

LUTHER'S WORKS

VOLUME 50

LETTERS

III

GOTTFRIED G. KRODEL

Editor

HELMUT T. LEHMANN

General Editor

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The first editions of Luther's collected works appeared in the sixteenth century, and so did the first efforts to make him "speak English." In America serious attempts in these directions were made for the first time in the nineteenth century. The Saint Louis edition of Luther was the first endeavor on American soil to publish a collected edition of his works, and the Henkel Press in Newmarket, Virginia, was the first to publish some of Luther's writings in an English translation. During the first decade of the twentieth century, J. N. Lenker produced translations of Luther's sermons and commentaries in thirteen volumes. A few years later the first of the six volumes in the Philadelphia (or Holman) edition of the *Works of Martin Luther* appeared. Miscellaneous other works were published at one time or another. But a growing recognition of the need for more of Luther's works in English has resulted in this American edition of Luther's works.

The edition is intended primarily for the reader whose knowledge of late medieval Latin and sixteenth-century German is too small to permit him to work with Luther in the original languages. Those who can, will continue to read Luther in his original words as these have been assembled in the monumental Weimar edition (*D. Martin Luthers Werke*. Kritische Gesamtausgabe; Weimar, 1883 ff.). Its texts and helps have formed a basis for this edition, though in certain places we have felt constrained to depart from its readings and findings. We have tried throughout to translate Luther as he thought translating should be done. That is, we have striven for faithfulness on the basis of the best lexicographical materials available. But where literal accuracy and clarity have conflicted, it is clarity that we have preferred, so that sometimes paraphrase seemed more faithful than literal fidelity. We have proceeded in a similar way in the matter of Bible versions, translating Luther's translations. Where this could be done by the use of an existing English version—King James, Douay, or Revised Standard—we have done so. Where it could not, we have supplied our own. To indicate this in each specific instance would have been pedantic; to adopt a uniform procedure would have been artificial—especially in view of Luther's own inconsistency in this regard. In each volume the translator will be responsible primarily for matters of text and language, while the responsibility of the editor will extend principally to the historical and theological matters reflected in the introductions and notes.

Although the edition as planned will include fifty-five volumes, Luther's writings are not being translated in their entirety. Nor should they be. As he was first to insist, much of what he wrote and said was not that important. Thus the edition is a selection of works that have proved their importance for the faith, life, and history of the Christian Church. The first thirty volumes contain Luther's expositions of various Biblical books, while the remaining volumes include what are usually called his "Reformation writings" and other occasional pieces. The final volume of the set will be an index volume; in addition to an index of quotations, proper names, and topics, and a list of corrections and changes, it will contain a glossary of many of the technical terms that recur in Luther's works and that cannot be defined each time they appear. Obviously Luther cannot be forced into any neat set of rubrics. He can provide his reader with bits of autobiography or with political observations as he expounds a psalm, and he can speak tenderly about the meaning of faith in the midst of polemics against his opponents. It is the hope of publishers, editors, and translators that throughout this edition the message of Luther's faith will speak more clearly to the modern church.

JAROSLAV PELIKAN
HELMUT LEHMANN

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 50

Volume 50 of the American Edition of *Luther's Works* is the third and final volume of letters in this series; it presents 89 letters¹ written by Luther in the period from January, 1531, to February 14, 1546, a date four days prior to Luther's death.

For the Empire the period covered by the letters set forth in volume 50 was a time dominated by the Nürnberg Truce of 1532, which (at least for the time being) conceded to the Reformation a legal opportunity to exist, and by the efforts of Emperor Charles V to defeat the Turks and the French and to find a solution to the Reformation issues. He first sought a peaceful solution by means of compromises, religious colloquies, and a general council; later he sought a military solution by means of war against the Protestants. For the Protestants of the Empire this period was a time of consolidation, expansion, and international contacts, especially with England, but also a time marked by setbacks stemming from political ineptitude and personal failure. For the papacy and the papal church in the Empire this period was a time of loss of territory, souls, and resources to the Protestants, but it was also a time of inventory, of reconsideration of the essentials and marginals of the Roman church, and of preparing for battle with Protestantism. These years saw both the papacy's participation in the Smalcaldic War against the Protestants in the Empire and the opening of the Council of Trent on December 13, 1545. For Luther this period was a time of peace; it is not that Luther was free of controversies with enemies on his right and his left—in fact, Luther wrote some of his most polemical writings during this period—but rather that the Nürnberg Truce enabled Luther to live in comparative peace and to remain within the legal and political order of the Empire to the end of his life.

The period in Luther's life covered by the letters of the present volume is often called that of the "old" Luther; it is contrasted to the period of the "young" Luther, and is often characterized as a period of lack of intellectual dynamics, of dogmatism, of growing egocentricity, of cantankerousness, of ecclesiastical and bourgeois "establishment-mindedness." And in all these labels there is a grain of truth. In the portrait of an older person we discover lines and wrinkles which we have not seen in the portrait of that same person at an earlier age, or which we perhaps simply did not want to see. Consequently it seems wiser to make a little less noise about the "old" Luther than is made in certain circles, especially since in contrast to the "young" Luther our knowledge of the "old" Luther is still sketchy at best.²

Since Letters I and II had covered only the first five volumes of WA, Br, Letters III had to cover the letters in the remaining six volumes of WA, Br. Thus, the problem of selection was increased simply because of the abundance of letters. There were two further difficulties. First, many—perhaps the majority—of the letters in WA, Br 6 through 11 deal less with events in Luther's life than with day-by-day matters in the life of the evangelical churches or congregations of the Empire. These matters³ lack the excitement of the events of the 1520s, and are probably of interest only to the specialist—and he too may soon be bored. Second, tighter restrictions as to time and space available for volume 50 made necessary a revision of the original selection of letters to be presented; in this process almost all those letters dealing with the Eucharistic controversy and its settlement by the Wittenberg Concord of 1536, with Luther's controversy with the Law Faculty of Wittenberg's University, and with the bigamy case of Philip of Hesse had to be eliminated. The letters which were finally incorporated in volume 50 concentrate on three major topics: (1) Luther the person: all of the extant letters written by Luther to his wife, all the letters from the journey to Eisleben where Luther died in the early morning hours of February 18, 1546, and as many letters as possible that deal with Luther's family and home, especially his children, have been included. That this last category does not even approach completeness is obvious.

(2) The contacts which Luther, his University, and his territorial government had with England during this period.

(3) The council for which Luther had called as early as 1518, which was finally opened a little over two months prior to his death, and which had directions totally different from those envisioned by him.

These principles of selection may of course be questioned. But it seemed natural to this editor, working in an ecumenically-minded age, to concentrate on the council; and to emphasize Luther's contacts with England in an edition of Luther's letters designed for an English-speaking audience should need no justification.

According to John of Salisbury, Bernard of Chartres compared the scholars of his day to dwarfs borne aloft on the shoulders of giants. This comparison is also applicable to the selection and editing of Luther's letters presented in volumes 48 through 50 of the American Edition of *Luther's Works*: this work, too, rests on the shoulders of those who in the past have edited and translated Luther's letters and of those who have aided this present editor in his task. To name them individually or to dedicate these three volumes to some of them would not be in keeping with the editorial principles of the American Edition of *Luther's Works*. Yet scholarly integrity requires the acknowledgment of the dwarf status of this editor, and at the very least requires the acknowledgment of the work of Hans Volz, to whom international Luther research owes so much. If in a few instances this present editor was able to suggest or present new insights into the texts, then this was possible only because he had available the results of the works of the giants. If all three volumes of letters in the American Edition of *Luther's Works* can contribute to making Luther less a saintly church father or a demon-filled monk and more of a real person to the reader, if they can in any way encourage and stimulate the reader to dig more deeply into the subject matter, then these three volumes will fulfill their function, and will be worth the time and labor put into them.

G.G.K.

Bibliographical Note

It would have been impossible to produce the present volume without the work done by Ernst Ludwig Enders and his successors,¹ by Otto Clemen,² Hans Volz, Eike Wolgast,³ and Hanns Rückert,⁴ scholars who have dedicated their energies to editing Luther's letters either totally or in selection.⁵ In the preparation of the translation of and commentary to the letters presented below the common technical aids have been used.⁶

The general history which is reflected in the letters of this volume is portrayed and analyzed in Ranke's history of the Reformation⁷ (still the unsurpassed masterpiece for this period), in the second volume of the *New Cambridge Modern History*, which is edited by Geoffrey R. Elton,⁸ and in the Reformation history by Franz Lau and Ernst Bizer.⁹ This history is documented in the collections prepared by Beresford J. Kidd¹⁰ and Hans Hillerbrand.¹¹ Emil Sehling began to collect all the evangelical church ordinances of the sixteenth century into a monumental corpus, and this task is now being carried on by the Institute for Evangelical Ecclesiastical Law in Göttingen.¹² Otto Winckelmann¹³ and Ekkehart Fabian¹⁴ have analyzed the early history of the Smalcaldic League; Walther Köhler¹⁵ and Hermann Sasse¹⁶ have presented the history of the Eucharistic controversy; and Friedrich Prüser¹⁷ has shown the ups and downs in the negotiations between the Smalcaldic League and Henry VIII of England. Charles V, the great political counterpoint to the evangelicals, is the subject of Karl Brandi's well written and researched biography which breaks much new ground.¹⁸ The plans of Charles V for dealing with the German Protestants did not always match those of the papacy. In this connection the idea of settling the issues raised by the Reformation by means of a general council of the church was of major importance. After much negotiating a council was finally opened on December 13, 1545. Hubert Jedin¹⁹ presented the prelude of this event, and his work is a necessary companion volume for many of the letters presented below.

Julius Köstlin,²⁰ Roland Bainton,²¹ and Ernest Sehwiebert²² have made the life and work of Luther the topic of profound studies which supply the details necessary to place the presented letters into the background of Luther's life. During much of the time covered in the present volume, Luther was dean of Wittenberg's Theological Faculty; in this position he was involved in many academic disputations of which the texts have been edited by Paul Drews.²³ The documents and events related to the last days of Luther's life, and to his death, have been presented by Jakob Strieder²⁴ and Christof Schubart.²⁵

The lives and letters of some of the men²⁶ with whom Luther either worked or corresponded are valuable sources of information concerning the background of some of the following letters. A selection from the works of Luther's co-worker Melancthon is now available in a modern edition.²⁷ Clyde Manschreck²⁸ has presented a biography of Melancthon, while Irmgard Höss²⁹ has made available a biography of Spalatin, and Bernhard Klaus³⁰ has published a biography of Dietrich.

The works of Erasmus of Rotterdam are cited according to the early eighteenth century Clericus edition,³¹ while the correspondence of Erasmus has been made available by Percy S. Allen³² in a masterful modern edition.

The history of the University of Wittenberg, Luther's base of operation, is reflected in the official papers,³³ from which much information on persons and events contemporary with Luther can be gained.

Many of the letters presented in volume 50 deal with the relationship of Luther, of Wittenberg University, and of Luther's territorial sovereign, Elector John Frederick, to England. In addition to Pruser's work mentioned above, the works by Gordon Rupp,³⁴ William Clebsch,³⁵ Gustave Constant,³⁶ and Neelak Tjernagel³⁷ provide the necessary materials for placing these letters into their proper context.

Note on Scriptural References

In quoting Scripture, Luther cites only chapter, not verse, since at Luther's time chapters were not yet customarily divided into verses. In the present translation Luther's own citations have been retained—except in the case of the Psalms—and supplemented or corrected as need be in brackets to conform to the versification in the RSV. If there is a major difference between the text offered by the RSV and the text offered by the Luther Bible, or some other version, then the version which comes closest to the passage cited by Luther has been added in parentheses.

Citations from the Psalms present a special problem. In the Vulgate—and in the modern Roman Catholic English versions based upon it—the Psalms are numbered differently than in the AV and RSV, though in both cases the total number of Psalms is 150. The difference parallels that between the Septuagint and the Hebrew text in that for the greater part of the Psalter the numeration of the former is one behind that of the latter; only for Psalms 1–8 and 148–150 is the numeration identical. Further confusion arises from the fact that in modern Latin and German Bibles—following Hebrew precedent—the title or introductory statement attached to many of the Psalms is frequently given a verse number, a practice not followed in the RSV. In the present volume Luther's Psalm citations, if they were correct in terms of the Vulgate of his time, have been altered directly in the process of translation to conform to the chapter numbers of the RSV. The reference to the Vulgate or to Luther's Bible found occasionally in the parentheses suggests only that the quoted text is closer to the Vulgate translation or to Luther's translation than to the RSV.

To Elector John¹

[Wittenberg, about January 16, 1531]

One of the problems facing the evangelicals was the dissension on the Lord's Supper. Consequently they responded to the Imperial Summons for the Diet of Augsburg² as three independent parties, each one highly suspicious of the others. There were the Lutherans who rallied around the Augsburg Confession; there was Zwingli and the Zürich city council which, on July 8, 1530, handed in to the Imperial government a confession of faith;³ and between these two parties stood some of the upper German cities led by Strassburg, which, on July 9, 1530, handed in to the Imperial government the Tetrapolitana.⁴ As early as the end of September, 1530, Martin Bucer⁵ took the initiative and conferred with Luther at the Coburg in an attempt to bring about the unification of German Protestantism. Encouraged by the results of this conference, Bucer went on a fact-finding mission⁶ through the upper German cities, and ended this trip with a visit to Zwingli in Zürich, and to Oecolampadius in Basel. Upon his return to Strassburg on October 17,⁷ Bucer drafted a documents⁸ which was to demonstrate that Luther and Zwingli were really in agreement on the Lord's Supper, and that the whole controversy was more a matter of terminology than of substantial disagreement. This document was approved by the evangelical clergy of Strassburg on November 9,⁹ and was sent to Oecolampadius, and by him to Zwingli. The latter categorically rejected it.¹⁰ Bucer now revised his document¹¹ in the hope that it would be, if not accepted by Zwingli, then at least tolerated by him, and forwarded this new version to Luther and to Landgrave Philip,¹² apparently on January 1, 1531.¹³ On January 10 Landgrave Philip, following Bucer's request,¹⁴ sent this document to Elector John, and urged him to enjoin Luther from engaging in polemics against the Zwinglians. The Elector delayed the return of the Landgrave's messenger and forwarded the document to Luther, requesting Luther's opinion on it by return mail. On January 17 the Elector forwarded to the Landgrave a copy of a Zettel (note), sent to him by Luther, which contained Luther's opinion on Bucer's document.¹⁵ It is generally assumed that letter No. 237 is this note. While Luther rejoices that he and Bucer have found agreement, he insists that before the matter can be finally settled and unity proclaimed, the following points have to be clarified: (a) Do the Zwinglians really teach about Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper as Bucer says they do? (b) What is Bucer's position, and what is the Zwinglians' position on the manducatio oralis impiorum? In view of his discussions with Bucer at the Coburg concerning this last issue Luther expresses hope that it can be settled to his satisfaction, and without too much difficulty.

On Elector John, see LW 48, 269, n. 8.

Text in German: WA, Br 6, 20–21.

First, Martin Bucer indicates that the other party¹⁶ agrees with us regarding the sacrament: that is, they believe, as we do, that the true body and blood of our Lord are present in the sacrament and with the Words [of Institution] are distributed as food of souls, or as strengthening for the Christian faith. We are pleased to receive this news, and we rejoice in our hearts hearing it.

Second, however, Bucer alone confesses this and presents his own opinion, as if the others, too, teach likewise.¹⁷ Yet, we are of course well aware—and books and actions plainly document it—that Zwingli and Oecolampadius have intensely fought against this teaching¹⁸ and have maintained as the central point that Christ is able to be corporeally present [only] in heaven, at only one place, and not in the sacrament. At this point, therefore, it is necessary first of all to be certain whether the others, too, teach as Bucer in good hope thinks they do, and whether they also publicly teach this among the people and act accordingly. Otherwise the unification might be put on a poor foundation, and matters might afterwards become worse. As I, Doctor Luther, have diligently stressed to Bucer at the Coburg,¹⁹ one must start such unification from a solid, clear foundation, or forget about it.

Third, in addition to this corporeal presence of Christ for souls, which Bucer affirms here, I have discussed with him also that type of corporeal presence by which both believers and unbelievers orally receive Christ's true body and blood under bread and wine. In this connection he made statements²⁰ over which I heartily rejoiced. In this document, however, nothing is said about this issue. Yet we think that if they go so far as to say that Christ's body is corporeally distributed and present to the soul, it should not

be difficult [for them] to affirm that Christ's body is also present to the mouth, or to the body, or in the bread and given to the mouth.

If now God would abundantly give grace (which we wish from our hearts) that they also would be one with us on this issue, and together with us affirm and teach this, then unity among us would indeed be a reality, and a great work and miracle of God would be completed.

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To Martin Bucer Wittenberg, January 22, 1531

In this letter Luther once more discusses the document mentioned in letter No. 237.¹ He expresses his joy that the matter has progressed to the point that he and Bucer can agree on Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper. The condition which for Luther has to be fulfilled before unity could be proclaimed, however, is the securing of Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper. This could be accomplished only by affirming that in the Lord's Supper Christ's true body and blood are distributed to the believer and also the unbeliever. If Bucer cannot join in this affirmation—and Luther envisions this as a real possibility—then unity could not be established, argues Luther, and this for two reasons: (a) Luther's own conscience demands affirmation of the confession that Christ's body and blood are offered to believers and unbelievers alike; and (b) a minister's responsibility for the faith of the communicants permits no yielding at this point, since unity means altar fellowship. To establish altar fellowship before agreement on the manducatio oralis impiorum² had been reached would mean that communicants could receive something other than what they believed they were receiving. Luther pleads with Bucer to interpret his stand not as a matter of stubbornness, but as a matter pertaining to conscience and faith. This plea is underscored by Luther's statement that unity among the evangelicals is a matter highly desirable, even necessary, for the promotion of the gospel. In conclusion Luther assures Bucer of his continuous prayers for Christ's guidance and grace that unity may indeed come.

On Martin Bucer, see LW 48, 247, n. 13.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 6, 25–26.³

To the venerable Mr. Martin Bucer,⁴ a minister of God's Word in the church at Strassburg, my superior⁵ Grace and peace in Christ. We have read the small confession⁶ which you, my Bucer, have sent, and we approve of it. We give thanks to God that we agree at least, as you write, insofar as we both confess that the body and blood of Christ are truly present in the Lord's Supper, and that together with the Words [of Institution] they are distributed as food of the soul. I am amazed, however, that you think that Zwingli and Oecolampadius also share this opinion or position. But now let me speak to you.

If, then, we confess that the body of Christ is truly distributed⁷ to the soul as food, and if there is no reason for us not to say that the body of Christ is also distributed in this way to the unbelieving soul, although the unbelieving soul does not receive it—just as the light of the sun is offered equally to the seeing and to the blind—I am wondering why it bothers you people to confess also that the body of Christ is offered, together with the bread, externally to the mouth of the believer and unbeliever alike; for through the concession that the body of Christ is distributed to individual souls it is, of course, necessarily granted that the body is present and can be distributed in many places at the same time. If this thought has not yet matured among you people, however, then I think this matter should be postponed and further divine grace should be awaited. I am unable to abandon this position, and if, as you write, you do not think that this position is demanded by Christ's words, my conscience nevertheless holds that it is required. Therefore I am unable to confess with you that total unity exists between us, if I do not wish to harm my conscience, [or] rather, if I do not wish to sow among us the seed of far worse turmoil for our congregations, and of more dreadful future dissension among us. [This would be the result,] if we had created unity among us in this way. I ask you, therefore, for the sake of conscience and peace in your congregations and in ours, not to let it go so far that we stir up more disturbances and scandals through this remedy for schism, but to entrust this matter to God. In the meantime let us be guardians of whatever peace and agreement thus far has been established, as we declare that the body of the Lord is truly present and distributed inwardly to the believing soul. For you people can easily understand that, if unity were established between us, some of your people would commune in our congregations,⁸ and also some of

ours in your congregations. Those who would commune with a different faith and with a different attitude of conscience would necessarily on both sides receive something different from that which they believe [they are receiving]. Thus it would be unavoidable that through the ministry [of the sacrament] and⁹ our consciences either their faith would be made a mockery through hidden deceit and lies¹⁰ if the communicants were unaware of this difference, or, if they were aware of the difference, then their faith would be destroyed through a public sacrilege. You can see how devout and Christian this would be. For this reason let us select rather the lesser of two evils, if one of the two must be endured at all. Let us therefore rather put up with this smaller disagreement, together with a limited peace, lest through our efforts to cure this evil we may stir up real tragedies of more serious discord and unbearable uproar.

I wish you would believe that, as I have told you at the Coburg,¹¹ I want to settle our discord even though I might have to live three times to accomplish it, because I have seen how necessary your fellowship is for us, and how the gospel was and still is disadvantaged [by our discord]. I have become so much aware of this that I am convinced that all the gates of hell,¹² the whole papacy, all of Turkey, the whole world, all the flesh, and whatever evils there are could not have harmed the gospel at all, if we had only been of one mind. But what am I to do with something which cannot be accomplished? If you wish to be fair, then you will attribute the fact that I shun this unity not to stubbornness, but to the urging of my conscience and to the force of my faith. Since our discussion at the Coburg I have great hope, but this hope is not yet unwavering.

May the Lord Jesus enlighten us, and may he make us perfectly of one mind; for this I pray, for this I sigh, for this I long. Farewell in the Lord.

Wittenberg, January 22, 1531

MARTIN LUTHER

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To Lazarus Spengler

[Wittenberg,] February 15, 1531

In the alliance negotiations of the evangelicals which followed the 1529 Diet of Speyer the right of armed resistance to the emperor had been questioned.¹ The Nürnberg city council categorically rejected the existence of any such right.² In the aftermath of the Diet of Augsburg³ a meeting of the evangelicals was held during the last days of December, 1530, in Smalcald for the purpose of creating a defense alliance. The Nürnberg delegation to this meeting was pushed into a corner by the Electoral Saxon delegation, which cited the short note Luther had written on this issue in October of 1530.⁴ The Saxons presented this document in such a way that Luther appeared to have changed his position on the resistance issue fundamentally, and to have endorsed wholeheartedly armed resistance to the emperor. Lazarus Spengler, Nürnberg's chancellor,⁵ immediately contacted Luther through Wenceslas Link⁶ and asked for clarification.⁷ Shortly thereafter, on February 3, 1531, Spengler contacted Luther once more, this time through Veit Dietrich.⁸ In his reply, letter No. 239, Luther first makes clear that he is not at all aware of having changed his position on the resistance issue. He goes on to state that during a meeting at Torgau he had endorsed armed resistance to the emperor, provided that the situation were as the legal experts had then presented it to him. If indeed this were the case, then, Luther states, there would be no reason for not endorsing armed resistance to the emperor;⁹ since thus far the legal experts had not proven their arguments, however, Luther refuses to make any final decision on this matter.

On Lazarus Spengler, see LW 48, 184.

Text in German with portions in Latin: WA, Br 6, 36–37.¹⁰

To the excellent Mr. Lazarus Spengler, chancellor¹¹ of the Nürnberg city council,¹² my friend and brother Grace and peace. Prudent, dear Sir and Friend! Master¹³ Veit¹⁴ has informed me of Your Honor's concern, that Your Honor is troubled by the arguments¹⁵ of our friends who boast as if we had recanted the earlier brief¹⁶ [which stated] that one is not to resist the emperor.

I am certainly not aware of any such recantation. At Torgau,¹⁷ however, it did happen that our friends heatedly debated with us on this matter. Some of them even intended to decide and do what seemed right to them without consulting us. This we had to allow to happen.¹⁸ Since we finally insisted, however, that the legal dictum, "One may fight force with force,"¹⁹ would not be sufficient [to justify resistance to the emperor], as we had also argued²⁰ earlier in the brief,²¹ etc., our friends produced the following: the

Imperial law permits armed resistance to the governing authority in case of flagrant injustice. At this point we said that we did not know whether the law states this. If the emperor has bound²² himself in such a way, then we will let him be bound but it would be their responsibility.²³ Since we teach:²⁴ “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s,”²⁵ and since it is the emperor’s [law] that one is to resist him in case of flagrant injustice, it would not be up to us either to alter or to improve²⁶ the emperor’s law. And so the matter rested on this syllogism: Whatever the emperor or the Imperial law has ordained has to be observed; the law, however, ordains resisting the emperor in such a case;²⁷ therefore one has to resist [the emperor], etc. Until now we have taught the major premise, [that is,] that one is to obey the sword in matters of state. We have, however, neither affirmed the minor premise, nor do we know [whether it is correct]. Therefore I would draw no conclusion; but we referred the whole matter back to the legal experts, that they might handle it. We do not wish, however, to settle [this issue], or counsel, impel, or urge anyone to do anything other than this major premise: the emperor is to be obeyed. If [the legal experts] could prove the minor premise, and this is not our task,²⁸ then we, who have taught the major premise, cannot deny the conclusion. And then one would resist the emperor not on the basis of that dictum of natural and divine law²⁹ “One may fight force with force,” and of the others which we have discussed, but on the basis of a new law which goes beyond natural law—[that is,] on the basis of the law of state and the Imperial law, by which the emperor has renounced his law³⁰—[for] we cannot undermine the use and efficacy of a law of state and of the Imperial law. Thus we theologians have maintained our earlier position,³¹ have postponed a decision on that new [legal opinion], and are awaiting the proof of the legal experts, which we have not yet seen.

Veit³² will report the rest.³³ Hurriedly,

February 15, 1531

MARTIN LUTHER

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To Wenceslas Link¹

Wittenberg, May 12, 1531

In connection with the sacrament of baptism, the evangelical church was confronted with the custom of the papal church of conditionally baptizing children.² This conditional baptism was used for foundlings, or if parents or midwives were not certain whether an emergency baptism had been correctly performed, or in any case in which one did not know whether a person had been correctly baptized or baptized at all. In these cases the priest was to use the regular liturgy of baptism but was to say: “I do not baptize you again, but if you have not yet been baptized, then I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.”³

Letter No. 240 is Luther’s opinion on this practice. The letter is a reply to an inquiry made by Link⁴ in Nürnberg. Here, in connection with the work on the Brandenburg-Nürnberg Church Ordinance,⁵ a controversy on the practice of conditional baptism had developed.⁶ On the one side stood Link and others who either openly rejected the practice or did not wish to adopt a precise statement on it; on the other side stood Andrew Osiander⁷ who advocated the retention of the practice.

Luther categorically rejects the practice of conditional baptism,⁸ and then develops a detailed argumentation for his position. His main reason is that conditional baptism turns the sacrament of baptism into a matter of uncertainty, while baptism is and should be the most certain assurance of a man’s salvation. Concluding his argumentation, Luther briefly discusses Numbers 5:19–20, a passage which Osiander had used to substantiate his position. In the last paragraph of the letter Luther thanks Link for some oranges; he also inquires whether Link had intended him to have a small washbasin and a two-arm candelabrum, both of which had arrived with the oranges.

On Wenceslas Link, see LW 48, 169 f.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 6, 96–97.

Grace and Peace

Regarding the question of conditional baptism, which you have presented to me in your recent letter, my Wenceslas, I have consulted with Master⁹ Philip,¹⁰ and after carefully considering the issue, we arrived at the following decision: Conditional baptism must be abolished in the church. In case one either doubts¹¹ or

simply doesn't know¹² that a person has been baptized, one is simply to baptize unconditionally, and as if that person never had been baptized.

These are the reasons [for our position]: A conditional baptism accomplishes nothing; it neither denies nor affirms anything; it neither gives nor takes away anything. Suppose someone is baptized conditionally;¹³ this person is afterwards forced to say: I am now as ignorant and uncertain whether I am baptized as I was before, and so are all who have baptized me. For if the first baptism was a valid one (a fact which has to be unknown, whether I like it or not), then the second baptism is nothing (because it is a conditional one). If the first baptism was not a valid one (and again, I am unable to know this), then the second baptism also is nothing because it is a matter of uncertainty and has to be considered a matter of uncertainty, so long as the first baptism is a matter of uncertainty. Because of the condition attached to the first baptism,¹⁴ which has been a matter of uncertainty, the validity of the second baptism, too, remains forever a matter of uncertainty.

It is better now that baptism be a matter of certainty, at least for the baptizers themselves, who afterwards could testify before the congregation.¹⁵ Therefore, in this case¹⁶ one sins more safely by rebaptizing, if one sins at all (which we don't believe), than by giving an uncertain baptism;¹⁷ this would definitely be wrong, because such a baptism is not a matter of certainty, but is something uncertain. Under these circumstances we then have a true and certain baptizing versus an uncertain baptizing. In this way we do not, however, thereby become raging Anabaptists. For they, as you know, publicly condemn the first certain baptism and do not want to call it a baptism [at all]. We, however, wish to leave that which is uncertain to its own fate, commend it to God's judgment, and administer a certain baptism. We believe we thus act correctly and safely.

Further, should someone baptize with a different formula, as you write,¹⁸ for instance, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of St. Michael," etc., then we are certain that this is no baptism at all, not even a conditional one.

Regarding the principle¹⁹ of condition in the law concerning jealousy,²⁰ that is another argument.²¹ For law and gospel are different matters. The gospel is God's promise, which must be a matter of certainty. The law deals with our things and works, can be observed or not observed, and can easily be made subject to a condition. And finally, the law also reveals the hearts of men to us who know nothing. But the promise simply bestows upon us things of God, whether we know it or not, even though we definitely know that men are in need of God's things, while we do not know with certainty, however, whether men have sinned against the law.²²

Since I am busy, I am writing this without order and in a hurry. Please sort it out and collect from this jungle²³ the better thoughts.

I thank you for the oranges which you have presented to us. A small washbasin, together with a two-arm candelabrum, was enclosed closed [with your last shipment]. I do not know whether you have given them [to us, since] you said nothing about it.

Farewell, and pray for me.

Wittenberg, May 12, 1531

MARTIN LUTHER

241

To Mrs. Margaret Luther¹ [Wittenberg,] May 20, 1531

Having been informed by his brother James that their mother is seriously ill, Luther writes this letter of spiritual counsel to her. Luther impresses upon his mother that her present illness is a sign of God's gracious chastisement, which is slight if compared with Christ's suffering. Taking John 16:33, and I Corinthians 15:54 f., as point of departure, Luther introduces the theme of Christ's victory over death and the devil, a victory which is pledged to the faithful through Word and sacraments, and which has to be affirmed especially now in the hour of illness, because it is the devil's purpose to make this victory uncertain. Consequently Luther encourages his mother to see in this illness an opportunity for gratefulness to God for his act of salvation in Christ, and for the fact that God has rescued her from the papistic darkness and brought her to the light of the gospel. In closing, Luther commends his mother to God's grace, and assures her of the prayers of his whole family.

On Margaret Luther, see LW 48, 329 f.²

Text in German: WA, Br 6, 103–106.

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior, Amen

My dearly beloved³ Mother! I have received my brother James's⁴ letter concerning your illness. Of course this grieves me deeply, especially because I cannot be with you in person, as I certainly would like to be. Yet I am coming to you personally through this letter, and I, together with all the members of my family, shall certainly not be absent from you in spirit.

I trust that you have long since been abundantly instructed, without any help from me, that (God be praised) you have taken [God's] comforting Word into [your heart], and that you are adequately provided with preachers and comforters. Nevertheless I shall do my part too and, according to my duty, acknowledge myself to be your child, and you to be my mother, as our common God and creator has made us and bound us to each other with mutual ties, so that I shall in this way increase the number of your comforters.

