May 2019

Dear Rising Ninth Graders:

Ah, the sweet respite of summer: sun, fun, and exciting destinations.
I invite you to join me on a fantastic voyage this summer…

There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers like a page
Of prancing poetry.

This traverse may the poorest take
Without oppress of toll;
How frugal is the chariot
That bears a human soul!

~ Emily Dickinson

In the 9th grade you will embark on a literary journey alongside medieval heroes such as Beowulf, Sir Gawain, and Roland. You will examine what it means to be a great leader,

and marvel at what makes a great story. Before you venture out with these courageous liegemen, however, you must undergo training in the code of chivalry. To introduce you to these ideals, you will read part I of *The Once and Future King*. After reading, you will complete the attached assignment. I look forward to hearing about your adventures when we return in August.

Have a restful and relaxing summer!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Maravilla

~Hic iacet Arthurus, rex quondam, rexque futurus~
Here lies Arthur, king once, and king to be.

Reading Assignment – *The Sword in the Stone* Journal Page

As you read *The Sword in the Stone*, put yourself in the Wart's shoes. When you finish reading, choose the transformation you find most important in preparing the Wart to become a king. Create a journal page about this transformation from the Wart's perspective following these directions:

- Your journal entry should be on 8.5"x11" paper. You may be as creative as you wish in paper choice.
- Write your journal entry in first person as though you are the Wart, telling about the transformation and how it changed you. Your journal entry should be at least one page in length.
- You will need to use inference to write the journal entry. That is, you should describe Wart's thoughts and feelings about the transformation, even though these may not be included in the book. Your inferences always should be based on actual events, descriptions, or conversations from the text. Do not make up events, characters, etc.
- Grab the reader's attention. Use interesting adjectives and strong verbs, and above all, correct grammar and punctuation.
- If you choose, you may include mementos, drawings, etc., in your journal, but not as a substitute for thoughtful writing.
- Strive for neatness and creativity.

Please bring your completed journal and be prepared to present it on the first day of class. Also, please look over the attached rubric, which explains how I will grade the journal assignment. This assignment will count as your first test grade in my class.

I look forward to seeing your work!

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions:

Mrs. Maravilla
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The Sword in the Stone – Journal Rubric

Grading Rubric

Grading Category		Score
Length/Organization (20 points)	Entry is one page in length. Student gives information in the correct order and shows logical thought progression.	
Content (30 points)	Entry lists specific events, but is not limited to plot summary; student draws inferences based on the text.	
Spelling/Grammar (10 points)	Entry has few if any spelling or grammar errors.	
Creativity – Writing (20 points)	Entry has many details and descriptive elements.	
Creativity – Appearance (20 points)	Journal page reflects student's creative effort in decoration and /or illustration.	

Geneva Classical Academy – Summer Reading
World History – 9th Grade

Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther – Roland H. Bainton

The Ninety-Five Theses – Martin Luther

Most historians date the beginning of the Protestant Reformation to 1517 when Martin Luther tacked his *Ninety-Five Theses* to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. This is a copy of the first four chapters of Roland H. Bainton's *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* and of Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses*. These four chapters detail Luther's life up to 1517 and the advent of his *Ninety-Five Theses*.

Write an essay in response to the reading. Your essay should be typed, double-spaced, and a minimum of one page in length. In your essay, answer the following questions:

What leads Luther to become a monk?

Why does Luther have a difficult relationship with his father?

Why, after becoming a monk, is Luther so unsatisfied with his life and, in particular, his relationship with God?

Why does Luther so fear God? Why does he go so far as to say that at one point, even during his time as a monk, he *hated* God?

Luther tries at least three ways to make his relationship right with God. What are his methods, and why don't they work?

What happens that radically changes his view of God and his relationship with God?

What are some aspects of the Church that anger Luther?

What is Luther's primary purpose in his *Ninety-Five Theses*?

Was Luther right to make his stand against the Church? Why or why not?

Would you have made the same stand? Why or why not?

Take your time and thoughtfully answer these questions. Your essay should be logical, well-written, and cohesive. Be sure that you draw specific examples from the text to support your claims.

If you just love the book and can't live without finishing it, I will be happy to get the rest of it to you.

Enjoy your summer and your summer reading!

Mr. Strawbridge

Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther
By
Roland H. Bainton

CHAPTER ONE - THE VOW

ON A SULTRY DAY in July of the year 1505 a lonely traveler was trudging over a parched road on the outskirts of the Saxon village of Stotternheim. He was a young man, short but sturdy, and wore the dress of a university student. As he approached the village, the sky became overcast. Suddenly there was a shower, then a crashing storm. A bolt of lightning rived the gloom and knocked the man to the ground. Struggling to rise, he cried in terror, "St. Anne help me! I will become a monk."

The man who thus called upon a saint was later to repudiate the cult of the saints. He who vowed to become a monk was later to renounce monasticism. A loyal son of the Catholic Church, he was later to shatter the structure of medieval Catholicism. A devoted servant of the pope, he was later to identify the popes with Antichrist. For this young man was Martin Luther.

His demolition was the more devastating because it reinforced disintegrations already in progress. Nationalism was in process of breaking the political unities when the Reformation destroyed the religious. Yet this paradoxical figure revived the Christian consciousness of Europe. In his day, as Catholic historians all agree, the popes of the Renaissance were secularized, flippant, frivolous, sensual, magnificent, and unscrupulous. The intelligentsia did not revolt against the Church because the Church was so much of their mind and mood as scarcely to warrant a revolt. Politics were emancipated from any concern for the faith to such a degree that the Most Christian King of France and His Holiness the Pope did not disdain a military alliance with the Sultan against the Holy Roman Emperor. Luther changed all this. Religion became again a dominant factor even in politics for another century and a half. Men cared enough for the faith to die for it and to kill for it. If there is any sense remaining of Christian civilization in the West, this man Luther in no small measure deserves the credit.

Very naturally he is a controversial figure. The multitudinous portrayals fall into certain broad types already delineated in his own generation. His followers hailed him as the prophet of the Lord and the deliverer of Germany. His opponents on the Catholic side called him the son of perdition and the demolisher of Christendom. The agrarian agitators branded him as the sycophant of the princes, and the radical sectaries compared him to Moses, who led the children of Israel out of Egypt and left them to perish in the wilderness. But such judgments belong to an epilogue rather than a prologue. The first endeavor must be to understand the man.

One will not move far in this direction unless one recognizes at the outset that Luther was above all else a man of religion. The great outward crises of his life which bedazzle the eyes of dramatic biographers were to Luther himself trivial in comparison with the inner upheavals of his questing after God. For that reason this study may appropriately begin with his first acute religious crisis in 1505 rather than with his birth in 1483. Childhood and youth will be drawn upon only to explain the entry into the monastery.

AT HOME AND SCHOOL

The vow requires interpretation because even at this early point in Luther's career judgments diverge. Those who deplore his subsequent repudiation of the vow explain his defection on the ground that he ought never to have taken it. Had he ever been a true monk, he would not have abandoned the cowl. His critique of monasticism is made to recoil upon himself in that he is painted as a monk without vocation, and the vow is interpreted, not as a genuine call, but rather as the resolution of an inner conflict, an escape from maladjustment at home and at school.

A few sparse items of evidence are adduced in favor of this explanation. They are not of the highest reliability because they are all taken from the conversation of the older Luther as recorded, often

inaccurately, by his students; and even if they are genuine, they cannot be accepted at face value because the Protestant Luther was no longer in a position to recall objectively the motives of his Catholic period. Really there is only one saying which connects the taking of the cowl with resentment against parental discipline. Luther is reported to have said, "My mother caned me for stealing a nut, until the blood came. Such strict discipline drove me to the monastery, although she meant it well." This saying is reinforced by two others: "My father once whipped me so that I ran away and felt ugly toward him until he was at pains to win me back." "[At school] I was caned in a single morning fifteen times for nothing at all. I was required to decline and conjugate and hadn't learned my lesson."

Unquestionably the young were roughly handled in those days, and Luther may be correctly reported as having cited these instances in order to bespeak a more humane treatment, but there is no indication that such severity produced more than a flash of resentment. Luther was highly esteemed at home. His parents looked to him as a lad of brilliant parts who should become a jurist, make a prosperous marriage, and support them in their old age. When Luther became a Master of Arts, his father presented him with a copy of the *Corpus Juris* and addressed him no longer with the familiar *Du* but with the polite *Sie*. Luther always exhibited an extraordinary devotion to his father and was grievously disturbed over parental disapproval of his entry into the monastery. When his father died, Luther was too unnerved to work for several days. The attachment to the mother appears to have been less marked; but even of the thrashing he said that it was well intended, and he recalled affectionately a little ditty she used to sing:

If folk don't like you and me,
The fault with us is like to be.

The schools also were not tender, but neither were they brutal. The object was to impart a spoken knowledge of the Latin tongue. The boys did not resent this because Latin was useful the language of the Church, of law, diplomacy, international relations, scholarship, and travel. The teaching was by drill punctuated with the rod. One scholar, called a lupus or wolf, was appointed to spy on the others and report lapses into German. The poorest scholar in the
class every noon was given a donkey mask, hence called the *asinus*, which he wore until he caught another talking German. Demerits were accumulated and accounted for by birching at the end of the week. Thus one might have fifteen strokes on a single day.

But, despite all the severities, the boys did learn Latin and loved it. Luther, far from being alienated, was devoted to his studies and became highly proficient. The teachers were no brutes. One of them, Trebonius, on entering the classroom always bared his head in the presence of so many future burgomasters, chancellors, doctors, and regents. Luther respected his teachers and was grieved when they did not approve of his subsequent course.

Nor was he prevailingly depressed, but ordinarily rollicking, fond of music, proficient on the lute, and enamored of the beauty of the German landscape. How fair in retrospect was Erfurt! The woods came down to the fringes of the village to be continued by orchards and vineyards, and then the fields which supplied the dye industry of Germany with plantings of indigo, blue-flowered flax, and yellow saffron; and nestling within the brilliant rows lay
the walls, the gates, the steeples of many-spired Erfurt. Luther called her a new Bethlehem.

RELIGIOUS DISQUIET

Yet Luther was at times severely depressed, and the reason lay not in any personal frictions but in the malaise of existence intensified by religion. This man was no son of the Italian Renaissance, but a German born in remote Thuringia, where men of piety still reared churches with arches and spires straining after the illimitable. Luther was himself so much a gothic figure that his faith may be called the last great flowering of the religion of the Middle Ages. And he came from the most religiously conservative element of the population, the peasants. His father, Hans Luther, and his mother, Margaretta, were sturdy, stocky, swarthy German *Bauern*. They were not indeed actually engaged in the tilling of the soil because as a son without inheritance Hans had moved from the farm to the mines. In the bowels of the earth he had prospered with the help of St. Anne, the patroness of miners, until he had come to be the owner of half a dozen foundries; yet he was not unduly affluent, and his wife had still to go to the forest and drag home the wood. The

atmosphere of the family was that of the peasantry: rugged, rough, at times coarse, credulous, and devout. Old Hans prayed at the bedside of his son, and Margaretta was a woman of prayer.

Certain elements even of old German paganism were blended with Christian mythology in the beliefs of these untutored folk. For them the woods and winds and water were peopled by elves, gnomes, fairies, mermen and mermaids, sprites and witches. Sinister spirits would release storms, floods, and pestilence, and would seduce mankind to sin and melancholia. Luther's mother believed that they played such minor pranks as stealing eggs, milk, and butter; and Luther himself was never emancipated from such beliefs. "Many regions are inhabited," said he, "by devils. Prussia is full of them, and Lapland of witches. In my native country on the top of a high mountain called the Pubelsberg is a lake into which if a stone be thrown a tempest will arise over the whole region because the waters are the abode of captive demons."

