Rome to press the demand for a dispensation for Henry to have two wives.

On December 29 Cardinal Contarini wrote that the Pope feared Carl would get his aunt to consent and thus win Henry over to the Kaiser. To Gabriel de Grammont, Bishop of Tarbes, in March, 1530, Clement said he would be glad if a second marriage were already consummated, without his authority, and to Jerome Ghinucci, bishop of Worcester, the Pope declared bigamy would be less scandalous than a divorce. Miguel Mai wrote Carl that Francis had warned the papal nuncio at Paris if Henry were pressed too hard, he would marry Ann, and England would fall away from the Pope. In August, 1530, Cardinal Jean du Bellay

urged Henry to marry, and he believed with the help of Francis the Pope would ratify the union.

On September 18 Casale wrote Henry that the Pope proposed "that your Majesty might be allowed two wives." This agrees with Mai's report to Carl. Cardinal Wolsey informed Cardinal Campegi of this plan.

On October 27 Dr. William Benet writes the Pope said "a great divine" had advised bigamy, but finally the council showed the Pope he could not grant a dispensation for bigamy. That "great divine" no doubt is Cardinal Cajetan, with whom Luther had that famous debate at Augsburg in 1518. In his commentaries on Genesis and Paul's epistles, Cajetan says a plurality of wives is not against natural law and not forbidden in the Bible.

John Joachim, Sieur de Vaux, the French ambassador, in 1531 told Anne the Kaiser would not oppose her marriage. The new ambassador, in 1532, Giles de la Pomeraye, had special instructions to help Henry in the divorce. Cardinal Grammont, on January 8, threatened the Pope Francis would join Henry in throwing off the authority of Rome; two days later Francis himself wrote the Pope in behalf of his "good brother." In October he and his "good brother" met at Calais and sent a demand that the Pope declare for the divorce or both would throw off the papal obedience.

On September 2, 1528, Erasmus wrote: "I should prefer that he should take two Junos rather than put away one." The Strassburg theologians, Bucer, Capito, Grynaeus, Hedio, and Zell, were of the same opinion.

Boniface Amorbach, Erasmus's friend, wrote him on February 28, 1530: "If I were a Lutheran, I should add that a new wife might be taken without putting away the old one, for polygamy was practised by the patriarchs, and Luther teaches that it is not forbidden by the New Testament." Zwingli and Oecolampadius thought Queen Catherine was to be put away, the marriage having been null and void.

In 1530 Henry spent about 5,000 crowns, sending Crammer to the Continent to get the universities to support the divorce.

In 1529 Henry highly praised Luther to Eustace Chapuys, Carl's ambassador, and was very sorry for having written against the monk, overpersuaded by Wolsey, and the king published a translation of Luther's letter to the king of 1525.

In July, 1531, Simon Grynaeus, the Basel scholar, was to gain Melancthon for the king, but on August 23 Master Philip wrote against the divorce and for bigamy. Luther was to be handled by somebody else. Stephen Vaughan, as early as 1529, was charged with heresy and attacked by More; in 1530 he was Henry's agent in Germany to get loans from the Fuggers and "bore too much affection towards Tyndale" to suit the king. Possibly it was this Lutheran Englishman that in 1531 sent the opinions of the universities to Barnes at Wittenberg to gain Luther for the divorce. Following the opinion of Louvain, Luther, on September 3, pronounced against the divorce; he "would rather permit the king to add another queen to the first and after the example of the patriarchs have two wives at the same time."

On November 14 Vaughan sent Henry a copy of the *Sententiae* of Barnes, which were published at Wittenberg. In September, William Paget, another English Lutheran, worked on Philip of Hessen at Rothenburg to urge Luther to please the English king for political reasons. Luther replied that his letter had already gone to England. It had gone on September 4 by Robert Barnes, who delivered it in December to the king, who was angry at the message and dismissed the messenger "with much ill will."

The very next day Henry sent Paget to get the Wittenbergers to write in favor of the divorce. He came on August 12, 1532, and told of Henry's killing Buckingham and Carl's pun: "It is a pity so noble a buck should be slain by such a hound." Of course, Paget was also unsuccessful. Luther said: "I advised the king that it would be better for him to take a concubine [meaning a second queen] than ruin his kingdom."

