

# THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

10737

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VOL. X.

JANUARY, 1906.

No. 1.

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## FAITH.

Grace expresses the attitude and relation of God to a sinner. And grace justifies and saves the sinner. However, saving grace is not an irresistible fiat of the Almighty. Grace may fail of its aim and end. No sinner is justified and saved *parforce*. There must be a proper attitude and an adequate relation of the sinner who is being justified and saved to God who justifies and is saving him. Faith expresses this latter attitude and relation. "*By grace are ye saved through faith,*" Eph. 2, 8. This means that salvation in individual instances, the saving of this or that particular sinner, requires the effectual operation of *two* forces. True, "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," Tit. 2, 11, regardless of men's attitude toward it. The word of grace has been issued to all men prior to their knowledge and wish, Matt. 28, 19. There is a salvation, perfect and complete in itself, independent of the faith of the saved; comp. Acts 4, 12: "*Neither is there salvation in any other,*" etc. Neither man's faith nor man's unbelief alter the fact of this salvation. The *Τετέλεσται* on Golgotha, John 19, 30, was spoken before unbelievers and scoffers. This cry has been ringing through the centuries. The "word of reconciliation" conjures up no mirage to pilgrims through this desert of sin, but points to the *fact* that "God was in Christ, *reconciling the world unto Himself*, not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. 5, 19. This salvation "is finished." Whether its tidings are carried to the husbandman on his farm or to the trader

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## WARTBURG LETTERS OF LUTHER.

The ten months in the life of Luther intervening between the fourth day of May, 1521, and the sixth day of March, 1522, are in more than one respect an important period in the history of Lutheranism. "It was a very well-considered measure, serving the end in view, which the Elector Frederick applied to Luther, when he caused him to be kept in a secret place and to disappear from the public arena." <sup>1)</sup> To begin with, it saved Luther's life. Counsels for his destruction were rife before Luther had quitted Worms, and the castle-gate at Wartburg had scarcely closed behind him and his friendly captors, when the imperial edict went forth which outlawed Luther in the greater part of continental Europe. To allow the monk, who had braved the scepter and the crozier together, to be abroad when the rumored chase for this exquisite game should begin, appeared to the good Saxon prince to be taking desperate chances, even if a nation united in behalf of Luther should have closed about the outlaw, defying the combined power of crown and miter. Moreover, it was a service which a German prince must loathe to do even by connivance to a pack of Roman and Spanish hell-hounds. All praise, then, to wise Prince Frederick!

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1) Koestlin, *Martin Luther* I, 463.

But in saving Luther the Wartburg exile saved the Reformation. It is no disparagement to Luther's sanctified zeal and to his well-known scorn of human aid in his struggle, to hint, as Kurtz does,<sup>2)</sup> at a possible effect of the imperial interdict: it might have forced Luther to strike an alliance with men of the stamp and aspirations of Ulrich von Hutten, and to turn the Reformation into a revolution. If Rome had forced the issue conjured up by the ante-dated decree of Charles V of May 8, it is not unlikely that Luther's followers would have risen to his armed defense and would not have permitted him to control their counter-measures for the defeat of the popish plot.

To Luther himself the retirement at Castle Wartburg brought more than personal safety: the quiet of his seclusion, the gentle aspects of nature in forest and fen during a beautiful German spring, frequent leisurely walks beyond the castle-walls, all this had a calming effect upon a mind that had been stirred to its depths by ordeals before which sturdy warriors would have quailed. It brought a much-needed relief, rest, and recreation<sup>3)</sup> to a toiler who had not spared himself at his task. And with physical relaxation came greater composure of mind. Removed from the scenes of his former busy life, from the acclaim of admiring followers, and the passionate outbursts of opponents, Luther, as from some spiritual eminence, could view, impersonally and impartially, the path that he had trodden thitherto, could calmly judge the merit or demerit of every speech and action of the four turbulent years that had passed since 1517, and could gratefully estimate and acknowledge the guiding hand of Providence which had not suffered this mighty movement to be materially turned aside from its divine purpose into carnal by-ways. Outeroppings like that of the Wittenberg iconoclasts and of the Zwickau illusionists were far better understood at a distance, as to their dangerous tendency and unholy motive, and pointed a mind calmly viewing

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2) *Kirchen-Gesch.* II, 18.