The education in the schools brought no emancipation but rather reinforced the training of the home. In the elementary schools the children were instructed in sacred song. They learned by heart the *Sanctus*, the *Benedictus*, the *Agnus Dei*, and the *Confiteor*. They were trained to sing psalms and hymns. How Luther loved the *Magnificat*! They attended masses and vespers, and took part in the colorful processions of the holy days. Each town in which Luther went to school was full of churches and monasteries. Everywhere it was the same: steeples, spires, cloisters, priests, monks of the various orders, collections of relics, ringing of bells, proclaiming of indulgences, religious processions, cures at shrines. Daily at Mansfeld the sick were stationed beside a convent in the hope of cure at the tolling of the vesper bell. Luther remembered seeing a devil actually depart from one possessed.

The University of Erfurt brought no change. The institution at that time had not yet been invaded by Renaissance influences. The classics in the curriculum, such as Vergil, had always been favorites in the Middle Ages. Aristotelian physics was regarded as an exercise in thinking God's thoughts after him, and the natural explanations of earthquakes and thunderstorms did not preclude occasional direct divine causation. The studies all impinged on theology, and the Master's degree for which Luther was preparing for the law could have equipped him equally for the cloth. The entire training of home, school, and university was designed to instill fear of God and reverence for the Church.

In all this there is nothing whatever to set Luther off from his contemporaries, let alone to explain why later on he should have revolted against so much of medieval religion. There is just one respect in which Luther appears to have been different from other youths of his time, namely, in that he was extraordinarily sensitive and subject to recurrent periods of exaltation and depression of spirit. This oscillation of mood plagued him throughout his life. He testified that it began in his youth and that the depressions had been acute in the six months prior to his entry into the monastery. One cannot dismiss these states as occasioned merely by adolescence, since he was then twenty-one and similar experiences continued throughout his adult years. Neither can one blithely write off the case as an example of manic depression, since the patient exhibited a prodigious and continuous capacity for work of a high order.

The explanation lies rather in the tensions which medieval religion deliberately induced, playing alternately upon fear and hope. Hell was stoked, not because men lived in perpetual dread, but precisely because they did not, and in order to instill enough fear to drive them to the sacraments of the Church. If they were petrified with terror, purgatory was introduced by way of mitigation as an inter- mediate place where those not bad enough for hell nor good enough for heaven might make further expiation. If this alleviation inspired complacency, the temperature was advanced on purgatory, and then the pressure was again relaxed through indulgences.

Even more disconcerting than the fluctuation of the temperature of the afterlife was the oscillation between wrath and mercy on the part of the members of the divine hierarchy. God was portrayed now as the Father, now as the wielder of the thunder. He might be softened by the intercession of his kindlier Son, who again was delineated as an implacable judge unless mollified by his mother, who, being a woman, was not above cheating alike God and the
Devil on behalf of her suppliants; and if she were remote, one could enlist her mother, St. Anne.

How these themes were presented is graphically illustrated in the most popular handbooks in the very age of the Renaissance. The theme was death; and the best sellers gave instructions, not on how to pay the income tax, but on how to escape hell. Manuals entitled On the *Art of Dying* depicted in lurid woodcuts the

departing spirit surrounded by fiends who tempted him to commit the irrevocable sin of abandoning hope in God's mercy. To convince him that he was already beyond pardon he was confronted by the woman with whom he had committed adultery or the beggar he had failed to feed. A companion woodcut then gave encouragement by presenting the figures of forgiven sinners: Peter with his cock, Mary Magdalene with her cruse, the penitent thief, and Saul the persecutor, with the concluding brief caption, "Never despair."

If this conclusion ministered to complacency, other presentations invoked dread. A book strikingly illustrative of the prevailing mood is a history of the world published by Hartmann Schedel in Nurnberg in 1493. The massive folios, after recounting the history of mankind from Adam to the humanist Conrad Celtes, conclude with a meditation on the brevity of human existence accompanied by a woodcut of the dance of death. The final scene displays the day of judgment. A full-page woodcut portrays Christ the Judge sitting upon a rainbow. A lily extends from his right ear, signifying the redeemed, who below are being ushered by angels into paradise. From his left ear protrudes a sword, symbolizing the doom of the damned, whom the devils drag by the hair from the tombs and cast into the flames of hell. How strange, comments a modern editor, that a chronicle published in the year 1493 should end with the judgment day instead of the discovery of America! Dr. Schedel had finished his manuscript in June. Columbus had returned the previous March. The news presumably had not yet reached Nurnberg. By so narrow a margin Dr. Schedel missed this amazing scoop. "What an extraordinary value surviving copies of the Chronicle would have today if it had recorded the great event!"

So writes the modern editor. But old Dr. Schedel, had he known, might not have considered the finding of a new world worthy of record. He could scarcely have failed to know of the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope in 1488. Yet he never mentioned it. The reason is that he did not think of history as the record of humanity expanding upon earth and craving as the highest good more earth in which to expand. He thought of history as the sum of countless pilgrimages through a vale of tears to the heavenly Jerusalem. Every one of those now dead would some day rise and stand with the innumerable host of the departed before the judgment seat to hear the words, "Well done," or, "Depart from me into everlasting fire." The Christ upon the rainbow with the lily and the sword was a most familiar figure in the illustrated books of the period. Luther had seen pictures such as these and testified that he was utterly terror-stricken at the sight of Christ the Judge.

THE HAVEN OF THE COWL

Like everyone else in the Middle Ages he knew what to do about his plight. The Church taught that no sensible person would wait until his deathbed to make an act of contrition and plead for grace. From beginning to end the only secure course was to lay hold of every help the Church had to offer: sacraments, pilgrimages, indulgences, the intercession of the saints. Yet foolish was the man who relied solely on the good offices of the heavenly intercessors if he had done nothing to insure their favor!

And what better could he do than take the cowl? Men believed the end of the world already had been postponed for the sake of the Cistercian monks. Christ had just "bidden the angel blow his trumpet for the Last Judgment, when the Mother of Mercy sat at the feet of her Son and besought Him to spare awhile, 'at least for my friends of the Cistercian Order, that they may prepare themselves.'" The very devils complained of St. Benedict as a robber who had stolen souls out of their hands. He who died in the cowl would receive preferential treatment in heaven because of his habit. Once a Cistercian in a high fever cast off his frock and so died. Arriving at the gate of Paradise he was denied entry by St. Benedict because of the lack of uniform. He could only walk around the walls and peep in through the windows to see how the brethren fared, until one of them interceded for him, and St. Benedict granted a reprieve to earth for the missing garment. This was of course popular piety. However much such crude notions might be deprecated by reputable theologians, this was what the common man believed, and Luther was a common man. Yet even St. Thomas Aquinas himself declared the taking of the cowl to be second baptism, restoring the sinner to the state of innocence which he enjoyed when first baptized. The opinion was popular that if the monk should sin thereafter, he was peculiarly privileged because in his case repentance would bring restoration to the state of innocence. Monasticism was the way par excellence to heaven.

Luther knew all this. Any lad with eyes in his head understood what monasticism was all about. Living examples were to be seen on the streets of Erfurt. Here were young Carthusians, mere lads, already aged by their austerities. At Magdeburg, Luther looked upon the emaciated Prince William of Anhalt, who had

forsaken the halls of the nobility to become a begging friar and walk the streets carrying the sack of the mendicant. Like any other brother
he did the manual work of the cloister. "With my own eyes I saw him," said Luther. "I was fourteen years old at Magdeburg. I saw him carrying the sack like a donkey. He had so worn himself down by fasting and vigil that he looked like a death's-head, mere bone and skin. No one could look upon him without feeling ashamed of his own life."

Luther knew perfectly well why youths should make themselves old and nobles should make themselves abased. This life is only a brief period of training for the life to come, where the saved will enjoy an eternity of bliss and the damned will suffer everlasting torment. With their eyes they will behold the despair which can never experience the mercy of extinction. With their ears they will hear the moans of the damned. They will inhale sulphurous fumes and writhe in incandescent but unconsuming flame. All this will last forever and forever and forever.

These were the ideas on which Luther had been nurtured. There was nothing peculiar in his beliefs or his responses save their intensity. His depression over the prospect of death was acute but by no means singular. The man who was later to revolt against monasticism became a monk for exactly the same reason as thousands of others, namely, in order to save his soul. The immediate occasion of his resolve to enter the cloister was the unexpected encounter with death on that sultry July day in 1505. He was then twenty-one and a student at the University of Erfurt. As he returned to school after a visit with his parents, sudden lightning struck him to earth. In that single flash he saw the denouement of the drama of existence. There was God the all-terrible, Christ the inexorable, and all the leering fiends springing from their lurking places in pond and wood that with sardonic cachinnations they might seize his shock of curly hair and bolt him into hell. It was no wonder that he cried out to his father's saint, patroness of miners, "St. Anne help me! I will become a monk."

Luther himself repeatedly averred that he believed himself to have been summoned by a call from heaven to which he could not be disobedient. Whether or not he could have been absolved from his vow, he conceived himself to be bound by it. Against his own inclination, under divine constraint, he took the cowl. Two weeks were required to arrange his affairs and to decide what monastery to enter. He chose a strict one, the reformed congregation of the Augustinians. After a farewell party with a few friends he presented himself at the monastery gates. News was then sent to his father, who was highly enraged. This was the son, educated in stringency, who should have supported his parents in their old age. The father was utterly unreconciled until he saw in the deaths of two other sons a chastisement for his rebellion.

Luther presented himself as a novice. From no direct evidence but from the liturgy of the Augustinians we are able to reconstruct the scene of his reception. As the prior stood upon the steps of the altar, the candidate prostrated himself. The prior asked, "What seekest thou?" The answer came, "God's grace and thy mercy." Then the prior raised him up and inquired whether he was married, a bondsman, or afflicted with secret disease. The answer being negative, the prior described the rigors of the life to be undertaken: the renunciation of self-will, the scant diet, rough clothing, vigils by night and labors by day, mortification of the flesh, the reproach of poverty, the shame of begging, and the distastefulness of cloistered existence. Was he ready to take upon himself these burdens? "Yes, with God's help," was the answer, "and in so far as human frailty allows." Then he was admitted to a year of probation. As the choir chanted, the head was tonsured. Civilian clothes were exchanged for the habit of the novice. The initiate bowed the knee. "Bless thou thy servant," intoned the prior. “Hear, O Lord, our heartfelt pleas and deign to confer thy blessing on this thy servant, whom in thy holy name we have clad in the habit of a monk, that he may continue with thy help faithful in thy Church and merit eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." During the singing of the closing hymn Luther prostrated himself with arms extended in the form of a cross. He was then received into the convent by the brethren with the kiss of peace and again admonished by the prior with the words, "Not he that hath begun but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

The meaning of Luther's entry into the monastery is simply this, that the great revolt against the medieval Church arose from a desperate attempt to follow the way by her prescribed, Just as Abraham overcame human sacrifice only through his willingness to lift the sacrificial knife against Isaac, just as Paul was emancipated from Jewish legalism only because as a Hebrew of the Hebrews he had sought to fulfill all righteousness, so Luther rebelled out of a more than ordinary devotion. To the monastery he went like others, and even more than others, in order to make his peace with God.

CHAPTER TWO - THE CLOISTER

LUTHER in later life remarked that during the first year in the monastery the Devil is very quiet. We have every reason to believe that his own inner tempest subsided and that during his novitiate he was relatively placid. This may be inferred from the mere fact that at the end of the year he was permitted to make his profession. The probationary period was intended to give the candidate an opportunity to test himself and to be tested. He was instructed to search his heart and declare any misgivings as to his fitness for the monastic calling. If his companions and superiors believed him to have no vocation, they would reject him. Since Luther was accepted, we may safely assume that neither he nor his brethren saw any reason to suppose that he was not adapted to the monastic life.