In 1532 Vaughan was again in Saxony and wrote very outspokenly to Henry in favor of the Reformers and tried to save Tyndale. In October, Henry had another young Englishman at Wittenberg; again without success. Henry was a bulldog and tried again. In March, 1535, Barnes was again in Wittenberg. On his return to London he was again returned to Wittenberg; his credence dated July 8. In the fall, Bishop Edward Fox of Hereford and Archdeacon Nicholas Heath of Stafford traveled by way of Strassburg, where they conferred with Bucer, and came to the Elector of Saxony at Weimar, and went with him to Schmalkalden, where Fox addressed the whole *Bund* and arranged for the entrance of Henry as Patron and Protector on his accepting the *Augsburg Confession* and *Apology*.

On January 1, 1536, the three ambassadors arrived at Wittenberg and discussed the *Augsburg Confession* and Henry's divorce till April 10. Luther joked about the importance attached to him — after eleven universities had already given their decision, it seems the world would be lost “unless we poor beggars, the Wittenberg theologians, be heard.” The English left with a polite letter to Thomas Cromwell and with a judgment against the divorce, signed shortly before March 17 by Luther, Jonas, Cruciger, Bugenhagen, and Melancthon.

### Philip's Bigamy.

As the proud English king took his family trouble to Luther, so the fiery von Hessen. Barely nineteen, he was urged by his councilors to marry Christine, daughter of the bearded Duke George of Saxony. She was unfriendly, homely, ill-smelling, given to drink, and had the stone, yet within sixteen years she bare him three sons and four daughters. He was not in love with her and within three weeks fell back into his former life of fornication and even sodomy. Diligent reading of the Bible — Eph. 5, 5; Heb. 12, 16 — awakened his conscience. His conscience was not strong enough to keep him from sin, but strong enough to keep him for about fifteen years from the Sacrament, and at the same time he was trying hard to get Luther and Zwingli to agree on the Lord's Supper. And how could he punish his subjects for crimes of which he himself was guilty?

In 1532, at Regensburg, Kaiser Carl passed the famous “Carolina,” the law punishing bigamy the same as adultery, and Philip published it in Hessen. When Berut Rotmann's *Restitution*, of October, 1534, defended the polygamy in Muenster, *Des Landgraven zu Hessen antwort uf dere stadt Munster schreiben* came out in 1535. Here Philip gave some telling arguments against the Anabaptists — to avoid offense, though it were right, which it is not. Matt. 18, 6. And he forbade polygamy and the desertion of unbaptized spouses.

In 1538 Duke Henry of Brunswick wrote that Philip could not sleep and soon would go insane. In 1539 the *Bund* of Schmal-kalden would help the Duke of Guelders against the Kaiser. Luther wrote, If the Kaiser drew the sword against the Protestants, he was no longer the Kaiser, but the hireling and bandit of the Pope and had to expect the fate such baseness deserved. But it did not come to war, for Philip could not mount his horse.



He suffered from syphilis, the disease which killed Ulrich von Hutten and Pope Julius II. He took treatments from a specialist, Dr. Gereon Sailer of Augsburg, till January, 1540, two months before his second marriage. On his sick-bed he thought, *Should he die, where would he go? Straight to hell, though fighting for the pure Gospel!*

In September he saw Margaret von der Saale, sweet seventeen, and made up his mind to have her "though it should cost goodly sums of money with Carl's councillors" to get the Kaiser's consent and, of course, the Pope's. Dr. Gereon Sailer confirmed the notion that bigamy was the only remedy for promiscuous adultery. His court preacher, Melander, with two divorced wives living and living with a third, told him polygamy was no more forbidden than celibacy, meats, etc. Philip's wife gave her written consent, he promising to cohabit with her in future even more than in the past. He kept his promise, for she bore him children in 1541, 1543, 1547. His future mother-in-law consented if Luther consented. Bucer and Melander were sent to get Luther's consent, in December — early in November Sailer had been sent to Wuerttemberg to buy the wine for the wedding.

The agents of Philip brought his stirring appeal for Luther's consent to the bigamy. Justus Winther, the Hessian court schoolmaster, had the draft for the reply. After many long and strong arguments against bigamy comes this: "As now Your Princely Grace has finally determined to have another wife, so we think that such is to be kept secret. . . . What was permitted concerning marriage in the law of Moses is not forbidden by the Gospel." Signed, December 10 by Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon. The following signatures were added: Martin Bucer, Anton Corvinus, Adam F. (of Fulda), John Lening, Justus Winther, Dionysius Melander, *et al.*

At Rothenburg on the Fulda on March 4, 1540, the court preacher solemnized the marriage with churchly honors and a sermon. Among the witnesses were the representatives of the Elector and Duke Maurice of Saxony. Melanchthon also had been lured to the place, and he made an address. And the confessional advice had, of course, pledged all to strict secrecy! Philip received the Sacrament with a good conscience in church at Easter and Pentecost. On May 24 Luther thankfully received "Fuder Weins rheinisch." Margaret bore Philip seven sons, the first one in 1541, March 12; on April 22 Christine bore him another.

