MARTIN LUTHER

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the course Reformation #502b
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March 4, 1988

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE TIMES OF MARTIN LUTHER..... 1

THE LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER..... 3

THE DOCTRINES OF MARTIN LUTHER..... 8

THE CHARACTER OF MARTIN LUTHER..... 10

THE CONFLICTS (DEFECTS) OF MARTIN LUTHER..... 12

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MARTIN LUTHER..... 16

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 18

THE TIMES OF MARTIN LUTHER

The times surrounding the life of Martin Luther provided a vacuum waiting to be filled. Europe was "ripe" for a reformation as numerous changes were taking place coupled with widespread unrest. In many respects this time period could be summed up with the word "new". There were new methods for commerce, new discoveries were being made (ex. Columbus 1492), New industries were begun which brought in new roads and new transportation systems. Improved living standards, the freedom of the peasants, the rise of capitalism, the invention of printing (Gutenburg - 1450), increasing population, social revolutions (autonomous aristocratic cities), a decline of feudalism, and a nationalistic spirit also paved the way for the "reformation".

However, the major catalyst for change leading to a religious reformation was the power (Papal control), secularization (Church involvement with the State), and absolute corruption (Godless practice) of the Roman Catholic Church. Superstition and mysticism were undeniably evident in the number of indulgences sold and by the enormous number of relics that were collected and worshipped. By 1520 it is estimated that there were 19,013 "holy" pieces on display. Included were such "remarkable" relics as the bones of Peter, a veil sprinkled with the blood of Christ, a twig from Moses' burning bush, and a piece of bread from the Last Supper"[1] Spiritual fear and uncertainty prompted many to view the collected "relics on all Saint's Day and make required contributions and in turn receive from the pope an indulgence that would reduce time spent in purgatory - either by themselves or others - by up to 1,902,202 years and 270 days"[2]

Great intellectual changes were also occurring in the times of Luther. Townsmen became thinkers, which led to an independent study of the Biblical text. Scholasticism ("Christian" philosophy) was on the up-rise, with Platonic realism, Aristotle's Nominalism and Erasmus' religious humanism, all seeking "truth" & "reality" in life. Men such as John Wycliffe (1320-1384), John Huss (1369-1415), and Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) cried out against the heresies of the Roman Church and preached God's word fearlessly.

During this time of dark history, a few brief sparks of reform were made evident by harassed dissenters, and by men such as the "Christian Humanist" Erasmus, who longed to see the Roman

1 William R. Estep, "Renaissance and Reformation," (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdman's Pub. Co., 1986), p.117.

2 Estep, p.117

Church cleansed not destroyed. It was Martin Luther, however, who ignited the reformation of the 16th. century.

THE LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER

Martin Luther was born in Eisleben on November 10, 1483 and was infant baptized (sprinkled) a day later. His father Hans Luder, came from a peasant background, however, after years of struggle and hard work he achieved success and modest prosperity in the mining industry. This success made him able to afford an excellent education and expensive books for his son. Luther received a typical late-medieval Catholic education which had a emphasis on Latin grammar, and classical and moral authors.

In his spiritual training he learned to trust in the Apostles, Saints, and Mary as mediators leading to salvation. At age 13 Luther was sent to Magdeburg to learn composition (rhetoric and logic). Here he learned Humanism as he sat under the Brethren of the Common Life, as well as piety and loyalty to the Church. Luther completed his early education at Eisenach in 1498, and then his father - Hans Luther wanted him to be a lawyer. Consequently Hans send his son to the University of Erfurt in 1501. This school had the highest reputation among German universities and was very expensive! The university was permeated with the nominalism of William of Ockham (1280-1349) and Gabriel Biel (d.1495), which challenged the realism of Aquinas. Here Luther learned Aristotelian logic, metaphysics, ethics and physics of his day and received a B.A. degree in 1502, and a M.A. in 1505.