His days as a novice were occupied with those religious exercises designed to suffuse the soul with peace. Prayers came seven times daily. After eight hours of sleep the monks were awakened between one and two in the morning by the ringing of the cloister bell. At the first summons they sprang up, made the sign of the cross, and pulled on the white robe and the scapular without which the brother was never to leave his cell. At the second bell each came reverently to the church, sprinkled himself with holy water, and knelt before the high altar with a prayer of devotion to the Saviour of the world. Then all took their places in the choir. Matins lasted three quarters of an hour. Each of the seven periods of the day ended with the chanting by the cantor of the Salve Regina: "Save, O Queen, Thou Mother of mercy, our life, our delight, and our hope. To Thee we exiled sons of Eve lift up our cry. To Thee we sigh as we languish in this vale of tears. Be Thou our advocate. Sweet Virgin Mary, pray for us, Thou holy Mother of God." After the *Ave Maria* and the *Pater Noster* the brothers in pairs silently filed out of the church.

With such exercises the day was filled. Brother Martin was sure that he was walking in the path the saints had trod. The occasion of his profession filled him with joy that the brothers had found him worthy of continuing. At the foot of the prior he made his dedication and heard the prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, who didst deign to clothe thyself in our mortality, we beseech thee out of thine immeasurable goodness to bless the habit which the holy fathers have chosen as a sign of innocence and renunciation. May this thy servant, Martin Luther, who takes the habit, be clothed also in thine immortality, O thou who livest and reignest with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, God from eternity to eternity. Amen."

The solemn vow had been taken. He was a monk, as innocent as a child newly baptized. Luther gave himself over with confidence to the life which the Church regarded as the surest way of salvation. He was content to spend his days in prayer, in song, in meditation and quiet companionship, in disciplined and moderate austerity.

THE TERROR OF THE HOLY

Thus he might have continued had he not been overtaken by another thunderstorm, this time of the spirit. The occasion was the saying of his first mass. He had been selected for the priesthood by his superior and commenced his functions with this initial celebration.

The occasion was always an ordeal because the mass is the focal point of the Church's means of grace. Here on the altar bread and wine become the flesh and blood of God, and the sacrifice of Calvary is re-enacted. The priest who performs the miracle of transforming the elements enjoys a power and privilege denied even to angels.
The whole difference between the clergy and the laity rests on this. The superiority of the Church over the state likewise is rooted here, for what king or emperor ever conferred upon mankind a boon comparable to that bestowed by the humblest minister at the altar?

Well might the young priest tremble to perform a rite by which God would appear in human form. But many had done it, and the experience of the centuries enabled the manuals to foresee all possible tremors and prescribe the safeguards. The celebrant must be concerned, though not unduly, about the forms. The vestments must be correct; the recitation must be correct, in a low voice and without stammering. The state of the priest's soul must be correct. Before approaching the altar he must have confessed and received absolution for all his sins. He might easily worry lest he transgress any of these conditions, and Luther testified that a mistake as to the vestments was considered worse than the seven deadly sins. But the

manuals encouraged the trainee to regard no mistake as fatal because the efficacy of the sacrament depends only on the right intention to per- form it. Even should the priest recall during the celebration a deadly sin unconfessed and unabsolved, he should not flee from the altar but finish the rite, and absolution would be forthcoming afterward. And if nervousness should so assail him that he could not continue, an older priest would be at his side to carry on. No insuperable difficulties faced the celebrant, and we have no reason to suppose that Luther approached his first mass with uncommon dread. The postponement of the date for a month was not due to any serious misgivings.

The reason was rather a very joyous one. He wanted his father to be present, and the date was set to suit his convenience. The son and the father had not seen each other since the university days when old Hans presented Martin with a copy of the Roman law and addressed him in the polite speech. The father had been vehemently opposed to his entry into the monastery, but now he appeared to have overcome all resentment and was willing, like other parents, to make a gala day of the occasion. With a company of twenty horsemen Hans Luther came riding in and made a handsome contribution to the monastery. The day began with the chiming of the cloister bells and the chanting of the psalm, "O sing unto the Lord a new song." Luther took his place before the altar and began to recite the introductory portion of the mass until he came to the words, "We offer unto thee, the living, the true, the eternal God." He related afterward:

At these words I was utterly stupefied and terror-stricken. I thought to myself, "With what tongue shall I address such Majesty, seeing that all men ought to tremble in the presence of even an earthly prince? Who am I, that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the divine Majesty? The angels surround him" At his nod the earth trembles. And shall I, a miserable little pygmy, say 'I want this, I ask for that'? For I am dust and ashes and full of sin and I am speaking to the living, eternal and the true God."

The terror of the Holy, the horror of Infinitude, smote him like a new lightning bolt, and only through a fearful restraint could he hold himself at the altar to the end.

The man of our secularized generation may have difficulty in understanding the tremors of his medieval forebear. There are indeed elements in the religion of Luther of a very primitive character, which hark back to the childhood of the race. He suffered from the savage's fear of a malevolent deity, the enemy of men, capricious, easily and unwittingly offended if sacred places be violated or magical formulas mispronounced. His was the fear of ancient Israel before the ark of the Lord's presence. Luther felt similarly toward the sacred host of the Saviour's body; and when it was carried in procession, panic took hold of him. His God was the God who inhabited the storm clouds brooding on the brow of Sinai, into whose presence Moses could not enter with unveiled face and live. Luther's experience, however, far exceeds the primitive and should not be so unintelligible to the modern man who, gazing upon the uncharted nebulae through instruments of his own devising, recoils with a sense of abject littleness.

Luther's tremor was augmented by the recognition of unworthiness. "I am dust and ashes and full of sin." Creatureliness and imperfection alike oppressed him. Toward God he was at once attracted and repelled. Only in harmony with the Ultimate could he find peace. But how could a pigmy stand before divine Majesty; how could a
transgressor confront divine Holiness? Before God the high and God the holy Luther was stupefied. For such an experience he had a word which has as much right to be carried over into English as *Blitzkrieg*. The word he used was *Anfechtung*, for which there is no English equivalent. It may be a trial sent by God to test man, or an assault by the Devil to destroy man. It is all the doubt, turmoil, pang, tremor, panic, despair, desolation, and desperation which invade the spirit of man.

Utterly limp, he came from the altar to the table where his father and the guests would make merry with the brothers. After shuddering at the unapproachableness of the heavenly Father he now craved some word of assurance from the earthly father. How his heart would be warmed to hear from the lips of old Hans that his resentment had entirely passed, and that he was now cordially in accord with his son's decision! They sat down to meat together, and Martin, as if he were still a little child, turned and said, "Dear father, why were you so contrary to my becoming a monk? And perhaps you are not quite satisfied even now. The life is so quiet and godly."

This was too much for old Hans, who had been doing his best to smother his rebellion. He flared up before all the doctors and the masters and the guests, "You learned scholar, have you never read in the Bible that

you should honor your father and your mother? And here you have left me and your dear mother to look after ourselves in our old age."

Luther had not expected this. But he knew the answer. All the manuals recalled the gospel injunction to forsake father and mother, wife and child, and pointed out the greater benefits to be conferred in the spiritual sphere. Luther answered, "But, father, I could do you more good by prayers than if I had stayed in the world." And then he must have added what to him was the clinching argument, that he had been called by a voice from heaven out of the thunder cloud.

"God grant," said the old Hans, "it was not an apparition of the Devil."

There was the weak spot of all medieval religion. In this day of skepticism we look back with nostalgia to the age of faith. How fair it would have been to have lived in an atmosphere of naive assurance, where heaven lay about the infancy of man, and doubt had not arisen to torment the spirit! Such a picture of the Middle Ages is sheer romanticism. The medieval man entertained no doubt of the supernatural world, but that world itself was divided. There were saints, and there were demons. There was God, and there was the Devil, And the Devil could disguise himself as an angel of light. Had Luther, then, been right to follow a vision which might after all have been of the arch fiend, in preference to the plain clear word of Scripture to honor father and mother? The day which began with the ringing of the cloister chime and the psalm "O sing unto the Lord a new song" ended with the horror of the Holy and doubt whether that first thunderstorm had been a vision of God or an apparition of Satan.

THE WAY OF SELF-HELP

This second upheaval of the spirit set up in Luther an inner turmoil which was to end in the abandonment of the cowl, but not until after a long interval In fact he continued to wear the monastic habit for three years after his excommunication. Altogether he was garbed as a monk for nineteen years. His development was gradual, and we are not to imagine him in perpetual torment and never able to say mass without terror. He pulled himself together and went on with the appointed round and with whatever new duties were assigned. The prior, for example, informed him that he should resume his university studies in order to qualify for the post of lector in the Augustinian order. He took all such assignments in stride.

But the problem of the alienation of man from God had been renewed in altered form. Not merely in the hour of death but daily at the altar the priest stood in the presence of the All High and the All Holy. How could man abide God's presence unless he were himself holy? Luther set himself to the pursuit of holiness. Monasticism constituted such a quest; and while Luther was in the world, he had looked upon the cloister in any form as the higher righteousness. But after becoming a monk he discovered levels within monasticism itself. Some monks were easygoing; some were strict. Those Carthusian lads prematurely old; that prince of Anhalt, mere animated bones
these were not typical examples. They were the rigorists, heroic athletes, seeking to take heaven by storm. Whether Luther's call to the monastery had been prompted by God or the Devil, he was now a monk, and a monk he would be to the uttermost. One of the privileges of the monastic life was that it emancipated the sinner from all distractions and freed him to save his soul by practicing the counsels of perfection not simply charity, sobriety, and love, but chastity, poverty, obedience, fastings, vigils, and mortifications of the flesh. Whatever good works a man might do to save himself, these Luther was resolved to perform.

He fasted, sometimes three days on end without a crumb. The seasons of fasting were more consoling to him than those of feasting. Lent was more comforting than Easter. He laid upon himself vigils and prayers in excess of those stipulated by the rule. He cast off the blankets permitted him and well-nigh froze himself to death. At times he was proud of his sanctity and would say, "I have done nothing wrong today." Then misgivings would arise. "Have you fasted enough? Are you poor enough?" He would then strip himself of all save that which decency required. He believed in later life that his austerities had done permanent damage to his digestion.

I was a good monk, and I kept the rule of my order so strictly that I may say that if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery it was I. All my brothers in the monastery who knew me will bear me out. If I had kept on any longer, I should have killed myself with vigils, prayers, reading, and other work.

All such drastic methods gave no sense of inner tranquility. The purpose of his striving was to compensate for his sins, but he could never feel that the ledger was balanced. Some historians have there- fore asserted that he must have been a very great sinner, and that in all likelihood his sins had to do with sex, where offenses are the least capable of any rectification. But Luther himself declared that this was not a particular problem. He had been chaste. While at Erfurt he had never even heard a woman in confession. And later at Wittenberg he had confessed only three women, and these he had not seen. Of course he was no wood carving, but sexual temptation beset him no more than any other problem of the moral life.

The trouble was that he could not satisfy God at any point. Commenting in later life on the Sermon on the Mount, Luther gave searching expression to his disillusionment. Referring to the precepts of Jesus he said:

This word is too high and too hard that anyone should fulfill it. This is proved, not merely by our Lord's word, but by our own experience and feeling. Take any upright man or woman. He will get along very nicely with those who do not provoke him, but let someone proffer only the slightest irritation and he will flare up in anger... if not against friends, then against enemies. Flesh and blood cannot rise above it.

Luther simply had not the capacity to fulfill the conditions.

THE MERITS OF THE SAINTS

But if he could not, others might. The Church, while taking an individualistic view of sin, takes a corporate view of goodness. Sins must be accounted for one by one, but goodness can be pooled; and there is something to pool because the saints, the Blessed Virgin, and the Son of God were better than they needed to be for their own salvation. Christ in particular, being both sinless and God, is possessed of an unbounded store. These superfluous merits of the righteous constitute a treasury which is transferable to those whose accounts are in arrears. The transfer is effected through the Church and, particularly, through the pope, to whom as the successor of St. Peter have been committed the keys to bind and loose. Such a transfer of credit was called an indulgence.