Of course, the secret transpired. Philip's dissolute sister Elizabeth, Duchess of Rochlitz, was wild, though she had advised him to keep a concubine rather than have so many prostitutes. The miserable mess made Melanchthon sick in June at Weimar; he was unconscious, his eyes were set; the Elector's own celebrated Doctor Sturz had given up all hope. Luther was hurriedly called. "Good God, how has Satan spoiled this *organon!*" At an open window he wrestled in prayer with God and then turned to his friend, "Philip, take this food, or I'll excommunicate you." Philip heard his master's voice and did as he was bid. "Had it not been for Luther, I should have died." "I prayed Philip alive from the dead."

Luther signed the confessional advice with a very heavy heart, as he wrote the Saxon Elector in June, 1540; yet, he says, "If such a matter as this of Philip's came before me to-day, I would advise as I have already advised. I am not ashamed of such a counsel, even if it should come before the whole world; only that for the offense I would rather have silence observed."

On June 27, 1540, Luther wrote Eberhard von der Tann: "Better be it said Doctor Martin was foolish in yielding to the Landgrave . . . than make public the reasons why we gave a private dispensation. For the disgrace coming therefrom to the Landgrave would be too great." Philip is called the Magnanimous, Luther *was* the Magnanimous. The Hessian told an untruth. He said he wanted the opinion for his own self; in reality he wanted it only to satisfy his future mother-in-law. And he concealed the truth that he already had a concubine — "her von Eschweg." He was bound to her and not free to choose another. Luther learned that only at the end of May and said: "Had I known that, certainly no angel would have brought me to that opinion."

Melanchthon also wrote on September 1: "We were deceived by Jason [Philip]. Nor has he complied with our advice. But in this matter he has often said one thing and done another." Luther's opinion was given under seal of confession and therefore was valid only before God; for the public it simply did not exist. And so, when Philip demanded that his bigamy be defended in public, the Elector of Saxony and Duke Ulrich of Wuerttemberg refused to stand by him in public. On July 8, 1540, Bucer begged Philip to make a public denial of his bigamy. On the same day, at the Eisenach Conference, Amsdorf, Bugenhagen, Brenz, Oslander, Schnepf, "and many others" would oppose the bigamy if it became public. Luther also demanded a public denial, "a good

strong lie," a white lie, or benefit lie, to hide Philip's disgrace; for to betray a confessional opinion was a mortal sin. Though Philip "without flattery held Luther the greatest theologian of all men," the Hessian theologians threatened to make public the confessional opinion. Then Luther wrote on July 20: "Before I would openly aid in defending it, . . . I would rather confess that . . . I had committed an error and a folly and beg pardon." Pastor Theodore Fabricius in the most friendly manner, first privately and then publicly, rebuked Philip and Melander. The Magistrate confiscated the property of the faithful preacher and clapped him into prison. Pastor Martin Leister — Listrius — criticized the bigamy and then — safety first — fled into Brandenburg. Pastor John Lening defended polygamy in the anonymous *Expostulation*, in the spring of 1541, and again, in the fall, in the *Dialogus* by "Huldericus Neobulus," revised by Bucer and spread by Philip. Luther began a reply in January, 1542, and another by Justus Menius was to follow, but the Elector forbade both. Luther's portion, however, had already been in print.

Already in 1540, when reminded of certain startling statements in his sermons on Genesis, Luther replied he was far from defending all he had written many years ago. In his reply to "Neobulus," Luther denied that what was allowed in the Old Testament was also allowed in the New Testament times. Also, he points out that Christ in Matt. 19, 3, etc., condemns the divorces then still allowed to the Jews. So Luther now denies the validity of priestly dispensations.

"It must have cost the devil a lot of labor to put such a block in the path of the Gospel," was the comment of the Elector Joachim II of Brandenburg. Yes, the moral harm done was unspeakably great.

When Cardinal du Bellay told Philip's case to Francis I, the adulterous French king laughed, "If such were exiled, where would I be?"

Francis might laugh, but the death penalty was on bigamy, and Philip could not laugh, and he ran to cover. In October, 1540, he sent Dr. Siebert von Loewenberg to Brussels to fix the matter with Carl. He promised to help the Kaiser against all foreign foes, and he betrayed the dealings the Protestant princes had with the French king, and thus he alone hindered the alliance.