At his father's request Luther entered law school in the summer of 1505. Being troubled about pursuing this field, he went home to visit and returned on July 2.

A couple of major events in Luther's life led him to change his direction:

> "Two close friends of his had died, and he had almost died when his dagger ran through its worn scabbard and severed an artery in his leg. But the occasion that triggered his final decision was the thunderstorm that overtook him on the road from Stotternheim to Erfurt. A nearby stroke of lightning sent him sprawling, and in the moment of terror he made a vow: `Save me, Saint Ann, and I will become a monk!' A bolt of lightning was the sure sign of the Judgment of God - every German knew this."[3]

When Luther's Father heard of his son's alteration of plans he was furious and did not consent to the move until two of his sons had died of the plague and a false letter came to him telling of Martin's death. Luther entered the Erfurt monastery led by Johann von Staupitz, who

3 Estep, p.114.

was known for his rigid discipline and kindness. Martin entered the monastery seeking to find God and salvation, but despite his most strenuous efforts, he found neither. He exhausted all the means the Roman Church had to offer to relieve a burdened conscience, but all to no avail. He spent hour upon hour in the confessional admitting to all the sins he could remember, but he was never sure he had confessed them all. Finally he declared that he did not love God but rather hated Him.[4]

Sometime after Luther received his first Theological degree "he was sent to Rome on monastic business. In his reflections of later years, he attributed great significance to that trip. The Rome that he had presumed to be the epitome of spiritual splendor had turned out to be terribly worldly".[5] When Luther entered Rome he saw nothing but paganism. His soul found no ringing affirmation of faith - but rather doubt. Luther, like Isaiah, discovered himself to be a sinner in the midst of sinners. In retrospect he said: "I went with onions and left with garlic".

Ever since entering the monastery, Luther became preoccupied with the question of his own salvation. He was unaffected by his monastic vows in 1506 which included "remission of the guilt and punishment for sins", and became more and more distressed with the enormity of his sins and his inability to satisfy a righteous God. By 1507 Martin Luther was ordained to the priesthood, celebrated mass and served in the monastery--none of which provided peace to his inner conflict and personal sin. He followed monastic life in every detail and later wrote: "If ever a monk got to heaven by monkery, I would have gotten there."

Luther testified: "I was myself a monk for twenty years and so plagued myself with prayers, fastings, wakings, and freezings that I almost died of the cold".[6] At the suggestion of his new friend, Staupitz, Luther set aside the theological books and turned to the study of the Bible.

Staupitz showed him great kindness and greatly influenced him with his wisdom and humility. As his "spiritual father" Staupitz taught Luther that "true repentance" consists not in self-imposed penances and punishments, but in a "change of heart". (Staupitz remained an "evangelical" within the Catholic Church, contributing discipline and piety in the some way Erasmus contributed scholarship and illumination).

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4 Estep, p.115.

5 Mircea Eliade, (ed.). The Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol.9(Macmillan Pub. Co. N.Y.,1987), p.58.

6 E. G. Schwiebert, Luther and His Times: The Reformation from a New Perspective, (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950), p.150.

Luther followed the advice of Staupitz and continued to study the Pauline epistles, pondering them day and night. When Luther was forced to grapple with the book of Romans, he found difficulty with the very first chapter, because he persisted in superimposing upon Paul his own medieval concept of God. Luther with his hermeneutical block could see nothing but an angry God. However, his passionate desire to know the truth led him to begin to comprehend two key expressions - "the righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel" and "the just shall live by faith". With this new comprehension Luther finally could say: "now I felt exactly as though I had been born again. As violently as I had formerly hated the expression "righteousness of God", so I was now as violently compelled to embrace the new concept of grace and, thus, for me, the expression of the Apostle really opened the gates of paradise." Luther finally discovered that Christ died for the sinner, not for sins in the abstract. What the Church and its sacramental system had failed to do for Luther, the Scriptures did!