3) D'Aubigné, *Hist. of Reform.* III, 14.

them to fearful dangers to which the cause of the Gospel was exposed from its insincere adherents. Thus, Castle Wartburg became both for his body and his soul what Luther has called it, a Patmos, an isle of refuge in a storm-swept sea.

And the hand of the divine Fashioner of men's hearts was busy in the seclusion of those Thuringian forests molding the heart of Luther to suit His purposes. Many and fierce were the soul-battles which our hero fought in his quiet study under the eyes of Him alone who seeth in secret. Man's utter insignificance, his waywardness, his pride, his helplessness, rose up before Luther's mind, to crush out whatever there might be in him of vaingloriousness or of self-reliance in God's cause. Prostrate the hero of Worms lay before his Maker and his Judge, pleading for mercy in Jesus' name. Then was the corn of wheat buried in the ground to die, that it might blossom forth again in coming years and ripen into an abundant harvest.

Nor was the period of the exile altogether barren of material results which redounded at once to the benefit of the young church of the Reformation. Luther, wherever placed, must always be a student. And with him to study meant to study Scripture. Within the Holy Book lay the secret of his strength. His unwavering stand upon the written Word of God had from the start raised the force and importance of his utterances in pulpit and press above that which attends the mere subjective expressions of a learned man's opinion. In his very earliest attacks upon Rome, when not yet fully conscious that he had begun to face the enemy of his life and the Antichrist, Luther occupied the objective ground of Scripture, and arose, not to state a personal grievance, but something like the solemn message of a prophet of old, which began with a "Thus saith the Lord." His studies at Castle Wartburg served to mature the theological mind in him, that mind which has become thoroughly habituated to think and to speak *οὐδὲν ἄτερ γραφῆς*. One study in particular not only served to give to Luther's view a still more pronounced objectivity, but also proved the very greatest blessing to his followers, from the greatest to the

humblest, and the trustiest weapon which the church of the Reformation has wielded against her adversaries in any conflict. It was in this retirement that Luther conceived the thought and made the beginning of translating the Bible into German, the New Testament portion of which he brought with him ready for the printer on his return to Wittenberg. At Castle Wartburg, too, the First Part of his Church Postil was completed in manuscript, not mentioning minor writings, such as his exposition of the Magnificat and his Latin exposition of the Psalms (though this latter was not completed). Besides these, there were prepared at Castle Wartburg a number of writings which showed that even in his retirement Luther was a wide-awake watchman on Zion's rampart. His "Instruction for those going to Confession," "Of Confession, whether the Pope have authority to enjoin it," "Against the Abuse of the Mass," "Of Ecclesiastical and Monastic Vows," "Against the bull *Coena Domini*," "Against the New Idol at Halle," were all written during his enforced exile.

In other ways this exile proved a salutary visitation. Luther's followers were, for a time at least, cast upon their own resources. They were forced to estimate Luther's work aside from Luther's person. And now was manifested, to the dismay and bewilderment of Rome, the vast influence which Luther's teaching was even at that early date exercising among the masses. The very disappearance of their beloved teacher served to weld their hearts into a firmer union. The full truth about the manner of his disappearing leaked out only gradually. At first, the common people believed Luther had met with foul play in the neighborhood of Gotha. They interpreted his disappearance as a forerunner of coercive measures which Rome would forthwith adopt against the evangelical faith. The head of the new movement having been struck down, it was suspected that the members would soon meet with the same fate. Yes, Germany at last learned to understand the true spirit of the Roman hierarchy. Note, now, the change that had come over these patient Germans, who for centuries had been the *bons*

*christians* of the Pope and his jesters! In their view of the situation the period of meek forbearance or of sullen submission to Rome was plainly over. They had begun to realize that the majesty to whom they had been doing homage in stupid ignorance was a hollow sham and a foul imposition. No more parleying with Rome! that seemed their determination when they heard Luther had been waylaid, perhaps slain. The enthusiastic defiance which the people everywhere set up against the edict of Charles V was an awful revelation to the papacy, and so startled the German bishops that they were quite sincere in their cry: "Bring back Luther! We are not safe without him!"