Precisely how much good it would do had not been definitely defined, but the common folk were disposed to believe the most extravagant claims. No one questioned that the pope could draw on the treasury in order to remit penalties for sin imposed by himself on earth. In fact one would suppose that he could do this by mere fiat without any transfer. The important question was whether or not he could mitigate the pangs of purgatory. During the decade in which Luther was born a pope had declared that the efficacy of indulgences extended to purgatory for the benefit of the living and the dead alike. In the case of the living there was no assurance of avoiding purgatory entirely because God alone knew the extent of the unexpiated guilt and the consequent length of the sentence, but the Church could tell to the year and the day by how much the term could be reduced, whatever it was. And in the case of those already dead and in purgatory, the sum of whose wickedness was complete and known, an immediate release could be offered. Some bulls of indulgence went still further and applied not merely to reduction of penalty but even to the forgiveness of sins. They offered a plenary remission and reconciliation with the Most High.

There were places in which these signal mercies were more accessible than in others. For no theological reason but in the interest of advertising, the Church associated the dispensing of the merits of the saints with visitation upon the relics of the saints. Popes frequently specified precisely how much benefit could be derived from viewing each holy bone. Every relic of the saints in Halle, for example, was endowed by Pope Leo X with an indulgence for the reduction of purgatory by four thousand years. The greatest storehouse for such treasures was Rome. Here in the single crypt of St. Callistus forty popes were buried and 76,000 martyrs. Rome had a piece of Moses' burning bush and three hundred particles of the Holy Innocents. Rome had the portrait of Christ on the napkin of St. Veronica. Rome had the chains of St. Paul and the scissors with which Emperor Domitian clipped the hair of St. John. The walls of Rome near the Appian gate showed the white spots left by the stones which turned to snowballs when hurled by the mob against St. Peter before his time was come. A church in Rome had the crucifix which leaned over to talk to St. Brigitta. Another had a coin paid to Judas for betraying our Lord. Its value had greatly increased, for now it was able to confer an indulgence of fourteen hundred years. The amount of indulgences to be obtained between the Lateran and St. Peter's was greater than that afforded by a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Still another church in Rome possessed the twelve-foot beam on which Judas hanged himself. This, however,

was not strictly a relic, and doubt was permitted as to its authenticity. In front of the Lateran were the *Scala Sancta*, twenty-eight stairs, supposedly those which once stood in front of Pilate's palace. He who crawled up them on hands and knees, repeating a *Pater Noster* for each one, could thereby release a soul from purgatory. Above all, Rome had the entire bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul. They had been divided to distribute the benefits among the churches. The heads were in the Lateran, and one half of the body of each had been deposited in their respective churches. No city on earth was so plentifully supplied with holy relics, and no city on earth was so richly endowed with spiritual indulgences as Holy Rome.

THE TRIP TO ROME

Luther felt himself to be highly privileged when an opportunity presented itself to make a trip to the Eternal City. A dispute had arisen in the Augustinian order calling for settlement by the pope. Two brothers were sent to the holy city to represent the chapter at Erfurt. One of the brothers was Martin Luther. This was in the year 1510.

The trip to Rome is very revealing of the character of Martin Luther. What he saw, and what he did not care to see, throw light upon him. He was not interested in the art of the Renaissance. Of course, the great treasures were not yet visible. The piers of the new basilica of St. Peter's had only just been laid, and the Sistine Chapel was not yet completed. But the frescoes of Pinturicchio were in view and might have awakened his admiration had he not been more interested in a painting of the Virgin Mary attributed to Luke the Evangelist than in all the Madonnas of the Renaissance. Again, the ruins of antiquity evoked no enthusiasm but served only to point the moral that the city founded on fratricide and stained with the blood of martyrs had been overthrown by divine justice like the Tower of Babel.

Neither the Rome of the Renaissance nor the Rome of antiquity interested Luther so much as the Rome of the saints. The business of the order would not be too time-consuming to prevent taking advantage of the unusual opportunities to save his soul. Luther's mood was that of a pilgrim who at the first sight of the Eternal City cried, "Hail, holy Rome!" He would seek to appropriate for himself and his relatives all the enormous spiritual benefits available only there. He had but a month in which to do it. The time was strenuously spent. He must of course perform the daily devotions of the Augustinian cloister in which he was lodged, but there remained sufficient hours to enable him to say the general confession, to celebrate mass at sacred shrines, to visit the catacombs and the basilicas, to venerate the bones, the shrines, and every holy relic.

Disillusionments of various sorts set in at once. Some of them were irrelevant to his immediate problem but were concomitants in his total distress. On making his general confession he was dismayed by the incompetence of the confessor. The abysmal ignorance, frivolity, and levity of the Italian priests stupefied him. They could rattle through six or seven masses while he was saying one. And when he was only at the Gospel, they had finished and would say to him, "*Passa*! *Passa*!" "Get a move on!" The same sort of thing Luther could have discovered in Germany if he had emerged from the cloister to visit mass priests, whose assignment it was to repeat a specified number of masses a day, not for communicants but in behalf of the dead. Such a practice lent itself to irreverence. Some of the Italian clergy, however, were flippantly unbelieving and would address the sacrament saying, "Bread art thou and bread thou wilt remain, and wine art thou and wine thou wilt remain." To a devout believer from the unsophisticated Northland such disclosures were truly shocking. They need not have made him despondent in regard to the validity of his own quest because the Church had long taught that the efficacy of the sacraments did not depend on the character of the ministrants.

By a like token the stories that came to Luther's ears of the immorality of the Roman clergy should not logically have undermined his faith in the capacity of Holy Rome to confer spiritual benefits. At the same time he was horrified to hear that if there were a hell Rome was built upon it. He need not have been a scandalmonger to know that the district of ill fame was frequented by ecclesiastics. He heard there were those who considered themselves virtuous because they confined themselves to women. The unsavory memory of Pope Alexander VI was still a stench. Catholic historians recognize candidly the scandal of the Renaissance popes, and the Catholic Reformation was as greatly concerned as the Protestant to eradicate such abuses.

Yet all these sorry disclosures did not shatter Luther's confidence in the genuine goodness of the faithful. The question was whether they had any superfluous merit which could be conveyed to him or to his family, and whether the merit was so attached to sacred places that visits would confer benefit. This was the point at which doubt overtook him. He was climbing Pilate's stairs on hands and knees repeating a *Pater Noster* for each one and kissing each step for good measure in the hope of delivering a soul from purgatory. Luther regretted that his own father and mother were not yet dead and in purgatory so that he might confer on them so signal a favor. Failing that, he had resolved to release Grandpa Heine. The stairs were climbed, the *Pater Nosters* were repeated, the steps were kissed. At the top Luther raised himself and exclaimed, not as legend would have it, "The just shall live by faith" he was not yet that far advanced. What he said was, "Who knows whether it is so?"

That was the truly disconcerting doubt. The priests might be guilty of levity and the popes of lechery all this would not matter so long as the Church had valid means of grace. But if crawling up the very stairs on which Christ stood and repeating all the prescribed prayers would be of no avail, then another of the great grounds of hope had proved to be illusory. Luther commented that he had gone to Rome with onions and had returned with garlic.

CHAPTER THREE - THE GOSPEL

Returning from Rome, Luther came under new influences due to a change of residence. He was transferred from Erfurt to Wittenberg, where he was to pass the remainder of his days. In comparison with Erfurt, Wittenberg was but a village with a population of only 2,000 to 2,500. The whole length of the town was only nine tenths of a mile. Contemporaries variously described it as "the gem of Thuringia" and "a stinking sand dune." It was built on a sand belt and for that reason was called the White Hillock, *Witten-Berg*. Luther never rhapsodized over the place, and he addressed to it this ditty:

Little land, little land,
You are but a heap of sand.
If I dig you, the soil is light;
If I reap you, the yield is slight.

But as a matter of fact it was not unproductive. Grain, vegetables, and fruit abounded, and the near-by woods provided game. The river Elbe flowed on one side, and a moat surrounded the town on the other. Two brooks were introduced by wooden aqueducts through the walls on the upper side and flowed without a covering down the two main streets of the town until they united at the mill. Open sluggish water was at once convenient and offensive.
Luther lived in the Augustinian cloister at the opposite end from the Castle Church.

The chief glory of the village was the university, the darling of the elector, Frederick the Wise, who sought in this newly founded academy to rival the prestige of the century-old University of Leipzig. The new foundation had not flourished according to hope, and the elector endeavored to secure better teachers by inviting the Augustinians and Franciscans to supply three new professors. One of them was Luther. This was in 1511.

By reason of the move he came to know well a man who was to exercise a determinative influence upon his development, the vicar of the Augustinian order, Johann von Staupitz. No one better could have been found as a spiritual guide. The vicar knew all the cures prescribed by the schoolmen for spiritual ailments, and besides had a warm religious life of his own with a sympathetic appreciation of the distresses of another. "If it had not been for Dr. Staupitz," said Luther, "I should have sunk in hell."

Luther's difficulties persisted. A precise delineation of their course eludes us. His tremors cannot be said to have mounted in unbroken crescendo to a single crisis. Rather he passed through a series of crises to a relative stability. The stages defy localization as to time, place, or logical sequence. Yet this is clear. Luther probed every resource of contemporary Catholicism for assuaging the anguish of a spirit alienated from God. He tried the way of good works and discovered that he could never do enough to save himself. He endeavored to avail himself of the merits of the saints and ended with a doubt, not a very serious or persistent doubt for the moment, but sufficient to destroy his assurance.

He sought at the same time to explore other ways, and Catholicism had much more to offer. Salvation was never made to rest solely nor even primarily upon human achievement. The whole sacramental system of the Church was designed to mediate to man God's help and favor. Particularly the sacrament of penance afforded solace, not to saints but to sinners. This only was required of them, that they should confess all their wrongdoing and seek absolution. Luther endeavored unremittingly to avail himself of this signal mercy. Without confession, he testified, the Devil would have devoured him long ago. He confessed frequently, often daily, and for as long as six hours on a single occasion. Every sin in order to be absolved was to be confessed. Therefore the soul must be searched and the memory ransacked and the motives probed. As an aid the penitent ran through the seven deadly sins and the Ten Commandments. Luther would repeat a confession and, to be sure of including everything, would review his entire life until the confessor grew weary and exclaimed, "Man, God is not angry with you. You are angry with God. Don't you know that God commands you to hope?"

This assiduous confessing certainly succeeded in clearing up any major transgressions. The leftovers with which Luther kept trotting in appeared to Staupitz to be only the scruples of a sick soul. "Look here," said he, "if you expect Christ to forgive you, come in with something to forgive—parricide, blasphemy, adultery—instead of all these peccadilloes."

But Luther's question was not whether his sins were big or little, but whether they had been confessed. The great difficulty which he encountered was to be sure that everything had been recalled. He learned from experience the cleverness of memory in protecting the ego, and he was frightened when after six hours of confessing he could still go out and think of something else which had eluded his most conscientious scrutiny. Still more disconcerting was the discovery that some of man's misdemeanors are not even recognized, let alone remembered. Sinners often sin without compunction. Adam and Eve, after tasting of the fruit of the forbidden tree, went blithely for a walk in the cool of the day; and Jonah, after fleeing from the Lord's commission, slept soundly in the hold of the ship. Only when each was confronted by an accuser was there any consciousness of guilt. Frequently, too, when man is reproached he will still justify himself like Adam, who replied, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me"—as if to say to God, "She tempted me; you gave her to me; you are to blame."

There is, according to Luther, something much more drastically wrong with man than any particular list of offenses which can be enumerated, confessed, and forgiven. The very nature of man is corrupt. The penitential system fails because it is directed to particular lapses. Luther had come to perceive that the entire man is in need of forgiveness. In the course of this quest he had wrought himself into a state of emotional disturbance passing the bounds of objectivity. When, then, his confessor said that he was magnifying his misdemeanors, Luther could only conclude that the consultant did not understand the case and that none of the proffered consolations was of any avail.

In consequence the most frightful insecurities beset him. Panic invaded his spirit. The conscience became so disquieted as to start and tremble at the stirring of a wind-blown leaf. The horror of nightmare gripped the soul, the dread of one waking in the dusk to look into the eyes of him who has come to take his life. The heavenly champions all withdrew; the fiend beckoned with leering summons to the impotent soul. These were the torments which Luther repeatedly testified were far worse than any physical ailment that he had ever endured.