Philip bribed Granvella, the Kaiser's chancellor, and the Archbishop of Lund and Naves, and Leander von Eck, the Bavarian chancellor, "fleeced with Lutheran rascality." At the *Reichstag*

at Regensburg in 1541 Cardinals Morone and Contarini said Dukes William and Louis of Bavaria were against Protestantism for gain, not for the Catholic faith. Carl said the Protestants would not recant even if beaten in war. Also, "Everybody is looking out only for number one; I must do so too." Carl looked out for number one by not prosecuting Philip for the following bribe—Philip promised to serve Carl; form no alliance with France, England, or any other foreign power; keep these and the Duke of Cleves out of the *Bund* of Schmalkalden; force out of the *Bund* King Christian III of Denmark, who had joined on April 9, 1538, for nine years; permit no Germans to enlist against the Kaiser and his sister Mary, the regent of the Netherlands. And he put his son-in-law, Duke Maurice of Saxony, into the camp of the Kaiser, who gave Maurice hopes of becoming the Elector of Saxony. This *Reichstag* also established the famous rule that a man had to be of the religion of the region in which he lived.

The *Bund* of Schmalkalden being paralyzed by Philip, Carl had a free hand to crush Duke William of Cleves and force him to stay the progress of the Reformation. This easy victory first proved to Carl the possibility of success, as showing the lack of coherence among the Lutherans, as he states in his commentaries. Thus the Smalcald War became so disastrous, disastrous also for Philip. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." Melancthon bitterly called Philip an Alcibiades. Yes, but we cannot rid ourselves of the haunting thought that the ill-fated *Beichtrat* was also at the bottom of the disaster of the Smalcald War and all that came of it.

Moeller and Hausrath think Luther was influenced to give his advice from fear of losing Philip from the Protestant cause; but "there is not a syllable where Luther expresses any fear that a petition to the emperor means his loss to the League," rightly writes Faulkner of the Methodist Drew Seminary. W. Walther and Brieger also write in the same strain.

Koestlin, Kolde, Bezold, Ranke, Jacobs, and other Protestants frankly condemn Luther for the scandal, which stains the escutcheon of the Reformation. Brieger seems to be fairer in saying: "The medieval still stuck in him." Rade writes: "If the Reformers erred in the *Beichtrat* to Philip in the use of the Old Testament, the cause was that they were not in this matter entirely free from the Roman Church." So also Zoeckler and John Philip Koehler. Faulkner, of Drew, agrees with Rockwell, now of Union, who cannot declare Luther's attitude ethically right.

and share his views and motives, yet his mistake (*Fehlgriff*), they say, is due to the importance given by him to the pattern of the Old Testament patriarchs and to the absence of any clear prohibition of bigamy in the New Testament. On this basis, Walter Koehler classes this action among the great deeds of Luther, classing it with his heroic stand at Worms.

Sheldon's *Church History* says the Reformers made an "enormous mistake; but that they were guilty of moral obliquity is not so clear."

As early as 1846 an Anonymous in *Hist. Polit. Blaetter f. d. kath. Dtschl.* pointed out the fact that Luther's consent was not the result of a momentary embarrassment.

The Jesuit Grisar admits Luther's position was "forced upon him by his wrong interpretation of the Bible." (Vol. IV, p. 146.) Nikolaus Paulus, another Catholic, admits Luther agreed to the bigamy, "not out of weakness, but with a good conscience."

We sorely regret Luther's error of interpretation; a slight turning of the little switch sends the train to safety or destruction. We much prefer to have heard the stern voice of John the Baptist: "It is not lawful for thee to have her." We agree with Luther: "Let him who will, attack my person; I do not give myself out for a saint." We agree with Luther: "Whether Luther be a scamp or saint, does not matter; what matters is whether his doctrine be true or false." And we agree with Margrave George of Brandenburg: "I was not baptized in the name of Luther; he is not my God and Savior; I do not rest my faith on him and am not saved by him; and therefore in this sense I am not a Lutheran. But if asked whether with my heart and lips I profess the teachings which God restored to light by His blessed servant Luther, I neither hesitate nor am ashamed to call myself a Lutheran. In this sense I am a Lutheran, and as long as I live, I will remain a Lutheran." And we almost agree with Lessing: "Luther is one of the greatest men the world has ever seen. Luther is with me in such veneration that, all things well considered, I am right glad to have discovered in him some few small imperfections, for I was otherwise really in danger of making a god of him. The traces I find in him that he is human are as precious to me as the most brilliant one of his perfections."

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