First, dear Mother, by God's grace you well know by now that this sickness of yours is [God's] fatherly, gracious chastisement.⁵ It is a quite small chastisement in comparison with that which he inflicts upon the godless, and sometimes even his own dear children, when one person is beheaded, another burned, a third drowned, and so on.⁶ And so all of us must sing: "For Thy sake we are being daily killed and regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."⁷ This sickness therefore should not distress or depress you. On the contrary, you should accept it with thankfulness as being sent by God's grace; [you should] recognize how slight a suffering it is—even if it be a sickness unto death—compared with the sufferings of his own dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did not have to suffer on behalf of himself, as we have to do, but who suffered for us and for our sins.

Second, dear Mother, you also know the true center and foundation of your salvation from whom you are to seek comfort in this and all troubles, namely, Jesus Christ, the cornerstone.⁸ He will not waver or fail us, nor allow us to sink or perish, for he is the Savior and is called the Savior of all poor sinners, and of all who are caught in tribulation and death, and rely on him, and call on his name.

[Christ] says: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."⁹ If he has overcome the world, surely he has also overcome the sovereign of this world¹⁰ with all his power. But what else is [the devil's] power but death, by which he has made us subject to himself, [and] held us captives on account of our sin? But now that death and sin are overcome, we may joyfully and cheerfully listen to the sweet words: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." We certainly are not to doubt that these words are indeed true. More than that, we are commanded to accept this comfort with joy and thanksgiving. Whoever would be unwilling to be comforted by these words would do the greatest injustice and dishonor to the dear Comforter, as if it were not true that he bids us to be of good cheer, or as if it were not true that he has overcome the world. [If we acted thus,] we would only restore within ourselves the tyranny of the vanquished devil, sin, and death, and oppose the dear Savior. From this may God preserve us.

Let us therefore now rejoice with all assurance and gladness, and should any thought of sin or death frighten us, let us in opposition to this lift up our hearts and say: "Behold, dear soul, what are you doing? Dear death, dear sin, how is it that you are alive and terrify me? Do you not know that you have been overcome? Do you, death, not know that you are quite dead? Do you not know the One who says of you: 'I have overcome the world?' It does not behoove me either to listen to your terrifying suggestions, or heed them. Rather [I should listen] to the comforting words of my Savior: 'Be of good cheer, be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' He is the victor, the true hero, who gives and appropriates to me his victory with this word: 'Be of good cheer!' I shall cling to him, and to his words and comfort I shall hold fast; regardless whether I remain here or go yonder, I shall live by [this word, for] he does not lie to me. You would like to deceive me with your terrors, and with your lying thoughts you would like to tear me away from such a victor and savior. But they are lies, as surely as it is true that he has overcome you and commanded us to be comforted.

"Saint Paul also boasts likewise and defies the terrors of death: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O hell, where is thy sting?'¹¹ Like a wooden image of death, you can terrify and challenge, but you have no power to strangle. For your victory, sting, and power have been swallowed up in Christ's victory. You can show your teeth, but you cannot devour, for God has given us the victory over you through Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be praise and thanks. Amen."

By such words and thoughts, and by none other, let your heart be moved, dear Mother. Above all be thankful that God has brought you to such knowledge and not allowed you to remain caught in papistic error, by which we were taught to rely on our own works and the holiness of the monks, and to consider this only comfort of ours, our Savior, not as a comforter but as a severe judge and tyrant,¹² so that we had to flee from him to Mary and the saints, and not expect of him any grace or comfort. But now we know it differently, [we know] about the unfathomable goodness and mercy of our heavenly Father: that Jesus Christ is our mediator,¹³ our throne of grace,¹⁴ and our bishop¹⁵ before God in heaven, who daily intercedes for us and reconciles all who believe in him alone, and who call upon him;¹⁶ that he is not a judge, nor cruel, except for those who do not believe in him, or who reject his comfort and grace; [and] that he is not the man who accuses and threatens us, but rather the man who reconciles us [with God], and intercedes for us with his own death and blood shed for us so that we should not fear him, but approach him with all assurance and call him dear Savior, sweet Comforter, faithful bishop of our souls, etc.

To such knowledge (I say) God has graciously called you. You possess God's seal and letter of this [calling], namely, the gospel you hear preached, baptism, and the sacrament of the altar,¹⁷ so that you should have no trouble or danger. Only be of good cheer and thank [God] joyfully for such great grace! For he who has begun [his work] in you will also graciously complete it,¹⁸ since we are unable to help ourselves in such matters. We are unable to accomplish anything against sin, death, and the devil by our own works. Therefore, another appears for us and in our stead who definitely can do better; he gives us his victory, and commands us to accept it and not to doubt it. He says: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"; and again: "I live, and you will live also, and no one will take your joy from you."¹⁹

The Father and God of all consolation²⁰ grant you, through his holy Word and Spirit, a steadfast, joyful, and grateful faith blessedly to overcome this and all other trouble, and finally to taste and experience that what he himself says is true: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And with this I commend your body and soul to his mercy. Amen.

All your children and my Katie pray for you; some weep, others say at dinner: "Grandmother is very sick." God's grace be with us all. Amen.

May 20, 1531

Your loving son,

MARTIN LUTHER

242

To Gregory Brück¹

[Wittenberg, end of May, 1531]

As a result of the negotiations among the evangelicals, the Smalcaldic League was organized at the end of December 1530.² Though a defense alliance, it was sufficient reason for the propapal Estates of the Empire to worry. Consequently the Archbishop of Mainz and the Count Palatine (who already during the Diet of Augsburg had been opposed to any forceful action against the evangelicals)³ began negotiations to bring about a compromise between the Emperor⁴ on the one side, and the Elector of Saxony⁵ and the Landgrave of Hesse⁶ (the leaders of the Smalcaldic League) on the other side. Asked for his opinion, Luther urges negotiating in good faith on the basis of the materials which had been prepared for earlier negotiations. Luther justifies his position with the saying: "Gain a night, gain a year."

On Gregory Brück, see LW 49, 51 f.

Text in German: WA, Br 6, 108.

My dear Mr. Chancellor: I am of the opinion that the negotiations proposed by the Cardinal of Mainz⁷ should not be rejected.⁸ On the basis of prior negotiations⁹ it can easily be established at which points one may or may not give in.¹⁰ If one could work for peace, and a decision on our case could be postponed,¹¹ then one should certainly accept this [proposal], according to the saying: "Gain a night, gain a year"; [or,] "Another day, another way,"¹² etc.

MARTIN LUTHER

To Elector John [Wittenberg,] June 16, 1531

The following letter shows Luther as a concerned pastor and as a responsible member of the community. Luther informs the Elector of the scandalous behavior of John Metzsch, the Electoral captain in Wittenberg, who, notwithstanding brotherly admonition and privately enacted excommunication, continues to patronize prostitutes, and whom Luther plans to censure in public. Luther further brings to the Elector's attention the fact that portions of the Wittenberg city wall were torn down but not replaced, that this situation endangers the city, and that, in Luther's view, Metzsch is not fulfilling his responsibilities in connection with this matter. Luther warns the Elector that Metzsch's conduct may well cause some serious disturbances among the people.

On Elector John, see LW 48, 269, n. 8.

Text in German: WA, Br 6, 122–124.

To my Most Gracious Lord, Duke John, elector in Saxony: *Personal* to His Electoral Grace Grace and peace in Christ! Most Illustrious, Noble Sovereign, Most Gracious Lord! It is not for me to be concerned with the affairs of secular government, or to disparage Your Electoral Grace's officials, nor shall I. Since the general talk is so loud and widespread, however, and since I am of the opinion that Your Electoral Grace expects faithful and loving service of me—which, of course, I am abundantly obligated to perform—and since, should something later go wrong, I would not want to be blamed for having been silent to the disadvantage of Your Electoral Grace, [I am writing this letter].

Our captain,¹ Hans Metzsch,² has time and again been admonished by me, kindly but seriously, to stay away from harlotry and dealings with prostitutes. After a while it was impossible for me, as a preacher, to tolerate such scandalous behavior or to be silent about it. But he continues, and does it so openly that everyone's mouth and nose, ears and eyes are full of it. He also admitted to me in private that he could not be without women. Thereupon I informed him of my refusal to associate with him personally, and privately³ I forbade him to come to the sacrament. Since he is so closely knit to the braids of prostitutes that he shows little fear of God with his conduct, and since from now on I will have to proceed against him also by means of public preaching and judgment, I ask with this letter for Your Electoral Grace's benevolent attitude [toward me]. Should Your Electoral Grace find out that I clash with Metzsch on this issue, then Your Electoral Grace may graciously remember this information I have given. For this scandal will be an obstacle to the preaching of the gospel,⁴ and will give to others also occasion to do evil. Metzsch may be a good soldier, but I would not want him to defend me in an emergency since he does not have before his eyes God who has thus far miraculously protected us without striking a blow, and daily still preserves us.

Second, with this letter I also want to demonstrate my faithfulness toward Your Electoral Grace. I also talked in a friendly way with Metzsch—and others—concerning the razing of the city wall.⁵ But since I am told I am a man of the pen and do not understand such a matter, I leave it alone. Nevertheless, if things turn out differently than these contractors think, no one should be in a position to say that I have not warned Your Electoral Grace of this danger. For I know very well how concerned one has been until now with the gates of the city, so that the city would be properly locked. But now the city stands open day and night because [of a break in the wall] of more than one hundred paces, so that pigs and all kinds of animals⁶ run into [town]; it is possible to see, walk, and shoot without any obstacle from the fields into the town square, and from the town square into the fields, because the wall is torn down to the foundation and nothing new has been built, or even surveyed, to replace it. If this is in good order, then it is fine with me, and Your Electoral Grace will accept this information of mine in a gracious attitude, and consider this matter further. My head is full of worry because there are many children⁷ of important and good people here, and times are very dangerous. God might allow something to happen which we would have to deplore belatedly and in vain. Metzsch is headstrong,⁸ and creates stout opposition toward himself. Therefore it is necessary for Your Electoral Grace to look into this situation, so that no dissatisfaction arises. For good people are patient, but too heavy a weight tears the bag, and a spark could easily start to glow among the impatient people who might get tired of Metzsch's stubbornness, cursing, and tyranny.

Thank God this is a good, peaceful, and law-abiding town. Oppression and strongheadedness, however, could change people so that they might consider not respecting an official in spite of the fact that he is an official of their territorial lord.

Again I ask Your Electoral Grace to accept this letter as an expression of honest, humble faithfulness. I have been silent long enough so that I would by no means disparage anyone. But unless I am totally out of my mind, [Metzsch and the contractors] are doing with Your Electoral Grace's property and money as they please. Although Your Electoral Grace perhaps knows all of this, I wanted to demonstrate my services.

God strengthen and comfort Your Electoral Grace's heart against all the intrigues of the devil. Amen.

June 16, 1531

Your Electoral Grace's humbly dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER

244

To Michael Stifel¹

[Wittenberg, June or July,]² 1531

Luther announces that he, along with many cherry-loving boys, will soon visit Stifel's cherry garden.

On Michael Stifel, see LW 49, 140, 211, n. 6.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 6, 143.

Grace and Peace

Greetings, greetings, greetings, my Michael. I have nothing else to write to you. So that you might not complain, however, that I write nothing to you, I wanted at least to write to you this ["greeting"]. At the same time I wanted to inform you that shortly we, together with many cherry-loving boys, will come to you, God willing, and visit your cherries.

Farewell in the Lord.

1531

MARTIN LUTHER

245

To Robert Barnes¹

[Wittenberg, September 3, 1531]²

One of the events which shocked Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century was the divorce of Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon.³ While the Roman Curia played politics and procrastinated in making a decision on Henry's request for an annulment of his marriage, Thomas Cranmer prepared the fatal blow to papal jurisdiction in England. In the late summer of 1529 he suggested to the King that the universities were the institutions which alone would be capable of giving an impartial verdict on the legitimacy and validity of the King's marriage. As a result of this suggestion the court contacted the major universities of Europe for opinions on the King's case. With very few exceptions the universities approved the planned annulment of the marriage.⁴

In order to strengthen his position, the King also sought out the opinions of the outstanding evangelical theologians on the Continent. To make the necessary contacts the court used Symon Grynaeus,⁵ a Humanist from Basel, who visited England in spring of 1531 for the purpose of studying manuscripts, and who returned to Basel by mid-July. While Grynaeus' exact commission is unknown, he carried sufficient material with him so that Melancthon, Bucer and the preachers of Strassburg, Zwingli, and others could issue briefs on this matter.⁶ At the same time contacts were established between the English court and Landgrave Philip of Hesse,⁷ who was to function as an intermediary between the court and Wittenberg University, especially Luther. By the time Philip contacted Luther,⁸ Luther had already spoken⁹ on the issue in a letter to Robert Barnes,¹⁰ one of the English evangelical exiles.

Barnes, a former Augustinian and a Cambridge University Doctor of Divinity, had been the outstanding member of the evangelically-oriented White Horse Inn group of theologians.¹¹ He had been tried for heresy and put under house arrest, but had been able to escape to the Continent. In the summer of 1530 he appeared in Wittenberg, and "early in September, 1531, Barnes became involved in" the

matter of Henry's divorce¹²—how is not clear. Was Barnes contacted by Grynaeus? Or by the English court? The latter seems to be suggested by the fact that Thomas Cromwell was involved in arranging for Barnes's safe-conduct for the return to England.¹³ Or was Barnes perhaps acting on his own initiative in an attempt either to bring about a rapprochement between Henry and Luther,¹⁴ or to put himself into the good graces of the King? In any case, just as Grynaeus had done with his contacts, Barnes provided Luther with copies of the briefs issued by the universities.¹⁵ Having obtained Luther's opinion on the matter, Barnes traveled via Magdeburg¹⁶ and Lübeck to Antwerp, where in November of 1531 he published a supplication addressed to the King;¹⁷ on the basis of this supplication Barnes hoped to be able to return to England. Under royal safe-conduct Barnes did indeed go to England in December of 1531, and delivered Luther's opinion on the marriage case. Obviously Luther's opinion, which was so contrary to all of the King's plans, did not endear Barnes to the King.

Luther categorically rejects the validity of the argument that the King has the duty or privilege to divorce the Queen. He substantiates this contention by discussing some of those arguments which had been presented in support of the divorce. He deals especially with the question of sin in marrying a deceased brother's wife. Concentrating on Leviticus 18:16, Luther points out that this passage does not establish the necessity of the divorce. Discussing the relationship of positive law to natural law and to divine law, Luther backs his stand against the divorce by arguing that matrimony is a matter of divine law, and that according to divine law matrimony is indissoluble. For divine law takes precedence over all statements of the positive law by which the King might have been forbidden to marry the wife of his deceased brother. If the King had done any wrong by marrying his deceased brother's wife, then he sinned at the most against positive law, as, for instance, set forth in the Canon Law. Luther doubts even this, because Pope Julius II had given his permission for the King to marry his deceased brother's wife; consequently the King was excused from obeying the positive law at this point. And further, two wrongs do not make one right. That is, even if the King had done wrong by marrying his deceased brother's wife, the divorce still would not remedy this situation; to the contrary, the divorce would be a more serious offense (because it would be contrary to divine law) than the alleged crime of the marriage to the deceased brother's wife (something which is forbidden only in the positive law of the pope).

Having delivered Luther's opinion to the court, Barnes considered it necessary to go once more into exile; in January of 1532 he was back on the Continent.¹⁸ Apparently he functioned for some time as assistant to John Aepinus, the pastor of St. Peter's Church in Hamburg.¹⁹ In 1533 he matriculated at Wittenberg University but never participated for any length of time in the life of the University. "From August, 1534, to January, 1535, Barnes returned to London to negotiate with Henry on behalf of the cities of Hamburg and Lübeck."²⁰ In May of 1535 he finally returned permanently to England, and in July of 1535 he attained the status of royal chaplain. Yet it was only for a short time that Barnes enjoyed the King's favor. He strongly opposed the Six Articles, "and for his stand against this policy Barnes was burned at Smithfield, July 30, 1540."²¹

Luther's letter to Barnes is extant in two versions, (A) and (B). The text of the (A) version provides the original text of this letter²² (the one given by Luther to Barnes), and is the basis for the following translation. This version is extant in several sixteenth century manuscript copies, and in the common editions of Luther's works. One of the copies was written by Nicholas von Amsdorf, who was at that time a pastor in Magdeburg. It is safe to assume that he copied from the original when Barnes traveled from Wittenberg via Magdeburg and Lübeck to Antwerp.²³ The text of the (B) version also originates with Luther, but is of secondary quality. Luther prepared this version—from memory or from notes—for Landgrave Philip of Hesse, to whom, on September 22, 1531, Luther promised to send a copy of his opinion concerning Henry's divorce.²⁴ A manuscript containing the text of this (B) version is deposited in the Marburg archive.²⁵ It is written in two different (unknown) handwritings, but corrected in Luther's own handwriting. This is the reason that St.L. and Enders²⁶ considered this (B) version to be the original one. In addition to this Marburg manuscript, the (B) version is extant in several sixteenth century manuscript copies, of which one was written by John Bugenhagen,²⁷ and in the common editions of Luther's works.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 6, 178–182 (A); 188–188 (B).

Grace and Peace in the Lord

My Antony:²⁸ here you finally have also²⁹ my opinion on the case of the King of England, since you insist on it with such great perseverance.

To begin with, as I have said, I approve of the decision of the faculty of Louvain,³⁰ especially regarding the latter question,³¹ and the King may abide by it with a sufficiently safe conscience; in fact, he has to abide by it if he wants to be on the safe side. Under no circumstances will he be free to divorce the Queen to whom he is married, the wife of his deceased brother,³² and thus make the mother as well as the daughter³³ into incestuous women. Even if the King might have sinned³⁴ by marrying the wife of his deceased brother, and even if the dispensation granted by the Roman pope might not have been valid³⁵ (I do not debate this now), nevertheless it would be a heavier and more dreadful sin [for the King] to divorce the woman he had married; and this especially for the reason that then the King, as well as the Queen and the Young Queen,³⁶ could be forever charged with, and considered as, being incestuous people. According to my opinion, therefore, those³⁷ who urge the King to the divorce for this reason alone torture his conscience in vain. If he has sinned by marrying, then this sin is past, and like all other sins of the past is amended through repentance; but the marriage should not be torn apart for this reason, and such a heavy future sin ought not to be permitted. For how many marriages are there in the world which have been made through sinning? And yet they ought not and may not be put asunder. So much for this one reason.

Regarding the other reason—whether you are fabricating it, or whether it is true—that the King is searching for a son, an heir to the kingdom, but that the Queen gives birth only to girls.³⁸ etc., [I reply:] Who doesn't see that this is an even less valid argument? Who will assure the King either that this present Queen will not give birth to a boy (if age does not hinder it), or that the other Queen,³⁹ the one whom he is to marry, will give birth to boys? Nevertheless, even if it would be certain that the other Queen would give birth to boys, it still will not be permissible to divorce the former Queen, especially not as an incestuous woman, and thus equally to put the mark of incest forever on the [already born] offspring, that is, to punish them without any cause with this extremely heavy punishment. Before I would approve of such a divorce I would rather permit the King to marry still another woman and to have, according to the examples of the patriarchs and kings, two women or queens at the same time.⁴⁰

The opponents bring forth, however, that it is contrary to divine law for a man to marry his deceased brother's wife. Leviticus 18 [:16]. To this I reply first of all: If they want to abide by the law of Moses, and also force us to live under the authority of this legislator, then what they will accomplish is that in this case the King will be held responsible not only for keeping the Queen to whom he is married, but also, if she had not [yet] been remarried to someone else, for marrying her by all means possible, and for begetting an offspring to his brother, since the deceased brother did not leave any children by this woman. This is clearly and definitely stated in Deuteronomy 25 [:5]. For if we are forced to observe one law of Moses, then by the same reason we also ought to be circumcised, and ought to observe the whole law, as Paul argues in Galatians 5 [:3]. Now, however, we are no longer under the law of Moses, but are subject in these matters to the laws of the state, just as, prior to Moses, Abraham and Nahor were. They married the daughters of their brother; this was a relationship which Moses afterwards prohibited.⁴¹ And Jacob married two sisters,⁴² also in opposition to Moses' law, who later prohibited such marriages for his people.⁴³ Therefore that law of Moses, which beforehand was not valid and which after Christ again ceased to be valid as positive law, does not bind the King, and does not demand the divorce. But that law of God and that statement of divine law⁴⁴ according to which matrimony is established as something which ought to be maintained forever, until death, binds the King. For the sake of this law, Christ abolished the letter of divorce handed down from Moses when he said: "From the beginning it was not so."⁴⁵

Therefore only this argument is left, that the King, if he has sinned by marrying his deceased brother's wife, has sinned against a man-made law, or a law of the state. If he would divorce the Queen, however, he would indeed sin against the divine law.⁴⁶ If the law of God is in conflict with the law of man, then the law of man has to yield, so that one does not sin against the law of God; the law of God does not have to yield so that one does not sin against the law of man. An offense against the law of man may either be quashed, or the need to obey this law may be nullified, so that we are not forced to sin against God's law or nullify the validity of God's law.⁴⁷

This, however, is the situation regarding the divine law, namely, that the superior law nullifies the inferior one. For instance: It was a divine law to observe the Sabbath;⁴⁸ yet another divine law, that is, the law of circumcision,⁴⁹ nullified this law concerning the Sabbath, and permitted, even more, required

circumcising exactly on the Sabbath (as often as the Sabbath was the eighth day after birth), as Christ himself argues in John 7 [:22]. Consequently the law concerning the Sabbath had to yield to the law concerning circumcision; one sinned against the law concerning the Sabbath, or rather the law concerning the Sabbath yielded, and in this case was nullified. Even more, on each Sabbath in the morning and in the evening sacrifices were made and all the works of the priests were performed in the Temple; and yet the priests were without guilt, as Jesus states in Matthew 12 [:5]. Even circumcision yielded to a new law of God by which the people were ordered to go out from Egypt;⁵⁰ during all the forty years that this new law was in effect, they did not circumcise, and did this without [committing] sin.⁵¹ Further, it had been divine law that the Bread of the Presence ought to be eaten only by the priests.⁵² And yet David, a layman, ate it without committing sin, as if he were ordered by another law of God, that is, the law to love one's neighbor who is in need.⁵³ There are many such examples in which one divine law nullifies another. What else are magistrates, and those who wield the sword and enforce the law by killing [or] imprisoning those who are guilty, [or] confiscating their property, doing other than nullifying these divine laws: "You shall not kill; you shall not steal"?⁵⁴ This is the same as if by another divine law these magistrates were ordered to kill, imprison, [or] punish those who are guilty. These actions would not be permitted unless the law, "You shall not kill," is nullified by another law. How much more in this case does that manmade law,⁵⁵ "you shall not marry your deceased brother's wife," have to yield to that former, superior law, "A man shall not abandon his wife, and the two shall be one flesh."⁵⁶ Even if this statement, "You shall not marry your deceased brother's wife," were a divine law, it would nevertheless have to yield and be nullified because of the law concerning matrimony, which is a superior law, as has been stated above concerning the examples which demonstrate just how often one divine law nullifies another one.

Let us nevertheless assume (which certainly is not true) that the law of Moses is still valid and binds us Gentiles when it states in Leviticus 18 [:16]: "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife." What are the opponents making out of this text? The text, of course, speaks of a living brother, not a deceased one. Since the contradictory law in Deuteronomy 25 [:5] orders that a brother ought to marry his deceased brother's wife, it becomes clear that [Leviticus 18:16] deals with a living brother (who could have had one or perhaps several wives at the same time). So for instance John the Baptist, on the basis of this passage (as is known), charges Herod that he is not permitted to have the wife of his brother Philip, who was [still] living.⁵⁷ Therefore on the basis of this passage the doctors of the opposition could accomplish nothing that is sound, even if the law of Moses [still] bound us Gentiles. How much less can they accomplish now since Moses' law does not bind us Gentiles!⁵⁸

You will reply: If someone continues this argumentation then he will end up teaching⁵⁹ that we also are not prevented by any law of God from marrying daughters, sisters, or mothers, since the law of Moses prohibits this, but the law of Moses now no longer binds us Gentiles. I answer that such marriages are prohibited and considered incestuous by natural law. This is sufficiently proven by the fact that in Scripture before, during, and after [the time in which] the law [of Moses was valid,] no example [for the permission of such marriages] can be found, and without example and law nothing may be undertaken. Precisely by this fact God has sufficiently demonstrated that he condemns such marriages. But there are laws and examples for marrying your deceased brother's wife.

The opponents argue that it follows from the law of Deuteronomy 25 [:5] that someone could marry, or would be obligated to marry his own daughter; so, for instance, if Othniel⁶⁰ at his death had left his wife Achsah, who was the daughter of his brother Caleb, then Caleb, as Othniel's brother, would have been obligated to marry his own daughter. Who does not see the evil effort in this argument to support an evil cause? [The opponents argue] as if they did not know, or ought not to know, that one law nullifies another whenever they contradict each other, as stated above. Therefore even if through the law of Deuteronomy 25 [:5] Caleb would have been obligated to marry his brother's wife, yet because this wife of his brother was his own daughter he was prohibited from marrying her by another, superior law, [and was ordered] to stay away from her. So the law of Deuteronomy 25 [:5] yields to the other law, that is, to the natural law, and simultaneously also to the Mosaic law of Leviticus 18 [:16]. Therefore it is impossible for the opponents to establish, by means of this law in Deuteronomy 25 [:5], the validity of that law in Leviticus 18 [:16], which deals with a living brother—or at least speaks ambiguously—and simply to condemn every marriage according to the law of Deuteronomy 25 [:5]. They do not see that by this condemnation they totally nullify the law concerning the marriage of a deceased brother's wife. Yet this law is confirmed

through that noble example of Ruth, who cites this law⁶¹ (even though Boaz was not her brother), and by the testimony of the Gospel of the Seven Brothers who were married to one and the same woman.⁶² One may not quibble that in Ruth's case "brother" means "kinsman"; otherwise this same sophistry will also be valid in case of Leviticus 18 [:16]. And further, in Deuteronomy 25 [:5] the text itself does not permit this interpretation, since [in this passage] the word "brother" is so often repeated, and laws are given concerning "brothers who live together." This sophistry is insufficient to quiet consciences; therefore it also should not be permitted to disturb consciences.⁶³

But here the opponents say that the law of Deuteronomy 25 [:5] was a law concerning ceremonial matters, which ought to yield to the law of Leviticus 18 [: 16], which was a law concerning morals, since ceremonial matters have ceased to be valid, but matters concerning morals have not ceased to be valid. To this I reply: Let those corrupt interpreters say whatever they wish without sound judgment; we contradict them [with the following argument]: The law of Deuteronomy 25 [:5] has certainly been a law concerning morals, because as a law of the state it was indeed instituted for the conservation of families, for the preservation of legacies, and for the begetting of heirs, that is, for the augmenting and strengthening of the common good, just as it certainly serves the common good and is moral to till the soil at this or that time, [and] in this or that way, so that the soil brings forth more fruit, since by using such a method goods are produced. 'At Moses' time there was no contradiction in the laws since both laws were valid, and were observed. Therefore both are abolished now. Consequently the opponents should stop insisting on the validity [only] of the law of Leviticus 18 [:16], or should maintain both laws as being valid.

At the risk of losing his salvation, and under the threat of eternal damnation, therefore, the King is to be held responsible for retaining the Queen to whom he is married. This is proven by the following argument: First of all, neither according to natural law nor according to divine law is it definitely prohibited to marry one's brother's wife, but only according to positive law. For, as I have said, the legislator Moses is dead and invalid for us. Matrimony is a matter of divine and of natural law. In cases where the divine and the positive laws contradict each other, the positive law must yield to the divine law. For this reason Christ, too, nullified the law of divorce given by Moses in order to establish the validity of the divine law concerning matrimony. If, therefore, the King of England has sinned by marrying his deceased brother's wife, then he has sinned against a man-made law, or a law of the state. If the emperor⁶⁴ and the pope, provided that the latter rules through his worldly tyranny,⁶⁵ have suspended their laws for the King, then the King has not sinned at all, because that same God who approves of the law of the state promulgated by the emperor also approves the emperor's suspension of the emperor's law. For God has given the emperor the authority to make and suspend laws, and that I might say so, the keys⁶⁶ of binding and freeing people in the territory which is subject to the emperor. If the King should divorce the Queen, however, he will most gravely sin against the divine law, which states: "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder."⁶⁷ "Man," that is, no man-made laws may separate those whom God has joined, either by ordinance or by permission, because God's joining, whether done through the law or through human action, stands higher than any man-made ordinance. Therefore if these laws now contradict each other, then one should be careful that the King of England does not observe a man-made law and sin against the divine law, but that he observe the divine law; he may be forgiven if he has sinned against a man-made law. Suppose now the divorce goes through, she is [still] the queen, and will be the queen of England,⁶⁸ and an injustice before God and man will have been done to her.

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To Elector John

[Wittenberg, about February 12, 1532]¹

To promote religious peace in the Empire² the Archbishop of Mainz³ and his staff drew up articles and in November of 1531 presented them to the Electoral Saxon government as basis for further discussions. On December 27 Chancellor Brück⁴ met with the representative of the Archbishop of Mainz in Bitterfeld⁵ for a discussion of these articles. Since the papal Estates of the Empire were ready to grant peace and security to the evangelicals until such time as a general council of the church would decide all controversial issues, prospects for peace were good. Consequently on February 8 and 9 a second conference between Brück and a representative of the Archbishop took place in Bitterfeld.

Emperor Charles,⁶ too, was willing to accept the articles on condition that Electoral Saxony and Hesse would abandon their opposition to the election of his brother, Ferdinand of Austria, as Roman king.⁷ But this condition was categorically rejected by Landgrave Philip of Hesse,⁸ who, in order to promote his own anti-Hapsburg plans, on February 1, 1532, wrote a letter to the Electoral prince, Duke John Frederick,⁹ urging him not to abandon the protest against Ferdinand's election. One should procrastinate, suggested Philip, by saying that prior to accepting Ferdinand as king, we would have to see how Ferdinand would fulfill his royal obligations; once the Emperor had left the Empire then we could see what to do next. And Brück had, in fact, protested the Emperor's condition as early as the first meeting in Bitterfeld.¹⁰

From the very beginning Luther was kept fully informed of these developments. Either prior to or after the first meeting at Bitterfeld, Brück used Melanchthon for obtaining Luther's opinion on the articles drafted by the Archbishop of Mainz. Luther gave his opinion in a discussion with Melanchthon, of which only Melanchthon's notes are extant.¹¹ After the second meeting at Bitterfeld, Brück asked Luther to give a judgment on the articles, and to do it in the form of an official brief. The following letter to Elector John is this brief requested by Brück.

Even though Luther is aware of the possibility that ambiguous passages might have been intentionally inserted into the articles, he urges his Sovereign to accept the articles as basis for negotiating in good faith, and thus have the opportunity to clarify whatever might be ambiguous in the articles. Regarding Ferdinand's election, Luther admonishes the Elector to abandon his opposition for the sake of peace.¹² He interprets the situation as God's challenge to the evangelicals to give up their rights by abandoning their opposition to Ferdinand's kingship, and to accept the offered peace as a gift of God, who might wish to spread the gospel through this peace. Not to abandon this opposition would in the long run certainly mean war. In this connection Luther warns the Elector to be careful of political alliances, which are a sign of dependence upon human planning, and which will falter and fail, because God alone guides and protects the work of the gospel.