The first academic courses that Luther taught were on Psalms (1513-1515), Romans (1515-1516), Galatians (1516-1517), and Hebrews (1517-1518).

> "His lecture notes, which have been analyzed intensively, chronicle his theological development: his shift from the traditional exegetical method, his increasing concentration on questions of sin, grace, and righteousness, his preoccupation with Augustine of Hippo, and last but by no means least - his alienation from scholastic theology"[7]

By this time in Luther's life he became indignant with the Roman Catholic Church's sale of indulgences. In response he wrote his famous protest against the scandals of the indulgence traffic - his Ninety-Five Theses. These writings virtually went unnoticed until he began to attack the dangers of indulgences in 1516. He strongly condemned them and said that they encouraged sin and promoted lies about supposed efficacy that reduced time spent in purgatory. Tradition has it that he nailed his Ninety-five Theses (written in Latin) on the doors of the Castle Church on the eve of All Saints Day, October 31, 1517. The controversy caused by these writings brought about polemics from Rome, tracts and treatise, blunt and subtle attempts to silence him, a debate with Johann Eck at Leipzig (1519), and an interview with Cardinal Cajetan in Augsburg (1519).

7 Eliade, p.58.

The year 1520 marked the appearance of some of Luther's most important reformatory writings which revealed the Catholic Church as she really was. In June 1520 the papal bull "Exsurge Domine" (Arise, O Lord) condemned forty-one sentences from Luther's writings as "Heretical, offensive, erroneous, scandalous for pious ears, corrupting for simple minds and contradictory to Catholic teaching." Luther was given sixty days to recant. His response, however, was to burn the bull in a public spectacle on December 10, 1520. In response to this Luther was excommunicated on January 3, 1521.[8]

In April of the next year (1521) Luther stood before the emperor and the estates of the empire in the Diet of Worms, declining to recant unless overcome by Scripture. Taken to Wartburg Castle by order of Frederick the Wise, elector of Saxony, Luther had the opportunity to continue his writings and especially to translate the N.T. from Greek into German (the "September Testament" of 1522). The translation of the entire Bible was completed in 1534.

Although condemned by the Edict of Worms and declared an outlaw, Luther returned to Wittenburg in March 1522 to cope with the Wittenburg Movement, braking its "radical" direction, and attempting to assure his idea of a conservative reformed church.

Up until 1523 Luther's controversies mainly centered on the pagan Roman Church. Following this, however, Luther was to break with Erasmus over the issue of man's will (Luther holding that it was not free but in bondage). He later broke from Zwingli of Zurich over the matter of the Lord's Supper.

In 1525 Luther married Katharina von Bora, a former nun who had left her convent the previous year. Luther, who had expressed a commitment to the celibate life, finally had a change of heart and gave three reasons why: 1) He wished to please his father, 2) He desired to spite the pope, and 3) He wanted to give "Katie" a name before he died. Luther's marriage was important, because it became something of a symbol for the new attitude of the reforming clergy toward marriage. His marriage provided "an attractive model for Protestant family life."[9] His family life is noted by many historians as a happy one. His home was a gathering place of friends and students, and the voluminous Table Talk was recorded by at least ten students between 1531 and

8 Eliade, p.59.

9 Estep, p.147.

1544. This book records many facets about Martin Luther and his beliefs that many pro-Lutherites blush at.

Luther died of a heart attack in the town in which he was born (Eisleben) while on a mission to reconcile the princes of Anhaldt (February 18, 1546). The history of Luther's life is not simply the history of the professor of Wittenberg. He was the leader of the movement that spread through much of Germany and the Scandinavian countries.