Into the retirement of Luther at Castle Wartburg we wish to take our readers by publishing what is extant to date of Luther's Wartburg letters. The contents of these letters cannot, indeed, rank in importance with Luther's doctrinal writings, still they are full also of noble lessons exhibiting the power of true faith. We shall avail ourselves freely of the excellent labors of Prof. Hoppe, in the new St. Louis Edition of Luther's Works, to whose patient research extending through twenty-five years the church is indebted for much light on Luther's life and writings.

The first news from Castle Wartburg by Luther's own hand are contained in the fragment of a letter of May 12th addressed

TO MELANCHTHON.<sup>4)</sup>

So great is the fear that my abode might in some manner be revealed that I have been scarcely able to obtain permission to send this letter. For the same reason be careful also yourself

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4) St. L. Ed. XXI a, 351. It is found in MS. in Cod. Jen. a, fol. 268. It is printed in the collection of Buddeus, p. 18, in De Wette's collection, vol. 2, p. 12 (addressed, however, to Spalatin, during May or June, 1521), and in the Erlangen Corresp., vol. 3, p. 146. It is found in German in Walch, vol. XXI, 769 (addressed to Spalatin, 1522). Buddeus, who offers this letter from the original of Luther, remarks that part of the writing had become effaced to such an extent that it was impossible to decipher it.

to suffer the question whether the persons keeping me are friends or foes to remain in doubt, or to appear doubtful, and observe silence, provided you believe that your doing so would redound to the glory of God. For there is no need of others besides yourself and Amsdorf knowing aught beyond the fact that I am still alive. Who knows what God intends to effect by this counsel to keep me silent<sup>5)</sup> on these heights. Now that I am a prisoner, the priests and monks who were in a rage while I was at liberty are fearful to such a degree, that they are beginning to mitigate their insane enactments against me. They cannot bear the sight of the great multitude of common people threatening them, and do not know by what ruse to escape. I behold in this "the mighty hand of the God of Jacob," Gen. 49, 24, and His doing while we keep silent, suffer, and pray. Is not the word of Moses true: "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace"? Ex. 14, 14. A certain Romanist has written to the gentleman wearing the biretta<sup>6)</sup> at Mayence, saying: "We are rid of Luther, as we wished to be; but the populace is so wrought up, that I surmise we shall hardly keep our lives, unless we light candles and go in search of him everywhere and bring him back." He wrote this in jest; but what if his jest should come to be serious truth! Ps. 4, 5: "Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still," etc. —

Of the same date there is extant another letter

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He assumes that it was written to Spalatin in 1522. It was evidently written during the first days after Luther's arrival at Castle Wartburg, and judging from its contents must have been written to some person in Wittenberg. Prof. Hoppe suggests Melanchthon as the addressee on the ground that there was no need to counsel Spalatin to keep Luther's hiding place a secret. Spalatin, no doubt, had been party to the secret negotiations for Luther's removal. Koestlin states that it was Spalatin who facilitated the delivery of letters to and from Luther, while the latter was at the Castle. See vol. 1, 470.

5) "durch diesen Rath des Schweigens."

6) "galeritae;" the Cardinal is meant.

TO MELANCTHON.<sup>7)</sup>

To Philip Melancthon, evangelist of the church at Wittenberg, my exceedingly dear brother in Christ:—

Jesus.

Grace! Well, what are you doing meanwhile, my dear Philip? Are you not praying that this retirement, to which I have reluctantly consented, may achieve some greater end for the glory of God? I also wish to know very much how you like this state of affairs. I was afraid that I might be regarded as a deserter from the line of battle, and yet, there was no way open to me for resisting those who desired and advised this plan. I wish for nothing more than to meet the rage of our adversaries and to offer my neck to them.

While I am sitting here, I place before my eyes all day long the condition of the Church, and I see, in the eighty-ninth Psalm, this saying (v. 48): "Wherefore hast Thou made all men in vain?" My God! what a frightful image is the abominable dominion of the Roman antichrist! And I abhor my callousness, because I am not altogether dissolved in tears, "weeping with my fountains of tears for the slain of the daughter of my people," Jer. 9, 1. But on this last day of His anger "there is none that stirreth up himself to take hold of God," Is. 64, 7, or that should "make up the hedge, and stand in the gap for the house of Israel," Ezek. 22, 30; 13, 5. Oh, a papal kingdom meet, indeed, for the end and the dregs of the world! God have mercy on us!