On Elector John, see LW 48, 269, n. 8.

Text in German: WA, Br 6, 260–261.

To the Most Serene, Noble Sovereign and Lord, Sir John, duke in Saxony, archmarshal and elector of the Holy Roman Empire, landgrave in Thuringia and margrave in Meissen, my Most Gracious Lord Grace and peace in Christ our Lord! Most Serene, Noble Elector, Most Gracious Lord! As he had once done previously, Doctor Brück, Your Electoral Grace's chancellor, has now again presented to me the articles¹³ which are to be the basis for the negotiations between the two Electors,¹⁴ etc., and Your Electoral Grace for the purpose of establishing a treaty or peace between His Imperial Majesty and Your Electoral Grace. In behalf of Your Electoral Grace, [Doctor Brück] has requested my judgment on these articles, etc.

It is my humble judgment that these articles can be tolerated and ought to be accepted. Even if some of them should still be ambiguous or could be suspected [of being a trap], yet I think that when the negotiations [actually] come about all matters could be made clear and definite. Indeed (as far as I can see) it seems to me that in these articles are expressed the honest intention and opinion of both Electors; for they have succeeded in receiving from the Emperor such a far-reaching and unencumbered order to negotiate, and they have used Count Palatine Frederick for this mission.¹⁵ With all this they demonstrate that they have been and still are seriously concerned with this matter.

Since the matter has now progressed to the stage that nothing might stand in the way of such a treaty and peace except perhaps the article concerning the king, etc.,¹⁶ it is my humble petition that Your Electoral Grace donate this article to Christ, and give it up. If the king was illegally elected, then by now he has suffered enough for it. Your Electoral Grace has sufficiently opposed such injustice, and has certainly demonstrated Your Grace's opposition. One also has to permit the functioning of the Christian precept which is called forgiveness of sins. Otherwise, if one blows one's nose too hard (says Solomon)¹⁷ blood comes, and if one wrathfully pursues an issue, strife will result from it. Certainly many unjust events will continue to be a part of this world; but once they have occurred they should remain unaltered, as the laws teach us, in order to prevent even greater trouble.

One also has to consider seriously that God is offering us such opportunities for peace because he perhaps intends to spread his gospel by means of this peace. We certainly are obligated even to deny

ourselves and abandon our plans, if [thereby] we can glorify and promote God's honor, name, and Word. All of these will be obstructed if there is no peace; perhaps even the opposite [of peace] might arise, so that we might be hindered in [the promotion of] the gospel by war or lack of peace, or even might be robbed of it.

Christ our Lord, to whose glory this article [concerning the king] will be donated, will in turn glorify Your Electoral Grace, as he promises. Thus in Romans 12 [:18] St. Paul speaks out, and teaches that we Christians ought to live in peace with every man, as much as it depends upon us. This means that we ought to abandon our right for the sake of peace, so that we do not suffer. For peace is more important than that which is legal; in fact, the laws are established for the sake of peace.

If—God forbid—the treaty should not come about because of this article [concerning the king] then the final outcome would be that a war would develop from this situation, whether the Emperor remains in the country or not, etc.¹⁸ Without doubt, Your Electoral Grace would also be one of the causes of such a war. It would be an unbearable burden for [Your Grace's] conscience if afterwards Mr. Remorse appeared and bit, saying: "Oh, why didn't I abandon my right and accept the peace, so that such great misfortune and grief would not have arisen?" Certainly it might happen that because of such a war the Empire would be torn apart and exposed to the Turk, and thus both the gospel and everything else would perish.

We also see that foreign kings are not faithful, and we have often experienced how effectively the cities control their citizens in time of a crisis; at present the people of Zürich are a good example of this.¹⁹ I know that God is strongly opposed to such alliances, and he also sees to it that they do not stand firm; the prophets are full of examples of this.²⁰ For alliances are nothing but thoughts and plans of man, undertaken in human cleverness, without God's Word or order. Therefore it is not possible that these alliances stand firm when the need arises, and do not falter. Here is Scripture, [where we read]: "All men are liars."²¹ That is, they do not come [to one's] aid, but falter. Therefore Isaiah calls Egypt a "broken reed of a staff," which will pierce the hand of him who leans on it.²² We have a divine cause, which God alone will and ought to protect, as he has faithfully done till now; the thoughts of men certainly will not do it.

May Your Electoral Grace accept this, my humble judgment, with a benevolent attitude toward me; for I, too, mean well, God knows it, and I hope not to have spoken with smooth lips but an evil heart.²³

For doing his own good will, may the gracious Father enlighten and strengthen Your Electoral Grace. Amen. Amen.

Your Electoral Grace's humbly dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER

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To Mrs. Martin Luther [Torgau,] February 27, 1532

On February 19 Luther and Jonas¹ visited Elector John² in Torgau³ for the purpose of consoling the Elector, who was suffering from something similar to gangrene in one of his feet.⁴ For reasons which cannot be established with certainty, Luther's return was delayed.⁵ In the following letter Luther informs his wife that he hopes to return "tomorrow or the next day." He also assures his wife that he is sleeping well. Then he briefly tells of the Elector's health, which seems to be improving. The major portion of the letter deals with Luther's famulus,⁶ John Rischmann, who was about to leave him. Luther urges his wife to find the means necessary for an appropriate farewell gift, even though he also expresses the opinion that the Common Chest should give such a present to Rischmann in his behalf. As an afterthought Luther asks his wife to tell Nicholas Hausmann to be content with the quarters provided to him. Luther also promises to report in person on a dinner he attended. In closing he asks his wife to give a kiss to their son John for him, to continue to urge the family to pray, and to have some presents ready for him to give to the children upon his return.

Text in German: WA, Br 6, 270–271.⁷

To my dearly beloved⁸ mistress of the house, Catherine Luther:⁹

Personal

God in Christ be with you!¹⁰ My dearly beloved Katie! As soon as Doctor Brück¹¹ is granted permission to leave the court—he puts me off with this prospect—I hope to come along with him tomorrow or the next day. Pray God to bring us home chipper and healthy! I am sleeping very well,¹² about six or seven hours without interruption, and then thereafter again for two or three hours. It's the beer's fault, I think. But just as in Wittenberg I am sober.¹³

Doctor Caspar¹⁴ says that the gangrene in our Gracious Lord's¹⁵ foot will spread no further.¹⁶ But neither Dobitzsch¹⁷ nor any prisoner on the stretching-rack in jail suffers such agony from John the jailer as His Electoral Grace suffers from the surgeons. His Sovereign Grace is, in his whole body, as healthy as a little fish, but the devil has bitten and pierced His Grace's foot. Pray, and continue to pray! I trust God will listen to us, as he has begun. For Doctor Caspar, too, thinks that in this case God has to help.

Since John¹⁸ is moving away, it is both necessary and honorable that I let him go honorably from me. For you know that he has served me faithfully and diligently, and conducted himself with humility, and done and endured all [he was required to do], according to the gospel. Remember how often we have given something to bad boys and ungrateful students, in which cases all that we did was lost. Now therefore reach into your wallet¹⁹ and let nothing be lacking for this fine fellow, since you know that it is well used and God-pleasing. I certainly know that little is available; yet if I had them I wouldn't mind giving him ten gulden.²⁰ But you shouldn't give him less than five gulden, since we didn't give him a new suit of clothes [upon his departure]. Whatever you might be able to do beyond this, do it, I beg you for it. The Common Chest²¹ might, of course, make a present to my servant in my honor, in view of the fact that I am forced to maintain my servants at my expense for the service and benefit of the local congregation.²² But they may do as they please. Yet under no circumstances should you let anything be lacking as long as there is still a fine goblet [in the house]. Figure out from where you will take the money. God certainly will provide more; this I know. With this I commend you to God. Amen.

Tell the pastor of Zwickau²³ he really ought to be pleased and content with the quarters. Upon my return I shall tell you how Mühlpfort and I have been guests of Rietesel,²⁴ and how Mühlpfort has demonstrated much wisdom to me.²⁵ But I wasn't eager for his wisdom.²⁶

Kiss young Hans for me;²⁷ keep after Hänschen, Lenehen,²⁸ and Aunt Lena²⁹ to pray for the dear Sovereign³⁰ and for me. I am unable to find anything to buy for the children in this town even though there is now a fair here. If I am unable to bring anything special along, please have something ready for me!

February 27, 1532

DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER

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To Thomas Zink

[Wittenberg,] April 22, 1532

John Zink was a very young undergraduate student at Wittenberg and a frequent guest in the Luthers' house. On March 24, 1532, he became seriously ill, and on April 20 he died. In the following letter of consolation, written to John's father, Luther points out how well-liked John Zink was, and what a great personal loss John's death is for him. Luther encourages the parents to be grateful to God for the opportunity they had had to raise such a fine boy, and for the fact that their son had had such a blessed and peaceful death. He assures the parents that their son died affirming his faith and in full possession of his rational faculties, facts which in turn are sure signs that the boy is now with God in eternal blessedness. In closing Luther mentions that Veit Dietrich, the boy's tutor, would write down some of the statements which the boy made during his final days, and that these statements should bring some consolation to the parents.

Text in German: WA, Br 6, 301–302.¹

To Thomas Zink at Hofheim²

Before all else—grace and peace in Christ, our Lord! My dear Friend! I think that by this time you will have learned that your dear son, John Zink, whom you sent here to study with us, was overtaken by a severe illness and, although nothing was spared in the way of care, attention, and medicine, the disease became too powerful and took your son away, carrying him off to heaven, to our Lord Jesus Christ. We were all very fond of the boy; he was especially dear to me—so that I made use of him many an evening for singing in my house³—because he was quiet, well-behaved, and especially diligent in his studies. Accordingly we all are deeply grieved by his death. We would have been very happy to have him saved, and to keep him with us, had this been at all possible. But he was even dearer to God, who desired to have him.

As is natural,⁴ your son's death, and the report of it, will distress and grieve your heart and that of your wife, since you are his parents. I do not blame you for this, for all of us—I in particular—are stricken with sorrow. Yet I exhort you now rather to thank God for having given you such a good, devout son, and for having considered you worthy of investing your money and efforts so well. Let this be your best comfort (as it is ours), that he fell asleep (rather than departed) so peacefully⁵ and softly, and with such a fine testimony of faith on his lips and in full possession of his rational faculties⁶ that we all marveled. There can be as little doubt that he is with God, his true Father, in eternal blessedness, as there can be doubt that the Christian faith is true. For such a beautiful Christian end cannot fail to lead heavenward.⁷

In addition, you should also consider how grateful you ought to be, and how much comfort you ought to derive from this, that he (unlike many others) did not perish in a dangerous and pitiful way. Even if he had lived a long time, you could not, with your efforts, have helped him to anything higher than some sort of office or service. Now, however, he is in a place which he would not wish to exchange for all the world, not even for a moment. Grieve in such a way, therefore, as to console yourselves even more. For you have not lost him, but have sent him on ahead of you to be kept in everlasting blessedness. St. Paul says:⁸ "You should not mourn over the departed, or those who have fallen asleep, as the heathen do," etc.

I am confident that Master⁹ Veit,¹⁰ your son's tutor, will write down for you some of the beautiful words which your son uttered before his death, and they will please and comfort you.¹¹ I, however, have not wished to omit writing these lines to you, out of love for the devout boy, so that you may have a reliable witness of what happened to him.

Christ, our Lord and Comforter, allow me to commend you to his grace. Amen.

In the evening of April 22, 1532

DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER,
written with my own hand
although now I, too, am weak

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To Nicholas von Amsdorf¹ [Wittenberg,] June 13, 1532

Excusing his silence on the basis of his own recent poor health, Luther first expresses his hope that Christ may restore von Amsdorf's health. Then he communicates news and rumors: a new attack against the Empire by the Turks is imminent; the Pope and the King of France refuse to aid the Emperor in the fight against the Turks; the mobilization against the Turks might make necessary an early closing of the Diet of Regensburg and the termination of the peace negotiations between the Emperor and "our" party; Karlstadt has gone to Friesland in search of a refuge and of suitable work. In closing Luther expresses his hope that Christ's will may be done, and commends von Amsdorf to Christ's grace.

On Nicholas von Amsdorf, see LW 48, 218.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 6, 318–319.

Grace and Peace in Christ

This has been the reason for the fact that I have not written to you,² my Amsdorf: the condition of my head—which gradually improves because of your prayers, for I have definitely despaired of [my] natural strength. I hear that you, too, are ill, and I do not like to hear this. May Christ restore you also and preserve you a long time for us.

I do not know what to expect concerning the peace which is to be established at Nürnberg between the Emperor³ and us.⁴ While still traveling,⁵ our friends wrote that the Turk, who has been totally immobile⁶ thus far, is now moving against Germany with a horrifying army of countless soldiers in order to attack⁷ Ferdinand and Charles simultaneously, and to devour both brothers. The Pope is in France,⁸ and he and the King of the French⁹ have broken off with the Emperor, and refuse him any help against the Turks.¹⁰ Look at these monstrosities of our age! This is [how they use] the money which the popes have been collecting for so many centuries by means of the indulgences for fighting the Turks.¹¹

It is said that the Emperor presses the sovereigns for their promised aid against the Turks.¹² Perhaps for this reason the diet and the peace negotiations may shortly come to an end. Karlstadt¹³ is said finally to have gone to Friesland in search of a refuge, since in Switzerland¹⁴ he was unable to find any work other than farmwork; earlier, when he was still with us, he quickly had enough of farmwork.¹⁵ This is the news we have.

May the Lord do whatever is good in his eyes; I commend you to his grace. Amen.

June 13, 1532

MARTIN LUTHER

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To Elector John¹

Wittenberg, June 29, 1532

The Nürnberg peace conference was scheduled to begin on June 3.² Since the Electors of Mainz and the Palatinate³ had not yet received their final instructions from the Emperor,⁴ the beginning had to be delayed. Finally on June 10 the two Electors presented to the evangelicals articles which were to function as the basis for a truce between the evangelicals and the Emperor. These articles were rejected by the evangelicals on June 13. Now the Electoral negotiators had to seek new instructions from the Emperor. In the meantime they tried their best to influence the evangelicals to accept the articles. Both sides, however, stubbornly clung to their positions, and refused to give in. On June 24 Duke John Frederick⁵ sent to his father, Elector John, a detailed report of the negotiations which had taken place, together with the necessary documentation. On June 28 the Elector forwarded this material to Wittenberg, requesting a judgment on the situation by return mail. This request was addressed to Luther, Jonas, Bugenhagen, and Melancthon.⁶ On June 29 Luther and Jonas jointly issued a brief and forwarded it to the Elector.⁷ Letter No. 250, also dated June 29, is Luther's covering letter for this brief. On that same day Luther also wrote a short personal letter to Duke John Frederick in Nürnberg,⁸ and dispatched it via the Electoral court at Torgau. Even though on June 30 the Elector had (about one hour before) sent off a letter to his son in Nürnberg, upon receipt of the material from Wittenberg he immediately dispatched another messenger to forward this material to Nürnberg.⁹ While in the covering letter the Elector did not bind his representatives in Nürnberg, he nevertheless strongly endorsed Luther's position.¹⁰ By July 4 this material was well known among the evangelicals in Nürnberg,¹¹ and it contributed substantially to getting the negotiations off dead center, since the Emperor, too, was ready to bend.

In his covering letter Luther points out that the time has come to demonstrate whether there is an honest interest in peace on the part of the evangelicals. If there is, then the conditions for peace should be accepted with trust that God will take care of the problems which might arise. If there is no genuine interest in peace, then Luther does not wish to have any further part in the matter. Whatever evil might come from a refusal of the peace offered by the Emperor would be someone else's responsibility, says Luther. He sees in the stubbornness with which some members of the evangelical party insist on having their own way in (what Luther considers to be) unimportant matters an attempt at perfection, a lack of faith, and a type of cleverness which does not want to yield to divine governance. Therefore Luther admonishes the Elector to do everything possible so that the offered peace is not rejected by the evangelicals. He concludes his letter with a short prayer for God's guidance, and a blessing for the Elector.

On Elector John, see LW 48, 269, n. 8.

Text in German: WA, Br 6, 325–327.

Grace and Peace in Christ!

Most Serene, Noble Elector, Most Gracious Lord! I am herewith returning to Your Electoral Grace the documents, together with our humble judgment.¹²

Since I notice in all the proceedings that some of our party wish to be too clever and too much on the safe side, and wish to have what they call a peace beyond debate, etc.,¹³ I certainly cannot but assume that these people have no desire for peace, or (and this would be the same thing) are aiming for the impossible. For when has there ever been signed, made, or promulgated a treaty, law, contract, sealed document, or letter¹⁴ against which one could not debate, or through which one could not poke a hole? If we want cleverly to arrange matters exactly as we wish them to be, and not to entrust everything to God in these matters, and let him also have a word, then certainly nothing good will come out of it; it will be for us as Solomon says: “He who blows his nose too hard forces blood from it,”¹⁵ and he who despises little things will never own bigger ones.

Certainly if His Imperial Majesty approves these articles, as we have received them now, changed through this one amendment (concerning the [privilege to grant] protection to persons who flee to us),¹⁶ then His Imperial Majesty has done enough, and it would be both our responsibility and our fault [if peace did not come about]. God meets us graciously; if we are ungrateful to him, we shall sin against him heavily, and in addition shall have no success.

I¹⁷ most humbly beg Your Electoral Grace, therefore, to write a serious, precise, and sharp letter to our friends,¹⁸ honestly admonishing them to consider the many and gracious concessions His Imperial Majesty is making to us, which we may accept with a good conscience, and that in addition His Imperial Majesty himself does not wish to mix the issue of the king¹⁹ into this matter. [Therefore] they should by no means reject such a gracious [offer of] peace for the sake of some highly detailed and forced marginal issues. God certainly will heal and take care of these unimportant, quibbled-over deficiencies (if the central points are continued in peace).²⁰ Our friends will not, after all, make a bull’s eye,²¹ and it is not necessary to make one; it is enough to hit the target. All our lives and dealings with God and man (being full of shortcomings) have to be based on toleration and forgiveness of sins. If we wished to be absolutely perfect²² in relationship to God and our neighbors, and absolutely pure and spotless, we would never be saved, and would never be at peace with our neighbor. If our friends seriously desire peace, then (as [I] said) they ought definitely to accept these articles. If they do not desire peace, however, then they need neither our counsel²³ nor judgment. They are easily clever and capable²⁴ enough all by themselves to cause a disaster, but they have to do it without our approval. If they cook too much soup they must eat it.²⁵ I for my part shall thank His Imperial Majesty from my heart if His Imperial Majesty approves these articles.

Should there be something fraudulent in the articles, which words never reveal anyhow, then I commend it to him who knows, judges, and governs all hearts; he will protect me well in such a danger and keep me unharmed. It is not up to me to be suspicious of His Imperial Majesty, much less to perhaps ascribe evil to His Imperial Majesty’s intention—which is unknown to me—and [therefore] judge it as being evil. For I certainly know that he who deceives a heart which trusts in God and someone who loves his neighbor deceives himself, while faith and love remain unharmed. Should this peace accomplish nothing else, this [alone] would be a great gain, that by this peace the threats, obstinacy, insistence, and bragging of the papists, our enemies, would be cut down. This would truly be a great grief²⁶ and pain for them.

Most Gracious Lord, God knows that in this matter I know nothing further to do or suggest. If [in spite of everything] no peace comes, or if a war should develop over this gracious offer of His Imperial Majesty, then truly we are not guilty of all the evil which might arise.

God has graciously listened to our humble prayer and offers us peace. May that same dear Father further give us also a grateful heart which recognizes such grace, and accepts and uses it well to his praise and honor. Amen. To this same faithful, kind God I faithfully and diligently commend Your Electoral Grace with my humble prayer.

Wittenberg, June 29, 1532

Your Electoral Grace’s humbly dedicated
MARTIN LUTHER

Brandenburg-Ansbach and to the Council of the City of Nürnberg Wittenberg, August 1, 1532

Since the first half of 1528 the Margraviate of Brandenburg-Ansbach and the city of Nürnberg had cooperated, with some interruptions, in organizing the evangelical church, first by jointly drafting a church ordinance and conducting a visitation of the parishes, and then by working toward a new church ordinance.¹ After many delays, the Nürnberg theologians, in November of 1531, produced a draft of a church ordinance for which the councilors and theologians of the Margraviate sent suggested changes from Ansbach. The officials in Ansbach also suggested that the ordinance be submitted to Luther for an opinion. After new delays, a version of the church ordinance was finally sent to Wittenberg on July 17, 1532, and the judgment of the Wittenberg theologians was requested.² Letter No. 251 is the response to this request.

The reply of the Wittenberg theologians is divided into a summary judgment and a brief of details. In the summary judgment Luther and his colleagues wholeheartedly approve of the church ordinance itself, and also of the attempt to organize the church in the two territories on the basis of such an ordinance. The brief of details is divided into two sections, the first one dealing with the ban, the second one with the “dry mass” (missa sicca).³ (Actually it ought to be divided into three sections, since in the second section, in addition to the dry mass, a number of miscellaneous items are discussed.) Concerning the ban, it is pointed out that at the present in the Wittenberg parish only that ban is being used by which someone who is living publicly in sin is excluded from the Lord’s Supper. Concerning the dry mass the Wittenberg theologians point out that this “spectacle” ought to be abolished, just as the custom of reserving the elements of the Lord’s Supper ought to be abolished. Luther and his colleagues also urge the elimination of the paragraphs in the ordinance which deal with a government that acts unjustly and with the exegesis of Acts 13:38 f., since the interpretation of this passage does not do justice to the Pauline teaching concerning the law. Finally Luther and his colleagues point out that the whole ordinance needs to be polished in order to avoid repetitions; they suggest Osiander for this task.

Text in German (with some words, especially technical terms, in Latin): WA, Br 6, 339–342.⁴

To the Noble, Honorable and Brave, Respectable, Distinguished, and Prudent⁵ Margravian Viceroys and Councilors, and to the Mayors and the Council of the City of Nürnberg, our Dear Sirs and Friends⁶ God’s grace and peace in Christ! Noble, Honorable, Brave, Respectable, Distinguished, Wise, and especially Gracious Sirs and Friends! We have carefully read through the church ordinance⁷ and the institution of a visitation⁸ which was sent to us and which is to be unanimously and uniformly introduced and instituted throughout the territory⁹ of the serene, noble sovereign and lord, Sir George, margrave in Brandenburg,¹⁰ and also in the territory which is subject to Your Honors, the lords of Nürnberg,¹¹ in order to avoid diversity both in teachings and also in certain external ceremonies. We have studied this document carefully, and as much as was possible at this time have scrutinized it. We have come to the conclusion that in its core it does not conflict with God’s Word, and that it agrees with our visitation ordinance.¹² Therefore we are highly pleased with it. Attached, however, you will find our opinion on certain articles which in part you too, have specially marked, as, for instance, concerning the ban,¹³ how it is to be used and practiced, and certain other points. As understanding people, you certainly will know how to consider and judge this material with a Christian mind, according to opportunity and necessity, so that especially pure teaching and preaching are preserved, and that nevertheless, for the sake of unity and good order, Christian ceremonies might also be conducted without abuse. For even though events occur everywhere so rapidly in our days that church ordinances cannot be drawn up and instituted everywhere as quickly as necessary, nevertheless in order to maintain pure teaching, and also external Christian discipline and behavior, and to prevent much wrong from occurring, one must daily improve on the situation¹⁴ until the Almighty grants more peace and unity both in ecclesiastical and secular governments. If there is any way in which we are able to be of service to you in such or similar Christian undertakings, we shall be ready to do it, according to the best of our abilities.

Written at Wittenberg, August 1, 1532

DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER

JUSTUS JONAS, OCTOR¹⁵

JOHN BUGENHAGEN POMER¹⁶

PHILIP MELANCHTHON¹⁷

CONCERNING THE BAN

1. At present we have instituted no other ban than that those who live in public sins¹⁸ and do not desist are not admitted to the sacrament of Christ's body and blood. This can be accomplished because no one among us receives the holy sacrament unless he has first been examined by the pastor or deacon. Further, we do not see how at this time another ban could be introduced, for many matters occur for which a preliminary investigation¹⁹ would be necessary. We are unable to see how at this time such a procedure of investigation could be instituted and organized, since secular government does not wish to be bothered with such an investigation. Therefore we are content to withhold the holy sacrament from those who live and remain in public sins, even though the world is now so crude and beastly as to be in no hurry at all for the sacrament and church, so that this exclusion from the Lord's Supper might not be considered to be a punishment. If someone excommunicates himself in this way, be content; when even secular authority is ready to permit the existence of public vices [what are we to do?] Nevertheless, in their sermons the preachers ought to censure such pagan ways and behavior by reciting the divine threats²⁰ in all seriousness; at the same time they ought to admonish the authorities²¹ to check such pagan ways.

If discipline would again be restored by instituting examination prior to communion, as certainly would be very useful and good, then one could more easily come to the point where one could institute a system of ecclesiastical discipline²² which would hold parents responsible for urging their children and members of their household to go to the sacrament and to church, [and] for preventing the young people from falling into such pagan contempt of the sacraments and of all divine matters.

If the public ban is also instituted, then, of course, the secular authority has to enforce an order for ostracizing the person who has been banned, if the public ban is to do any good at all; at the present this might cause many wrongs, especially in the large cities and territories. But our type of ban, by which someone is excluded in private from the sacrament, has no impact on citizenship and business dealing. In spite of this action, a Christian may work and have other civic dealings with the person who is banned, as one would have dealings with a pagan, but in such a way that he makes clear to the one who is banned and to others that he does not approve of, nor is pleased with, the ungodly and censurable teachings and actions [which caused the ban].

ON THE DRY MASS²³

2. Concerning the mass which is to be celebrated without [giving] the sacrament, we are very much pleased with Brenz's judgment;²⁴ we, too, are of the opinion that one is not to conduct this spectacle of the dry mass. For what else would this be than a public and powerful confirmation of the papal private masses,²⁵ a confirmation by which people would be incited to think more highly of the papal private masses and to run to them more than previously? If people became accustomed to thinking anything at all of this dry mass, then they would consider the papal private mass to be even more important and sacred, while one obviously knows that the papal private mass is an abomination, and a wrong service of God.²⁶

[MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS]

3. Concerning the reserving of the sacrament in the ciborium, we think that even though it might still be the custom to reserve the sacrament and lock it up, this custom ought to be abolished; for sacrament and Word ought to be together. We know, of course, that this sacrament has been instituted for the purpose of being used and not for the purpose of making a special worship of God with [one] piece of the sacrament apart from the usage of the sacrament and the Word.

[4.] On the fifty-seventh folio²⁷ the following is written concerning secular governmental authority which abuses its office: Whoever conducts himself in the exercise of secular authority and its power in such a way that one has to be afraid of him, even if one is doing what is right, is in God's eyes no governmental authority, etc. It is our opinion that it would be better to omit this paragraph in order to avoid offense and a difficult disputation. Even though Holy Scripture and secular law teach how to deal with an unjust ruler, nevertheless an evil governmental authority still remains governmental authority, as every understanding person knows. For if in God's eyes an evil governmental authority should be no governmental authority, then the subjects would be free of all obligations, etc. Even if one intends to bring said words into a

tolerably clear meaning by means of a commentary and explanation, it is nevertheless better to avoid such a disputation by omitting said paragraph, which after all is unnecessary here.²⁸

[5.] On the sixtieth folio²⁹ the verse of Acts 13 [:38 f.] is interpreted [as follows]: Christ has abolished the law in those portions which do not justify. These words sound as if there is a portion of the law which [if observed] would justify, just as our opponents, too, teach that we are justified because of morally good deeds. But we are now teaching—and this is the truth—that we are definitely acceptable to God only by mercy, when we trust in such mercy as promised in Christ, and not because of our works or virtues, whatever their name may be. Therefore we are of the opinion that that paragraph, too, ought to be omitted. [For] Paul speaks in a Hebrew sense and in a universal context that all things in the law could not have justified us; this includes also those portions of the law which deal with morals. Why should one then change this into a context of particulars?

[6.] It also seems as if this visitation ordinance has not been put together by one person and at one time; in addition, there are many corrections in it, and certain paragraphs have been repeated often, as, for instance, is the case with the material on confession. If one were to entrust this document to one man, for instance to Mr. Osiander,³⁰ he might put it into another [and better] form, etc.³¹

DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER

JUSTUS JONAS DOCTOR³²

JOHN BUGENHAGEN POMER

PHILIP PELANCTHON

252

To Duke Joachim of Brandenburg [Wittenberg,] August 3, 1532

The Diet of Regensburg granted, though hesitantly, troops and money to Emperor Charles for the defense of the southeastern border of the Empire against the advancing Turks. The Imperial army was to be mobilized according to the Imperial Circuits,¹ and circuit-captains were to lead the individual contingents. The Lower Saxon Circuit offered the position of captain to Duke Joachim, the Electoral prince of Brandenburg, who accepted the offer. The Duke wrote about this decision to Luther and Melanchthon, requesting their prayers for his undertaking, and a letter of spiritual instruction. Letter No. 252 is Luther's reply.

Luther assures the Duke of his prayers and expresses his hope that God may be with this defense of the Empire and Christian people against the Turks. Then Luther comments on the frame of mind in which Christians ought to go into this war. He makes three points, and underscores some of his arguments with observations made in connection with the David and Goliath story. First of all, Luther emphasizes, Christians ought not depend on their military might in this war, but on God's help. Secondly, Christians ought not to presuppose that God is on their side and will give them victory because of their own goodness or because of the wickedness of the Turks. And finally, under no circumstances should Christians see in this war an opportunity to gain glory or booty. For Christians the only purpose of this war should be a glorification of God's name and the defense of Christian people. If the Imperial army should go to war in another frame of mind, then, Luther assures the Duke, this war will result in more damage for God's people than for the enemy.

Text in German: WA, Br 6, 344–345.² The following translation, with minor changes, is by Theodore G. Tappert, and is used by permission from LCC 18, 330–332. Published 1955, The Westminster Press.

Grace and peace in Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen

Serene, Noble Sovereign, Gracious Lord! We have received Your Sovereign Grace's letter³ and learned of Your Sovereign Grace's intention to move personally, as a captain of the Saxon Circuit, against that miserable tyrant, the Turk. For this reason, then, Your Sovereign Grace requests our prayers and a letter of Christian instruction.

We are heartily glad to hear that Your Sovereign Grace has such a Christian heart and disposition in these matters and undertakings. We are reluctant, therefore, not to accompany Your Sovereign Grace with our *Pater noster*,⁴ to the best of our ability. For apart from [Your Grace's] request, since we ought not nor

are able to go along bodily, we know that we are obliged to move out to war spiritually with our earnest prayers, to join with the dear Emperor Charles⁵ and his soldiers, and to help fight under his banner against Satan and his adherents. God grant that this may be the time when Michael, the sovereign of God's people, will arise and deliver his people, as Daniel 12 [:1]⁶ prophesies.

Thus, above all else, I wish and I pray God through Jesus Christ, our Lord, to give the devout Emperor, all the sovereigns, and all those who are now to fight against the Turks, first of all, a courageous heart that relies cheerfully on God's help. May God graciously keep them from depending, under any circumstances, on their own power and strength, as the Turks do, for such reliance would be disastrous. May he rather make them sing with David, "I shall not trust in my sword";⁷ and again, "Lord, thou art the one that gives victory unto kings";⁸ and again, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God"⁹—and whatever more verses there are in the Psalter.