THE DOCTRINES OF MARTIN LUTHER

Although Luther's theology was somewhat clouded and unclear in its definition and application toward the end of his life, he basically held to three pervading principles. His theology summed up involved the principle of justification by faith, the priesthood of believers, and the three "solas" (sola scriptura - scripture alone, sola fides - faith alone, and sola gratia - grace alone). In his theological theses, Luther set forth the major themes of his new evangelical theology. He believed that the Law did not save, he claimed it condemns. Luther argued that man's will is not free but enslaved to sin. He also proposed that "good works" are futile, because man can do nothing good of himself.[10] Luther, especially in his early ministry, strived to place good works in their proper context of justification by faith. He proclaimed that it is "not that the righteous (justified) person does nothing, but that his works do not make him righteous, rather that his righteousness creates works."[11]

One of Luther's major tenets, though he was not always consistent in his application of it, was his conviction that the Bible was the "supreme authority". In holding this position he rejected, for example, the claims of the Zwickau prophets, who said that God spoke through the Holy Spirit in visions and dreams with revelation superior than that of the Bible."[12] Luther's convictions in canonicity involved a rejection of two N.T. epistles that seemed contradictory to Paul's teaching on justification by grace alone; they were the epistles of James and Jude. Luther's hermeneutic was one arrived at with difficulty, because he lived in a day in which most theologians forced their own theological presuppositions into the text. In spite of this pressure which no doubt had its effect on Luther, he insisted that Scripture be interpreted by Scripture. Luther for the most part was committed to the principle of grammatico-historical interpretation, and would not even consider a theological argument apart from Scripture. In his dispute with Dr. Eck when wearied by his habit of quoting Scripture out of context, he said with disgust: "I grieve that the Holy Doctor penetrates the Scriptures as profoundly as a water spider the water; in fact, he flees from them as the Devil from the cross. Therefore, with all reverence for the Fathers, I prefer the authority of the Scriptures."[13]

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10 James Atkinson, (trans. & ed.), Luther: Early Theological Works, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p.277.
11 Atkinson, p.293.
12 Estep, p.140-141.
13 Schwiebert, p.238.

Luther in his doctrinal position opposed papal mediation, countering it with the basic Biblical concept of the priesthood of believers. Along these lines he believed in "soul liberty" saying paradoxically that "a Christian is subject to none...yet he is a dutiful servant of all."[14] He also attacked the entire Roman Catholic sacramental system, with its seven sacraments. He showed his distinctive theology regarding the Mass by denying transubstantiation, and the Mass as a sacrifice. However, Luther still held to a modified version of Catholic teaching, by advocating a "real presence" of Christ in the bread and wine.

Luther apparently at one time believed that immersion was the primitive mode of baptism, but evidently abandoned its practice after he had immersed his first son - Hans. While Luther was careful never to divorce "faith" from salvation, he erred in linking faith to baptism as a means of appropriating salvation.

> "According to the Augsburg Confession, salvation is offered in baptism, but personal appropriation of the salvation comes only through faith, in the conversion and surrender to God. Luther himself, as regards to the doctrine of baptism, in the second half of his development, could not free himself from the leaven of Catholicism. Through this the Reformation lost its full fruit, and not long after Luther's death fell into an external formalism."[15]

Luther also reduced the "sacraments" to two and thus defined the empirical church (universal church) as present "where the Word is preached and the sacraments are properly observed."

14 Estep, p.130.

15 Johannes Warns, Baptism, (Minneapolis: James & Klock Pub. Co., 1957), p.161.

THE CHARACTER OF MARTIN LUTHER

Hans Luder, Martin's father, appears prominently in Luther's later recollections as having a stern and oppressive presence. Some historians believe that his son's development was significantly affected by his example.[16] As a reformer, Luther had several admirable characteristics. He had an appreciation for scholarship, as evident in his careful exegesis of Scripture and his study of Augustine. Luther was gifted with a vigorous and creative mind. In his debates he displayed an amazing ability to recall from memory vast amounts of material. He was also a man of honesty and sincerity. Even as a monk he sought to know the true God in a genuine manner, while in the midst of a medieval maze of error, and after his conversion his commitment to the truth he embraced was transparent for all to see. This honesty was evident during the Leipzig Disputation in 1519. Luther, knowing full well that his opponents viewed John Huss as an arch "heretic", when hard pressed about his opinions of Huss, said that he was not wrong in all of his doctrine as accused.[17] Luther was a man of courage especially in his younger years, as evidenced by his willingness to deviate from the plans his father had made for him and as seen in his bold stand against the sale of indulgences by the Roman church.