Wherefore, being a servant of the Word, you should meanwhile continue fortifying the walls and towers of Jerusalem, until they shall attack you too. You know your calling and your gifts. I am praying for you especially, in the hope that

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7) St. L. Ed. XV, 2513. This letter is found in Cod. Jen. a, fol. 118. It is printed in Aurifaber, vol. 1, fol. 324, in Strobel-Rammer, p. 16, in Schuetze, vol. 2, p. 206, however, incomplete, without the name of the addressee, and placed among the letters from Castle Coburg of the year 1530; in De Wette, vol. 2, p. 1, and in the Erlang. Corresp., vol. 3, p. 148.



my prayer (as I doubt not!) may somewhat avail. Do the same for me, and let us jointly bear this burden. We are left standing alone in the line of battle; after me they will seek to lay hold of you also.

Spalatin writes me that there is in press an edict<sup>8)</sup> so cruel, that they will begin to search every man in the world, on peril of his conscience, for my books. By this edict they will soon work their own ruin. Their Rehoboam at Dresden<sup>9)</sup> rejoices and is eager to execute the edict. They say that the Emperor was also importuned to write the King of Denmark, requesting him not to receive the remnants of the Lutheran heresy, and they are chanting the well-known strain, Ps. 41, 6: "When shall he die, and his name perish?"

Hartmann Kronenberg<sup>10)</sup> has given the Emperor notice that he has quitted his service, for which he was to receive a

8) This refers to the imperial edict issued at Worms May 8, 1521, by which the papal bull of excommunication was confirmed, Luther declared to be diabolically possessed and outlawed, and his abettors charged with the crime of lese majesty, and all their chattels and goods forfeited to their captors after May 14.

9) Duke George of Saxony.

10) Hartmuth von Kronberg, or Cronenberg, a town in the Duchy of Nassau, situated at the foot of the Taunus Mountains, had openly espoused the cause of Luther, had addressed a letter full of burning indignation to Pope Leo X, had urged the inhabitants of Kronberg, with him, to repent of their sins, and to believe the Gospel, had induced and strengthened the city clerk at Oppenheim, Jacob Kohl, to embrace Luther's teaching, and had entered, since March, 1522, into a correspondence with Luther. On March 16, 1522, he nailed to the main gate of the city of Frankfurt a placard addressed to the inhabitants, warning them against "the false prophets and wolves;" he particularly assailed Peter Meyer, the parish priest at St. Bartholomew's, for attempting to suppress Luther's doctrine. In the style of the military parlance of that day, this bold Christian knight drew up articles of agreement between the King of Heaven, his Captain Jesus Christ, and himself, stipulating the terms of service to which he bound himself, in chivalrous faith, to engage in field-duty for his Lord. Every way this Hessian nobleman is one of the most congenial figures of the day, bold, aggressive, yet without that wanton impetuosity of knightly valor which in more than one instance spoiled undertakings in behalf of the Reformation. His zeal was not tainted by carnal or secular motives; he took his stand simply on Gospel ground.

salary of 200 guilders in gold,<sup>11)</sup> because he is loath to serve one who will listen to such impious people. I believe that the upshot will be that this edict will rage nowhere except in the dominions of this Rehoboam and your other neighbor,<sup>12)</sup> who are both afflicted with vaingloriousness. God lives and reigns to eternity! Amen.

The Lord has smitten me with great pain in the rectum. I am so costive, that my stool is forced from me only with great effort, causing nervous perspiration, and the longer I delay the harder it becomes. Yesterday, after four days, I had the first evacuation. For this reason I have not slept all night, and I am still restless. Do pray for me. For if this affliction is to go on as it has begun, it will become unbearable.

The Cardinal at Salzburg has joined Ferdinand on his nuptial journey to Innsbruck the day before St. Philip and St. James,<sup>13)</sup> which was four days after our departure.<sup>14)</sup> It is rumored that Ferdinand was not pleased with his companion, nor the Emperor, as Spalatin writes me. However, you may read his letter yourself. Be sure to write me all that is happening among you, and how everybody is. Godspeed to you and yours!

Exaudi Sunday,<sup>15)</sup> 1521, in the realm of birds.

Your

MARTIN LUTHER.

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*(To be continued.)*

11) This was the annual salary in consideration of which he, together with his friend Sickingen, had agreed to enter the Emperor's service.

12) The Elector Joachim of Brandenburg.

13) April 30.

14) Luther left Worms April 26.

15) May 12.