This is what David did when he killed Goliath and said, "You come to me trusting in your sword and spear, but I come to you in the name of the Lord," etc.; I Samuel 17 [:45]. It is said that the Turkish emperor, when moving out [to war], swore by his sword, which is his god.¹⁰ May God help now that this idol [of the Turkish emperor] may become for him a filthy object of ridicule because of his folly, pride, and presumption. Amen.

Second, I beg our people not to place their reliance on the Turk's being altogether wrong and God's enemy while we are innocent and righteous in comparison with the Turk—for such presumption is also vain—but rather to fight in the fear of God, and in reliance on his grace alone. For we, too, are unrighteous in God's sight. Some [on our side] have shed much innocent blood, have persecuted, despised, and disobeyed God's Word, so that under no circumstances are we to take our stand on either our own righteousness or the unrighteousness of the Turks. For the miserable devil is God's enemy, too, and does us great injustice and wrong; in comparison with the devil we are innocent; nevertheless we must not boast of our innocence and the superiority of our claims, but must fight against him in all fear and humility and depend solely on God's help. This is what David, too, did in his fight against Goliath; he did not boast of his claims, but with God's help he fought and said, "You have blasphemed that God in whom I put my trust."¹¹ In like manner we must pray to God, not to avenge our innocence on the Turk, but [rather] to avenge and glorify his name through the Turk,¹² that great blasphemer, and meanwhile graciously to forget our sins.

Third, I hope and pray that in such a war our people by no means seek honor, glory, land, booty, etc., but only the glory of God and of his name, together with the defense of poor Christians and subjects. For the glory should and will be God's alone. As sinners and unworthy people we deserve nothing but shame, dishonor, and even death, as Your Sovereign Grace knows better than I can write. But since Your Sovereign Grace has so earnestly requested spiritual instruction, I have wished to set down this brief opinion to be of service to Your Sovereign Grace. I have no doubt that if Your Sovereign Grace inculcates such sentiments in others, so that the war is conducted on a high plane, the devil and all his angels will be too weak for our soldiers, and the Turks will encounter men who are different from those whom they have fought before, when both sides were insolent and fought without God, which has always harmed God's people more than their enemies.

May Your Sovereign Grace now go forth in God's name, and may the same God send his angel Michael to accompany Your Sovereign Grace and help all of you to gain a glorious victory and return home to the praise and honor of God. Amen. Our *Pater noster* shall follow after you and go along with you, and, if it pleases God, [our prayers] will await Your Sovereign Grace in the battlefield, that they may be found there.

May it please Your Sovereign Grace graciously to accept these lines, [which] I have written in haste. Herewith I commend [Your Grace] to God. Amen.

August 3, 1532

Your Sovereign Grace's willing [servant],
DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER

253

To Nicholas von Amsdorf¹

[Wittenberg,] November 2, 1532

Luther tells of the worries of Mrs. von Pack on behalf of her husband, Otto von Pack. Luther also voices skepticism about a naval victory over the Turks. Then he tells of his translation of Ecclesiasticus, and of the condition of his wife, who is suffering from fever and insomnia while awaiting the delivery of their fifth child.

On Nicholas von Amsdorf, see LW 48, 218.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 6, 381–382.

Grace and Peace in Christ

My Amsdorf: Mrs. [von] Pack is worried about her husband, Doctor Otto [von] Pack,² because there is a rumor at Leipzig that he has been seen in the duchy³ of Sir George, and she is afraid that her husband might perhaps have been imprisoned. I have comforted that excellent woman as much as I could, [suggesting that] I think something else may be the case, etc. Therefore, she asked that I beg you, should you perhaps run into him in Magdeburg,⁴ to admonish him seriously to stop moving around, especially in the duchy of Sir George, because dangerous traps are prepared for him there. According to your kindness you will do this.

There is no news [around here]. What is said about the capture of Turkish ships would be happy news, if it were true.⁵ I am totally occupied with the translation of Ecclesiasticus. I hope to be freed from this drudgery within three weeks.⁶

My Katie is ill with fever and insomnia, [and] close to her delivery.⁷ I commend her to your prayers, and also myself, and all that belong to me. Our [Lord] Christ be with you. Amen.

November 2, 1532

MARTIN LUTHER

254

To John Löser

[Wittenberg,] January 29, 1533

In the evening of January 28, 1533, Luther's fifth child,¹ a boy, was born. Later that night Luther wrote to John Löser asking him to be godfather, and to come to the baptism.

John Löser was an Electoral Saxon marshal by inheritance.² He had a distinguished career of service to the Saxon dukes, and also to other ruling families of the Empire. His military service to Emperor Maximilian, and his service to the Saxon duke Henry the Pious, in connection with his pilgrimages to the Holy Land and to Compostella, were highlights in Löser's career. Luther had close relations with Löser, in whose house he was several times a guest, and to whom he dedicated some of his works.³ Luther performed Löser's marriage, apparently baptized one of Löser's sons, and supposedly preached Löser's funeral sermon in 1541.

On John Löser, see WA, Br 3, No. 640, Introduction.

Text in German: WA, Br 6, 426.⁴

To the Brave and Honorable John Löser, marshal⁵ in Saxony, my Most Gracious Lord and Dear Friend⁶ Grace and peace in Christ! Brave, Honorable Dear Sir and Friend!⁷ As I asked recently,⁸ so for the sake of our Lord Christ I ask Your Honor again to humble yourself in God's honor, and to appear in assistance of my young son, whom God has given to me this night by my dear Katie, so that he may come out of the old Adam's nature to the rebirth in Christ through the holy sacrament of baptism, and may become a member of sacred Christendom. Perhaps God the Lord may wish to raise [with this boy] a new enemy of the pope or the Turk.⁹ I would like very much to have him baptized around the Vesper hour so that he remain a heathen no longer, and I might become the more assured [of his salvation]. Your Honor is asked to come here unencumbered¹⁰ and to aid in fulfilling this service¹¹ in God's praise. I am willing and ready to do whatever I can to make it up to you.

Herewith I commend you and yours to God. Amen.

At 1 A.M. in the night of January 29, 1533

Your Honor's willing servant,

MARTIN LUTHER

To the Council of the City of Nürnberg Wittenberg, April 18, 1533

In addition to many other problems, the evangelical church had to come to terms with the question of ecclesiastical discipline.¹ In this connection confession and absolution were of special importance. While in the papal church private confession and absolution administered in the confessional box were the universal and mandatory practice, there was also the custom of administering a general, public confession and absolution immediately aft the sermon.² Luther had summarized his position on these matters in his Babylonian Captivity of the Church (1520) and On Confession (1521). In the spring of 1533 he became involved in a controversy on confession and absolution which was boiling in Nürnberg.³ The issue was private confession and absolution (advocated and demanded by Osiander⁴ to the exclusion of general, public confession and absolution) versus general, public confession and absolution (advocated by the majority of the Nürnberg clergy, among them Link,⁵ though not to the exclusion of private confession and absolution). While the city council tried to do justice to both sides, it leaned definitely toward Link and his followers.⁶ On April 8, 1533, the city council asked Luther and Melanchthon for an opinion on this controversy.⁷ In their joint answer, letter No. 255,⁸ Luther and Melanchthon set forth what seems to be a compromise, but which nevertheless was based on solid theological considerations. Since the preaching of the gospel is identical with the proclamation that forgiveness of sin is at hand, Luther and Melanchthon say, and since this preaching can and ought to be done both in public and in private, both forms of confession and absolution ought to be retained. Both forms of absolution demand and aid faith. Private absolution, as the personal application of forgiveness, has a great advantage, however, because it speaks to the individual personally, and thus directly helps the faith of the individual and aids in the proper understanding of the public absolution. On the other hand, general public confession and absolution need not be rejected only because there might be people in the congregation who do not believe the word of forgiveness.

Text in German (with some words in Latin): WA, Br 6, 454–455.⁹

To the Honorable and Wise Mayors, and to the Council of the City of Nürnberg,
Our Dear Sirs

God's grace through our Lord Jesus Christ! Honorable, Wise, Dear Sirs! Regarding Your Honors' inquiry, we have discussed this matter among ourselves and do not see that public, general absolution is to be censured or rejected, for the [following] reason[s]:

The preaching of the holy gospel itself is principally and actually an absolution in which forgiveness of sins is proclaimed in general and in public to many persons, or publicly or privately to one person alone. Therefore absolution may be used in public and in general, and in special cases also in private, just as the sermon may take place publicly or privately, and as one might comfort many people in public or someone individually in private. Even if not all believe [the word of absolution],¹⁰ that is no reason to reject [public] absolution, for each absolution, whether administered publicly or privately, has to be understood as demanding faith and as being an aid to those who believe in it, just as the gospel itself also proclaims forgiveness to all men in the whole world and exempts no one from this universal context. Nevertheless the gospel certainly demands our faith and does not aid those who do not believe it; and yet the universal context of the gospel has to remain [valid].

Regarding the idea that no one might desire private absolution if one has public absolution and keeps it in use, we say that this is definitely a weighty issue, [but] that consciences nevertheless are in need of this special comfort. For one has to instruct consciences that the comfort of the gospel is directed to each individual particularly; therefore, as you people who understand these matters know, the gospel has to be applied through Word and sacrament to each individual particularly, so that each individual in his conscience is tossed about by the question whether this great grace, which Christ offers to all men, belongs to him too. Under these circumstances it can easily be understood that one is not to abolish private absolution in favor of public absolution; also, this application¹¹ makes more clear the meaning of the gospel and the power of the keys. For very few people know how to use public absolution or apply it to themselves, unless in addition this application reminds them that they also ought to apply the general

absolution to themselves as if it belonged to each individually; for this is the true office and task of the gospel: definitely to forgive sins by grace.

For these reasons we do not consider that general absolution is either to be rejected or to be abolished, but¹² that nevertheless the personal application and [private] absolution should be maintained.

May God always graciously protect Your Honors. We are always ready and willing to serve Your Honors.¹³

Written at Wittenberg, April 18, 1533

DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER

PHILIP MELANCHTHON¹⁴

256

To John Schlaginhaufen

[Wittenberg,] March 10, 1534

Having heard that Schlaginhaufen was ill, Luther sends his greetings and good wishes for total recovery. He complains about the speed with which time passes and about his own lack of productivity, and asks for his friend's prayer in this matter. He closes with general greetings, asking for Schlaginhaufen's love, and assuring his friend of his own willingness to be of service in any brotherly task.

John Schlaginhaufen of Neunburg/Upper Palatinate, had studied in Wittenberg and was a frequent guest in Luther's home. In 1532 he became a pastor in Zahna (near Wittenberg), and in 1533 in Köthen (southwest of Dessau), where he rose later to the position of superintendent. He was a studious recorder of Luther's Table Talks and a collector of Luther's letters. He died in approximately 1560.

On John Schlaginhaufen, see ADB 31,329 ff.

Text in Latin (with some sentences in German): WA, Br 7, 24.¹

To my dearest brother in the Lord, John Schlaginhaufen, a faithful minister of Christ at Köthen Grace and peace in Christ. I hear, excellent Sir, that you are ill. I am really sorry about this, and I pray Christ to be merciful with you, restore your health, and enable you faithfully to fulfill your ministry.² I am quite well, thank God, but I do not know how the days pass without me accomplishing what I should and would like to. I live such a useless life that I cannot stand myself. I do not know where the time goes and why I accomplish so little. This is the sum of it. Pray for me that my work will bear more fruit.

The Lord be with you. Greet your wife and children in my behalf. Trust in the Lord and continue loving me who, in Christ, will never neglect serving you in any brotherly task.

March 10, 1534

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

257

To Mrs. Martin Luther¹

[Dessau,] July 29, 1534

During the summer of 1534 Luther and some of his friends twice visited the court at Dessau² in order to give spiritual counsel to the sovereign Joachim of Anhalt, who at that time was seriously ill and was experiencing great spiritual struggles.³ During his second visit to Dessau Luther wrote this personal note to his wife. He tells first of the pending return of Melanchthon, and of the necessity for his own continued stay in Dessau. Then he informs his wife that "yesterday" he drank something which did not agree with him, and asks his wife to send him his whole wine-cellar and some of her homebrewed beer, because otherwise the beer at Dessau, to which he is not accustomed, would make him totally unable to return home. He concludes by commending his household to God.

Text in German: WA, Br 7, 91.

To my kind, dear lord, Lady Catherine von Bora, Mrs. Doctor Luther,⁴ at Wittenberg Grace and peace in Christ! Dear Sir Katie! I know of nothing to write to you since Master⁵ Philip,⁶ together with the others, is coming home. I have to remain here longer for the devout Sovereign's sake.⁷ You might wonder how long I shall remain here, or how you might set me free.⁸ I think that Master⁹ Francis¹⁰ will set me free, just as I freed him—but not so soon.

Yesterday I drank something which did not agree with me, so that I had to sing: If I don't drink well I have to suffer, and [yet] I do like to do it.¹¹ I said to myself what good wine and beer I have at home, and also [what] a pretty lady or (should I say) lord. You would do well to ship the whole cellar full of my wine and a bottle of your beer¹² to me here, as soon as you are able; otherwise I will not be able to return home because of the new beer.¹³

With this I commend you to God, together with our young ones and all the members of our household. Amen.

July 29, 1534

Your loving¹⁴

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

258

To Elector John Frederick¹

[Wittenberg,] August 20, 1535

In the resolution of the 1530 Diet of Augsburg,² Emperor Charles promised to enter into negotiations with Pope Clement VII to bring about a general council of the church; this council was to meet at a place convenient to all parties involved, and was to enact a Christian reformation.³ As a first, half-hearted, politically motivated step⁴ in this direction a special papal envoy came to Germany in the spring of 1533 to negotiate with the German bishops and sovereigns, among them Elector John Frederick of Saxony, who functioned as spokesman for the Smalcaldic League. Even though the league protested some of the notions of the papacy concerning the council, it did not reject outright the plan of the council.⁵ By year's end Pope Clement VII, however, buried the whole council matter again.⁶ The council plan was revived by Pope Paul III,⁷ and in 1535 the papal representative at the Hapsburg court in Vienna, Pietro Paolo Vergerio the Younger,⁸ traveled through Germany in an attempt to gain support for the council, especially for an Italian city as the place where the council would meet.⁹ On August 3 and 4 he visited Margrave George of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach, who on August 5 informed Elector John Frederick of Vergerio's visit and of Vergerio's travel plans, which included a visit to the Elector. On August 19 the Elector acknowledged receipt of this letter and pointed out that he would stand by the answer given to the papal envoy two years ago. On the same day the Elector forwarded copies of this correspondence to Brück and requested his counsel. Luther was also informed¹⁰ of this situation and was requested to give his judgment. Letter No. 258 is Luther's reply. Luther points out that the answer given to the papal envoy two years ago says all that has to be said. He leaves to the Elector's discretion the matter of the city proposed by the papacy for the meeting of the council. He voices skepticism, however, as to the seriousness and honest desire of the papists to bring about a free and Christian council, and then places the whole issue into God's hands.

On Elector John Frederick, see LW 48, 181 f.

Text in German: WA, Br 7, 238.

Grace and peace, and my poor *Pater noster*!¹¹ Most Serene, Noble Sovereign, Most Gracious Lord! I have received and carefully read Your Electoral Grace's letter, and also the copies [of the material] pertaining to the council.¹² Since Your Electoral Grace graciously requests my judgment as to whether Your Electoral Grace should make another statement which goes beyond the earlier answer given two years ago to the legate of His Imperial Majesty and of Pope Clement,¹³ it is my humble opinion that in that answer¹⁴ everything pertaining to this matter has been dealt with sufficiently, and certainly in a Christian way. As far as I am concerned I do not care about the place,¹⁵ wherever it were located in the whole world, since I am not yet able to consider this to be serious business.¹⁶ If they were serious, I would long ago have deserved to be taken and burned by these wrathful saints.¹⁷ Your Electoral Grace will certainly know what to reply, if they continue to insist on [their choice of] locale. I hope and pray that God will let the papists at least once come to their senses so that they will be forced to undertake in all seriousness a council which would have to be called free and Christian.¹⁸ But in this matter I am like unbelieving Thomas; I have to put my hands and fingers into the side and scars, otherwise I do not believe it.¹⁹ Yet God, in whose hands are the hearts of all men,²⁰ is able to accomplish even more than that.

Herewith I commend Your Electoral Grace to the dear Father's, our God's, grace and peace. Amen.

In the evening of August 20, 1535

Your Electoral Grace's dedicated
MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

259

To Philip Melanchthon¹ [Wittenberg,] August 29, 1535

In the summer of 1535 most of the faculty and students of Wittenberg University, including Melanchthon, moved to Jena because of the plague which was again harassing the people of Wittenberg.² The University in Wittenberg was not closed, however, but continued to function. In the following letter Luther, who was dean of the Theological Faculty at that time, asks Melanchthon to distribute the enclosed theses for two doctoral disputations among the theological students who are in Jena. He also invites Melanchthon and others to the graduation festivities. Then Luther reports some details: he has heard nothing from the Electoral court regarding the “synod”; Brück has arrived in Wittenberg; he, Luther, is ill with diarrhea, but hopes to be better by “tomorrow.” In conclusion Luther mentions the French envoys who are trying to get Melanchthon to come to France, a certain letter of the Elector to Melanchthon, and his latest confrontation with the Archbishop of Mainz.

On Philip Melanchthon, see LW 48, 77, n. 3.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 7, 244–245.

Grace and Peace

Here we are sending the theses of the disputations,³ excellent Philip, which we would kindly ask you to distribute to the theological candidates; we also ask you, in our behalf, to invite everyone to the disputation at the time and place mentioned. Unless it seems wise to you to do otherwise I do not believe it is necessary to post the theses on the doors there,⁴ since you are strangers there and do not live in the town where the University is located. When you people come, however, you will find them posted on the doors here according to custom and in the usual form. Then we shall also officially invite you to the banquet, even though we would like to know [now] (as you can guess) how many of you will come. The festivity will be on the day of the Holy Cross,⁵ [and] we look forward with joy to your coming. For now another constellation of the stars has passed without doing any damage,⁶ and in three days not even one case of death has occurred. Today one occurred, but it had nothing to do with the plague.

From the court I hear nothing about that synod which you mention.⁷ Perhaps they are diligently hiding such great mysteries from us, and I am willingly ignorant of such mysteries. Today Doctor Brück⁸ arrived. I shall visit him tomorrow if I am in a position to do so, for yesterday and today I have been suffering from diarrhea, and my body has been weakened so that I cannot sleep and have no appetite, and we have nothing to drink.⁹ I hope to feel better tomorrow. In the last two days I have had fifteen bowel movements.

Write to me whether you have swallowed that letter of the Sovereign¹⁰ by which I was quite disturbed because of you (as I wrote),¹¹ and also how your health is.¹² I have become suspicious (as you have read [by now])¹³ of those envoys of yours.¹⁴ You know that faithless and rotten disciple of mine,¹⁵ and he has many people who go along with him and who are like him.

May the Lord guide and preserve you. Amen.

August 29, 1535¹⁶

EXCURSUS

In February of 1535, in an attempt to gain the good will of the Smalcaldic League, the French king, Francis I, wrote a letter to the league in which he explained his general policies. He especially tried to justify the persecution of the evangelicals in France as police action against criminals. See C. R. 2, No. 1247; WA, Br 7, 227. Pursuing the same goal of establishing closer ties with the German Protestants, in the spring of 1535 Francis dispatched the French nobleman Barnabé Voré with an invitation to Melanchthon to come to France. Melanchthon declined this invitation (see C. R. 2, No. 1275), but this discouraged neither Voré nor the King. On June 23 Francis wrote to Melanchthon and again invited him to come to France for consultations with “our” learned men for the purpose of bringing about “harmony” in Christendom; C. R. 2, No. 1279. Voré, apparently with a small legation, brought this letter to

Melanchthon, whom he met in Jena sometime between August 4 and August 8. Now Melanchthon was persuaded to accept the invitation (see *C. R. 2*, No. 1295 and *WA*, Br 13, 232, addition to *WA*, Br 7, 215, n. 8; *C. R. 2*, No. 1297), and on August 15/16 he was at the Electoral court in Torgau (not Weimar, as Manschreck, p. 224, states), seeking a leave of absence; *C. R. 2*, Nos. 1300, 1302, 1304, 1305.

Melanchthon's request was turned down. Through his councilors the Elector informed Melanchthon of his displeasure over the fact that Melanchthon had entered into negotiations with the French without the prior knowledge of and approval by the court. Melanchthon was told to abandon his plan to go to France; if he should desire it, however, the Elector would write to King Francis and excuse Melanchthon for not coming; *C. R. 2*, 907 f. Melanchthon accepted this offer from the Elector, and on August 17 the Elector promised to send to Melanchthon in Jena a copy of his letter to the French King; *C. R. 2*, No. 1300. The Elector's letter to Francis is dated August 18; *C. R. 2*, No. 1303. Thus the Elector and his councilors had every reason to believe that the case was closed; see *C. R. 2*, 908, 910. Whether they really thought so or only later said they had thought so is an open question; in view of Melanchthon's request for the letter to Francis I, however, they could have felt justified in assuming that Melanchthon was, if not content, then at least agreeable.

In connection with his visit to Torgau, Melanchthon had presented a written petition to the Elector (*C. R. 2*, No. 1302), asking for his leave of absence. The date of this petition is uncertain. The *C. R.* editors assign August 18 to the document, yet in a note they also give August 17. Clemen, *WA*, Br 7, No. 2221, Introduction, dates the document August 15; he does so on the basis of the Elector's August 19 statement (*C. R. 2*, 907) to the effect that Melanchthon had been at court on August 15, and had "then" presented a document to which an oral reply had been given. Clemen's date seems to have the most solid foundation, even though Clemen bypasses certain facts and fails to make certain observations. (a) One may ask whether Clemen has the right to deduce from the Elector's statement everything which he does. The statement was made in a summary report in which a document by Melanchthon, marked (A), was forwarded to Brück; no details about the negotiations with Melanchthon were mentioned, except that the answer which had been orally given to Melanchthon was summarized, and Melanchthon's seeming acceptance of this answer was underscored. Clemen in no way documents that the "writing" which the Elector forwarded as exhibit (A) to Brück on August 19, and which according to the Elector's statement Melanchthon had presented on August 15 (*C. R. 2*, 907), is identical with the extant, undated Melanchthon petition, *C. R. 2*, No. 1302. Only further research in the archives could establish this. (b) Melanchthon received the Elector's answer, at least the portion assuring him that a letter would be written to the King of France, on August 16; see *C. R. 2*, No. 1300. Consequently Melanchthon was in contact with the Electoral officials at least twice, once on August 15 (see *loc. cit.*), and again on August 16 (see *C. R. 2*, 907). (c) The Electoral officials considered the case closed, and they and the Elector thought that Melanchthon had accepted the negative answer given him. In his report to Brück the Elector presented the situation in such a way that it is clear beyond any doubt that after an answer had been given to Melanchthon which he seemingly, had accepted, the case was *reopened* by Melanchthon and Luther. See *C. R. 2*, 908, 910. (d) And finally, on August 19 the Elector mentioned two letters from Melanchthon which he forwarded to Brück: one marked (A) given to the Elector on August 15 and orally dealt with by the Electoral officials, and one characterized as an "additional" letter; *C. R. 2*, 907, 908. On August 24 the Elector replied to a *second* letter from Melanchthon; *C. R. 2*, 910. This second letter is not extant; at least it is not printed in *C. R.*

In light of these observations, events must have taken place as follows: On August 15 Melanchthon was at court in Torgau, apparently turning over to the Electoral officials a petition to the Elector in support of his request for a leave of absence; *C. R. 2*, 907. On that day or the next Melanchthon orally received a negative reply from the Elector, and on August 16 he received the promise that the Elector would write to King Francis, excusing Melanchthon for not coming to France; *C. R. 2*, Nos. 1300, 1304. The officials believed that Melanchthon was satisfied; they went ahead and drafted the letter to France, completing it on August 18 (*C. R. 2*, 908, and *ibid.*, No. 1303), and thought the case closed. They were wrong, for they received a second letter from Melanchthon, and even more, Luther got into the act. One of the two Melanchthon letters is missing. The one which is extant, *C. R. 2*, No. 1302, could be the one of August 15, as Clemen suggests, but it could also be the one written *after* Melanchthon's request had been rejected by the Elector. That the dateline of the extant letter is Torgau only establishes the fact that, provided this

extant letter was the second letter, Melanchthon wrote it after his second meeting with the Electoral officials, the one of August 16, and before he left for Wittenberg, where he was on August 17. At least the Elector thought that Melanchthon was in Wittenberg on that day (*C. R. 2*, No. 1300). And on August 18 Melanchthon wrote from Wittenberg (not Jena, as Clemen, *WA*, Br 7, 229 states) to Jonas that he has been for “two days” in Wittenberg; he also told Jonas that “thus far” he had not yet received the Elector’s permission to go to France—a statement which would make no sense at all, if Melanchthon had not still been expecting an answer from the Elector, i.e., an answer to his second letter with which he had tried to change the court’s position which had been made clear to him on August 15/16—but that he did not really expect to receive this permission. See *C. R. 2*, No. 1301. By August 19 Melanchthon had left Wittenberg for Jena “quite angry” about the Elector’s refusal to grant him the leave of absence, as Luther wrote to Jonas on that day; *WA*, Br 7, 232.

On August 19 the Elector informed Brück in Wittenberg that, in addition to Melanchthon, Luther also was at court in Torgau, that Luther had been informed of the reasons for the denial of Melanchthon’s petition, and that the court had the impression that Luther was satisfied. In spite of all this, Luther wrote a letter, says the Elector, which was included for Brück. See *C. R. 2*, 908. It is difficult to establish any details about this journey of Luther to Torgau; Luther would have needed approximately a day and a half to two days in order to make this round-trip journey of about 90 kilometers and to take care of his affairs at court. On August 19 Luther was back in Wittenberg; *WA*, Br 7, No. 2223; *C. R. 2*, 909. On August 17 the Elector had thought Luther to be in Wittenberg; *C. R. 2*, 903. The Elector’s report to Brück (*C. R. 2*, 908) would seem to justify the assumption that Luther was at court on August 18, the day on which the letter to Francis I was completed. And further, Melanchthon would hardly have gone to Wittenberg had he met Luther in Torgau on August 15/16. It is safe, then, to suggest that under the impact of the news which Luther received from Melanchthon personally about the frosty reception that had been accorded him at court, Luther, who favored Melanchthon’s trip to France (*WA*, Br 7, 232), traveled to Torgau sometime on August 17 in an attempt to support Melanchthon’s (second) petition for a leave of absence. After Luther had been informed of the reasons for the denial of this petition (and feeling that little else could be done) but prior to leaving again for Wittenberg, Luther left at court his own official letter to the Elector (*WA*, Br 7, No. 2221, dated August 17) in a last attempt to change the Elector’s mind. If one wishes to wring every possible inference from the Elector’s report to Brück, then one may deduce that all these events took place on August 18, probably in the morning, and that Luther used the afternoon for returning to Wittenberg. Then Luther would either have redated his letter to the Elector, or he would have actually written it on the 17 (perhaps while still in Wittenberg) and would have taken it along. It is reasonable to assume that Luther also took along the second letter of Melanchthon to the Elector mentioned above, and left it at court, along with his own. This would explain the fact that on August 18 (see above), while still in Wittenberg, Melanchthon had still been waiting, though with little hope, for a positive answer from the Elector. In any event, Luther returned to Wittenberg with mixed emotions; on the one hand he realized that his mission had been as unsuccessful as that of Melanchthon; on the other hand he did not know what would happen next (*WA*, Br 7, 232); i.e., Luther was uncertain how Melanchthon would react to the frigid reception, and how the court would react to the renewed pleas made by Melanchthon and himself.

The Elector found himself in a dilemma. By August 18, when the letter to King Francis had been completed, the Elector had thought that the case was closed; while he and his officials must have been aware of possible unhappiness on the part of Melanchthon and Luther, they must nevertheless have felt that things had been smoothed over. At that point the two petitions appeared, undoubtedly much to the surprise and annoyance of the Elector, who was now more than ever determined not to let Melanchthon go; see *C. R. 2*, 910. And so on August 19 (*C. R. 2*, No. 1304) the Elector sent to Brück in Wittenberg a brief report about the events, together with Melanchthon’s two letters, the letter from Luther, and a draft of a reply to Melanchthon’s second request for a leave of absence. He left it to Brück’s discretion to pressure Luther and Melanchthon (whom the Elector thought still to be in Wittenberg) in an attempt to make them withdraw their petitions. In his own handwriting the Elector, in a postscript, spelled out his determination not to let Melanchthon go, as well as some of the reasons for this decision. Whether the envisioned meeting between Brück and Luther actually took place could not be established, though it is almost certain, for Luther tells of having seen the draft of the Elector’s tart, brusque, final reply to Melanchthon. Luther referred to it above, p. 87 (at note 10). Since the date of the final version of this letter

is August 24 (C. R. 2, No. 1305), and since Brück in his answer to the Elector's August 19 request for counsel on the draft of this final reply obviously informed the court that Melanchthon was no longer in Wittenberg, so that the Elector's August 24 letter was sent to Melanchthon in Jena, it was impossible for Luther to have seen the final version and to have already communicated with Melanchthon about it by August 29; see p. 87, at notes 11 and 13. Luther was disturbed about the content and tone of the draft of this letter (see also WA, Br 7, 243) which he could have seen on the evening of August 19 at the very earliest; consequently soon after this date he wrote to Melanchthon the no-longer extant letter mentioned above (p. 87), obviously in an attempt to prepare Melanchthon for this letter and comfort him with, among other thoughts, a certain rumor about the French envoys (which Luther had most probably heard while he was in Torgau); see p. 87, n. 14. While in his letters to Brück and Melanchthon the Elector gave a long list of reasons why he refused to grant Melanchthon the requested leave of absence, in the final analysis it is quite clear that the Elector was annoyed at Melanchthon, that he would have felt embarrassed if his famous professor had gone to France, the enemy of the Empire, and that he simply did not wish Melanchthon to go to France. Melanchthon had no choice but to accept the Elector's verdict, and on August 28 he wrote to King Francis declining the invitation to France; C. R. 2, No. 1306. And Luther tried to make the best out of these events, as his September 1 letter to Jonas demonstrates; see WA, Br 7, 246.

260

To Justus Jonas¹

[Wittenberg,] September 4, 1535

Luther, anticipating Jonas' arrival in Wittenberg to participate in a graduation, jovially explains the suggestions he had made regarding the speech Jonas is to deliver at this graduation. He also asks Jonas to buy, or somehow help to acquire, some of the supplies necessary for the banquet² which the Luthers intend to give in connection with this graduation. Then Luther mentions the victories which Emperor Charles had gained over the Turks in Africa, and tells of the establishment of some religious regulations enjoined by Duke George of Saxony and Cardinal Albrecht of Mainz upon their people in an attempt to assure the successful outcome of the Emperor's campaign. He concludes by sending his wife's and his own good-humored greeting to the Jonas family.³

On Justus Jonas, see LW, 48, 275, n. 3.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 7, 249–250.⁴

Grace and peace!