Whether right or wrong, Luther made his position and convictions known. He declared his conviction that the Bible was the Christian's supreme authority. He was very bold in his disputation against scholastic theology, consisting of ninety-seven theses in which he attacked Aquinas, Aristotle, Duns Scotus, Ockham, and Biel. Luther, unintimidated by Cardinal Cajetan, boldly said: "I deny that the Pope is above Scripture. His Holiness abuses Scripture!"[18]

It is believed by some historians that Luther's refusal to compromise his convictions and stand at the Diet of Worms (1521) was the finest scene in human history."[19]

Luther's boldness in making his opinions obviously known was evident in his reaction to the bull of excommunication issued by Pope Leo X. When this document (which condemned Luther as a heretic) was received, the students and professors in Wittenberg led by Luther made a festival occasion of it. They built a huge bonfire and threw the bull of excommunication into it, along

16 Eliade, p.57.
17 Estep, p.127.
18 Bainton, Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959), p.91.
19 Estep, p.130.

with copies of false decretals, and some of Eck's works saying: "Since they have burned my books, I burn theirs"[20]

20 Bainton, p.166.

THE CONFLICTS (DEFECTS) OF MARTIN LUTHER

There is little that one can say about Luther without fear of contradiction. He is an enigma difficult to figure out. There is no doubt that the "old Luther" was different in many ways than the "young Luther". Although the vast majority of historical studies (primarily - pro-Luther) deal exclusively with the events through 1530, Luther did not die at the closing of the Imperial Diet of Augsburg as most biographers are content to present it. On the contrary, he lived another fifteen years, dying of heart failure on February 18,1546, at the age of sixty-two. What did Luther believe and do in these latter years? Why are these years such a mystery?

It is known that in Luther's latter years he participated fully in several very bitter controversies. "In some of the treatises, Luther apparently retreated from positions of principle established earlier in his career. Some of the later polemics were so violent and vulgar that they offended contemporaries and remain offensive to this day."[21] Examples of verbal abuse are seen in his anti-Jewish treatises, and his vulgar name calling directed toward the Roman church. Some historians seek to justify Luther's contradictions and polemical excesses to the new pressures that impinged on him in his later years coupled with his age and extremely poor health. Some even say that at this point in life he suffered mental illness, acute senility and was a manic-depressive.[22] Some have said that "by middle age Luther, with his digestive and plumbing systems misused and messed up, seemed resigned to death. Just before death he could joke about `giving the worms a fat doctor on which to feed.'"[23]

Luther is called by some "the man of contradiction", the "roving planet" who moved between "yes" and "no" on many issues. For example, "the Reformer who said `yes' to the aggrieved peasants and encouraged their cause, feared anarchy so much that he turned on them and was left with their blood on his hands."[24]

Luther who had considered Zwingli's part in the Execution of the Anabaptists "barbarian", being dead set against the use of the sword in defending the faith, eventually reneged on this conviction as expressed in his own words:

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21 Mark U. Edwards, Jr., Luther's Last Battles, (Concordia Theological Quarterly, Vol. 48, April-July, 1984), p.126.
22 Edwards, p.128.
23 Martin E. Marty, A Man of Grand Contradictions, (Christianity Today, Oct.21, 1983), p.9.
24 Marty, p.8.