His description tallies so well with a recognized type of mental malady that again one is tempted to wonder whether his disturbance should be regarded as arising from authentic religious difficulties or from gastric or glandular deficiencies. The question can better be faced when more data become available from other periods of his life. Suffice it for the moment to observe that no malady ever impaired his stupendous capacity for work; that the problems with which he wrestled were not imaginary but implicit in the religion on which he had been reared; that his emotional reactions were excessive, as he would himself recognize after emerging from a depression; that he did make headway in exhausting one by one the helps proffered by medieval religion.

He had arrived at a valid impasse. Sins to be forgiven must be confessed. To be confessed they must be recognized and remembered. If they are not recognized and remembered, they cannot be confessed. If they

are not confessed, they cannot be forgiven. The only way out is to deny the premise. But that Luther was not yet ready to do. Staupitz at this point offered real help by seeking to divert his attention from individual sins to the nature of man. Luther later on formulated what he had learned by saying that the physician does not need to probe each pustule to know that the patient has smallpox, nor is the disease to be cured scab by scab. To focus on particular offenses is a counsel of despair. When Peter started to count the waves, he sank. The whole nature of man needs to be changed.

THE MYSTIC LADDER

This was the insight of the mystics. Staupitz was a mystic. Although the mystics did not reject the penitential system, their way of salvation was essentially different, directed to man as a whole. Since man is weak, let him cease to strive; let him surrender himself to the being and the love of God.

The new life, they said, calls for a period of preparation which consists in overcoming all the assertiveness of the ego, all arrogance, pride, self-seeking, everything connected with the I, the me, and the my. Luther's very effort to achieve merit was a form of assertiveness. Instead of striving he must yield and sink himself in God. The end of the mystic way is the absorption of the creature in the creator, of the drop in the ocean, of the candle flame in the glare of the sun. The straggler overcomes his restlessness, ceases his battering, surrenders himself to the Everlasting, and in the abyss of Being finds his peace.

Luther tried this way. At times he was lifted up as if he were amid choirs of angels, but the sense of alienation would return. The mystics knew this too. They called it the dark night of the soul, the dryness, the withdrawing of the fire from under the pot until it no longer bubbles. They counseled waiting until exaltation would return. For Luther it did not return because the enmity between man and God is too great. For all his impotence, man is a rebel against his Maker.

The acuteness of Luther's distress arose from his sensitivity at once to all the difficulties by which man has ever been beset. Could he have taken them one at a time, each might the more readily have been assuaged. For those who are troubled by particular sins the Church offers forgiveness through the penitential system, but pardon is made contingent upon conditions which Luther found unattainable. For those too weak to meet the tests there is the mystic way of ceasing to strive and of losing oneself in the abyss of the Godhead. But Luther could not envisage God as an abyss hospitable to man the impure. God is holy, majestic, devastating, consuming.

Do you not know that God dwells in light inaccessible? We weak and ignorant creatures want to probe and understand the incomprehensible majesty of the unfathomable light of the wonder of God. We approach; we prepare ourselves to approach. What wonder then that his majesty overpowers us and shatters!

So acute had Luther's distress become that even the simplest helps of religion failed to bring him heartsease. Not even prayer could quiet his tremors; for when he was on his knees, the Tempter would come and say, "Dear fellow, what are you praying for? Just see how quiet it is about you here. Do you think that God hears your prayer and pays any attention?"

Staupitz tried to bring Luther to see that he was making religion altogether too difficult. There is just one thing needful, and that is to love God. This was another favorite counsel of the mystics, but the intended word of comfort pierced like an arrow. How could anyone love a God who is a consuming fire? The psalm says, "Serve the Lord with fear." Who, then, can love a God angry, judging, and damning? Who can love a Christ sitting on a rainbow, consigning the damned souls to the flames of hell? The mere sight of a crucifix was to Luther like a stroke of lightning. He would flee, then, from the angry Son to the merciful Mother. He would appeal to the saints—twenty-one of them he had selected as his especial patrons, three for each day of the week. All to no avail, for of what use is any intercession if God remains angry?

The final and the most devastating doubt of all assailed the young man. Perhaps not even God himself is just. This misgiving arose in two forms, depending on the view of God's character and behavior. Basic to both is the view that God is too absolute to be conditioned by considerations of human justice. The late scholastics, among whom Luther had been trained, thought that God is so unconditioned that he is bound by no rules save those of his own making. He is under no obligation to confer reward on man's achievements, no matter how meritorious. Normally God may be expected to do so, but there is no positive

certitude. For Luther this meant that God is capricious and man's fate is unpredictable. The second view was more disconcerting because it held that man's destiny is already determined, perhaps adversely. God is so absolute that nothing can be contingent. Man's fate has been decreed since the foundation of the world, and in large measure also man's character is already fixed. This view commended itself all the more to Luther because it had been espoused by the founder of his order, St. Augustine, who, following Paul, held that God has already chosen some vessels for honor and some for dishonor, regardless of their deserts. The lost are lost, do what they can; the saved are saved, do what they may. To those who think they are saved this is an unspeakable comfort, but to those who think they are damned it is a hideous torment.

Luther exclaimed:

Is it not against all natural reason that God out of his mere whim deserts men, hardens them, damns them, as if he delighted in sins and in such torments of the wretched for eternity, he who is said to be of such mercy and goodness? This appears iniquitous, cruel, and intolerable in God, by which very many have been offended in all ages. And who would not be? I was myself more than once driven to the very abyss of despair so that I wished I had never been created. Love God? I hated him!

The word of blasphemy had been spoken. And blasphemy is the supreme sin because it is an offense against the most exalted of all beings, God the majestic. Luther reported to Staupitz, and his answer was, "*Ich verstehe es nicht*!"—"l don't understand it!" Was, then, Luther the only one in all the world who had been so plagued? Had
Staupitz himself never experienced such trials? "No," said he, "but I think they are your meat and drink." Evidently he suspected Luther of thriving on his disturbances. The only word of reassurance he could give was a reminder that the blood of Christ was shed for the remission of sins. But Luther was too obsessed with the picture of Christ the avenger to be consoled with the thought of Christ the redeemer.

Staupitz then cast about for some effective cure for this tormented spirit. He recognized in him a man of moral earnestness, religious sensitivity, and unusual gifts. Why his difficulties should be so enormous and so persistent was baffling. Plainly argument and consolation did no good. Some other way must be found. One day under the pear tree in the garden of the Augustinian cloister—Luther always treasured that pear tree—the vicar informed Brother Martin that he should study for his doctor's degree, that he should undertake preaching and assume the chair of Bible at the university. Luther gasped, stammered out fifteen reasons why he could do nothing of the sort. The sum of it all was that so much work would kill him. "Quite all right," said Staupitz. "God has plenty of work for clever men to do in heaven."

Luther might well gasp, for the proposal of Staupitz was audacious if not reckless. A young man on the verge of a nervous collapse over religious problems was to be commissioned as a teacher, preacher, and counselor to sick souls. Staupitz was practically saying, "Physician, cure thyself by curing others." He must have felt that Luther was fundamentally sound and that if he was entrusted with the cure of souls he would be disposed for their sakes to turn from threats to promises, and some of the grace which he would claim for them might fall also to himself.

Staupitz knew likewise that Luther would be helped by the subject matter of his teaching. The chair designed for him was the one which Staupitz himself had occupied, the chair of Bible. One is tempted to surmise that he retired in order unobtrusively to drive this agonizing brother to wrestle with the source book of his religion. One may wonder why Luther had not thought of this himself. The reason is not that the Bible was inaccessible, but that Luther was following a prescribed course and the Bible was not the staple of theological education.

Yet anyone who seeks to discover the secret of Christianity is inevitably driven to the Bible, because Christianity is based on something which happened in the past, the incarnation of God in Christ at a definite point in history. The Bible records this event.

Luther set himself to learn and expound the Scriptures. On August 1, 1513, he commenced his lectures on the book of Psalms. In the fall of 1515 he was lecturing on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The Epistle to the Galatians was treated throughout 1516-17. These studies proved to be for Luther the Damascus road. The third great religious crisis which resolved his turmoil was as the still small voice compared to the earthquake of the first upheaval in the thunderstorm at Stotternheim and the fire of the second tremor which consumed him at the saying of his first mass.
No *coup de foudre*, no heavenly apparition, no religious ceremony, precipitated the third crisis. The place was no lonely road in a blinding storm, nor even the holy altar, but simply the study in the tower of the Augustinian monastery. The solution to Luther's problems came in the midst of the performance of the daily task.

His first lectures were on the book of Psalms. We must bear in mind his method of reading the Psalms and the Old Testament as a whole. For him, as for his time, it was a Christian book foreshadowing the life and death of the Redeemer.

The reference to Christ was unmistakable when he came to the twenty-second psalm, the first verse of which was recited by Christ as he expired upon the cross. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" What could be the meaning of this? Christ evidently felt himself to be forsaken, abandoned by God, deserted. Christ too had *Anfechtungen*. The utter desolation which Luther said he could not endure for more than a tenth of an hour and live had been experienced by Christ himself as he died. Rejected of men, he was rejected also of God. How much worse this must have been than the scourging, the thorns, the nails! In the garden he sweat blood as he did not upon the cross. Christ's descent into hell was nothing other than this sense of alienation from God. Christ had suffered what Luther suffered, or rather Luther was finding himself in what Christ had suffered, even as Albrecht Durer painted himself as the Man of Sorrows.

Why should Christ have known such desperations? Luther knew perfectly well why he himself had had them: he was weak in the presence of the Mighty; he was impure in the presence of the Holy; he had blasphemed the Divine Majesty. But Christ was not weak; Christ was not impure; Christ was not impious. Why then should he have been so overwhelmed with desolation? The only answer must be that Christ took to himself the iniquity of us all. He who was without sin for our sakes became sin and so identified himself with us as to participate in our alienation. He who was truly man so sensed his solidarity with humanity as to feel himself along with mankind estranged from the All Holy. What a new picture this is of Christ! Where, then, is the judge, sitting upon the rainbow to condemn sinners? He is still the judge. He must judge, as truth judges error and light darkness; but in judging he suffers with those whom he must condemn and feels himself with them subject to condemnation. The judge upon the rainbow has become the derelict upon the cross.

A new view also of God is here. The All Terrible is the All Merciful too. Wrath and love fuse upon the cross. The hideousness of sin cannot be denied or forgotten; but God, who desires not that a sinner should die but that he should turn and live, has found the reconciliaion in the pangs of bitter death. It is not that the Son by his sacrifice has placated the irate Father; it is not primarily that the Master by his self-abandoning goodness has made up for our deficiency. It is that in some inexplicable way, in the utter desolation of the forsaken Christ, God was able to reconcile the world to himself. This does not mean that all the mystery is clear. God is still shrouded at times in thick darkness. There are almost two Gods, the inscrutable God whose ways are past finding out and the God made known to us in Christ. He is still a consuming fire, but he burns that he may purge and chasten and heal. He is not a God of idle whim, because the cross is not the last word. He who gave his Son unto death also raised him up and will raise us with him, if with him we die to sin that we may rise to newness of life.

Who can understand this? Philosophy is unequal to it. Only faith can grasp so high a mystery. This is the foolishness of the cross which is hid from the wise and prudent. Reason must retire. She cannot understand that "God hides his power in weakness, his wisdom in folly, his goodness in severity, his justice in sins, his mercy in anger."

How amazing that God in Christ should do all this; that the Most High, the Most Holy should be the All Loving too; that the ineffable Majesty should stoop to take upon himself our flesh, subject to hunger and cold, death and desperation. We see him lying in the feedbox of a donkey, laboring in a carpenter's shop,

dying a derelict under the sins of the world. The gospel is not so much a miracle as a marvel, and every line is suffused with wonder.

What God first worked in Christ, that he must work also in us. If he who had done no wrong was forsaken on the cross, we who are truly alienated from God must suffer a deep hurt. We are not for that reason to upbraid, since the hurt is for our healing.