I hope that you have received the letter⁵ and disputations,⁶ my Jonas, and that at the same time you learned that we, the pig, wanted to teach you, Minerva,⁷ what to say at the graduation. Now the chief cook, our lord Katie, asks you to accept this coin⁸ and to buy for us poultry or fowl,⁹ or whatever in that airy kingdom of our feathered friends is subject to the dominion of man (and may be eaten)¹⁰—but (for God's sake) no ravens, though we are quite eager to devour all the sparrows at once.¹¹ Should you spend more, it will be repaid you. Further, if you can buy, or hunt at no expense to yourself, some rabbit or similar meaty delicacies send them along, for we intend to satisfy the bellies of all of you, if that drink called beer finally turns out all right. For my Katie has cooked 7 *Quartalia* (as they call them) into which she has mixed 32 *Scheffel* of malt, because she wants to satisfy my palate.¹² She hopes it will turn out to be good beer. Whatever it is, you and the others will taste it.

There is no news, except what you already know¹³ about the Emperor's victory in Africa.¹⁴ Duke George¹⁵ and the Bishop of Halle,¹⁶ however, held a meeting and decided to require their people, for the good of the Emperor, to fast three times per week, and to receive only one part of the sacrament¹⁷ so that in the future everything will turn out successfully. If Charles should reach Constantinople¹⁸ (which God may grant), then it will not be God who will have accomplished this, but [rather] those three fast days and the one part of the sacrament. The poet certainly is right when he says: "Those who are as smart as you are can easily transfer to themselves the glory created by the efforts of others."¹⁹ Now I understand why Terence²⁰ calls that Thraso²¹ a wicked person. [But] these words originate with Scipio and Laelius, and not with Terence.²² Yet Christ lives and sees this wickedness of devils and men, wickedness too great to be put into words. We, however, live too, and rejoice in that raging of devils and men, and intend even to put on a banquet and a feast day while they miserably chafe—especially if you happily arrive here²³ with

some captured feathered animals and force them, after they have been taken from the freedom of the kingdom of the air, to walk into the jail of the cooking pots upon²⁴ a city stove.

My Katie cordially and reverently greets you and all your family. But hold a minute, if my wife greets you, I, in mm, greet your wife. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.²⁵ Farewell in the Lord!

September 4, 1535

Yours, MARTIN LUTHER

261

To George Spalatin

[Wittenberg,] September 6, 1535

Luther asks Spalatin's help for an elderly pastor who has been expelled from office. He also reports some news: Robert Barnes is in Wittenberg in order to get Melanchthon to come to England; Hartmuth von Cronberg is searching for his sister and has visited Luther; the cities of Greece supposedly call Emperor Charles the liberator from the Turkish tyranny; there is no plague in Wittenberg. Luther closes by sending greetings from his wife to the Spalatin family.

On George Spalatin, see LW 48, 8 f.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 7, 251.¹

To the most distinguished Mr. George Spalatin, Master [of Arts],² superintendent in Meissen,³ my dearest brother in the Lord

Grace and peace in the Lord! The pastor in Burkartshain by the name of Wolfgang Götzel⁴ is being expelled by his lord, [even though] he is now old, has an abundance of children, and has so far faithfully discharged his official duties. Help this man, my George, as much as you are able to. For it is cruel that Christ's poor are so afflicted by our people, and such arbitrary cruelty of the nobility will cause great harm to our gospel. Therefore I heartily commend him to you.

There is no news, except that Doctor Antony, that unfortunate Englishman,⁵ is here as envoy of his King⁶ to our Sovereign,⁷ and asks that Master⁸ Philip⁹ come to England for a colloquy with the King.¹⁰ [Also,] Hartmuth von Cronberg¹¹ was here in search of his sister. For this most honorable woman was indeed here for some months, though we did not know it. A certain Jew had abducted her, a widow, and made her his wife. But while traveling he was killed by her relatives, and his wife, called by her relatives to return to them in peace, left town.¹² From Silesia comes word that the cities of Greece are calling Emperor Charles¹³ the liberator from the Turkish tyranny.¹⁴ The fortune of that man is unheard of; may Christ complete it. Amen. Of our plague¹⁵ I know nothing; thus all is a lie. Of many it is said that they have been buffed already for three days, but behold they are alive and most healthy. May God punish those miserable people who are masters in lying and seducing the people!

Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me!

September 6, 1535. My lord Katie reverently greets you together with your whole flesh.¹⁶

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

262

To Elector John Frederick

[Wittenberg,] September 12, 1535

Luther and some of his colleagues urge the Elector to grant a private audience to Robert Barnes, the English envoy. They also mention Barnes's efforts regarding a possible trip of Melanchthon to England, and point out that it would cause sadness to Melanchthon if he were not permitted to go. A brief blessing closes the letter.

On Elector John Frederick, see LW 48, 181 f.

Text in German: WA, Br 7, 266–267.¹

To the Most Serene, Noble Sovereign and Lord, Sir John Frederick, duke in Saxony and elector, archmarshal of the Holy Empire, etc., landgrave in Thuringia and margrave in Meissen, our Most Gracious Lord

Grace and peace in Christ, and also our poor *Pater noster*!² Most Serene, Noble Sovereign, Most Gracious Lord! Doctor Antony,³ envoy of His Royal Majesty of England,⁴ has shown us letters⁵ and asked us to intercede in his behalf with Your Electoral Grace for a secret or private audience, since he wishes to have his mission⁶ withheld from public knowledge until a settlement has been reached. Since Your Electoral Grace is well acquainted with this man from the past,⁷ and since in our opinion he brings good news as far as his orders are concerned, it is our humble request that Your Electoral Grace graciously grant such an audience to this man.

Further, with Master⁸ Philip's⁹ consent,¹⁰ Barnes has diligently negotiated with the King; he has accomplished much, so that the King highly desires Master Philip [to come], advises against the trip to France (as Doctor Antony can report further), and in addition sends an official¹¹ safe-conduct and also offers bond, etc. [Therefore] it is our humble request that if Your Electoral Grace is unable to grant [an audience to Barnes] prior to the trip to Austria,¹² then [Your Grace] would not deny it after the return home (which, God may graciously grant). Who knows what God intends to accomplish? His wisdom is greater than ours, and his will better than ours. Should Master Philip not go, now that he has been officially invited as a result of his readiness [to go to England], then this might cause him many sad thoughts. Even without this problem he is and almost always has been overburdened with work, worry,¹³ and spiritual struggles.¹⁴ Your Electoral Grace certainly will know how to consider graciously such matters, and kindly act accordingly. Christ our Lord be with Your Electoral Grace eternally. Amen.

September 12, 1535

Your Electoral Grace's dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

JUSTUS JONAS, DOCTOR¹⁵

CASPAR CRUCIGER, DOCTOR¹⁶

JOHN BUGENHAGEN POMER, DOCTOR¹⁷

263

To Gregory Brück¹

[Wittenberg, about September 15, 1535]²

Following up his letter of recommendation of Robert Barnes to the Elector (No. 262), Luther writes to Gregory Brück, the Electoral Saxon chancellor emeritus, and expresses his hope that Brück will help Barnes get the desired private audience with Elector John Frederick. In view of the willingness of Henry VIII to affirm the gospel and join the Smalcaldic League, Luther advocates the King's admission to the league. He sees in the King's desire God's hand at work, and sees a possibility of confounding the plans of the papists. Luther informs Brück that he, Luther, and his colleagues will deal with the next English envoy on the matter of the King's marriage. And he finally strongly recommends that Melanchthon be permitted to go to England, or even be sent there.

On Gregory Brück, see LW 49, 51 f.

Text in German (with some words, phrases, and sentences in Latin): WA, Br 7, 268.

Grace and peace in Christ!

Honorable, highly-learned, dear Sir and Friend!³ The Englishman, Doctor Antony, the envoy of his King,⁴ comes⁵ and, as you know,⁶ requests of my Most Gracious Lord⁷ an audience which should be gracious, yet secret or private, something about which I do not worry. If Your Honor promotes this matter, then my Most Gracious Lord will not feel imposed upon, especially since His Electoral Grace is well acquainted with this man from before,⁸ and since Barnes comes under different circumstances than the French legation.⁹

Since the King now also offers to accept the gospel, join the federation of our sovereigns,¹⁰ and permit our *Apologia*¹¹ to circulate in his kingdom, it seems to me that, if His Royal Majesty would be honorably¹² received into the federation, it would confound the papists with regard to both the council¹³ and all [their other] plans. For since all of this is taking place by itself in this way without our seeking it, God may, indeed, intend something which is bigger and better than we are capable of understanding. If God intends graciously to meet us in this way,¹⁴ it is up to us not to let him pass by in ungratefulness. One has to seize

an opportunity head on, because behind it is [only] emptiness.¹⁵ Neglect an opportunity (says Bonaventure),¹⁶ and the opportunity will neglect you.

Regarding the royal marriage¹⁷ it has already been decided that the other envoy, once he has arrived,¹⁸ is to deal with us theologians about this matter; one may not deny him this. This issue is of no concern to the sovereigns. I myself would like to hear the reasons of the English since they appear to be so certain on this issue.

I would very much like to see Master¹⁹ Philip²⁰ travel to England on his own, or be sent there,²¹ for he has previously agreed [to go],²² and as a result negotiations with the King have brought matters to this point.²³ Should he again²⁴ be prevented [from going], then he might feel that his reputation is being too much harmed; in the final analysis such stubbornness²⁵ might produce anger, or perhaps an eel's tail.²⁶ If it cannot be accomplished now [that Melanchthon may go], then it should certainly be arranged after my Most Gracious Lord's return.²⁷ Melanchthon has done much and worked hard, as we all know. But if one were not to have any consideration for him, or put up with him a little bit,²⁸ that would be dealing too harshly with him, and poorly rewarding his merits. After all, all the jurists and physicians are free to go to foreign lords if they wish to do so. I am writing this so that this good man is not forced to overburden himself with sad thoughts.

Your Honor certainly will do what is best in this matter. With this be commended to God. Amen.²⁹

264

To Justus Jonas¹

[Wittenberg,] October 28, 1535

Forwarding a letter from Melanchthon, Luther informs Jonas of the death of Christian Beyer, and of the fact that Gregory Brück is not in Prague at the moment. Then he tells of some events in Wittenberg: As yet no news has been received from the Electoral party which is on its way to Austria; Schadewalt has died from the plague; at the moment there are no other deaths from the plague; students are returning; and he himself is suffering from a catarrhal chest cold. He also wonders about the silence surrounding the papal envoy, Pietro Paolo Vergerio, and the council. As an afterthought Luther mentions his intention of writing theses against the private mass, and also on I Corinthians 13 and other passages dealing with justification. He also extends the greetings of his wife, and briefly describes her daily activities, which range from farm chores to Bible reading.

On Justus Jonas, see LW 48, 275, n. 3.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 7, 316–317.

Grace and peace in Christ!

Eight days ago, Doctor Christian Beyer² departed from this life; so Philip³ writes. He suffered from a fever; during the trip⁴ he also got a cough and a catarrhal cold⁵ which moved from the head to the chest. I am sending the letter.⁶ As you will read in Philip's letter, Brück is not in Prague.⁷ Up to now we have received nothing from those who are traveling to Austria.⁸ Last Sunday⁹ the plague carried away Schadewalt,¹⁰ our best citizen. Since then, however, we are again at peace with the plague.¹¹ I am suffering from a salty catarrhal cold,¹² and sometimes from a slight cough. Many students are returning.¹³ Besides this I have nothing [to write about]. I am wondering where the papal legate is,¹⁴ or where he might have gone; concerning him, and concerning the whole council¹⁵ there is such great silence.

Greet your whole family, and pray for us!

October 28

I am thinking about putting together theses against the private mass, and also on I Corinthians 13 and certain other passages that pertain to the topic of justification.¹⁶ My lord Katie sends greetings; she drives the wagon, takes care of the fields,¹⁷ buys and puts cattle out to pasture, brews,¹⁸ etc. In between she has started to read the Bible, and I have promised her fifty gulden¹⁹ if she finishes before Easter. She is very serious²⁰ and is now starting the Book of Deuteronomy.

October 28, 1535

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

To Justus Jonas¹

[Wittenberg,] November 10, 1535

Luther thanks Jonas for a hare and some birds, and reports on some of his daily activities and correspondence matters: he has written to Jonas about an as yet undecided affair of a procuress; he and Bugenhagen have had breakfast with the papal envoy, Pietro Paolo Vergerio, who had suddenly come to Wittenberg; the people of Frankfurt have written to him about the pressure which Albrecht of Mainz is putting on them to restore the celebration of the mass. In this connection Luther points out that he needs the help of his friends for all the problems he faces, and that it is a shame that the plague (which barely does any harm in the city) should keep his friends away. Luther also includes a letter from the pastor at Colditz and an “eloquent” writing by Hans von Dolzig. Then Luther mentions that the Elector has thus far had a good trip, and that there must be a mix-up regarding the persons who supposedly are accompanying the Elector on this trip. In conclusion Luther extends his wife’s and his own greetings to the Jonas family, and mentions the sale of linen which Jonas had offered.

On Justus Jonas, see LW 48, 275, n. 3, and above, pp. 93, n. 3, 107, n. 1.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 7, 321–322.

Grace and peace!

I thank you for the hare and the birds,² excellent Jonas. I have much too much that I could write [about], but I am sluggish, and affairs are too complicated for me to be able to write about them in view of all the work I have to do. I have written about that procuress.³ As yet I do not know what will happen to her, but I hope that she will be evicted from town.

Suddenly, out of the blue,⁴ the legate of the Roman pope showed up also in this town.⁵ Now he is with the Margrave.⁶ This man seems to fly rather than ride. How I wished that you had been here! The legate invited me and Pomer⁷ for breakfast, since I had refused an evening meal because of the bath.⁸ I came and ate with him in the castle. But I am not permitted to write to anyone about what I said. During the whole meal I played the role of Luther himself;⁹ I also acted as the representative of the Englishman Antony,¹⁰ whom the papal legate had also invited,¹¹ [and I did so] in an extremely vexing way (as Anthony has written to you).¹² [More] about this in person.

The people of Frankfurt have written to me¹³ and complained that they are pressured by the [Arch]bishop of Mainz¹⁴ to restore masses and ceremonies. In all these matters I need you people¹⁵ here. But I am forced to carry these burdens alone and answer by myself because of that plague (that is, the devil), which rejoices that it is able to keep us apart for such a long time through one or two funerals.¹⁶ May God set free and protect his Word.

I am sending you the letter of Augustin,¹⁷ the pastor at Colditz, in which you can read about that turbulent sect of the Epicureans among those braggarts.¹⁸ Nevertheless God is able to revenge himself, when he is despised. I am also sending the eloquent writing of [von] Dolzig.¹⁹

Concerning our Sovereign’s²⁰ good trip up to Prague²¹ you need not have any doubts. Philip²² writes for the third time²³ already that Brück²⁴ is in Jena. Perhaps it is Bleycardus,²⁵ for he is with the Sovereign, and affairs and names have been mixed up: that is, previously Brück was ill, and Bleycardus went with the Sovereign, as if he were Brück.

My Katie greets you and your whole family. She continues reading,²⁶ only the tragedy concerning that procuress²⁷ has robbed her of eight days. Concerning the sale of linen (which you offer), she answers that you can easily imagine what she would do in such a dangerous²⁸ situation, especially in view of such great, promising freedom to make up the reading, [or] fear to lose this opportunity.²⁹

Kind greetings in Christ to your whole family!

November 10, 1535

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

To Philip Melanchthon

[Wittenberg, beginning of December, 1535]¹

Announcing the coming of Robert Barnes to Jena, Luther asks Melanchthon to prepare himself to receive an English legation, and to do so in a manner worthy of the ambassadors' dignity and Elector John Frederick's honor. Then Luther briefly mentions the threats made in Wittenberg by the papal envoy, Pietro Paolo Vergerio, against Henry VIII. In the remaining portions of the letter Luther deals with two topics: (a) Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz has taken away, and supposedly sold for a large sum of money, the crosier of the abbot of the monastery at Zinna and some of the sacred vessels of a church in Jüterbog. In this connection Luther muses on the greed of the cardinals, especially Albrecht. (b) The friends in Jena should not be deterred from returning to Wittenberg by rumors concerning the plague. In closing Luther extends greetings from his wife. In a humorous way he mentions that his wife is thinking of Melanchthon; he warns his friend not to make him jealous since then he would take revenge by thinking of Melanchthon's wife.

On Philip Melanchthon, see LW 48, 77, n. 3, and above, p. 85.

Text in Latin (with some words, sentences, or phrases in German): WA, Br 7, 330–331.

Mr. Philip Melanchthon, Master [of Arts],² a faithful disciple of Christ, my dearest brother, who is in Jena Grace and peace in the Lord! Since Doctor Antony³ himself comes, there was nothing for me to write about; from his report you will find out everything that goes on here. You see to it now that you be a companion and debator worthy of the two ambassadors,⁴ and of the honor of their King⁵ and our Sovereign.⁶ I rejoice that Doctor Antony has been freed from his worries.⁷ For I, too, started to have very grave thoughts, since the other ambassador⁸ delayed so long. It is quite easy for someone who knows what kind of traitors, thieves, robbers, and even devils the most reverend lord cardinals, popes, and their ambassadors are, to have second thoughts. I wish there would be more kings of England who would slay them.⁹ For with these words the legate, Paolo Vergerio,¹⁰ answered me here: “Yea! (I know) the King of England kills cardinals and bishops. But,” etc. Then, gesturing with his hand and gnashing his teeth, he threatened that King with sufferings greater than the emperors ever had experienced before;¹¹ [he did this,] to be sure, not with open words but with lips pressed together. In the flesh, even in the heart, they are malicious people! May the Lord grant that you, too, can see this.

Priest Albrecht¹² at Halle has taken away the crosier of the abbot at Zinna, and the monstrance in Jüterbog, together with many other chalices; [he did this] out of such great devotion that he even replaced them with letters sealed by him.¹³ They say that that crosier of the abbot and the monstrance brought a large sum.¹⁴ It is truly right that Albrecht became a cardinal since he, in his ingenuity, so successfully competes with all the cardinals, and soon will have outdone them if he is permitted to continue. For in this way they¹⁵ have robbed all the churches in Rome and in Italy of altars, masses,¹⁶ incomes, and treasury; yet nevertheless they strictly insist on the masses and the worship in the churches. If you believe Cicero, then you think that Verres or Dionysius really are something;¹⁷ but now one most reverend cardinal of the holy catholic church not only has a hundred Verres and a thousand Dionysiuses in his heart, but also publicly and without any shame practices their ways in works for everyone to see. How do the sovereigns and lords tolerate this! And thus they vex us through crimes and the rape of churches.¹⁸

We expect your return,¹⁹ and should a rumor reach you, then endure and overcome it. We hope that, even if there should be any future cases of contagious disease [around here], we will nevertheless have clean air (instead of this Scythian sky).²⁰ Were it the plague, it would need other symptoms. Everywhere on earth people are mortal; they are born and they die. We cannot all remain alive here on earth, otherwise we will not get yonder.

My lord [Katie] greets you reverently; she thinks more frequently of you. Take care not to provoke me to jealousy, since you, too, have a wife for my revenge. Farewell in the Lord; greet Doctor Caspar Cruciger²¹ and all our friends, and pray for me!

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

267

To Elector John Frederick

[Wittenberg,] January 11, 1536

The English ambassadors,¹ who had arrived in Electoral Saxony at the end of November, 1535, attended the meeting of the Smalcaldic League which was in session in Smalcald in December of 1535, and which was addressed by Edward Fox. During this meeting the ambassadors had a conference with the Electoral Saxon chancellor emeritus, Gregory Brück, and presented to him a document of six articles; and the evangelicals, in turn, presented to the English 13 articles. Both documents² were to be the basis for further negotiations. In his address to one of the league's plenary sessions,³ Fox underscored the necessity of common action on the part of all the evangelicals regarding the pending council, and of unity among all who opposed the pope. The result of this meeting was that theological discussions (in which the matter of the King's marriage was to be of great importance) were to be conducted in Wittenberg. On January 1 the ambassadors arrived in Wittenberg, where they stayed until April as the Elector's guests.⁴ In Smalcald the English voiced their desire that Melanchthon be present at these discussions; Melanchthon excused himself, however, by citing the judgment regarding the matter of the King's marriage which he had given in 1531,⁵ and his obligations to the University which, because of the plague, had been moved to Jena.⁶ After the ambassadors had settled down in Wittenberg they approached Elector John Frederick and urged him to order Melanchthon to come to Wittenberg and attend the discussions. The Elector wrote to Luther for advice,⁷ and letter No. 267 is Luther's reply.

Luther underscores that he himself would be willing to bear the burden of these discussions without Melanchthon. Yet he encourages the Elector to send for Melanchthon, provided that Melanchthon wishes to attend the discussions. He gives three reasons for his stand: (a) to keep Melanchthon away from the discussions might be misinterpreted by the English as disrespect for them, and this could cause a bad reputation for the Elector; (b) according to a prior arrangement, Melanchthon was to attend the discussions; (c) to keep Melanchthon away from the discussions might do damage to Melanchthon's reputation. Then Luther informs the Elector that regarding the King's divorce he is curious to hear the ambassadors' arguments, but that he will not simply be talked into abandoning his opinion given in 1531.⁸ In conclusion Luther commends the Elector to God and thanks the Elector for a gift of venison.

As a result of Luther's letter Melanchthon was called to Wittenberg,⁹ where he arrived sometime after January 17.¹⁰ At the beginning of February he went back to Jena,¹¹ and on February 13 he returned permanently to Wittenberg.¹² In February Heath made a short trip to Nürnberg.¹³ Because of these travels, it was not until early March that serious theological discussions finally began,¹⁴ the first two months of the year having been spent in occasionally heated discussions about the King's divorce and in academic disputations on certain theological subjects.¹⁵ The ambassadors attended these disputations, though they did not participate in them actively or in great detail. Thus the discussions, which Luther had hoped could be finished quickly,¹⁶ dragged on, and as early as January 25 Luther voiced his unhappiness about the whole matter.¹⁷

On Elector John Frederick, see LW 48, 181 f.

Text in German: WA, Br 7, 342–343.¹⁸

To the Most Serene, Noble Sovereign and Lord, Sir John Frederick, duke in Saxony, archmarshal and elector of the Holy Roman Empire, landgrave of Thuringia and margrave at Meissen, my Most Gracious Lord

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus, and my poor *Pater noster*!¹⁹ Most Serene, Noble Sovereign, Most Gracious Lord! I have obediently read²⁰ Your Electoral Grace's letter. First, regarding Master²¹ Philip,²² whether he is to be ordered by Your Electoral Grace to come [to Wittenberg] in order to assist us in the discussions of the King's matter²³ with the English legation: it is my humble judgment in this matter that Master Philip should also be present (provided that he himself does not wish to avoid getting entangled in this matter); for prior to the trip to Austria²⁴ Your Electoral Grace had written to Doctor Antony²⁵ that he should call us theologians together as soon as the other legation²⁶ arrived, either here or (should the other ambassador²⁷ be afraid of the plague)²⁸ at Torgau.²⁹

Your Electoral Grace informs me that at Smalcald the ambassadors received favorably Master Philip's opinion;³⁰ yet I do not know how this happened, and whether the ambassadors are content [with this opinion. Therefore] I refer this issue back to Your Electoral Grace for consideration. For I would not like to see them cause us a bad reputation, as if they had been despised, since even without this, the

constellation of the stars is so negative³¹ for them that even I am compelled to wonder,³² and in reality there is no limit to the praise and commendation of the honorable way in which Your Electoral Grace has treated the ambassadors until now,³³ etc.

Of course, so far as I am concerned, I certainly do not begrudge Master Philip the opportunity to be spared this matter, since it looks as if I have to empty³⁴ this bathtub by myself. Regardless of whether I am alone [in doing this], or whether everyone else is with me, yet (I think) a large portion [of the work] certainly will rest on me. But I would not like to have Master Philip's reputation left unconsidered in this matter.

Second, I thank Your Electoral Grace with my whole heart that Your Electoral Grace so faithfully exhorts me to deal carefully with the matter,³⁵ etc. But since the ambassadors base themselves on Your Electoral Grace's letter regarding our own previously made offer,³⁶ I have to see and hear what they produce. For (to speak confidentially and in secret) Your Electoral Grace will certainly find out that I shall not let myself be talked into³⁷ publicly condemning the Queen and the young Queen,³⁸ together with the whole kingdom, as being incestuous, as they brag that the Pope and eleven universities have already done.³⁹ I will not get mixed up with their incest business,⁴⁰ even if I could do nothing more in this matter than say "gawk" like a goose. But I maintain that my former judgment is to stand; besides this I shall not be unfriendly toward the ambassadors regarding one or the other issue,⁴¹ so that they do not think that we Germans are made of stone and wood, etc. I will not discuss my opinions casually,⁴² just as the English, too, are not committing themselves,⁴³ etc. Otherwise all the stable hands⁴⁴ would first have to justify this matter all over town.

May Your Electoral Grace graciously receive this letter as my humble answer. With this be commended to God—and also my humble thanks to Your Electoral Grace for the presented venison, etc.

January 11, 1536

Your Electoral Grace's dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

268

To Nicholas Hausmann

[Wittenberg,] January 17, 1536

Luther asks Hausmann not to pay any attention to the protests made by Master Peter regarding the marriage of the Master's widowed daughter. Then Luther informs Hausmann that at the moment he knows of no vacant parish for the pastor at Wörlitz, that in Wittenberg there is nothing new except what Hausmann has heard from Francis Burchart, and that the English legation in Wittenberg is awaiting the arrival of Melancthon. Luther closes by extending his wife's greetings, and by assuring Hausmann that he would write shortly about Spiegel and the personal matter about which Hausmann had asked him.

On Nicholas Hausmann, see LW 48, 399 f.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 7, 347.¹

To the excellent and venerable Mr. Nicholas Hausmann, Master [of Arts],² a minister of the gospel in Dessau, my elder³ in the Lord

Grace and peace in Christ! I ask you, my Hausmann, to let the marriage of the daughter of Master Peter take its course.⁴ For Master Peter has no authority over her, since she, as a widow, has been taken out of her father's jurisdiction and been independent for a long time. Master Peter has even been deprived of his house and all possessions by means of a public judgment. She marries at her own risk. It is enough that Master Peter has had such a sad experience with the former son-in-law; now he should not concern himself with this [new son-in-law], but take care of his own affairs.

At this point I know of no vacancy for the pastor at Wörlitz ([I say this] not to make empty promises).⁵ Should I be in a position to help him, however, I shall be delighted to do so if there is a vacancy somewhere.

I have no news except what you no doubt have heard there from Master⁶ Francis.⁷ The English legation here is still awaiting Masters Philip⁹ so that they may unfold¹⁰ the matter of the King of England.¹¹ Yet I, who am afflicted with many things, continuously grow less able to handle one single thing. My

Katie greets you reverently. Farewell in Christ! Regarding Spiegel and your own matter,¹² I shall write shortly in detail. Again, farewell!

January 17, 1536

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

269

To Caspar Müller

[Wittenberg,] January 19, 1536

Throughout the letter¹ Luther complains, in a serious yet humorous way, about a severe cough and cold, and about his advancing age. In addition the letter is filled with details about Luther's day-by-day life. At the moment Luther cannot accept a student as boarder; there is nothing new to write about the English legation which is in Wittenberg; the issue of the divorce of Henry VIII has been settled by the death of Catherine of Aragon; it was only right that the pope was disavowed in England in connection with this marriage issue, since he played games in this serious matter; the papal envoy, Pietro Paolo Vergerio, has been at Wittenberg and at the Smalcald meeting of the Smalcaldic League. Luther also voices his skepticism about some development in the Mansfeld smelting business and his disappointment that none of the people of Mansfeld, including his brother James, has informed him of this development. He tells Müller that he has to go to Torgau, and adds that his wife and his son, John, send greetings. In closing he expresses the hope that Müller will accept the letter in good humor, as Luther intends it.

On Caspar Müller, see LW 49, 341, n. 26.²

Text in German (with a few words in Latin): WA, Br 7, 348–350.³

To the honorable and wise Caspar Müller, chancellor at Mansfeld, my kind lord⁴ and dear friend⁵ Grace and peace! My dear Mr. Chancellor and Friend!⁶ I certainly would like to write Your Honor⁷ many things and thus comply with Your Honor's request. But I, too,⁸ am sick with a cough and catarrh. Yet the most serious illness begins with me; that is, the sun has shone on me for such a long time,⁹ a vexation which, as you well know, is common, and certainly many people die of it.¹⁰ For people finally become blind from such prolonged sunshine,¹¹ some turn grey, black, and wrinkled from it.¹² Who knows whether Your Honor¹³ didn't step on a stone which, heated by the rays of the sun,¹⁴ caused Your Honor such days of pain? Of course, it is not the dear sun's fault that by its shining mud becomes hard and wax becomes soft.¹⁵ Everything has a unique nature which develops and reveals itself; in the final analysis, a thing develops in accord with its basic nature.

For several reasons I would have liked to have Kegel¹⁶ as a boarder;¹⁷ but since the students are returning from Jena¹⁸ my table is filled, and I cannot simply oust the old companions.¹⁹ If a place becomes vacant, however, as might happen after Easter, I would be happy to inform Your Honor accordingly, provided that lord Katie will then be gracious to me.

Concerning the English legation²⁰ (how nosy you gentlemen of Mansfeld are!) I know of nothing special to write. For the Queen is dead;²¹ it is also said that the child, her daughter is deathly ill.²² In the eyes of the whole world she²³ has lost her case;²⁴ we poor beggars, the theologians at Wittenberg, are the only exceptions who would like to maintain her in royal honor, where she should have stayed. This has been the end and solution [of this matter].²⁵

In this case the Pope has acted like a real pope, and has issued contradictory bulls.²⁶ He has played such a game that it served him right to be ousted from England—and not even for the sake of the gospel. He has played his game²⁷ well against the King, so that I am forced to stand up for the King, and yet I am unable to approve of the matter.²⁸ For goodness sake,²⁹ pray³⁰ the *Pater noster*³¹ at least once against the papacy, that St. Valentine may grab it by the neck!³²

The Pope's orator has been here,³³ as Your Honor knows. But in my present haste I am unable to send [a copy of] the answer given him at Smalcald,³⁴ for I am having a coughing spell, and because of this cough I am unable to search for the copy; as soon as the cough stops I will look for it. I think that the cough certainly would stop if Your Honor would pray for me.

Since Your Honor received a part of the smelting houses, I wish you well.³⁵ But I have no hope at all, for my theology tells me that man's planning and God's blessings are against one another.³⁶ If this is to

happen to my dear fatherland, I will not stand in the way. But you people are really fine fellows, since neither Your Honor nor James Luther nor the Kaufmanns³⁷ wrote how they fared in this matter. With your silence you are causing us poor children (who live here) to think that all of you together have become beggars. Yet God will nevertheless still feed us. Amen.

Tell my brother³⁸ that my cough and his silence kept me from answering him! Give my greetings to his black hen, together with the chicks.³⁹ I have to cough [now], and yet I have to think of Shrove Tuesday⁴⁰ at Torgau; I don't know what I am to cough there.⁴¹ Maybe I will have to keep company with John of Jena.⁴²

My lord Katie sends cordial greetings to Your Honor and asks that, if it is in Your Honor's power, Your Honor not let the sun shine upon Your Honor more⁴³ than upon me, even if the sun intends to shine on me too much.⁴⁴

Your godchild, Master John,⁴⁵ greets you. He is set on really growing up (not growing to be a bad boy); may God grant it! With this be commended to God!