> "The secular authority has the sword, with command that it shall restrain all scandal, that it shall not spread or do damage. But it is the most dangerous and dreadful scandal when false doctrine and an improper Divine worship are spread."[25]

In October 31, 1531, Melanchthon (Luther's close & influential friend) wrote:

> "As touching the Anabaptists, we have pronounced the following sentence: Because they form a devilish sect, they are not to be suffered, for they disrupt the churches, and yet themselves have no certain doctrine. This sect is therefore nothing else than a distraction to the churches, especially because they openly reject the clerical office. We have therefore decided that in various places the death-sentence shall be pronounced on the ringleaders."[26]

While Martin Luther left the Roman Catholic Church, Luther's beliefs about the "sacraments" of Communion and Baptism reveal that the Roman Catholic Church never left him. In response to Karlstadt's scriptural reforms to the "mass" Luther in 1521 confronted him about his "radicalism", and speedily restored the Roman mass (with the exception of the references to "sacrifice"). While Karlstadt rejected the idea of "real presence" Luther defended it, resorting to a philosophical argument based on the concept of the "ubiquity of Christ".[27] When Luther and Zwingli squared off for a debate on October 2, 1529 called the Marburg Colloquy, Luther called Zwingli's views of the "eucharist" "heretical". Although they both rejected the miracle of transubstantiation and the mass as a sacrifice, they disagreed on the doctrine of the "real presence". Before the discussion began, Luther wrote in chalk on the table in the great banquet room "This is my body", which he interpreted literally. Zwingli, in contrast, set forth his memorial view and translated the phrase "This signifies my body".[28]

With the rejection of churches made up of only believers went the rejection of believer's baptism. Luther did entertain the

possibility of implementing it, but he was restrained by his pessimistic appraisal of the common man's response:

> "If from now on only adults and older people were to be baptized, I venture to assert that not more than a tenth of our people would allow themselves to be

25 Warns, p.173.
26 Warns, p.179.
27 Estep, p.140.
28 Estep, p.150.

baptized."[29]

In both Communion and Infant Baptism, Luther believed that participants needed to have faith if the "sacrament" was to convey the grace of God. Thus infant faith was necessary for infant baptism:

> "If we cannot prove that young children do themselves believe and have faith of their own, I should forthwith counsel that at once we let off this practice, the sooner the better and never again baptize another infant in order that we may not mock and blaspheme the adorable majesty of God by such nonsensical and magical work."[30]

Estep even admits that Luther "in his later years placed less emphasis on faith and more on the necessity of baptism for salvation."[31]

Luther's change in his later life makes the task difficult to summarize his often contradictory writings. Either his views changed or his terminology did, but change is evident none-the-less.

Whereas earlier Luther appealed solely to Scripture for his authority, later he became the sole authority. Whereas formerly he taught the sole liberty of the believer, toward the end of his life he violently opposed anyone who didn't agree with him. Whereas he once held to the church being independent from the state, he later called for a State Lutheran Church of which he was in a sense the pope.

Luther was a man who battled doubts. One time when his friend Justus Jonas wanted to cover some doubts by pointing to firm St. Paul, Luther countered, "I don't believe (Paul) believed as firmly as he talks. I cannot believe as firmly either, as I can talk or write about it."[32]

What is it that caused Luther to alter convictions? One suggestion that must be considered is the corrupting influence of his so called "friend" Melanchthon. "Evil communications do corrupt good manners." Melanchthon was a compromiser. One time for example, he skillfully tried to placate the emperor and the Roman Catholic theologians by condemning both the Zwinglians and the Anabaptists and by distinguishing the Lutherans from

29 Estep, p.157.
30 Muller, Church and State in Luther and Calvin: A Comparative Study (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), p.23.
31 Estep, p.158.
32 Marty, p.9.

those whom both Catholics and Lutherans considered "heretics". He also emphasized that they held with the Catholics "one faith, one Lord, and one baptism". His willingness to compromise even caused Philip of Hesse to remark, "Master Philip goes backward like a crab."[33]

A second question is: was Luther truly characteristic of the names the charismatic, radical Thomas Muntzer viciously called him? Did he compare to the names "Brother Fattened Swine" or "Brother Soft Lie" and did he really preach a "sweet sinful Jesus" instead of "the cross" and a "bitter Christ" as his opponent charged? In viewing his overall life and the overall thrust of his message and ministry the answer would have to be "no".