Repentance which is occupied with thoughts of peace is hypocrisy. There must be a great earnestness about it and a deep hurt if the old man is to be put off. When lightning strikes a tree or a man, it does two things at once—it rends the tree and swiftly slays the man. But it also turns the face of the dead man and the broken branches of the tree itself toward heaven. . . . We seek to be saved, and God in order that he may save rather damns. . . . They are damned who flee damnation, for Christ was of all the saints the most damned and forsaken.

The contemplation of the cross had convinced Luther that God is neither malicious nor capricious. If, like the Samaritan, God must first pour into our wounds the wine that smarts, it is that he may thereafter use the oil that soothes. But there still remains the problem of the justice of God. Wrath can melt into mercy, and God will be all the more the Christian God; but if justice be dissolved in leniency, how can he be the just God whom Scripture describes? The study of the apostle Paul proved at this point of inestimable value to Luther and at the same time confronted him with the final stumbling block because Paul unequivocally speaks of the justice of God. At the very expression Luther trembled. Yet he persisted in grappling with Paul, who plainly had agonized over precisely his problem and had found a solution. Light broke at last through the examination of exact shades of meaning in the Greek language. One understands why Luther could never join those who discarded the humanist tools of scholarship. In the Greek of the Pauline epistles the word "justice" has a double sense, rendered in English by "justice" and "justification." The former is a strict enforcement of the law, as when a judge pronounces the appropriate sentence. Justification is a process of the sort which some- times takes place if the judge suspends the sentence, places the prisoner on parole, expresses confidence and personal interest in him, and thereby instills such resolve that the man is reclaimed and justice itself ultimately better conserved than by the exaction of a pound of flesh. Similarly the moral improvement issuing from the Christian experience of regeneration, even though it falls far short of perfection, yet can be regarded as a vindication of the justice of God.

But from here on any human analogy breaks down. God does not condition his forgiveness upon the expectation of future fulfillment. And man is not put right with God by any achievement, whether present or foreseen. On man's side the one requisite is faith, which means belief that God was in Christ seeking to save; trust that God will keep his promises; and commitment to his will and way. Faith is not an achievement. It is a gift. Yet it comes only through the hearing and study of the Word. In this respect Luther's own experience was made normative. For the whole process of being made new Luther took over from Paul the terminology of "justification by faith."

These are Luther's own words:

I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, "the justice of God," because I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in punishing the unjust. My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him. Therefore I did not love a just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him. Yet I clung to the dear Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant.

Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that "the just shall live by his faith." Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the "justice of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven…

If you have a true faith that Christ is your Saviour, then at once you have a gracious God, for faith leads you in and opens up God's heart and will, that you should see pure grace and overflowing love. This it is to

behold God in faith that you should look upon his fatherly, friendly heart, in which there is no anger nor ungraciousness. He who sees God as angry does not see him rightly but looks only on a curtain, as if a dark cloud had been drawn across his face.

Luther had come into a new view of Christ and a new view of God. He had come to love the suffering Redeemer and the God unveiled on Calvary. But were they after all powerful enough to deliver him from all the hosts of hell? The cross had resolved the conflict between the wrath and the mercy of God, and Paul had reconciled for him the inconsistency of the justice and the forgiveness of God, but what of the conflict between God and the Devil? Is God lord of all, or is he himself impeded by demonic hordes? Such questions a few years ago would have seemed to modern man but relics of medievalism, and fear of demons was dispelled simply by denying their existence. Today so much of the sinister has engulfed us that we are prone to wonder whether perhaps there may not be malignant forces in the heavenly places. All those who have known the torments of mental disorder well understand the imagery of satanic hands clutching to pull them to their doom. Luther's answer was not scientific but religious. He did not dissipate the demons by turning on an electric light, because for him they had long ago been routed when the veil of the temple was rent and the earth quaked and darkness descended upon the face of the land. Christ in his utter anguish had fused the wrath and the mercy of God, and put to flight all the legions of Satan.

In Luther's hymns one hears the tramp of marshaled hordes, the shouts of battle, and the triumph song.

In devil's dungeon chained I lay
        The pangs of death swept o'er me.
My sin devoured me night and day
        In which my mother bore me.
My anguish ever grew more rife,
I took no pleasure in my life
        And sin had made me crazy.

Then was the Father troubled sore
        To see me ever languish.
The Everlasting Pity swore
        To save me from my anguish.
He turned to me his father heart
And chose himself a bitter part,
        His Dearest did it cost him.

Thus spoke the Son, “Hold thou to me,
        From now on thou wilt make It.
I gave my very life for thee
        And for thee I will stake it.
For I am thine and thou art mine,
And where I am our lives entwine,
        The Old Fiend cannot shake it."

CHAPTER FOUR - THE ONSLAUGHT

LUTHER'S new insights contained already the marrow of his mature theology. The salient ideas were present in the lectures on Psalms and Romans from 1513 to 1516. What came after was but commentary and sharpening to obviate misconstruction. The center about which all the petals clustered was the affirmation of the forgiveness of sins through the utterly unmerited grace of God made possible by the cross of Christ, which reconciled wrath and mercy, routed the hosts of hell, triumphed over sin and death, and by the resurrection manifested that power which enables man to die to sin and rise to newness of life. This was of course the theology of Paul, heightened, intensified, and clarified. Beyond these cardinal tenets Luther was never to go.

His development lay rather on the positive side in the drawing of practical inferences for his theory of the sacraments and the Church, and on the negative side by way of discovering discrepancies from contemporary Catholicism. At the start Luther envisaged no reform other than that of theological education

with the stress on the Bible rather than on the decretals and the scholastics. Not that he was in- different to the evils of the Church! In his notes for the lectures on Romans he lashed out repeatedly against the luxury, avarice, ignorance, and greed of the clergy and upbraided explicitly the chicanery of that warrior-pope Julius II. Yet whether these strictures were ever actually delivered is doubtful; for no record of them appears in the student notes on the lectures. Luther was, in fact, less impelled to voice a protest against immoral abuses in the Church than were some of his contemporaries.

For one reason he was too busy. In October, 1516, he wrote to a friend:

I could use two secretaries. I do almost nothing during the day but write letters. I am a conventual preacher, reader at meals, parochial preacher, director of studies, overseer of eleven monasteries, superintendent of the fish pond at Litzkau, referee of the squabble at Torgau, lecturer on Paul, collector of material for a commentary on the Psalms, and then, as I said, I am overwhelmed with letters. I rarely have full time for the canonical hours and for saying mass, not to mention my own temptations with the world, the flesh, and the Devil. You see how lazy I am.

But out of just such labors arose his activities as a reformer.

As a parish priest in a village church he was responsible for the spiritual welfare of his flock. They were procuring indulgences as he had once done himself. Rome was not the only place in which such favors were available, for the popes delegated to many churches in Christendom the privilege of dispensing indulgences, and the Castle Church at Wittenberg was the recipient of a very unusual concession granting full remission of all sins. The day selected for the proclamation was the first of November, the day of All Saints, whose merits provided the ground of the indulgences and whose relics were then on display. Frederick the Wise, the elector of Saxony, Luther's prince, was a man of simple and sincere piety who had devoted a lifetime to making Wittenberg the Rome of Germany as a depository of sacred relics. He had made a journey to all parts of Europe, and diplomatic negotiations were facilitated by an exchange of relics. The king of Denmark, for example, sent him fragments of King Canute and St.
Brigitta.

The collection had as its nucleus a genuine thorn from the crown of Christ, certified to have pierced the Saviour's brow. Frederick so built up the collection from this inherited treasure that the catalogue illustrated by Lucas Cranach in 1509 listed 5,005 particles, to which were attached indulgences calculated to reduce purgatory by 1,443 years. The collection included one tooth of St. Jerome, of St. Chrysostom four pieces, of St. Bernard six, and of St. Augustine four; of Our Lady four hairs, three pieces of her cloak, four from her girdle, and seven from the veil sprinkled with the blood of Christ. The relics of Christ included one piece from his swaddling clothes, thirteen from his crib, one wisp of straw, one piece of the gold brought by the Wise Men and three of the myrrh, one strand of Jesus' beard, one of the nails driven into his hands, one piece of bread eaten at the Last Supper, one piece of the stone on which Jesus stood to ascend into heaven, and one twig of Moses' burning bush. By 1520 the collection had mounted to 19,013 holy bones. Those who viewed these relics on the designated day and made the stipulated contributions might receive from the pope indulgences for the reduction of purgatory, either for themselves or others, to the extent of 1,902,202 years and 270 days. These were the treasures made available on the day of All Saints.

Three times during his sermons of the year 1516 Luther spoke critically of these indulgences. The third of these occasions was Halloween, the eve of All Saints. Luther spoke moderately and with- out certainty on all points. But on some he was perfectly assured. No one, he declared, can know whether the remission of sins is complete, because complete remission is granted only to those who exhibit worthy contrition and confession, and no one can know whether contrition and confession are perfectly worthy. To assert that the pope can deliver souls from purgatory is audacious. If he can do so, then he is cruel not to release them all. But if he possesses this ability, he is in a position to do more for the dead than for the living. The purchasing of indulgences in any case is highly dangerous and likely to induce complacency. Indulgences can remit only those private satisfactions imposed by the Church, and may easily militate against interior penance, which consists in true contrition, true confession, and true satisfaction in spirit.

Luther records that the elector took this sermon amiss. Well he might, because indulgences served not merely to dispense the merits of the saints but also to raise revenues. They were the bingo of the sixteenth century. The practice grew out of the crusades. At first indulgences were conferred on those who sacrificed

or risked their lives in fighting against the infidel, and then were extended to those who, unable to go to the Holy Land, made contributions to the enterprise. The device proved so lucrative that it was speedily extended to cover the construction of churches, monasteries, and hospitals. The gothic cathedrals were financed in this way. Frederick the Wise was using an indulgence to reconstruct a bridge across the Elbe. Indulgences, to be sure, had not degenerated into sheer mercenariness. Conscientious preachers sought to evoke a sense of sin, and presumably only those genuinely concerned made the purchases. Nevertheless, the Church today readily concedes that the indulgence traffic was a scandal, so much so that a contemporary preacher phrased the requisites as three: contrition, confession, and contribution.

A cartoon by Holbein makes the point that the handing over of the indulgence letter was so timed as not to anticipate the dropping of the money into the coffer. We see in this cartoon a chamber with the pope enthroned. He is probably Leo X because the arms of the Medici appear frequently about the walls. The pope is handing a letter of indulgence to a kneeling Dominican. In the choir stalls on either side are seated a number of church dignitaries. On the right one of them lays his hand upon the head of a kneeling youth and with a stick points to a large ironbound chest for the contributions, into which a woman is dropping her mite. At the table on the left various Dominicans are preparing and dispensing indulgences. One of them repulses a beggar who has nothing to give in exchange, while another is carefully checking the money and withholding the indulgences until the full amount has been received. In contrast he shows on the left the true repentance of David, Manasseh, and a notorious sinner, who address themselves only to God.

The indulgences dispensed at Wittenberg served to support the Castle Church and the university. Luther's attack, in other words, struck at the revenue of his own institution. This first blow was certainly not the rebellion of an exploited German against the mulcting of his country by the greedy Italian papacy. However much in after years Luther's followers may have been motivated by such considerations, his first onslaught was not so prompted. He was a priest responsible for the eternal welfare of his parishioners. He must warn them against spiritual pitfalls, no matter what might happen to the Castle Church and the university.

THE INDULGENCE FOR ST. PETER’S

In 1517, the year following, his attention was called to another instance of the indulgence traffic fraught with far-reaching ramifications. The affair rose out of the pretensions of the house of Hohenzollern to control the ecclesiastical and civil life of Germany. An accumulation of ecclesiastical benefices in one family was an excellent expedient, because every bishop controlled vast revenues, and some bishops were princes besides, Albert of Brandenburg, of the house of Hohenzollern, when not old enough to be a bishop at all, held already the sees of Halberstadt and Magdeburg, and aspired to the archbishopric of Mainz, which would make him the primate of Germany.