Accept my ways (as Your Honor knows them); for I am quite rough and coarse, big, grey, green, overburdened with, excessively mixed up in, and overtaken by [all kinds of] affairs, so that sometimes, in order to preserve myself,⁴⁶ I have to force myself to make a joke.⁴⁷ Of course, a man is not more than a man, even if God can make out of a man what he wishes—yet we have to do our part too.⁴⁸ Greet all good gentlemen and friends!

January 19, 1536

DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER

270

To Francis Burchart

[Wittenberg,] January 25, 1536

Luther informs Burchart of the receipt of a present of wine, and congratulates him on his appointment as vice-chancellor. Then Luther mentions that he is debating, or rather wrangling, with the Englishmen, that he is bothered by the expenses which the visit of the Englishmen causes for the Elector, and that he is tired of these useless talks. Finally, Luther announces the date of an upcoming disputation on private mass, and encourages Burchart to come to Wittenberg for this disputation.

On Francis Burchart, see p. 80, n. 10.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 7, 352.¹

Grace and peace from the Lord!

The wine about which you write has been sent and given to me as a present,² about six buckets,³ my Francis. I congratulate you on your success, and the new honor or occupation,⁴ and I am asking the Lord⁵ Christ to multiply and preserve this, your success, with all blessings. Amen.

Here we are debating with the Englishmen,⁶ if debating is wrangling. I am bothered by the fact that our Sovereign⁷ is burdened with such great expenses. I certainly am sick and tired;⁸ already in the cases of Karlstadt and Zwingli I started to hate such useless talks by which, as Paul says,⁹ the hearts are hidden¹⁰ so that you lose all that you have learned and become a fool. "They have become fools"¹¹ (he says)¹² "while they want to be wise." But more about this¹³ in person.

The disputation on private mass will take place this coming Saturday,¹⁴ God willing, and the sum of it is contained in this syllogism:¹⁵ Every human curie action¹⁶ in divine matters is an abomination; every private mass is of this kind; therefore every private mass is an abomination.

Farewell in the Lord, and come if you are able.¹⁷

January 25, 1536

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

271

To Elector John Frederick

[Wittenberg,] March 28, 1536

Luther informs the Elector that Francis Burchart will present to him a German translation of the articles which are the result of the discussions held between the English legation and the Wittenberg theologians.¹

Luther endorses the articles and approves of proceeding with the negotiations to establish an alliance between the Smalcaldic League and the King of England, provided that the King accepts the articles and makes no efforts to change them. Luther also tells his Sovereign that, compared with the articles, the King's divorce is of minor importance. Then Luther chastises his old foe, Duke George, for his latest effort to harass the evangelicals in the Duchy of Saxony. In an enclosed note Luther, in behalf of his colleague, Caspar Cruciger, asks the Elector to make available the castle at Eilenburg for Cruciger's wedding, since this wedding could not take place in Leipzig or Wittenberg.

On Elector John Frederick, see LW 48, 181 f.

Text in German: WA, Br 7, 383–384.²

To the Most Serene, Noble Sovereign and Lord, Sir John Frederick, duke in Saxony and elector, etc., landgrave in Thuringia and margrave in Meissen, my Most Gracious Lord
Grace and peace in Christ Jesus, our Lord, together with my humble prayer!³ Most Serene, Noble Sovereign, Most Gracious Lord! From Master⁴ Francis, the vice-chancellor,⁵ we have humbly received Your Electoral Grace's order concerning the English, etc.⁶ Said Master Francis will turn over [to Your Electoral Grace] the articles, all of them translated into German,⁷ from which Your Electoral Grace will see how far we have progressed with the English by this time.⁸ Since they do not know, however, how their Lord King⁹ will react to these articles, especially to the last four,¹⁰ they have taken a recess in order to inform His Royal Majesty accordingly. If His Royal Majesty should accept these articles,¹¹ then one may proceed to form the alliance.¹² For these articles are certainly in agreement with our teaching.¹³ And¹⁴ then in due time one may, of course, dispatch a legation to England—since the English desire it¹⁵—to inform the King in greater detail. If His Royal Majesty should not accept these articles, however, or if he searches in them for much to be discussed or changed,¹⁶ then, indeed we are not in a position again to confuse or upset our congregations—which have hardly been brought to peace and quiet—just because of the English.

Your Electoral Grace may exclude from these theological issues the matter of the King's marriage; or, should it be considered wise, [Your Electoral Grace] may offer to defend it to the degree to which we have approved of it.¹⁷

Regarding Duke George's matter¹⁸ our people have acted quite carelessly, and this has deeply troubled me. But Your Electoral Grace [may have] a good conscience [regarding this issue] since Your Grace has honestly and with a Christian attitude offered to let all bad will fall by the wayside. Thus God's will has been fulfilled, and in his time he certainly will not forget it. But that man, eager for revenge and without any peace, remains as he has always been, ravenous for blood and murder; one day he is going to discover, as Psalm 8 states: You execute the enemy and him who is eager for revenge.¹⁹ The best thing²⁰ is that he, together with all his hangers-on, is unable to pray because of such unrepenting wickedness; of course he is not in need of prayer, so haughty is he. Yet we who are seeking and offering peace and pardon are able to pray—praise be to God. Therefore God will listen to us, provided that we humbly confess our sins and seek his honor.

May Jesus Christ, our dear Lord, strengthen and comfort Your Electoral Grace's heart against the devil's threats and gloomy thoughts. The devil had worse things in mind [on other occasions]. Amen.

March 28, 1536

Your Electoral Grace's dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

and the others, etc.²¹

Further, Doctor Caspar Cruciger²² has asked me to write to Your Electoral Grace and ask that Your Electoral Grace would graciously grant him [the use of] the castle at Eilenburg for his wedding. For otherwise he does not know where to go, since his wedding cannot take place at Leipzig²³ or Wittenberg.²⁴ Your Electoral Grace certainly will know how to act graciously in this matter. For in such matters one has to help [others to] overcome obstacles.²⁵ Herewith [Your Electoral Grace] be commended to God. Amen.

272

To Thomas Cromwell
Wittenberg, April 9, 1536

Luther explains the fact that he had not yet answered a letter from Cromwell by telling of the sudden departure of Robert Barnes from Wittenberg. Luther, thanking Cromwell for his kind letter, sidesteps the praise with which Cromwell had showered him. He emphasizes that by God's grace he has much good will, but that he lacks the power to put his Will into operation. Turning to Cromwell and the affairs in England, Luther voices his pleasure with Cromwell's efforts on behalf of the gospel, and assures Cromwell of his prayers. In conclusion Luther refers Cromwell to Barnes for information pertaining to the situation in Wittenberg.

Luther wrote this letter at a time when Cromwell's fortunes were about to reach their apex. Born in approximately 1485, Cromwell had studied law and had entered the service of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey. A member of the House of Commons since 1523, Cromwell successfully weathered Wolsey's downfall in 1529; he moved on into the service of King Henry VIII, and in 1531 he was appointed privy councilor. Thereafter his career advanced rapidly, and in January of 1535 he was appointed the King's vicar general in ecclesiastical affairs, a position in which he executed the secularization of the monasteries. In July of 1536 Cromwell was made lord privy seal, and for the next three and a half years he was perhaps the most influential man around the King. In his interior policies he advocated royal supremacy in church and state, and his religious policies, in which traditionalism and Erasmian reform were blended, served that principle. His foreign policy was aimed at bringing about an alliance between England and the Smalcaldic League. "The King's disgust at the marriage [that is, with Anne of Cleve, arranged by Cromwell] and the fact that he now had no further use for Cromwell were the causes of his [that is, Cromwell's] undoing; for though Cromwell had only recently been created Earl of Essex ... he was arrested, sentenced for treason and beheaded on 28 July 1540." O.D.C.C. p. 357.

On Thomas Cromwell, see DNB 5, 192 ff.; G. R. Elton, Policy and Police. The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell (Cambridge, 1972).

Text in Latin: WA, Br 7, 396.¹

To the highly esteemed and most excellent man, Sir Thomas Cromwell, chancellor² and councilor of the most serene lord, the King of England,³ my Lord to be esteemed in Christ⁴
Grace and peace in Christ! Your Lordship—that I have not replied to Your Lordship's letter,⁵ which Doctor Barnes has turned over to me, is the fault of that same Doctor Barnes, who suddenly left and did not consider me worthy of a greeting or a farewell, in such a great hurry was he.⁶ But the place and time will come for me to revenge myself on him for this neglect of me. Nevertheless I most heartily thank you for your most friendly and kind letter, and I only wish that by Christ's blessing I would be and act as they⁷ have pictured me to Your Lordship. For comparing myself with those virtues in which Your Lordship believes I excell, I consider myself far inferior. This one thing I confess to the Lord, namely, that by his grace I do not lack in eagerness and good will; or as Paul says,⁸ the power to will has been given to me, but the power of execution I do not find in myself. Yet he who sees my imperfection is perfect, and in his time will finally make me perfect according to his good will; to him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Doctor Barnes has, however, made me extraordinarily happy in telling me of Your Lordship's earnest and determined will regarding the cause of Christ,⁹ especially since because of your prestige,¹⁰ by which you are capable of accomplishing very many things throughout the whole kingdom and with the Most Serene Lord King, you can do much good. I do pray and I shall pray to the Lord to strengthen abundantly his work, begun in Your Lordship, to his glory and the salvation of many. Amen.

Through Doctor Barnes Your Lordship, whom I commend to the Father's mercy, will become thoroughly acquainted with the situation here.¹¹

Wittenberg, April 9, 1536

Your Lordship's dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER DOCTOR

273

To Francis Burchart

Wittenberg, April 20, 1536

By April 10, 1536, the stay of the English ambassadors, Fox and Heath, in Electoral Saxony came to an end in a cool, though diplomatically correct, atmosphere.¹ The ambassadors returned to London on June

30, having traveled via Frankfurt, where they had stayed from approximately April 25 to June 11, and had attended a meeting of the Smalcaldic League.² Clemen argues that after the discussions in Wittenberg had been ended, and for reasons that are not absolutely clear, Elector John Frederick approached Luther through Francis Burchart with the question whether further concessions to Henry VIII could be made.³ Letter No. 273 is Luther's reply to the Elector's inquiry. Luther emphatically points out that the theological position set forth in the Wittenberg Articles must be maintained even though theological formulations might be changed, that patience regarding the practical application of doctrine has to be exercised, and that issues pertaining to ceremonies might in due time be properly handled by reasonable rulers. At this point, Luther argues, one should not worry about ceremonies as long as the proper foundation of the faith is being laid. The political problem, that is, whether the Smalcaldic League ought to enter into an alliance with Henry VIII if the King does not accept all the articles, is up to the politicians to decide, says Luther, though he points out that it seems to him to be dangerous to enter into an alliance if the hearts of those entering are not united.

On Francis Burchart, see p. 80, n. 10.

Text in German: WA, Br 7, 403–404.⁴

Since my Most Gracious Lord⁵ has requested an answer to the question of how far one could go in making concessions to the King of England regarding the articles, it is my judgment, dear Mr. Vice-Chancellor, that in this matter we are unable to concede anything beyond what has been already conceded.⁶ If one wishes to talk about the issues or to formulate the results in different words it suits me fine (so that we do not appear to be contemptuous of the ability⁷ of other people).⁸ Yet it is impossible that the articles⁹ and the central points be believed or taught differently. Were it otherwise, it certainly would have been easier for us at Augsburg¹⁰—and might still be today—to become one with the pope and with the Emperor; further, it would be a disgrace for us not to be willing to concede to the Emperor and to the pope what we would now concede to the King. Of course it is true that one must patiently realize that in England not everything can be abruptly put into practice according to the teaching Oust as among us it also did not go swiftly). Nevertheless the central points¹¹ must not be changed or abandoned. Ceremonies are temporal matters, and in time they can be handled correctly by reasonable rulers; therefore there is no need to quarrel or worry a lot at this time about ceremonies, as long as the correct foundation is being laid.¹² But whether the alliance with the King should be initiated¹³ in the event that the King does not agree with us on all articles—that is a matter I leave to the dear lords,¹⁴ together with my Most Gracious Lord, to consider because it is a secular matter; yet it seems to me to be dangerous externally to make an alliance if the hearts are not united. But I shall not insist on my judgment; God, if he intends to be gracious, certainly knows how to use the thoughts of godly people, of the enemies, and of all people for the best results.

Written at Wittenberg, April 20, MARTIN LUTHER
1535¹⁵

274

To George Spalatin

[Wittenberg,] June 10, 1536

Recommending Kilian Zimmermann, who is searching for a place to work, Luther informs Spalatin that there are no jobs left open in Wittenberg since so many poor people from other places have come to Wittenberg in search of a way to make a living. Then Luther briefly mentions the execution of Anne Boleyn. Ending his letter, Luther promises to write as soon as possible about Spalatin's "Asmodeus," extends greetings to Spalatin's wife, and encourages the Spalatins to endure patiently the insults of Spalatin's mother-in-law.

On George Spalatin, see LW 48, 8 f.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 7, 430.¹

To the excellent man of true godliness, George Spalatin, Master [of Arts],² a most faithful servant of Christ, my dearest brother in the Lord

Grace and peace in Christ! Excellent Spalatin! Here comes Kilian Zimmermann,³ who either has been expelled or is fleeing from Glauchau,⁴ and has asked for help in finding some kind of job. But since so many poor are streaming together here from all over, it is absolutely impossible to find any jobs.

Therefore he has finally asked me to recommend him to you. I ask you to understand that this is being diligently done by me with this letter. For he also belongs to your diocese⁵ since he had lived close to Altenburg.

I am sure that any news I have is already old stuff to you, such as that absolutely monstrous tragedy in England.⁶ As soon as I am able I shall write concerning your Asmodeus;⁷ in the meantime may Christ grant you to be victorious through enduring. Greet your most pleasant wife and tell her that I have the highest opinion of her, and that she should endure those motherly (not to say stepmotherly) insults. All things will finally turn out in the best and happiest way; but those who have harmed her will be confounded. Farewell in Christ to you and your whole household. Amen.

June 10, 1536

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

275

To Justus Jonas¹

[Wittenberg,] August 17, 1536

Luther mentions that he has seen only a German translation of the papal bull by which a general council of the church is summoned, and gives a negative evaluation of the bull for “we are already condemned” in it. Then he refers to three “spooky” incidents, and briefly reports on the war over the succession to the Danish throne. In closing Luther sends greetings from his wife, and encourages Jonas to return soon to Wittenberg.

On Justus Jonas, see LW 48, 275, n. 3.

Text in Latin (with some words in German): WA, Br 7, 503–504.²

Grace and peace in Christ!

The reason that the bull of Sir Paul, that is, of the cardinals,³ has not been turned over to me is perhaps due to the fact that Master⁴ Philip,⁵ in his eagerness, was the first to receive it personally from Bernard,⁶ and that since then he has not yet shown it to me (as there is between us both mutual reliance and negligence). For I usually handle his letters in this way too. But yesterday I saw the German bull,⁷ which has been published here; I also saw and became aware of,⁸ not those basic virtues⁹ about which Seneca¹⁰ and the other philosophers teach, but the cardinals—I should rather say, the central poles,¹¹ the chiefs,¹² indeed the heads of Satan themselves. In every respect they are cardinals, and are justly called so. For in that bull we are already condemned.¹³ But of other things [let us talk] in person. It is the most just wrath of God over the world.

You have correctly interpreted the spook Eric.¹⁴ But I believe that I have written to you also about our spook in Frankfurt in the Margraviate¹⁵—or perhaps you have heard about it from somewhere else—that is, about the virgin who plucks margravian coins from the beard of someone who stands around, or from his suit or from anywhere, and then devours them.¹⁶ Finally one hears from Halle a new and monstrous story, which you should investigate, namely, that during a shooting match, which had been organized by the [Arch]bishop,¹⁷ a young groom disappeared from amidst the tents, carried away by a storm, and leaving behind his bow, arrows, coat, even his shoes.

In addition to this, the following is news: The Duke of Holstein has finally defeated Denmark, Copenhagen has been captured and subdued, and Duke Albrecht of Mecklenburg has been pushed out. Now there is hope for peace in that area since the Duke of Holstein finally has become king through the cold fact that he¹⁸ is the victor. [There is hope for peace, that is,] unless the Emperor intends to harass that area through a new war, which I wouldn’t want [to see happen].¹⁹

My Lord Katie reverently greets you, together with your whole family. See to it that you return, that you bring news, [and then] that you repair, put in order, open up, redecorate, and put back into good condition everything which needs it.²⁰ Christ be with you. Amen.

August 17, 1536

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

To Nicholas Hausmann [Torgau,]¹ September 20, 1536

Even though Luther thinks that Hausmann is probably well informed about all that is news, he communicates everything he thinks might be news and comments on the various items: The Margraves of Brandenburg have abandoned the gospel; Jerome Weller has moved into his own house close by Luther's own; the French campaign of Emperor Charles V has taken a large toll in lives; Duke George of Saxony apparently is writing a thick book against the bishops; it looks to Luther as if no one really works seriously for the council; lane Seymour, an enemy of the gospel, is to be crowned on St. Michael's Day, and conditions in England have changed so much that Barnes has to go into hiding; the English are boycotting the council. Luther also tells Hausmann that he intends to call him to Wittenberg. In closing he asks for Hausmann's prayer in his behalf, and extends greetings to the sovereign of Anhalt-Dessau.

On Nicholas Hausmann, see LW 48, 399 f.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 7, 546–547.²

To the very gifted³ man, Mr. Nicholas Hausmann, Master [of Arts],⁴ a servant of Christ in the congregation at Dessau, my dearest brother in the Lord
Grace and peace. I seldom write to you,⁵ excellent Nicholas, for I think there is no need for writing since you are always best informed about everything that is news among us, and since your court⁶ finds out news faster than ours. Both Margraves have become alienated from our gospel;⁷ should you not [yet] know this, then know it now; further, I don't know what evil is starting to burn among us here.⁸ May Christ crush Satan under our feet.⁹

I hereby inform you of my new plan concerning you: I am thinking about calling you away from there and making you a member of my household, so that finally you can enjoy peace and quietness. Already I have the promise of your brother that he will maintain you here at my place. For I can see that position is not meant for you.¹⁰

Doctor Jerome Weller is happy and has moved away from me into his own house, close to me; I am pleased with this.¹¹

The affairs of the Emperor are not as prosperous as people brag.¹² They say that approximately five thousand of his soldiers¹³ have perished from starvation, among them some outstanding military men, such as Margrave Frederick, the provost of Würzburg,¹⁴ [and] Caspar von Frundsberg,¹⁵ and I don't know who else.

It looks to me as if in reality people only pretend to be concerned about the council¹⁶ rather than actually working for it, although it is said that Duke George is writing a thick book¹⁷ against the bishops, whom he thinks to bring into line with the Canon Law; that is, [he hopes] to bring about unity between the devil and God.

Our Alesius¹⁸ writes to us from England that the new Queen Joanna,¹⁹ an enemy of the gospel (as he says), is to be crowned on [St.] Michael's Day;²⁰ the conditions in the kingdom are now so different that Antony²¹ has to go into hiding and be silent, and is not without danger. Nevertheless the King persists in rejecting the pope; with the consent of the whole kingdom it was decided that no one is to attend the council, unless the King has first approved of the council,²² which will never be the case. Thus the monarchs disagree,²³ and the council will turn out to be a fairy tale, or at least will not convene at the set date. Once this date has been missed who will set another one? The whole world is full of foul play.²⁴

Farewell in Christ, and pray for me, my brother, for I am very much in need of it. In my behalf greet your excellent sovereigns²⁵ reverently.

September 20, 1536

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

To John Luther

[Wittenberg,] January 27, 1537¹

Luther tells of his pleasure with his son's studies and letters, and encourages his son to continue studying diligently. Pointing to the fourth commandment and to God's blessing for obedient children and God's curse for disobedient children, Luther admonishes John to fear God, to obey his parents, and to avoid all improper conversations. Then Luther sends greetings from the whole family, and informs John that it would be possible for him and his teacher to visit with the Luthers during Shrovetide.

On John Luther, see LW 49, 152, n. 7.

Text in Latin (with some words in German): WA, Br 8, 19–20.

Grace and peace in the Lord!

Thus far, my dearest son, your studies and the letters you have written to me have been a pleasure for me. If you continue this way then not only will you please me, your father who loves you, but you also will very much benefit yourself, so that you will not seem to have stained yourself with dishonor. Therefore take care to pursue diligently what you started. For God, who has commanded children to be obedient to their parents, has also promised his blessing to obedient children. See to it that you have only this blessing before your eyes, and that you do not let yourself be diverted from it by any evil example. For that same God has also threatened disobedient children with a curse. Therefore fear God who blesses and curses, who even though he delays with his promises and threats, a fact which leads to the ruin of the evil, nevertheless quite quickly implements them for the well-being of the good. Fear God, therefore, and listen to your parents—who certainly want nothing but the best for you—and run from disgraceful and disreputable conversations.

Your mother cordially greets you; so do Aunt Lena and your sisters and brothers, all of whom are looking forward to a successful progress and conclusion of your studies. Mother requests that you greet your teacher and his wife. Further, should they wish to be with you here during this Shrovetide, or these happy days, while I am gone from here, then this is fine with us. Aunt Lena very much asks for this.

Farewell, my son; listen to and learn from the exhortations given to you by good men. The Lord be with you.

January 27, 1537

MARTIN LUTHER
your Father according
to the flesh and spirit

278

To Justus Jonas

Altenburg, February 1, [1537]

Notwithstanding a severe cardiac illness in the second half of December, 1536, Luther drafted the Smalcald Articles; they were discussed, revised, and approved at a conference of theologians who had been especially baled to Wittenberg.¹ On January 3, 1537, Luther forwarded the articles to Elector John Frederick.² In the meantime the Smalcaldic League had been called to meet in Smalcald on February 7, 1537, in order to work out a program of joint action in response to the papal summons of a general council to Mantua.³ Summoned by the Elector to attend this meeting, Luther, along with Melancthon, Bugenhagen, and Jonas, left Wittenberg for Smalcald on January 30.⁴ Their first stopover was Torgau, where Jonas suffered such a severe attack of (gall?) stones that he had to stay behind; on January 31 the others continued the journey. Luther's party spent the night of January 31 at the Electoral castle in Grimma, and arrived at the castle in Altenburg in the late afternoon of February 1; while there Luther wrote the following letter to the ailing Jonas in Torgau.⁵ Luther expresses his hope that Jonas' health has in the meantime improved. Then he reports that the papal envoy, Peter van der Vorst, might come to Smalcald, and that the Imperial vice-chancellor, Matthias Held, will be present at the Smalcald meeting of the league, so that this meeting will turn out to be of greater importance than "both sides" had assumed. Luther mentions that a certain canon from Zeitz swears that the pending meeting at Smalcald will be attended by men more learned than will attend the council of Mantua, should it ever come about. Luther asks Jonas to visit his family, and that of Bugenhagen; he tells of the magnificent hospitality he is experiencing in the Elector's castles, and sends some verses which he has addressed to Spalatin.

On Justus Jonas, see LW 48, 275, n. 3.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 8, 22–23.⁶

Grace and peace in Christ!

Even though I think that these lines might come to you too late,⁷ excellent Jonas, yet I wished to inform you that we hope that at this hour you have finally recuperated from the stone, and that our prayers have been heard. Here we hear the rumor that the most sacred legate, that is, the man from Acqui,⁸ comes straight from Nürnberg to our Sovereign.⁹ This is being written from Coburg to the Sovereign, who has replied to the people in Coburg that, should the legate come, they should instruct him to go to Smalcald.¹⁰ There he will be awaited, if he really comes. If, I say, he really comes, then no doubt he does not come because of reverence,¹¹ but because of the Turks,¹² to seek help, etc. For what else are the Lutherans than sheep for the slaughter,¹³ except when per chance those furious murderers might be in need of the help of the Lutherans. But we shall see. The chancellor of the Emperor, Doctor Matthias Held, also will be present;¹⁴ perhaps this meeting will be of greater importance than both sides have assumed. May God grant it to be a legitimate council.

A canon from Zeitz is here, but he is an apostate from his order since he has married;¹⁵ he is a distinguished man, who swears and states¹⁶ that in this meeting there will be men more learned than even at the council of Mantua (should this ever come about). I write this in order to console you, for your desire is marvelous.¹⁷

Farewell, and visit my family, and also the Pomeranian Rome¹⁸ and his little Quirites.¹⁹ We are healthy and happy; indeed, we are treated magnificently as guests of the Sovereign, and are excellently cared for in his castles at Grimma and Altenburg.²⁰ We had expected to be guests of the old Pylades and Theseus.²¹ Therefore, as is our custom (known to you), we have played a game with him in verses. I am including mine; Master²² Philip,²³ that is Homer, sends his too; but here are those verses of mine, that is, of Choerilus:²⁴

As to Christ your deeds, George, are most pleasing.

So let this crew of strangers be pleasing to you.

To famous Chalcis²⁵ we are traveling for our meeting.

God's great cause forces us to travel there.

You too, excellent man, have an important part in such great affairs.

You, leader and companion on the way, come with us.²⁶

February 1, at Altenburg, at 8:00 P.M.

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

279

To Elector John Frederick¹

[Smalcald, about February 9, 1537]

On February 7 the Luther party arrived in Smalcald.² On February 9 Luther preached in the City Church,³ and on February 10 the meeting of the Smalcaldic League, to which Luther had been summoned, was officially opened with an address by the Electoral Saxon chancellor emeritus Gregory Brück.⁴ Many items were on the agenda of this meeting; the most pressing one dealt with a joint policy regarding acknowledgment of, and attendance at, the council summoned by Pope Paul III to Mantua.⁵ On this topic Luther issued the following opinion. No details about background, possible addressee, or date of this document could be established, though it is clear that it is part of the negotiations about the council. It is commonly assumed that, while in Smalcald, Luther issued this opinion for Elector John Frederick and that he wrote this document in the days immediately preceding the official beginning of the meeting.⁶ The tone of the document is critical. Luther chastises the "Roman scoundrels" for their intention of manipulating the council to their own advantage, so that the issues (Luther's own case, the Gravamina) would not be freely debated. He sees in the council a forum designed to condemn the evangelicals and to justify the spilling of innocent blood; consequently, Luther argues, in the eyes of all impartial people the council will

turn out to be a farce. Above all, Luther is not convinced that the papists are at all serious about the council, but feels that they would rather cancel it for any possible reason. Since the refusal of the evangelicals to attend the council would provide such a reason and thus would do great damage to the cause of the evangelicals, Luther affirms his readiness to attend the council. Yet he also underscores that he would in no way feel bound by this readiness.⁷

On Elector John Frederick, see LW 48, 181 f.

Text in German: WA, Br 8, 35–38.⁸

These are my thoughts:

[1]

I definitely see and fear that it will finally come to a fight. One must not be terrified, etc., by this, for God is and is called almighty,⁹ and until now has arranged many things differently than we thought.

2

I have no doubt that the pope¹⁰ or his followers are afraid [of this council] and would rather see this council thwarted.¹¹ Yet they would like this to come about in such a way that they could boast—and do so with seeming justice—that [this failure] was in no way their fault, since they had summoned the council, sent out messengers, and called the Estates, as they certainly would underscore.

3

In an abominable way they have therefore presented us with a devil's head, so that we should be frightened and retreat; that is, they have summoned a council for which they announce [as agenda] nothing pertaining to matters of the church, nothing pertaining to a hearing, nothing pertaining to other matters, etc., but only that which pertains to the extirpation and eradication of the poisonous Lutheran heresy¹² as they interpret it for themselves in the bull *De reformatione curiae*.¹³

4

Thus we have not only already received the judgment on our case which is to be pronounced against us in the council, but in addition the appeal with a hearing, answer, and discussion of all matters has been moved to the background;¹⁴ further, the papists have scared away all godly, honorable people who might perhaps have been selected as mediators. These accursed scoundrels of the devil wish to act as they please, not only to condemn us (for they are certain of this on the basis of previous bulls¹⁵ issued against us) but also immediately to command and start the execution and eradication [of us all]. And this notwithstanding the fact that we have not yet been heard¹⁶ (as all laws require), and that they, the cardinals, etc., have not yet studied our writings nor understood [the point of our] teaching since our books are everywhere prohibited. They have only read the false writers and listened to the lying mouths, while in contrast to this they have not listened to us. Yet both bishops and sovereigns in the German territories, even if they belong [to the pope's] party, know that the authors in whom the pope, Italy, and other nations, etc., believe are liars¹⁷ and scoundrels.

For¹⁸ at Wittenberg we heard from the pope's orator, Pietro Paolo Vergerio,¹⁹ that he thought and had been informed quite differently about many things among us than he finds them actually to be. Doctor Gervasius, the envoy of the King of France,²⁰ also publicly admitted to us that his King had been talked into believing²¹ that among us Lutherans there is no matrimony, governmental authority, church, or anything else. One may easily figure out from where the King, the pope, and the other nations got such an opinion. The wicked one at Halle²² and those similar to him have permitted these [evil] books, and perhaps also [other] writings, to be distributed²³ while obstructing our books. But God is not fettered,²⁴ etc. Since in some matters the pope and his followers have been too quick to believe such shameful and abominable lies, they owe it to us to listen²⁵ to us. I am silent about the matters which their own party will raise against them,²⁶ such as the facts that the pope and the Cardinal (!)²⁷ confiscate and lay waste (!) to monasteries and collegiate chapters, that the Bishop at Halle has three dioceses,²⁸ and that some similar to him [and some] canons have many benefices, etc., and many [other] innumerable matters which, even regardless of the Luther case, are certainly in need of conciliar action.²⁹ But the bull³⁰ is conveniently silent about all these matters, [for the papists] are afraid that during a council these issues might be stirred up.

5

Therefore they would like to frighten us³¹ into refusing [to attend the council]. Then they would feel safe and could say that we obstructed the council, etc. Thus not only would the legal disadvantage hang over

us,³² but also we would be forced to hear that by our refusal [to attend the council] we helped to strengthen all such abominations of the pope which otherwise would perhaps have been remedied.

6

See the devil at work in his wicked scoundrels: the papists do not want to condemn us but to wipe us out. This means: Until now the papists have studiously used the canon, *Si papa*,³³ and in our time the papists have spilled much innocent blood, have done all kinds of damage to many godly, honorable people, exiled them, robbed them [of their property], and treated them shamefully, only because these people received the sacrament [in both kinds],³⁴ etc., since they definitely knew that this was right. Now the papists want to justify such spilling of blood and such persecution by means of a conciliar decree.³⁵ And not only this, but they intend really to begin and pursue such devilish raging; in addition, they want to compel us to consider such actions to be right, and to be their yes-men, so that consequently all the spilling of blood, persecution, blasphemy, and destruction of Christendom which they have previously committed, are now still committing, and stubbornly intend eternally to commit, may be loaded on our consciences and that we, knowingly, may [thus] be pulled with them to hell. The devil may do this, as he certainly is doing through them.