Luther was a man with "feet of clay", he clearly had doubts, ambiguities, and other flaws, but the contributions he made to the cause of Christ (though limited) cannot be overlooked.

33 Estep, p.152.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MARTIN LUTHER

Many who seek to demonstrate that Martin Luther never really was converted (saved), fail to understand the times in which he lived and the forces and pressures he needed to stand against. "Luther's theology was born in suffering, nurtured in doubt, and tested in terror."[34] With this understanding one can appreciate the contributions that Martin Luther did make.

By September 1522 Luther, using the second edition of the Greek N.T. by Erasmus and the Latin Vulgate, had succeeded in seeing through the press his German translation of the N.T. It is said that Luther, being a master of his native tongue, actually created the modern German language by his translation.[35] Finally Luther turned to the translation of the O.T. It came out in bits and pieces, and eventually, by 1534, Luther had translated the entire Bible. The translation of the Bible into German had "world-shaking" importance and is noted as "Luther's noblest achievement."[36]

Luther's antagonists severely criticized his translation, pointing out that he had inserted words that were not in the Greek or Latin texts. For example they cited Romans 3:28, that had the added word "alone" inserted ("a man is justified by faith alone, apart from the works of the Law"). Luther pointed out that while the word "alone" was not in the Greek, the meaning was. While Luther was intent on translating meaning, not merely words (to make it understandable to the common man), he was not unaware of the translator's responsibility to be true to the biblical text, and for this reason he explained:

> "I have not disregarded literal meanings too freely, but with my helpers, I have been very careful to see that when a passage is important, I have kept the literal meaning, and not departed freely from it."[37]

While Luther's enemies pronounced that "his books are to be eradicated from the memory of man"[38], it is a fact that his writings have lived on.

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34 Marty, p.9.

35 Estep, p.137.

36 Bainton, p.326.

37 J. D. Douglas (ed.) The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1978), p.610.

38 Bainton, p.189.

While Zwingli refused to use music in worship, Luther saw the immense potential music held for evangelical worship. As early as 1523 he began to collect hymns and psalms for a hymnbook that was published in 1524. Luther also composed music and wrote the lyrics. Among the most famous is "A Mighty Fortress is our God."

In composing his hymns, Luther used the "contractual technique" by borrowing or imitating secular folk tunes, and providing them with new lyrics. Luther loved music so much that he ranked it second only to theology as evident in his words:

> "I am not ashamed to confess publicly that next to theology, there is no art which is the equal of music, for she alone, after theology, can do what otherwise only theology can accomplish, namely, quiet and cheer-up the soul of man, which is clear evidence that the devil, the originator of depressing worries and troubled thoughts, flees from the voice of music just as he flees from the words of theology."[39]

Martin Luther was instrumental in re-introducing many novel benefits to the Christian Church. He stirred up the thinking of many believers; he aided in the reconstruction of family life by the influence of his own marriage; he introduced congregational singing; he put the Bible into the language of the people; and because of his transition from the altar to the pulpit, he set a pattern and became a model for many preachers in the years that followed.

Martin Luther, (1483-1546), has gone down in history known as the "German Theologian" and "Reformer of the Christian Church". He was a man of great potential, and remarkable achievement. However, he was a man who could have been used in a much greater way if he had faithfully sold out <u>all</u> to his Lord, and submitted in every area to the Scriptures. If he had only learned to "come out from, and be separate" instead of constructing a "reformed" version of the Roman Catholic Church, God only knows <u>what could have been</u>.

39 Estep, p.153.

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