He knew that he would have to pay well for his office. The installation fee was ten thousand ducats, and the parish could not afford it, being already depleted through the deaths of three archbishops in a decade. One of them apologized for dying after an incumbency of only four years, thereby so soon involving his flock in the fee for his successor. The diocese offered the post to Albert if he would discharge the fee himself. He realized that he would have to pay the pope in addition for the irregularity of holding three sees at once and probably still more to counteract the pressures of the rival house of Hapsburg on the papacy.

Yet Albert was confident that money would speak, because the pope needed it so badly. The pontiff at the moment was Leo X, of the house of Medici, as elegant and as indolent as a Persian cat. His chief pre-eminence lay in his ability to squander the resources of the Holy See on carnivals, war, gambling, and the chase. The duties of his holy office were seldom suffered to interfere with sport. He wore long hunting boots which impeded the kissing of his toe. The resources of three papacies were dissipated by his profligacy: the goods of his predecessors, himself, and his successor. The Catholic historian Ludwig von Pastor declared that the ascent of this man in an hour of crisis to the chair of St. Peter, " a man who scarcely so much as understood the obligations of his high office, was one of the most severe trials to which God ever subjected his Church."

Leo at the moment was particularly in need of funds to complete a project commenced by his predecessor, the building of the new St. Peter's. The old wooden basilica, constructed in the age of Constantine, had been condemned, and the titanic Pope Julius II had overawed the consistory into approving the grandiose scheme of throwing a dome as large as the Pantheon over the remains of the apostles Peter and Paul. The

piers were laid; Julius died; the work lagged; weeds sprouted from the pillars; Leo took over; he needed money.

The negotiations of Albert with the pope were conducted through the mediation of the German banking house of Fugger, which had a monopoly on papal finances in Germany. When the Church needed funds in advance of her revenues, she borrowed at usurious rates from the sixteenth-century Rothschilds or Morgans. Indulgences were issued in order to repay the debts, and the Fuggers supervised the collection.

Knowing the role they would ultimately play, Albert turned to them for the initial negotiations. He was informed that the pope demanded twelve thousand ducats for the twelve apostles. Albert offered seven thousand for the seven deadly sins. They compromised on ten thousand, presumably not for the Ten Commandments. Albert had to pay the money down before he could secure his appointment, and he borrowed the sum from the Fuggers.

Then the pope, to enable Albert to reimburse himself, granted the privilege of dispensing an indulgence in his territories for the period of eight years. One half of the return, in addition to the ten thousand ducats already paid, should go to the pope for the building of the new St. Peter's; the other half should go to reimburse the Fuggers.

These indulgences were not actually offered in Luther's parish because the Church could not introduce an indulgence without the consent of the civil authorities, and Frederick the Wise would not grant permission in his lands because he did not wish the indulgence of St. Peter to encroach upon the indulgences of All Saints at Wittenberg. Consequently the vendors did not enter electoral Saxony, but they came close enough so that Luther's parishioners could go over the border and return with the most amazing concessions.

In briefing the vendors Albert reached the pinnacle of pretensions as to the spiritual benefits to be conferred by indulgences. He made no reference whatever to the repayment of his debt to the Fuggers. The instructions declared that a plenary indulgence had been issued by His Holiness Pope Leo X to defray the expenses of remedying the sad state of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul and the innumerable martyrs and saints whose bones lay moldering, subject to constant desecration from rain and hail. Subscribers would enjoy a plenary and perfect remission of all sins. They would be restored to the state of innocence which they enjoyed in baptism and would be relieved of all the pains of purgatory, including those incurred by an offense to the Divine Majesty. Those securing indulgences on behalf of the dead already in purgatory need not themselves be contrite and confess their sins.

Then let the cross of Christ, continued the instructions, and the arms of the pope be planted at preaching stations that all might contribute according to their capacity. Kings and queens, archbishops and bishops, and other great princes were expected to give twenty-five gold florins. Abbots, cathedral prelates, counts, barons, andother great nobles and their wives were put down for twenty. Other prelates and lower nobility should give six. The rate for burghers and merchants was three. For those more moderately circumstanced, one.

And since we are concerned for the salvation of souls quite as much as for the construction of this building, none shall be turned empty away. The very poor may contribute by prayers and fastings, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs not only to the rich but also to the poor.

The proclamation of this indulgence was entrusted to the Dominican Tetzel, an experienced vendor. As he approached a town, he was met by the dignitaries, who then entered with him in solemn procession. A cross bearing the papal arms preceded him, and the pope's bull of indulgence was borne aloft on a gold-embroidered velvet cushion. The cross was solemnly planted in the market place, and the sermon began.

Listen now, God and St. Peter call you. Consider the salvation of your souls and those of your loved ones departed. You priest, you noble, you merchant, you virgin, you matron, you youth, you old man, enter now into your church, which is the Church of St. Peter. Visit the most holy cross erected before you and ever imploring you. Have you considered that you are lashed in a furious tempest amid the temptations and dangers of the world, and that you do not know whether you can reach the haven, not of your mortal body, but of your immortal soul? Consider that all who are contrite and have confessed and made contribution will receive complete remission of all their sins. Listen to the voices of your dear dead relatives and friends,

beseeching you and saying, "Pity us, pity us. We are in dire torment from which you can redeem us for a pittance." Do you not wish to? Open your ears. Hear the father saying to his son, the mother to her daughter, "We bore you, nourished you, brought you up, left you our fortunes, and you are so cruel and hard that now you are not willing for so little to set us free. Will you let us lie here in flames? will you delay our promised glory?" Remember that you are able to release them, for

As soon as the coin in the coffer rings,
The soul from purgatory springs.

Will you not then for a quarter of a florin receive these letters of indulgence through which you are able to lead a divine and immortal soul into the fatherland of paradise?

Such harangues were not being delivered in Wittenberg because of the prohibition of Frederick the Wise, but Tetzel was just over the border, not too far away for Luther's parishioners to make the journey and return with the pardons. They even reported Tetzel to have said that papal indulgences could absolve a man who had violated the Mother of God, and that the cross emblazoned with the papal arms set up by the indulgence sellers was equal to the cross of Christ. A cartoon published somewhat later by one of Luther's followers showed the cross in the center empty of all save the nail holes and the crown of thorns. More prominent beside it stood the papal arms with the balls of the Medici, while in the foreground the vendor hawked his wares.

THE NINETY-FIVE THESES

This was too much. Again on the eve of All Saints, when Frederick the Wise would offer his indulgences, Luther spoke, this time in writing, by posting in accord with current practice on the door of the Castle Church a printed placard in the Latin language consisting of ninety-five theses for debate. Presumably at the time Luther did not know all the sordid details of Albert's transaction. He must have known that Albert would get half the returns, but he directed his attack solely against Tetzel's reputed sermon and Albert's printed instructions, which marked the apex of unbridled pretensions as to the efficacy of indulgences. Sixtus IV in 1476 had promised immediate release to souls in purgatory. Tetzel's jingle thus rested on papal authority. And Leo X in 1513 had promised crusaders plenary remission of all sins and reconciliation with the Most High. Albert assembled the previous pretensions and in addition dispensed explicitly with contrition on the part of those who purchased on behalf of the dead in purgatory.

Luther's *Theses* differed from the ordinary propositions for debate because they were forged in anger. The ninety-five affirmations are crisp, bold, unqualified. In the ensuing discussion he explained his meaning more fully. The following summary draws alike on the *Theses* and the subsequent explications. There were three main points: an objection to the avowed object of the expenditure, a denial of the powers of the pope over purgatory, and a consideration of the welfare of the sinner.

The attack focused first on the ostensible intent to spend the money in order to shelter the bones of St. Peter beneath a universal shrine of Christendom. Luther retorted:

The revenues of all Christendom are being sucked into this insatiable basilica. The Germans laugh at calling this the common treasure of Christendom. Before long all the churches, palaces, walls, and bridges of Rome will be built out of our money. First of all we should rear living temples, next local churches, and only last of all St. Peter's, which is not necessary for us. We Germans cannot attend St. Peter's. Better that it should never be built than that our parochial churches should be despoiled. The pope would do better to appoint one good pastor to a church than to confer indulgences upon them all. Why doesn't the pope build the basilica of St. Peter out of his own money? He is richer than Croesus. He would do better to sell St. Peter's and give the money to the poor folk who are being fleeced by the hawkers of indulgences. If the pope knew the exactions of these vendors, he would rather that St. Peter's should lie in ashes than that it should be built out of the blood and hide of his sheep.

This polemic would evoke a deep *Ja wohl* among the Germans, who for some time had been suffering from a sense of grievance against the venality of the Italian *curia* and often quite overlooked the venality of the German confederates. Luther lent himself to this distortion by accepting Albert's picture of the money going all to Rome rather than to the coffers of the Fuggers. Yet in a sense Albert's picture was right. He was

only being reimbursed for money which had already gone to Rome. In any case, however, the financial aspect was the least in Luther's eyes. He was ready to undercut the entire practice even though not a gulden left Wittenberg.

His second point denied the power of the pope over purgatory for the remission of either sin or penalty. The absolution of sin is given to the contrite in the sacrament of penance.

Papal indulgences do not remove guilt. Beware of those who say that indulgences effect reconciliation with God. The power of the keys cannot make attrition into contrition. He who is contrite has plenary remission of guilt and penalty without indulgences. The pope can remove only those penalties which he himself has imposed on earth, for Christ did not say, "Whatsoever I have bound in heaven you may loose on earth."

The penalties of purgatory the pope cannot reduce because these have been imposed by God, and the pope does not have at his disposal a treasury of credits available for transfer.

The saints have no extra credits. Every saint is bound to love God to the utmost. There is no such thing as supererogation. If there were any superfluous credits, they could not be stored up for subsequent use. The Holy Spirit would have used them fully long ago. Christ indeed had merits, but until I am better instructed I deny that they are indulgences. His merits are freely available without the keys of the pope.

Therefore I claim that the pope has no jurisdiction over purgatory. I am willing to reverse this judgment if the Church so pronounces. If the pope does have the power to release anyone from purgatory, why in the name of love does he not abolish purgatory by letting everyone out? If for the sake of miserable money he released uncounted souls, why should he not for the sake of most holy love empty the place? To say that souls are liberated from purgatory is audacious. To say they are released as soon as the coin in the coffer rings is to incite avarice. The pope would do better to give away everything without charge. The only power which the pope has over purgatory is that of making intercession on behalf of souls, and this power is exercised by any priest or curate in his parish.

Luther's attack thus far could in no sense be regarded as heretical or original. Even though Albert's instructions rested on papal bulls, there had as yet been no definitive pronouncement, and many theologians would have endorsed Luther's claims.

But he had a more devastating word:

Indulgences are positively harmful to the recipient because they impede salvation by diverting charity and inducing a false sense of security. Christians should be taught that he who gives to the poor is better than he who receives a pardon. He who spends his money for indulgences instead of relieving want receives not the indulgence of the pope but the indignation of God. We are told that money should be given by preference to the poor only in the case of extreme necessity. I suppose we are not to clothe the naked and visit the sick. What is extreme necessity? Why, I ask, does natural humanity have such goodness that it gives itself freely and does not calculate necessity but is rather solicitous that there should not be any necessity? And will the charity of God, which is incomparably kinder, do none of these things? Did Christ say, "Let him that has a cloak sell it and buy an indulgence"? Love covers a multitude of sins and is better than all the pardons of Jerusalem and Rome.

Indulgences are most pernicious because they induce complacency and thereby imperil salvation. Those persons are damned who think that letters of indulgence make them certain of salvation. God works by contraries so that a man feels himself to be lost in the very moment when he is on the point of being saved. When God is about to justify a man, he damns him. Whom he would make alive he must first kill. God's favor is so communicated in the form of wrath that it seems farthest when it is at hand. Man must first cry out that there is no health in him. He must be consumed with horror. This is the pain of purgatory. I do not know where it is located, but I do know that it can be experienced in this life. I know a man who has gone through such pains that had they lasted for one tenth of an hour he would have been reduced to ashes. In this disturbance salvation begins. When a man believes himself to be utterly lost, light breaks. Peace comes in the word of Christ through faith. He who does not have this is lost even though he be absolved a million times by the pope, and he who does have it may not wish to be released from purgatory, for true contrition seeks penalty. Christians should be encouraged to bear the cross. He who is baptized into Christ must be as

a sheep for the slaughter. The merits of Christ are vastly more potent when they bring crosses than when they bring remissions.

Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses* ranged all the way from the complaints of aggrieved Germans to the cries of a wrestler in the night watches. One portion demanded financial relief, the other called for the crucifixion of the self. The masses could grasp the first. Only a few elect spirits would ever comprehend the full import of the second, and yet in the second lay all the power to create a popular revolution. Complaints of financial extortion had been voiced for over a century without visible effect. Men were stirred to deeds only by one who regarded indulgences not merely as venal but as blasphemy against the holiness and mercy of God.

Luther took no steps to spread his theses among the people. He was merely inviting scholars to dispute and dignitaries to define, but others surreptitiously translated the theses into German and gave them to the press. In short order they became the talk of Germany. What Karl Barth said of his own unexpected emergence as a reformer could be said equally of Luther, that he was like a man climbing in the darkness a winding staircase in the steeple of an ancient cathedral. In the blackness he reached out to steady himself, and his hand laid hold of a rope. He was startled to hear the clanging of a bell.

The 95 Theses

Out of love for the truth and from desire to elucidate it, the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology, and ordinary lecturer therein at Wittenberg, intends to defend the following statements and to dispute on them in that place. Therefore he asks that those who cannot be present and dispute with him orally shall do so in their absence by letter. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

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1. When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ``Repent'' (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.
2. This word cannot be understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, that is, confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy.
3. Yet it does not mean solely inner repentance; such inner repentance is worthless unless it produces various outward mortification of the flesh.
4. The penalty of sin remains as long as the hatred of self (that is, true inner repentance), namely till our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.
5. The pope neither desires nor is able to remit any penalties except those imposed by his own authority or that of the canons.
6. The pope cannot remit any guilt, except by declaring and showing that it has been remitted by God; or, to be sure, by remitting guilt in cases reserved to his judgment. If his right to grant remission in these cases were disregarded, the guilt would certainly remain unforgiven.
7. God remits guilt to no one unless at the same time he humbles him in all things and makes him submissive to the vicar, the priest.
8. The penitential canons are imposed only on the living, and, according to the canons themselves, nothing should be imposed on the dying.
9. Therefore the Holy Spirit through the pope is kind to us insofar as the pope in his decrees always makes exception of the article of death and of necessity.
10. Those priests act ignorantly and wickedly who, in the case of the dying, reserve canonical penalties for purgatory.
11. Those tares of changing the canonical penalty to the penalty of purgatory were evidently sown while the bishops slept (Mt 13:25).

12. In former times canonical penalties were imposed, not after, but before absolution, as tests of true contrition.
13. The dying are freed by death from all penalties, are already dead as far as the canon laws are concerned, and have a right to be released from them.
14. Imperfect piety or love on the part of the dying person necessarily brings with it great fear; and the smaller the love, the greater the fear.
15. This fear or horror is sufficient in itself, to say nothing of other things, to constitute the penalty of purgatory, since it is very near to the horror of despair.
16. Hell, purgatory, and heaven seem to differ the same as despair, fear, and assurance of salvation.
17. It seems as though for the souls in purgatory fear should necessarily decrease and love increase.
18. Furthermore, it does not seem proved, either by reason or by Scripture, that souls in purgatory are outside the state of merit, that is, unable to grow in love.
19. Nor does it seem proved that souls in purgatory, at least not all of them, are certain and assured of their own salvation, even if we ourselves may be entirely certain of it.
20. Therefore the pope, when he uses the words ``plenary remission of all penalties,'' does not actually mean ``all penalties,'' but only those imposed by himself.
21. Thus those indulgence preachers are in error who say that a man is absolved from every penalty and saved by papal indulgences.
22. As a matter of fact, the pope remits to souls in purgatory no penalty which, according to canon law, they should have paid in this life.
23. If remission of all penalties whatsoever could be granted to anyone at all, certainly it would be granted only to the most perfect, that is, to very few.
24. For this reason most people are necessarily deceived by that indiscriminate and high-sounding promise of release from penalty.
25. That power which the pope has in general over purgatory corresponds to the power which any bishop or curate has in a particular way in his own diocese and parish.
26. The pope does very well when he grants remission to souls in purgatory, not by the power of the keys, which he does not have, but by way of intercession for them.
27. They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory.
28. It is certain that when money clinks in the money chest, greed and avarice can be increased; but when the church intercedes, the result is in the hands of God alone.
29. Who knows whether all souls in purgatory wish to be redeemed, since we have exceptions in St. Severinus and St. Paschal, as related in a legend.
30. No one is sure of the integrity of his own contrition, much less of having received plenary remission.
31. The man who actually buys indulgences is as rare as he who is really penitent; indeed, he is exceedingly rare.
32. Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.
33. Men must especially be on guard against those who say that the pope's pardons are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to him.
34. For the graces of indulgences are concerned only with the penalties of sacramental satisfaction established by man.
35. They who teach that contrition is not necessary on the part of those who intend to buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessional privileges preach unchristian doctrine.
36. Any truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without indulgence letters.

37. Any true Christian, whether living or dead, participates in all the blessings of Christ and the church; and this is granted him by God, even without indulgence letters.
38. Nevertheless, papal remission and blessing are by no means to be disregarded, for they are, as I have said (Thesis 6), the proclamation of the divine remission.
39. It is very difficult, even for the most learned theologians, at one and the same time to commend to the people the bounty of indulgences and the need of true contrition.
40. A Christian who is truly contrite seeks and loves to pay penalties for his sins; the bounty of indulgences, however, relaxes penalties and causes men to hate them -- at least it furnishes occasion for hating them.
41. Papal indulgences must be preached with caution, lest people erroneously think that they are preferable to other good works of love.
42. Christians are to be taught that the pope does not intend that the buying of indulgences should in any way be compared with works of mercy.
43. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better deed than he who buys indulgences.
44. Because love grows by works of love, man thereby becomes better. Man does not, however, become better by means of indulgences but is merely freed from penalties.
45. Christians are to be taught that he who sees a needy man and passes him by, yet gives his money for indulgences, does not buy papal indulgences but God's wrath.
46. Christians are to be taught that, unless they have more than they need, they must reserve enough for their family needs and by no means squander it on indulgences.
47. Christians are to be taught that they buying of indulgences is a matter of free choice, not commanded.
48. Christians are to be taught that the pope, in granting indulgences, needs and thus desires their devout prayer more than their money.
49. Christians are to be taught that papal indulgences are useful only if they do not put their trust in them, but very harmful if they lose their fear of God because of them.
50. Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the indulgence preachers, he would rather that the basilica of St. Peter were burned to ashes than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep.
51. Christians are to be taught that the pope would and should wish to give of his own money, even though he had to sell the basilica of St. Peter, to many of those from whom certain hawkers of indulgences cajole money.
52. It is vain to trust in salvation by indulgence letters, even though the indulgence commissary, or even the pope, were to offer his soul as security.
53. They are the enemies of Christ and the pope who forbid altogether the preaching of the Word of God in some churches in order that indulgences may be preached in others.
54. Injury is done to the Word of God when, in the same sermon, an equal or larger amount of time is devoted to indulgences than to the Word.
55. It is certainly the pope's sentiment that if indulgences, which are a very insignificant thing, are celebrated with one bell, one procession, and one ceremony, then the gospel, which is the very greatest thing, should be preached with a hundred bells, a hundred processions, a hundred ceremonies.
56. The true treasures of the church, out of which the pope distributes indulgences, are not sufficiently discussed or known among the people of Christ.
57. That indulgences are not temporal treasures is certainly clear, for many indulgence sellers do not distribute them freely but only gather them.
58. Nor are they the merits of Christ and the saints, for, even without the pope, the latter always work grace for the inner man, and the cross, death, and hell for the outer man.

59. St. Lawrence said that the poor of the church were the treasures of the church, but he spoke according to the usage of the word in his own time.
60. Without want of consideration we say that the keys of the church, given by the merits of Christ, are that treasure.
61. For it is clear that the pope's power is of itself sufficient for the remission of penalties and cases reserved by himself.
62. The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.
63. But this treasure is naturally most odious, for it makes the first to be last (Mt. 20:16).
64. On the other hand, the treasure of indulgences is naturally most acceptable, for it makes the last to be first.
65. Therefore the treasures of the gospel are nets with which one formerly fished for men of wealth.
66. The treasures of indulgences are nets with which one now fishes for the wealth of men.
67. The indulgences which the demagogues acclaim as the greatest graces are actually understood to be such only insofar as they promote gain.
68. They are nevertheless in truth the most insignificant graces when compared with the grace of God and the piety of the cross.
69. Bishops and curates are bound to admit the commissaries of papal indulgences with all reverence.
70. But they are much more bound to strain their eyes and ears lest these men preach their own dreams instead of what the pope has commissioned.
71. Let him who speaks against the truth concerning papal indulgences be anathema and accursed.
72. But let him who guards against the lust and license of the indulgence preachers be blessed.
73. Just as the pope justly thunders against those who by any means whatever contrive harm to the sale of indulgences.
74. Much more does he intend to thunder against those who use indulgences as a pretext to contrive harm to holy love and truth.
75. To consider papal indulgences so great that they could absolve a man even if he had done the impossible and had violated the mother of God is madness.
76. We say on the contrary that papal indulgences cannot remove the very least of venial sins as far as guilt is concerned.
77. To say that even St. Peter if he were now pope, could not grant greater graces is blasphemy against St. Peter and the pope.
78. We say on the contrary that even the present pope, or any pope whatsoever, has greater graces at his disposal, that is, the gospel, spiritual powers, gifts of healing, etc., as it is written. (1 Co 12[: 28])
79. To say that the cross emblazoned with the papal coat of arms, and set up by the indulgence preachers is equal in worth to the cross of Christ is blasphemy.
80. The bishops, curates, and theologians who permit such talk to be spread among the people will have to answer for this.
81. This unbridled preaching of indulgences makes it difficult even for learned men to rescue the reverence which is due the pope from slander or from the shrewd questions of the laity.
82. Such as: ``Why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love and the dire need of the souls that are there if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church?" The former reason would be most just; the latter is most trivial.
83. Again, ``Why are funeral and anniversary masses for the dead continued and why does he not return or permit the withdrawal of the endowments founded for them, since it is wrong to pray for the redeemed?"

84. Again, ``What is this new piety of God and the pope that for a consideration of money they permit a man who is impious and their enemy to buy out of purgatory the pious soul of a friend of God and do not rather, because of the need of that pious and beloved soul, free it for pure love's sake?''

85. Again, ``Why are the penitential canons, long since abrogated and dead in actual fact and through disuse, now satisfied by the granting of indulgences as though they were still alive and in force?''

86. Again, ``Why does not the pope, whose wealth is today greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build this one basilica of St. Peter with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers?''

87. Again, ``What does the pope remit or grant to those who by perfect contrition already have a right to full remission and blessings?''

88. Again, ``What greater blessing could come to the church than if the pope were to bestow these remissions and blessings on every believer a hundred times a day, as he now does but once?''

89. ``Since the pope seeks the salvation of souls rather than money by his indulgences, why does he suspend the indulgences and pardons previously granted when they have equal efficacy?''

90. To repress these very sharp arguments of the laity by force alone, and not to resolve them by giving reasons, is to expose the church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies and to make Christians unhappy.

91. If, therefore, indulgences were preached according to the spirit and intention of the pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved. Indeed, they would not exist.

92. Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, ``Peace, peace,'' and there is no peace! (Jer 6:14)

93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, ``Cross, cross,'' and there is no cross!

94. Christians should be exhorted to be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, death and hell.

95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven through many tribulations rather than through the false security of peace (Acts 14:22).