7

All this certainly would have been sufficient reason long ago to attack and destroy the papists.³⁶ Yet we have the advantage that (as the situation stands now) it will turn out to be a miserable, despised council which few rulers will attend,³⁷ and that in addition the [effectiveness of the] ban (should the papists intend to pursue the matter) has long since been nullified. Also, [any] council has now come into such a bad reputation, namely, that it is able to err and has often erred; thus the council has lost its power and prestige, so that in order for the council again to be respected the papists are forced to demonstrate a high degree of fairness for everyone to see. For if this bull³⁸ were to be made public and be commented upon, what a mockery and an absurdity this council would then be considered by all godly and honorable people! Also, this council would then be an absolute duplication of other councils, as, for instance, the Council of Constance,³⁹ etc., the stupidity of which has now also become clear through God's Word.

8

[For these reasons] I shall not be afraid of this scarecrow,⁴⁰ but shall let the papists continue, and let them completely pour out their foolishness.⁴¹ I also would not give a negative answer to the legate (were His Haughtiness⁴² to demand an answer);⁴³ yet I shall also not bind myself,⁴⁴ for, if God grants it, the papists will also pour out the big fool after the little ones. It is not necessary to be in a hurry in this matter. One has to learn the ways of God, who does not hurry, but with great patience coaxes [the tongues of people out of their mouths] and then puts little sticks through their tongues so that people are unable to pull them back into their mouths.⁴⁵

9

Were we unnecessarily in a great hurry, and were we to try to overtake God,⁴⁶ we might labor in vain. For we whose own logic is much too weak against the devil need God's help at our side.

10

In addition it would create a great scandal, perhaps even also the apostasy of many good people, if we, just at this time when the Turk is again around and the Emperor is in distress,⁴⁷ rejected the council.⁴⁸ (To be honest, however, I think that since the papists knew what the situation would be this year insofar as the Turk and the Frenchman are concerned, the Roman scoundrels have arranged for the council precisely this year so that even if the Lutherans did not obstruct it, it would certainly be obstructed by the Turks and the French.⁴⁹ Of course the Roman scoundrels would really prefer to have it said that the council had been obstructed by the Lutherans. For this would then have to be called obstinacy; but [if the papists canceled the council] then this, of course, would have had to be done out of necessity, that is, because the Turks kept them from conducting the council, etc.) In summary, they are unable to endure a council, not even one of their own, unless they are able to manipulate it as they wish.

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To Mrs. Martin Luther¹
[Tambach,]² February 27, 1537

While Luther was in Smalcald he suffered one attack after the other of what was probably kidney stones,³ and he became so severely ill that there were serious doubts whether he would live.⁴ His wife was informed accordingly, and she sent a “carriage” to Smalcald in order to bring Luther home. In the meantime, however, Luther lapsed into total weakness; stones blocked his urinary system and apparently some early signs of uremic poisoning developed. Luther’s health was up and down, but the general tendency was poor. Feeling that his end was near, Luther wanted to die at home, and so every effort was made to get him back to Wittenberg.⁵ After Elector John Frederick had visited Luther in the morning of February 26,⁶ Luther, along with Bugenhagen, Spalatin, a physician, and others, left Smalcald for Wittenberg in several carriages, among them the Elector’s private carriage. They traveled only about 15 kilometers to Tambach, where during the night of February 26 Luther’s health suddenly improved.⁷ In the following letter, written from Tambach in the very early hours of February 27,⁸ Luther informs his wife of these developments. He tells of his past severe illness, of the many unsuccessful efforts to help him, and of the miracle which God has now accomplished in him. He asks his family to thank God for this rescue. He also tells Catherine that for the time being the Elector would retain the horses sent from Wittenberg and that it would not be necessary for her to travel from Wittenberg to meet him, for he is confident of coming home soon.

Text in German: WA, Br 8, 50–51.⁹

Grace and peace in Christ!

In the meantime you might rent some extra horses, should you need them, dear Katie, for my gracious Lord¹⁰ will retain your horses and send them home with Master¹¹ Philip.¹² I myself left Smalcald yesterday and traveled up to this place in my gracious Lord’s private carriage.¹³ This is the reason: I had not been healthy there for more than three days,¹⁴ and from the first Sunday¹⁵ to this night not one little drop of water passed from me; I had no rest nor did I sleep, and I was unable to retain any drink or food. In summary, I was dead; I commended you, together with the little ones, to God and to my gracious Lord, since I thought that I would never again see you in this mortal life. I felt great pity for you, yet had resigned myself to the grave. But many people prayed to God so hard on my behalf that their tears moved God to open my bladder this night, and in two hours about one *Stübig*¹⁶ passed from me, and I feel as if I were born again.

Therefore thank God and have the dear little ones, together with Aunt Lena,¹⁷ thank the real Father, for you certainly would have lost this father. The good Sovereign ordered people to run, ride, fetch, and with all his might tried his best to help me.¹⁸ But it was not to be. Your manure cure didn’t help me either.¹⁹ [But] this night God has accomplished a miracle in me, and he continues to do it through the intercession of godly people.

I am writing this because I think that my most gracious Lord has ordered the bailiff²⁰ to send you to meet me, fearing I would die on the way, so that prior to this you could talk with me or see me.²¹ Now this is not necessary, and you can certainly stay at home, since God has so abundantly helped me that I am confident I can come happily to you. Today we will spend the night at Gotha.²² By the way, I have written four times,²³ and I wonder that nothing has reached you.

February 27, 1537

MARTIN LUTHER

The messenger has been paid but give him a tip.²⁴

281

To George Spalatin

[Wittenberg,] March 21, 1537

Luther finally returned home from Smalcald on March 14.¹ He was still ailing, and only slowly recuperated.² In the following letter Luther informs Spalatin of his gradual improvement, and of his wife’s gratitude for the hospitality extended to her in Spalatin’s home. He also tells Spalatin his wife was sorry that she did not bring along some gifts for Spalatin’s daughters, and that she intends to send them some booklets.

On George Spalatin, see LW 48, 8 f.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 8, 59.³

To the most illustrious and excellent man, Mr. George Spalatin, archbishop of the congregations in Meissen,⁴ my dearest brother

Grace and peace in Christ! Finally I am writing to you, my Spalatin, after my pen has celebrated so many Sabbath days. By God's grace I gradually recuperate, and learn to eat and drink again.⁵ Yet my thighs, knees, and bones are still shaky, and are thus far not sufficiently strong to carry my body. I am more exhausted than I thought, but I shall take care of myself with rest and other nourishment until through God's help I have regained my strength.

My Katie greets you reverently; she is sorry that she brought along nothing in the line of a present⁶ for your daughters,⁷ but she is now having some little books⁸ bound, which she has decided to send as a memento. In the meantime she asks that you accept her gratefulness and her good intentions. She raves about your thoughtful treatment, and your great kindness [to her].⁹

Farewell in Christ, and pray for us!

March 21, 1537

Yours, MARTIN LUTHER

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To Wolfgang Capito [Wittenberg,] July 9, 1537

*In May of 1536 the Wittenberg Concord was signed. This agreement established unity in the interpretation of the Lord's Supper—and thus ecclesiastical fellowship—between the evangelicals of southwestern Germany, especially Bucer and Capito (the Reformers of Strassburg), and Luther.¹ Shortly thereafter the evangelicals of Strassburg approached Luther with a plan to publish a collection of his works in that city.² In the following letter Luther mentions that he is not at all eager to have his works republished since, except for his *On the Bound Will* and his Catechism, he would rather see his books disappear. Then Luther talks about the Wittenberg Concord. He is confident that Bucer and Capito are working hard to make the concord work and that, notwithstanding Satan's work at Augsburg, Christ will complete the work he has begun. Luther also sends his wife's thanks for a golden ring which had been sent by Capito. Even though the ring has somehow disappeared, to Catherine Luther's bitter disappointment, Luther assures Capito that the hope for unity among the evangelicals has not disappeared.*

On Wolfgang Capito, see LW 48, 305, n. 2.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 8, 99–100.³

To the most illustrious man, Mr. Wolfgang Capito, Dr. Theol., a most faithful servant in the congregation⁴ at Strassburg, my dearest brother in Christ

Grace and peace in Christ! Through those Frenchmen whom you had recommended to me,⁵ my Capito, I want⁶ to write back to you. Perhaps they themselves will tell you what they have seen and heard. Regarding [the plan] to collect my writings in volumes,⁷ I am quite cool and not at all eager⁸ about it because, roused by a Saturnian hunger,⁹ I would rather see them all devoured.¹⁰ For I acknowledge none of them to be really a book of mine, except perhaps the one *On the Bound Will*¹¹ and the Catechism. Nevertheless I have entrusted the matter to Doctor Caspar Cruciger¹² to see if anything ought to be done.

I have an idea that in this case¹³ you people will put forth much effort; yet I do pray that our [Lord] Christ does not let you work in vain. Others, too, have given me a sufficiently clear picture of the satan at Augsburg;¹⁴ but let us wait for Him who has begun His work.¹⁵ When His time arrives He will come and will not delay;¹⁶ therefore let us not despair. On the other hand, concerning you and Bucer¹⁷ I am convinced that you act in a sincere and candid way; not only this, but I also rejoice that all who write to me or talk with me have the same opinion about you people when they mention you.¹⁸

My Catherine thanks you for the golden ring.¹⁹ Hardly ever have I seen her more indignant than when she realized that the ring either had been stolen by a thief, or had been lost because of her own negligence (this seems to me unlikely, though I always nag her about it), for I had convinced her that this present had been sent to her as a good omen and token of the fact that your church really is one with ours. And so the woman is crushed. I am writing this for you to know that [nevertheless] we have total and sincere hope regarding unity. May Christ complete the matter. Amen. But this I add: send nothing further to my wife, so that you do not double the sadness, for Christ is sufficient for both of us.

Do greet all your and our friends and tell them to think the best of us as we do of you people. The Lord Jesus be the seal of this [good] will; to him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory for ever. Amen.

July 9, 1537

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

283

To Nicholas Hausmann

[Wittenberg,] February 23, 1538

Luther tells of being worn down by vexations of Satan which have kept him from writing long letters to Hausmann. He asks Hausmann to thank the sovereigns of Dessau for the gift of a fish, and to extend his congratulations to Sir John upon his reconciliation with his wife. In connection with this reconciliation, Luther speaks of the power of prayer, and asks for Hausmann's prayer in his behalf. Then Luther informs Hausmann that the Consilium de emendanda ecclesia will be published in Latin and in German, and voices his negative opinion of this document. He extends greetings from his wife and his wishes that Master Peter may be strong in Christ. In a postscript Luther tells of enclosing a satirical woodcut of the papal coat of arms, and returns Hausmann's copy of the Consilium.

On Nicholas Hausmann, see LW 48, 399 f.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 8, 200.¹

To the most distinguished man, Mr. John² Hausmann, Master [of Arts], a faithful and sincere servant of Christ in Dessau, my dearest brother in the Lord and my elder³ to be honored Grace and peace in Christ! I have not the time to write to many people, my excellent and dearest Nicholas. Therefore I am also asking you first to thank the illustrious sovereigns⁴ in my behalf for the fish given to me, and then also in my name to congratulate the sovereign, Sir John, upon his reconciliation with his wife.⁵ May Christ strengthen his work which he has begun in them, [and] complete it.⁶ Amen. To Him be also glory for having so graciously listened to our prayers in this matter. By this example we are taught to pray without ceasing,⁷ for He who is coming will indeed come and save us.⁸ But as I have said, I am now so worn down by certain vexations of Satan that I am unable to write more.⁹ More at some other time, if [Christ]¹⁰ will grant the time. Pray diligently to the Lord for me, therefore, that I might be able to do what is good in his eyes.

Those monstrosities of the Roman cardinals will be published both in Latin and in German.¹¹ But the malice of the matter and the wickedness of those people are beyond indignation and words. Christ will come and himself be the judge; punishment worthy of those mockers of God and men has to be reserved for him. As I have asked, do pray for me, for I am confident that your prayers accomplish much with God. My Katie greets you reverently, and I wish that Master Peter¹² may be strong in Christ.

Written on Saturday after Peter's Enthronement¹³—that is, [the feast] which has been introduced by the pope in order to stabilize his tyranny—1538.

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

I am sending the papal coat of arms, which I have drawn, or caused to be drawn, together with [that of] his cardinals.¹⁴ I am returning the copy of the "Improved Church," for I had it already, also in a German translation.¹⁵

284

To Edward Fox

[Wittenberg,] May 12, 1538

Apter the English legation returned home from the 1536 meeting of the Smalcaldic League at Frankfurt,¹ the interest of Henry VIII in an alliance with the German evangelicals rapidly cooled.² The situation changed, however, when Pope Paul III summoned the Council of Mantua, and when papal envoys publicized this summons throughout Europe. In late February/early March, 1537, the Smalcaldic League rejected this summons,³ and on March 26 the league informed Henry VIII of this action; at the same time

the league renewed the idea of further theological discussions for the purpose of establishing unity, as well as a basis for common action regarding the council.⁴ Henry, too, rejected the council, and did so in his famous Protest, a document which supposedly “shocked even Cromwell.”⁵ Henry sent a copy of this document to Elector John Frederick of Saxony in order to promote the renewal of alliance negotiations,⁶ and in February of 1538 he sent Christopher Mont to the members of the Smalcaldic League. Mont’s mission was to get a legation of councilors and theologians of first rank—Melanchthon was to be among them—to come to England for further negotiations.⁷ Mont discharged his mission during and after the March/April meeting of the Smalcaldic League in Brunswick.⁸ As was to be expected, Elector John Frederick refused to let Melanchthon go. As a result the Electoral Saxon Vice-Chancellor Francis Burchart, the Hessian Councilor George von Boineburg, and the superintendent of Gotha, Frederick Myconius, were sent to England. The purpose of this mission was to lay the doctrinal groundwork for a legation to be dispatched later on.⁹ Upon his return from the league’s meeting, Myconius visited Luther in Wittenberg,¹⁰ and when on May 13 Myconius and Burchart left Wittenberg for England,¹¹ Luther sent along with them the following letter, addressed to Edward Fox, one of the members of the English legation which had been in Wittenberg in 1536.

Luther first reflects upon the kindness shown to him by Fox during the latter’s stay in Wittenberg. Then Luther mentions that for a long time he has received no news from Fox, that this fact worries him because it could be a sign that the cause of the gospel is not faring well in England (a possibility supported by rumors), and that he hopes to receive good news from the league’s envoys upon their return. The envoys, in turn, will give Fox all the news pertaining to the church and commonweal in Germany. Luther closes with greetings from his wife.

On Edward Fox, see p. 114, n. 4.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 8, 219–220.¹²

To the father who is to be revered in Christ, Sir Edward, bishop of Hereford in England, my superior¹³ to be cherished in the Lord

Grace and peace in Christ, our Lord! Since these men, our friends and the envoys¹⁴ of the sovereigns, are getting¹⁵ ready for the journey to your most serene King,¹⁶ I cannot, Reverend Sir, omit writing a letter to you since [otherwise] I really fear being charged with being an ungrateful and forgetful man. Since¹⁷ in addition to the most warm friendliness you showed in conversing with us here, you have also shown me an overflowing measure of kindness and helped me with your counsel [in the battle] against my enemy, the stone, I am unable to forget you. We speak of you people often and at great length, especially¹⁸ since, in view of the changing conditions in your kingdom, either you are unable to write letters to us with which we might satisfy our wish [for news concerning you], or those letters which you did dispatch have perhaps been intercepted. So¹⁹ we are hanging in the air, and indeed are afraid that this persistent silence²⁰ might perhaps be a sign of some harsh blow struck against the progress of the gospel. In addition there are some who think that your King, finally ensnared by the Roman intrigues,²¹ would like to get back into the pope’s good grace. In this affair we pray and, [torn] between hope and fear, wish that Satan would be crushed under your feet.²² At this point we are not certain how the cause of the gospel fares among you people. But we hope that through these envoys, when they return, we shall hear happy news and truly “good news” about your English church. On the other hand, what the situation is concerning both the church and the commonweal in our Germany, you will be able to find out in detail from our friends.

May the Lord Jesus Christ multiply in you people—and at the same time also in us—his grace and gifts²³ to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

My Katie reverently greets Your Lordship. In Christ farewell to Your Lordship, to whom I commend myself.²⁴

May 12, 1538

Your Lordship’s dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER

285

To James Propst
[Wittenberg,] September 15, 1538

After a long silence (which was the result of Luther's work load, his aging, his spiritual struggles, and his conviction that Propst was not in need of his letters of counsel and guidance), Luther writes this letter to Propst. Luther first tells Propst that two well-educated but poor brethren have come from lower Germany to Wittenberg, and that one of them will be sent to Propst in Bremen. Then he communicates news: He, an old man, is becoming youthful again because of the many theological controversies in which he is constantly involved; in this connection he sends theses against the Antinomians. Further, Charles V, Francis I, and the Venetians are undertaking joint naval operations against the Turks, and thus a good beginning has been made in the war against this great enemy of Christendom; the council, transferred from Mantua to Vicentia, has breathed its last; the Pope promotes the interests of his sons by means of murder. Luther also extends greetings from his wife and his daughter Margaret (Propst's godchild), asks for Propst's prayers in his behalf, wishes God's blessing upon Propst, and asks Propst to extend his and his wife's greetings to Propst's wife.

On James Propst, see LW 48, 233, n. 34.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 8, 291–292.¹

To the excellent man, Mr. James Propst, a theologian and a faithful and sincere servant of Christ in the area of Bremen, my dearest brother

Grace and peace in Christ! I write to you rather rarely, my James, and I do not answer your letters² as you would perhaps wish.³ But I hope you make the best of this, since you know of my various burdens of business, work, age, and spiritual struggles.⁴ Finally I think you do not need my letters, since in other ways you have been so richly endowed by God as to be able to guide and console both yourself and all others in this very evil age [in which people are] possessed by such great ungratefulness and contempt for the Word of salvation. But enough about these matters.

Let me go on.⁵ Two excellent and learned brethren⁶ [have come to us]⁷ from lower Germany. Of course, we, who are poor enough ourselves, are flooded with poor people who come from all over.⁸ Yet we decided to feed them both, according to our ability. Since they are unable to be useful here on account of the language,⁹ however, it seems wise to Mr. Philip¹⁰ to send one of them to you people; Philip thinks there is a chance that a place of ministering might Perhaps be free among you, so that they are not forced to be idle;¹¹ also, you people are wealthy, and the flood of your wealth can easily flow over into the lowliness of their poverty.¹² Should the ungratefulness of man have become so powerful among you people that you are unable to sustain him until he may be provided with [a place of] ministering, then send him back to us, and we shall share with him what we have.

News: I—an exhausted old man, tired out from so many labors¹³—constantly become younger from day to day; that is, new sects always rise up against me,¹⁴ and renewed youth is necessary to fight them. You will find out about the Antinomians from these theses.¹⁵ Were there no other proof that we are the ones who have been called and elected to the Kingdom of God and have the true Word of God, this one fact would suffice: we are attacked by so many sects which constantly disagree with one another—sometimes they even originate within our own ranks—not to speak of the papists, and my personal wars with Satan, and the contempt for the Word in our midst. But we are not better than the apostles and prophets, or even our Lord himself.

We have certain news that the Emperor, the Frenchman, and the Venetians have joined their fleets against the Turks, and that at sea a good beginning has been made against such a great enemy.¹⁶ May God bless and give success to the prayers of the Christian people.

The council which has been transferred to Vicentia has without much ado breathed its last.¹⁷ And the Pope in Rome¹⁸ leads the life of ease; by right and by wrong he strives to make his [sons] richer and more important, bravely killing or poisoning¹⁹ those whose property his sons eagerly covet. Rome is so incomparably bad that God is in no position to consider it worthy of an opportunity for reform: “God’s wrath has come upon it at last.”²⁰

My lord Katie greets you, and so does your little godchild, my daughter, little Margaret,²¹ for whom you will please provide a decent suitor after my death. I write nothing about myself except to ask you to pray in my behalf that the Lord may free me from the blows and the thorns²² of the angel of Satan, and that according to His will He may grant me a good hour when I am to be delivered from this misery.²³ The Lord be with you, and please greet your lord²⁴ for me and my Katie.

September 15, 1538

Yours,

To Elector John Frederick [Wittenberg,] July 8, 1539

In April of 1539 Duke George of Saxony, Luther's bitter foe since the days of the Leipzig Disputation in 1519, died. He was succeeded by his brother, Duke Henry, during whose short reign (1539–1541) the Reformation was officially introduced in Ducal Saxony. This was a heavy blow for the papal party in the Empire, but especially for a printer named Nicholas Wolrab¹ whom John Cochlaeus² had set up in Leipzig in 1535 for the specific purpose of printing the works of papal theologians directed against the Reformers, and also any materials pertaining to the pending council. At the beginning of May, 1539, Duke Henry stopped Wolrab's work on the third volume of a Postil by George Witzel.³ On May 11 Wolrab approached the Duke and requested permission to complete the work, pointing out that in printing Witzel's Postil he was only following Duke George's order, and that he had invested large sums in the project which he would lose, were he to discontinue the half-completed project. Wolrab added a postscript in which he mentioned his intention of reprinting Luther's German Bible,⁴ and asked for a ducal patent which would license him exclusively to print and market Luther's German Bible in the Duchy of Saxony. As one might expect, Luther found out about this plan. In the following letter Luther approaches his territorial lord, Elector John Frederick, with the request that he see to it that Wolrab not get away with this plan. Luther points out that it would be wrong to let Wolrab enrich himself at the expense of the hard work of the Wittenberg publishers and printers who took the financial risk for the German Bible in the first place. Were Wolrab successful, it would certainly mean financial loss for the Electors subjects, because the people at Leipzig have better marketing opportunities.

On Elector John Frederick, see LW 48, 181 f.

Text in German: WA, Br 8, 491.⁵

To the Most Serene, Noble Sovereign and Lord, Sir John Frederick, duke in Saxony, archmarshal and elector of the Holy Roman Empire, landgrave in Thuringia, margrave in Meissen, and count of the castle in Magdeburg, my Most Gracious Lord

Grace and peace in Christ, and also my humble *Pater noster*!⁶ Most Serene, Noble Sovereign, Most Gracious Lord! Wolrab at Leipzig—the scoundrel⁷ who until now has printed and with great effort distributed all the insulting books directed against us—has decided to reprint our German Bible and take the bread out of the mouths of our printers.⁸ Your Electoral Grace knows how unfair it is that this scoundrel should be able to use the labor and expense of our printers for his own profit and their damage. This would mean that he with his wickedness would manage to have even our work serve him in the best possible way as the result of his unpunished foul play, disgraceful action, and slander. Therefore it is my humble request that Your Electoral Grace help see to it that Wolrab does not reap such rich rewards from his wickedness, and that Your Electoral Grace's subjects not have to pay so dearly for the expenses and risk [they were willing to face]. I do not mention the fact, which is annoying to me personally, that that slanderer and printer of insulting books should abuse my own hard work in this way, and in addition perhaps even scoff. For what he might deserve by his [past] printing [activity] insofar as God and we are concerned⁹ I shall entrust to God. It would not be unfair, of course, if the printers at Leipzig, who until now have grown sufficiently rich with their insulting books, were forced to refrain for a time from becoming even richer With our books and by ruining our printers. For it can easily be figured out that the printers at Leipzig can more easily sell a thousand copies, because all the markets are in Leipzig,¹⁰ than our printers can sell a hundred copies.

In this matter Your Electoral Grace certainly will know how to arrive at a solution worthy of Your Grace.¹¹ With this I commend you to the dear Lord. Amen.

July 8, 1539

Your Electoral Grace's dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER

To Martin Bucer

[Wittenberg,] October 14, 1539

Luther explains his long silence by referring to his work, his age, and his hope that true unity exists between the evangelical preachers of Strassburg and himself, so that it should be unnecessary for him to write a letter each time that Bucer writes one. Luther expresses his appreciation for the news Bucer had given him regarding the status of the evangelical cause in upper Germany, and sees in the activities of certain people a sure sign that II Peter 2:1 is about to come true for them. He emphasizes also, however, that “our sins ... are signs of some great calamity for us.” Then Luther comments on some details: His Latin is not good enough to write the preface for the Postil as requested by “our Crato,” and therefore Bucer should write this preface; even though at the moment an envoy of Henry VIII is at the court of Elector John Frederick, there is no reason at all for hope that anything might be accomplished with the King; the Emperor has lost both luck and God’s blessing by allying himself with the Pope. In closing Luther extends greetings to John Sturm and John Calvin, and makes a rather cutting remark about Jacopo Sadoletto and the Italians.

On Martin Bucer, see LW 48, 247, n. 13.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 8, 568–569.¹

To the illustrious man, Mr. Martin Bucer, bishop² of the church at Strassburg, a true servant of the Lord,
my dearest brother in Christ

Grace and peace in the Lord! I think, my Bucer, that you know it is not necessary for me to write more frequently to you.³ You have more leisure and are younger, not to mention the work and the problems with which I am loaded down every hour. Therefore assume that you have been promptly answered each time you write to me. For I hope that there is real unity of heart between us. I assume the same regarding all your colleagues,⁴ whom I ask you also to greet reverently in my name. We are grateful, of course, that you do not leave us in the dark about what is going on among you people, especially in matters pertaining to the Cross, that is, the Word of the Crucified. St. Peter’s word which says, “They⁵ are bringing upon themselves a swift destruction,”⁶ is coming true. They wish to perish.⁷ Again they are spreading great threats, and (so they boast) efficacious ones. May God destroy their plans,⁸ as he has done thus far, even though our sins, ungratefulness, and contempt⁹ are signs of some great calamity for us. People among us [here] take as some kind of harsh punishment the fact that winds and waters have been raging so extraordinarily for six weeks already, so that¹⁰ our old people can remember nothing similar.

Our Crato has requested of me a preface to my *Postils*. But I am not well versed in Latin; if I ever was, it must be that by not using any Latin for such a long time and by using German instead, I have forgotten it.¹¹ I have asked Crato to request the preface from you, and I am still requesting this.¹²

I¹³ am afraid that your hopes regarding the King of England are empty. We heard the English themselves, while they were here,¹⁴ complaining about their King and admiring our freedom. Now the King has an envoy at our Sovereign’s court; but that envoy neither brought nor reported anything that could give any hope. May the Lord direct the King’s heart,¹⁵ together with all the other kings, to his glory.

The prophecies about the Emperor have now become a reality: all luck and all of God’s blessing left him after he had allied himself with the Pope whom God detests. But they blame all this on us.¹⁶

Farewell, and please greet reverently Mr. John Sturm¹⁷ and John Calvin;¹⁸ I have read their books with special pleasure.¹⁹ I wish Sadoletto²⁰ would believe that God is the creator of men even outside of Italy. But this thought does not enter the hearts of the Italians since of course they alone, ahead of the rest of mankind, have totally lost their minds because of their arrogance. Again, farewell.

October 14, 1539

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER²¹

To Elector John Frederick

Wittenberg, October 23, 1539

When the legation of the Smalcaldic League left London for Germany on October 1, 1538,¹ they took along a letter to Elector John Frederick² in which Henry VIII praised the members of the legation for their piety and learnedness, and expressed his hope that Melancthon and other learned men would soon come to England in order to conclude the matter, that is, an alliance between Henry and the league. The one condition of the league on which such an alliance depended was unity in doctrinal matters. And it was precisely on this point that the King intended to stay flexible. Whatever was accomplished in 1538 regarding doctrinal matters was of little importance, for the Thirteen Articles³ (the result of the deliberations between the English and the envoys of the league) never gained official status in England; in addition the articles did not produce any solution to the crucial issues.⁴ Yet for political reasons Henry VIII kept up his efforts to bring about an alliance with the German Protestants, and in January of 1539 he again dispatched Christopher Mont to Germany.⁵ The King ordered him to find out as much as possible about the political plans of the Smalcaldic League, to press the league to send a legation of prestigious men to England, and to get from the league information about the political position and the religious views of the ruling family of Cleve. Cromwell ordered Mont to explore the possibilities of a marriage of Mary Tudor into the ruling family of Cleve, and a marriage between one of the daughters of the duke of Cleve and Henry VIII. In addition, Mont was to assure the league that Cromwell would do everything in his power to have Henry VIII participate in the affairs of the league.

Mont discharged his mission at the Frankfurt meeting of the Smalcaldic League in spring of 1539.⁶ At this meeting the league dispatched Francis Burchart and the Hessian councilor, Louis von Baumbach, to England. In addition, the Germans informed the King that their position on controversial matters had been made sufficiently clear to the King, that they would not abandon their position regarding private mass, communion "in both kinds," and the marriage of priests, and that the King should finally shake off all the vestiges of papalism.⁷

Shortly after Burchart and von Baumbach had arrived in London a change in Henry's ecclesiastical policies occurred. On April 28 that Parliament was convened which on June 16 passed the Six Articles; on June 28 these articles became law, the transgression of which could be punished even by death. Thus the foundation of what is commonly called the "Catholic Reaction" in Henry's policies had been laid, and the King's interest in an alliance with the Smalcaldic League diminished. The German envoys were therefore forced to leave London empty-handed on May 31, 1539.⁸

In order to keep the contacts with the Smalcaldic League open, at the end of August, 1539, Cromwell again dispatched Christopher Mont to Elector John Frederick and Landgrave Philip of Hesse.⁹ Mont was to tell the Elector that, even though there were some issues on which the King did not agree with the German evangelicals, the King nevertheless still repudiated the pope, and that a common foe made a common cause. Mont was further to try to win the Elector over to the idea that the Wittenberg theologians should not write against the Six Articles, and that another legation should be sent to England.

Mont was with the Elector at the beginning of September,¹⁰ and on September 16 he received a polite yet firmly negative answer which was critical of the King: the Elector blames the King for the collapse of the negotiations; the Six Articles are an open affirmation of the papacy and condemnation of the evangelicals; the Elector is in no position to prevent his theologians from writing against the articles.¹¹

Thus at the end of September, 1539, the negotiations aimed at an alliance between England and the Smalcaldic League had collapsed. In view of the Six Articles the German evangelicals felt betrayed by Henry.¹² Notwithstanding this development, the negotiations between the English and the court of Cleve aimed at bringing about the marriage between Henry VIII and Anne of Cleve were continued.¹³ Since on the basis of dynastic relations Elector John Frederick was involved in this project, Francis Burchart was again sent to England, along with John von Dolzig and the representatives of Cleve.¹⁴ The purpose of this mission was to negotiate the marriage contract. The mission was successful: the marriage contract was completed.¹⁵ And Burchart was able to gain a first-hand view of the situation in England as it was developing under the impact of the Six Articles; according to the impressions which he took back to Germany, not all was lost for the cause of the gospel in England.¹⁶ Thus at the end of October, when Burchart for the third time returned from England, prospects for a renewal of negotiations between England and the Smalcaldic League were not as dim as at the end of September.

Meanwhile in another way the contacts between Henry VIII and the German Protestants were kept alive, notwithstanding the Six Articles. In attempts to counteract the papal party around the King, to forestall the full consequences of the Six Articles, and to save the cause of the gospel in England, Martin Bucer, on September 16, 1539, wrote to Landgrave Philip of Hesse. In his letter Bucer blamed the developments which led to the Six Articles on the facts that Melanchthon (who alone would have been capable of dealing with the sophistry of the papal party in England) was never sent to England, that in October of 1538 Myconius and Burchart had left England prematurely, and that the Germans always lacked courage and vision. In order to save whatever could be saved for the cause of the gospel in England, Bucer argued, Melanchthon should be sent to England at once.¹⁷

On September 30 the Landgrave informed the Elector of Bucer's letter, and on October 7 the Elector informed his chancellor emeritus, Gregory Brück, of this correspondence. On October 11 the Elector replied to the Landgrave that there was no hope that Henry could be gained for the gospel, that Bucer was wrong in blaming the German evangelicals for the collapse of the negotiations, and that all further negotiations with the English would depend on the news which Burchart and von Dolzig would report from London. As he had done in the answer given to Mont, so in these letters the Elector put the blame for the collapse of the negotiations with England squarely where it belonged and thus clearly established his position; nevertheless on October 12 he requested his Wittenberg theologians to draw up a brief on the situation, especially on Bucer's argument that the German evangelicals were at fault for the developments in England, and were therefore obligated to take the initiative by sending Melanchthon to England.¹⁸ Letter No. 288 is this brief. Luther and some of his colleagues point out that the German evangelicals have done everything possible in this matter, that the King's recent actions and statements make clear beyond doubt that he stubbornly acts contrary to his conscience, and that therefore he is to be abandoned as a stiff-necked person. Since the King was never serious about the gospel, but only used it whenever it suited him, says Luther, there is no further need or possibility of dealing with him. Even to send Melanchthon to England would accomplish nothing other than more useless discussion since the King refuses to commit himself to the gospel. Notwithstanding this position, the Wittenberg theologians leave it up to the Elector to decide whether to negotiate further with Henry VIII. They promise to compose swiftly an *expostulatio* of the King and to admonish him once more. In conclusion they also mention that arrangements have been made for the rapid printing of a book sent to them by the Elector.

On Elector John Frederick, see LW 48, 181 f.

Text in German: WA, Br 8, 572–575¹⁹

To the Most Serene, Noble Sovereign and Lord, Sir John Frederick, duke in Saxony, archmarshal and elector of the Holy Roman Empire, landgrave in Thuringia, margrave in Meissen, and count of the castle in Magdeburg, etc., etc., our Most Gracious Lord
First of all, God's grace through our Lord Jesus Christ! Most Serene, Noble, Most Gracious Elector and Lord! We have read through Mr. Bucer's letter²⁰ and realize that it has been written in great earnestness, no doubt with good intention, and as a direct result of the information given by the refugees; we, too, heard similar miserable lamentations from some of those who are at Hamburg.²¹ Even though these people hope to get help through us, as all those afflicted [and] in need search everywhere for help, yet we know of no way to help them. As far as we personally are concerned, we do not shy away from any danger or labor; yet it is also true that in the matter of instructing and admonishing the King²² enough has been done by our party, and this for the following reasons:

St. Paul says:²³ He who is weak is to be tolerated, but he who is stiff-necked is to be let go, for according to Paul he is condemned by his own judgment; that is, he openly acts contrary to his conscience. On the other hand, he is called weak who wants to learn and does not attack that which he understands, but accepts, affirms, and promotes it.

That the King of England acts contrary to his conscience may be seen from the following: He knows that our teaching and position on the usage of the whole sacrament,²⁴ on confession, and on the marriage of a priest are correct, or at least he knows that our teaching is not contrary to God's Word. [But] now he says in his articles and in his edict²⁵ that some of these points are contrary to God's law.

This the King certainly says contrary to his own conscience. For much written material has come to him, both publicly²⁶ and also addressed to him personally.²⁷ He has read this material, and he has received sufficient information from his²⁸ and from our envoys.²⁹ He himself has also had a little book by Sarcerius

—in which these issues are dealt with briefly—translated into English, and ordered it to be printed, and has used it as his prayer book.³⁰ We also hear that [at one time] he talked quite differently about this teaching, and said about [the King of] France,³¹ among other things, that that man does evil in attacking this teaching, for he understands it and knows that it is correct. In addition, the King has many godly, learned preachers, the deposed Bishop Latimer, Cranmer,³² and others to whom he listened previously, and whom he tolerated for a while.

Notwithstanding all this, the King suddenly condemns this teaching more harshly than the pope who, of course, never stated that the marriage of a priest is contrary to God's law, etc., [or] that it is God's commandment to tell [all individual] sins in the confessional.³³ Like Nebuchadnezzar with his pillar,³⁴ the King decrees punishments; [that is,] he intends to kill those who do not obey these articles.³⁵ He also started this persecution in a horrible way, for many are in jail and are awaiting the punishment.³⁶ That means, like Herod,³⁷ he has used this teaching for a while to his advantage, but now he attacks it, and [thus it can be seen that] the devil begins to use a new ruse: since the papal power has to fall, the devil now urges the great kings to use religion as it is opportune for them, for their profit and advantage.

A cruel blindness will follow from this, for there is [now] no reason that the kings of all territories, [of] Spain, France, England, Hungary, and Poland should protect the bishops and the estate of priests, on whom the mass and all the other errors depend, except for this one reason—that the kings are eager to have people available for the chancellery, for legations, and for all kinds of evil actions, so that these same priests might maintain their status, even without the kings' expenses.³⁸

Besides this, the kings see that the crude people are attached to the mass and the routine ceremonies, and do not like to have these idols taken away. Therefore the kings arrange it so that they and the priests are able to retain more authority. But the kings maintain what they want and make ordinances to their advantage. We worry, therefore, that this King is of such a mind, [and] that he does not seek God's glory, but wishes to do and decree what he himself desires. He said to the Vice-Chancellor that he alone intends to rule his kingdom;³⁹ by this he has shown that he does not think highly of this teaching, and intends to create a religion for himself, as Antiochus⁴⁰ and others did.

Second, since it is now out in the open that the King is acting contrary to his conscience, we think that we are not obligated⁴¹ to admonish him once again, but that we are free to abide by St. Paul's rule⁴² which states that one should twice admonish one's opponents, and if this does not help one should then avoid them as people who act contrary to their consciences. Such admonishing has now taken place,⁴³ yet the King flails against his conscience. With such people no instruction is of any use.

We also hear⁴⁴ that the King is a sophist and glossator who colors all articles with a little gloss, [yet] wants to pretend to affirm them. He who has no desire for clear, certain truth may easily get entangled and has to pay the price regardless of whether he must open his mouth wide like a pike⁴⁵ who tears himself off the hook.

In Ecclesiasticus 37⁴⁶ it is written that to him who uses sophistry God will not give grace; he will not receive wisdom, for there is no end to the mulling-over of things, and the twisting of them. Therefore nothing permanent can be accomplished with such people, and experience teaches us how harmful it is [to try to do so], especially for the lords.⁴⁷ Since the King is eager for such glossing, as we indeed hear, we have little hope that he will commit and submit himself wholeheartedly to the Word of God.

One also has to consider the people who are now in power and favor around the King. They too have no consciences. The man from Winchester,⁴⁸ while traveling around the country, is accompanied by two unchaste females dressed in men's clothing.⁴⁹ Yet he declares that the marriage of priests is contrary to God's law. He is so arrogant as to say in public that he intends to maintain against the whole world that the thesis,⁵⁰ "We are justified by faith," is wrong. Among tyrants he is the greatest; prior to this year he pushed for the burning of two people solely on the ground of transubstantiation.⁵¹ And so the proverb is true: like master, like servant.⁵²

From all this we conclude that thus far we have done everything possible.⁵³ We know that we did everything with the best Christian intention, and maintain that we are not obligated to try further to deal with the King; there is little hope for such an undertaking. Perhaps God does not wish his gospel to be touted by this King who has such a bad reputation.

We leave it to Your Electoral Grace's further deliberations whether one should try once more. Nothing shall be omitted. We all shall put together an *expostulatio*⁵⁴ addressed to the King and exhort him once

more in writing; more, however, we are not obligated to do. For when Mr. Bucer cites: “Go into all the world, preach,” etc.,⁵⁵ then we have to reply that we are doing this with our writings; in addition to this, also to abandon our present work is not commanded us.

I, Philip, wrote to the King concerning the prior edict—of course in all humility and respect—and criticized it; the same criticism I wrote to Cromwell and to the man of Canterbury.⁵⁶ Yet letters have been sent to me from England to the effect that the King has received my letters most ungraciously.⁵⁷ From this one can easily see that even if I were in England the King would grant me only a short audience, or, as he did with the previous envoys,⁵⁸ refer me to his arrogant, poorly educated bishops and have me quarrel with them.

How ingeniously the King debates⁵⁹ about these matters can be seen from two of his arguments. Regarding good works he argues as follows: Since evil works earn eternal wrath, it must follow that good works earn eternal salvation. And as I hear, he does not intend to have this argument taken away from him. The other one, concerning the marriage of priests, is this: Since the King has power to decree that a man remain at court as long as the King desires, [and] not marry, the King has also the power to decree that priests do not marry. This is the ingenious mind by which the King has ridiculed and condemned us. Your Electoral Grace will carefully consider whether it is fruitful to enter into debate with persons who help themselves by such arguments.

Arrangements have been made that the book⁶⁰ which Your Electoral Grace has sent to us be speedily printed. The *expostulatio*,⁶¹ too, will be swiftly produced.

May God protect Your Electoral Grace at all times.

Written at Wittenberg, October 23, 1539

Your Electoral
Grace’s dedicated servants,
MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR
JUSTUS JONAS, DOCTOR⁶²
JOHN BUGENHAGEN POMER, DOCTOR⁶³
PHILIP MELANCHTHON⁶⁴

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To Elector John Frederick¹

[Wittenberg,] October 23, 1539

To the official brief of the Wittenberg theologians regarding further negotiations with Henry VIII (letter No. 288), Luther adds this personal letter. After reviewing briefly the correspondence on this issue, Luther rejects any further dealings with the King, who was never serious about the gospel, but always bent it to his own advantage. The German evangelicals are better off without this unfaithful, wavering hypocrite, who in effect wants to be worshipped, and who thinks that God cannot get along without him. Therefore Luther requests his Sovereign to abide by the negative answer given to Christopher Mont.

On Elector John Frederick, see LW 48, 181 f.

Text in German (with some words, phrases, or sentences in Latin): WA, Br 8, 577–578.²

To the Most Serene, Noble Sovereign and Lord, Sir John Frederick, duke in Saxony, archmarshal and elector of the Roman Empire, landgrave in Thuringia, margrave in Meissen, and count of the castle in Magdeburg, my Most Gracious Lord

Grace and peace in Christ, and my poor *Pater noster*!³ Most Serene, Noble Sovereign, Most Gracious Lord! Martin Bucer has previously also written to me in the same way in which he wrote to my Gracious Lord, the Landgrave, requesting my assistance in urging that a legation, especially Master Philip, be sent to England.⁴ For the time being I have answered him suggesting that he abandon such hope, for there is no hope so far as the King is concerned, etc. It is therefore my humble request of Your Electoral Grace that Your Grace allow nothing to move you into abandoning the position you have already taken.⁵

The King is a dilettante⁶ and has no serious intentions. This we have certainly found out from the English who have been here,⁷ although at the time out of Christian love we had to believe that he was serious. But finally, when we had debated ad *nauseam*⁸—at great expense to Your Electoral Grace⁹—

everything was sealed with a sausage¹⁰ and left to the King's pleasure. The English themselves said: "Our King vacillates." And Doctor Antony¹¹ said several times: "Our King in no way respects religion and the gospel."

Since that time I have come to be glad that the King has shown by public action that he has fallen from the gospel and, even more, that he has revealed his hypocritical pretense. By no means would we have fared well with him, for we would have had to load his sins upon ourselves, and yet had a false friend in him. Above all, as the English let slip while they were here, we would have had to let the King continue to be and be called "Head and Defender of the Gospel," as he boasts that he is head of the English churches.¹² Away, away with this head and defender! Gold and money make him so cocky as to think that he should be worshipped, and that God could not get along without him. Let the King himself carry his sins, for which he is not ready to repent; we have enough of our own to carry. We have more than enough evidence [of his hypocrisy]: he [betrayed] Emperor Maximilian and soon thereafter King Louis of France as well.¹³ He should be pope, as in fact he is in England.

May our dear Lord God protect Your Electoral Grace and all friends¹⁴ from every evil, especially from such cunning, insidious¹⁵ attacks of the devil. Amen.

October 23, 1539

Your Electoral Grace's dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER

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To Mrs. Martin Luther Weimar, July 2, 1540

On June 11, 1540, Melanchthon left Wittenberg for the Electoral court in Weimar, intending to go from there to Hagenau. He was to participate in a colloquy between evangelicals and Roman Catholic theologians which was to work out a theological basis for Emperor Charles's policy of reconciliation between the opposing religious-political parties of the Empire. Melanchthon arrived in Weimar on June 12 and became so seriously ill that he could not continue the journey.¹ In order to make new arrangements, Elector John Frederick² summoned³ Luther and Caspar Cruciger⁴ to Weimar on June 16.⁵ Luther arrived in Weimar on June 23⁶ and stayed there until approximately July 4 when he and the others went on to Eisenach with (the now recuperated) Melanchthon. Luther and his friends stayed there from July 7 to 26, primarily for the purpose of finding a solution to the highly embarrassing problem of the bigamy of Landgrave Philip of Hesse.⁷ On July 27 Luther and Melanchthon left Eisenach for Wittenberg, where they arrived on August 2.⁸

Luther's absence from Wittenberg of approximately six weeks is the background for the four following letters written by Luther to his wife. In letter No. 290 Luther informs his wife that he is well, that Melanchthon's health is improving, and that at Arnstadt a pastor has driven a devil out of a young girl. Luther also discusses business and family matters: Catherine should help Bugenhagen and others find a pastor for the parish in Greussen; he, Luther, has received the letters from his children, but as yet has received no letter from his wife; he encloses a "silver apple" which Catherine should divide among the children; he will stay until July 4 in Weimar and then go to Eisenach with Melanchthon; Wolfgang Seberger should not neglect the mulberries and should tap the wine. Luther adds greetings to all his boarders and friends and asks them to step in and help wherever the need arises.

Text in German: WA, Br 9, 168.⁹

To my dearly beloved¹⁰ Katie, Mrs. Doctor Luther,¹¹ etc., to the lady at the new pig market:¹² *Personal* Grace and Peace! Dear Maid Katie, Gracious Lady of Zölsdorf¹³ (and whatever other names Your Grace has)! I wish humbly to inform Your Grace that I am doing well here. I eat like a Bohemian and drink like a German;¹⁴ thanks be to God for this. Amen. The reason for this is that Master¹⁵ Philip¹⁶ truly had been dead, and really, like Lazarus, has risen from death.¹⁷ God, the dear father, listens to our prayers. This we [can] see and touch [with our hands], yet we still do not believe it. No one should say Amen to such disgraceful unbelief of ours.

I have written to Doctor Pomer, the pastor,¹⁸ that the Count of Schwarzburg is asking that a pastor be sent to Greussen.¹⁹ As a wise woman and doctor, you, with Master George Major²⁰ and Master Ambrose,²¹

might also give counsel as to which of the three candidates²² I suggested to Pomer might be convinced [to go]. It is not a bad parish. Yet you people are wise and will find a better solution [than I suggested].

There²³ at Arnstadt the pastor has driven a devil out of a young girl in a truly Christian way.²⁴ Regarding this event we say: may the will of God, who is still alive, be done, even though the devil should be sorry about this.²⁵

I have received the letters from the children,²⁶ also the one from the *baccalaureus* (who is no child)²⁷—(Marushe [is] also not [one])²⁸—but from Your Grace I have received nothing. If it please God, then you might now, at least once, answer this, the fourth letter,²⁹ with your gracious hand.

I am sending along with Master Paul³⁰ the silver apple which my Gracious Lord³¹ presented to me. As I previously said,³² you may divide it among the children and ask them how many cherries and apples they would wish in exchange for it; give them these at once, and you retain the stalk, etc.³³

Give my hearty greetings and good will to our dear boarders,³⁴ especially to Doctor Severus or Schiefer,³⁵ and tell them to help in all affairs of the church, school, house—wherever the need arises. Also [tell] Master George Major and Master Ambrose³⁶ to help you around the house.³⁷ By God's will we shall be here until Sunday,³⁸ and then, with Philip, we shall travel from Weimar to Eisenach.³⁹

With this I commend you to God. Tell our Lycaon⁴⁰ not to neglect the mulberries by oversleeping; of course, he won't oversleep unless he forgets about it. Also, he should tap the wine at the right time. All of you be happy and pray. Amen.

Weimar, July 2, 1540

MARTIN LUTHER

who loves you from his heart⁴¹

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To Mrs. Martin Luther [Eisenach,]¹ July 10, 1540

While Luther was in Weimar, he received a portion of his quarterly salary which normally would have been paid to him on St. Michael's Day.² He sends this and some other money to his wife with letter No. 291 and suggests how she could exchange this money for smaller denominations. Then he mentions certain events: Around Eisenach the devil is raging by means of arson and murder; Philip Melanchthon has recuperated, and for this one should thank God; the Colloquy of Hagenau will accomplish nothing except, perhaps, that the Pope will arouse the Turks to attack "us"; Nicholas von Amsdorf is visiting Luther in Eisenach. In a postscript Luther leaves the payment of the messenger to his wife. He also makes some suggestions for the remodeling of the house, though he is aware that his suggestions might come too late.

Text in German: WA, Br 9, 171–173.³

To Mrs. Catherine Luther⁴ at Wittenberg, etc., my dear mistress of the house, etc. Grace and peace! Dear Maid Katie! Herewith I am sending you (via the driver of Doctor Bleikard,⁵ etc.)⁶ A [:]⁷ forty-two *Taler*,⁸ the salary due this coming St. Michael's Day,⁹ and also forty gulden on the account of George Schnell which you may use until we return¹⁰ We were unable to get one penny in change at court,¹¹ just as you cannot get any in Wittenberg.¹² George Schnell received his change from Weissensee in the territory of Duke¹³ George.¹⁴ However, I think that one thousand gulden in little *Groschen*¹⁵ have now arrived or will arrive shortly from my Most Gracious Lord¹⁶ for change, etc.¹⁷ For this is what he has ordered.¹⁸ But it would be good if the people themselves would begin to avoid [using] the *Merker*, as well as the Polish pennies,¹⁹ for they certainly are doing too much damage to this principality, since one of them is not worth five pennies. In the long run they may not be tolerated without damage to my Most Gracious Lord, and also to his land and people, as we shall see,²⁰ if God wills it. You might see whether John von Taubenheim²¹ at Torgau could or would change the *Taler* into smaller coins for you.

There is nothing new, except that around here, too, the devil is raging and gives horrible examples of his maliciousness,²² and pushes the people [to commit] arson which often proves fatal, suicide, etc. The people²³ are quickly jailed for this and executed. In this way God admonishes us to believe, to fear, and to

pray, for all this is God's punishment on account of the ungratefulness for and contempt of his dear Word.²⁴

Master Philip is returning to life again from the grave;²⁵ he still looks sick, yet he is in good spirits,²⁶ jokes and laughs again with us, and eats and drinks with us as usual. Praise be to God! You people, too, should join us in thanking the dear Father in heaven who raises the dead and who alone gives all grace and blessings; praised be he in eternity. Amen. But pray zealously, as you people ought to do, for our Lord Christ, that is, for all of us who believe in him, [and pray] against the crowd of devils who now rage at Hagenau²⁷ and rebel against the Lord and his anointed;²⁸ they intend to burst their bonds, as is stated in Psalm 2,²⁹ so that God in heaven may deride them and finally shatter them like a potter's vessel.³⁰ Amen. What will happen there, however, we do not yet know, except that we expect they will command us: "Do this and that, etc., or we shall devour you." For they have evil intentions.

Also, tell Doctor Schiefer³¹ that I do not have any further hopes regarding Ferdinand;³² he goes to his own destruction. Yet I worry that the Pope,³³ as I often prophesied, will arouse the Turk against us, for Ferdinand would not really fight back, as he supposedly said in a veiled way, and that [we shall] see strange events. For the Pope already sings: "If I cannot bend the great, I shall move hell."³⁴ If he is unable to incite the Emperor against us,³⁵ he will try it with the Turk. He will not yield to Christ. May Christ intervene with force against the Turk as well as the Pope and the devil, and prove that he is the one and only lord, seated by the Father on his right hand.³⁶ Amen.

Amsdorf is also still with us here.³⁷ With this I commend you to God. Amen.

July 10, 1540

MARTIN LUTHER

You certainly will know how to pay and tip the driver Wolf. I³⁸ have an idea how you could have the windows in the new roof constructed, which I forgot to mention when I left.³⁹ Only two windows should be on the side toward the *Collegium*,⁴⁰ placed between the two firewalls;⁴¹ in the upper part, the gable,⁴² there should be none on the side toward the *Collegium*. On the side toward the kitchen⁴³ there should be only three little windows framed with upright bricks.⁴⁴ In the hall which leads to the dark chamber there should be the two [lower] half sections of the wall covered with mortar (so that one may pass by [unseen]), and the light should come from the roof. But I am afraid I am too late [with these suggestions].

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To Mrs. Martin Luther [Eisenach,]¹ July 16, 1540

Luther informs his wife of some everyday events: He is healthy and happy and enjoying his food and drink; Melancthon also is healthy again; von Amsdorf is still in Eisenach; the delegation that went to Hagenau had a good time on the way and made a short trip from Hagenau to Strassburg; it is unbearably hot in Eisenach. Luther asks his wife to tell Schiefer a rumor that King Ferdinand is seeking the friendship of the Turks. He also asks her to write to him whether she has received all that he sent, especially the money. In closing, he extends von Amsdorf's greetings to Katie.

Text in German: WA, Br 9, 174–175.²

To my gracious maid, Catherine Luther von Bora and Zölsdorf,³ at Wittenberg, my beloved Grace and peace! My dear Maid and Lady Katie! Your Grace should know that we are chipper and healthy here (God be praised), eat like the Bohemians (yet not much) and drink like the Germans (yet not much).⁴ We are happy indeed, for our gracious lord of Magdeburg, Bishop⁵ Amsdorf,⁶ is our table companion. Otherwise we have no news, except that⁷ Doctor Caspar,⁸ Myconius,⁹ and Menius¹⁰ have let themselves be pampered on the way¹¹ and made a leisurely trip¹² from Hagenau to Strassburg¹³ to serve and honor John of Jena.¹⁴ Also, Master Philip has again been totally restored.¹⁵ God be praised. Tell my dear Doctor Schiefer¹⁶ that his King Ferdinand is being talked about as if he intends to seek the friendship of the Turks against the evangelical sovereigns.¹⁷ I hope this is not true for it would be too hard.

[At least] write and let me know whether you have received all the things that I sent, such as the ninety gulden¹⁸ that I sent recently with Wolf the driver, etc.¹⁹

With this I commend you to God. Amen. Have the children pray. Here there is such a heat and drought²⁰ that it is beyond words and unbearable [day] and night. Come [O Last] Day. Amen.

July 16, 1540. The Bishop of Magdeburg²¹ sends kind greetings.

Your loving²²
MARTIN LUTHER

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To Mrs. Martin Luther
[Eisenach,]¹ July 26, 1540

Although Luther is unsure just where his wife is as he writes this letter to her, he asks that some beer be ready for him on his return to Wittenberg, which he hopes will be soon. He comments briefly on the outcome of the Colloquy of Hagenau, on Melancthon's recovery, and on fires in the Thuringian Forest. He encourages his family to pray and commends all of them to God.

Text in German: WA, Br 9, 205.²

To the wealthy lady at Zölsdorf³, Mrs. Doctor Catherine Luther,⁴ residing in the flesh at Wittenberg and living in the spirit at Zölsdorf, to my beloved: *Personal*

If she is absent, then Doctor Pomer,⁵ the pastor, is to break [the seal] and read [the letter] ... Please⁶ see to it that you have a good glass⁷ of beer waiting for us. God willing, we shall leave tomorrow, Tuesday, for Wittenberg.⁸

Nothing was accomplished at the Diet of Hagenau;⁹ effort and labor are lost, and expenses have been incurred for nothing. Yet even if we accomplished nothing else, we fetched Master Philip from hell, and shall cheerfully bring him home from the grave,¹⁰ God willing and by his grace. Amen.

The devil is on the loose, himself possessed by new, [more] evil devils,¹¹ burning and doing damage which is terrible.¹² In the Thuringian Forest more than one thousand *Acker*¹³ of my Most Gracious Lord's¹⁴ trees have been burned to the ground, and are still burning; in addition, today the news is that the forest near Werdau¹⁵ and in many other places also has started to burn. No firefighting does any good. This will make wood expensive.

Pray, and have [the children] pray against that horrible Satan who most violently attacks us not only in soul and body but also in property and honor. May Christ our Lord come down from heaven and also start a little fire¹⁶ for the devil and his companions which the devil would be unable to extinguish. Amen.

I am not sure whether this letter¹⁷ will find you at Wittenberg or Zölsdorf;¹⁸ otherwise I would like to write about more things. With this I commend you to God. Amen. Greetings to our children, the boarders,¹⁹ and all, etc.

July 26, 1540

Your loving²⁰
MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

294

To Mrs. Martin Luther
[Wittenberg,] September 18, 1541

Luther hurriedly wrote¹ this short note to his wife (who apparently was at Zölsdorf)² so that she would not be frightened if she heard rumors about the Turks, and because he himself was worried about his wife, having received no letters from her. He tells Katie to make the necessary arrangements and come home; as he views the present situation, there is danger at hand, and God will punish "our" sins.

Text in German: WA, Br 9, 518–519.³

To my dear mistress of the house, Katie Ludern⁴ von Bora:

Personal

Grace and peace. Dear Katie! I am letting Urban⁵ run to you with this letter, so that you should not be frightened if rumors⁶ about the Turks⁷ reach you. Also, it seems strange to me that you write or send absolutely nothing to us even though you certainly know that we are concerned about you because Mainz,⁸ Henry,⁹ and many of the nobility in Meissen¹⁰ are very hostile toward us.¹¹ Sell and arrange what you are able to, and come home.¹² For it appears to me that a storm is brewing¹³ and that God will punish our sins with the rods of his wrath.

With this I commend you to God. Amen.

To Justus Jonas

[Wittenberg,] February 16, 1542

At the time Luther wrote this letter, Jonas was in Halle to organize and supervise the evangelical church there. Luther asks Jonas to see to it that his messengers (who would bring letters to Wittenberg) wait for a reply if Jonas expects to get a reply at all. Then Luther mentions that Kilian Goldstein, the carrier of the present letter, was a most welcome visitor, and would have been even more welcome had he stayed for dinner. As an afterthought, Luther responds to a no-longer extant letter of Jonas by stating that he, too, wishes to know whether Karlstadt passed away with a repentant heart and by announcing the pending arrival of Karlstadt's widow in Wittenberg. In a lengthy postscript Luther communicates news: Bucer's wife, his daughters, and a son have perished in the plague; a ghost disturbs Karlstadt's grave and house; the Sultan intends to invade the Empire, and the Sultan's oldest son is revolting against his father; the Hungarian stories have been printed in Wittenberg; and finally, Eck has published a book about the Diet and Colloquy of Regensburg.

On Justus Jonas, see LW 48, 275, n. 3.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 9, 621–622.¹

To the illustrious man, Mr. Justus Jonas, Doctor of Theology, the provost² at Wittenberg, a faithful ambassador of Christ³ at Halle, my superior⁴ to be revered in the Lord.

Grace and peace! I have told⁵ that excellent man, Doctor Kilian, your syndic,⁶ the same thing that I am communicating to you [now] by means of this pen, dipped in ink and filling up the paper, namely, that you should not continue to request an answer from me⁷ unless you have first coaxed the messengers or letter carriers to do a small service—that is, at least to return alter they have delivered a letter, and pick up⁸ an answer. For they deliver your letters to me as if they were forced to take care of other things after they have dropped off your letters, or to turn them over to the first person they meet, or in the meantime to kill a Turk. Well, if you do not take care of this, then have no doubt that I am unable to answer. For (as you know) I am too poor⁹ to be able to send letters to you by my own messengers; further, I am too occupied to be able to look around for someone who might perhaps go or move from here to Halle. This is in reply to your four letters, or perhaps even more.¹⁰

By the way, Doctor Kilian was a most welcome visitor, and would have been even more welcome had he stayed for dinner. But he said that he had to hurry, so I urged him in vain to stay. Be that as it may, the agreement of souls is a sufficiently large and happy banquet, however far apart their bodies are, according to the saying: the church is the fellowship of saints.

Farewell, and pray for me. The Lord be with you. Amen.

Greet your highly respected wife, the fruitful one who is blessed with children, on behalf of all of us. Concerning Karlstadt's death,¹¹ I too¹² wish to know whether he passed away with a repentant heart.¹³ His wife will be here about Easter,¹⁴ and from her we shall find out everything.

Again farewell.

February 16, 1542.¹⁵

Bucer's¹⁶ wife has perished in the plague; also all his daughters and a son. Many learned men have died,¹⁷ as I think you know.

A friend writes from Basel that Karlstadt has died and adds a fantastic story; he insists that some ghost comes to Karlstadt's grave and moves around in his house, making all kinds of noise by throwing stones and gravel.¹⁸ According to Attic Law¹⁹ one may not speak evil of the dead;²⁰ therefore I shall add nothing.

We have seen to it that the Hungarian stories have been printed.²¹ The Poles say that the Turkish tyrant aims for the domination of Europe, and that there is no doubt that the Turks intend to invade Germany and demand free passage from the Poles. The Poles promise to fight, provided that they will get help from the Germans. But if at this Diet of Speyer, just as at the others, there is quarreling back and forth in a Sophist-like way,²² then the events will speak [louder], and Germany will be beset by some doom. I sustain myself with this one consolation, that is, I know that God cares for the church.

From Hungary comes the news that the oldest son of the Turkish tyrant has revolted against his father and intends to make war in Syria because, it is said, the father intends to turn over the empire to the youngest son.²³

Eck²⁴ has published a most rabid treatise about the events at Regensburg; in tearing Bucer apart Eck proves to be more biting than Archilochus, though he also directs his attacks against others.

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

296

To Marcus Crodel

[Wittenberg,] August 26, 1542

In 1542 Luther sent his son John to Torgau, where John was to stay with Marcus Crodel, the headmaster of the Torgau Latin school. In the present letter Luther asks Crodel to add John to the class of boys who would be trained in grammar and music, to keep an eye on John's conduct, and to send a progress report on the boy's studies, along with an evaluation of the boy's potential. Luther also sends along Florian von Bora who, Luther says, will need a firm hand; Luther hopes that Crodel might perhaps place him with a citizen in Torgau. Luther points out that he considers education through the example set by classmates better than private tutoring. He assures Crodel that if the arrangement with John works out, then his other two sons would also come to Torgau for further schooling. Luther praises Crodel as a teacher, particularly for his diligence and his strictness. In conclusion Luther extends greetings to John Walther, who would be the one to take care of John's musical training, and to Gabriel Zwilling and his family.

Marcus Crodel of Weimar (1487?–1549) was graduated as Bachelor of Arts from Wittenberg University in 1521 and, except for a short period of service in the office of the Electoral chamberlain, taught on the secondary level for the remainder of his life. In 1529 he became a teacher at the Torgau Latin school, and in 1539 headmaster (Rector) of that school. He is described as a learned man who even knew some Hebrew, and he is known for a Latin textbook which he published in 1541. Under his guidance the Torgau Latin school developed into one of the leading institutions of Humanism, organized around the liberal arts with emphasis on rhetoric and music. Luther and Melancthon held Crodel in high regard and presented him with copies of many of their writings. Crodel was several times a guest in Luther's house.

On Marcus Crodel, see Enders, Briefwechsel 14, 323, n. 1; ZKG 52 (1933), 339; WA, Br 10, No. 3783, Introduction; WA 48, 60, 256; on the Latin school in Torgau, see also LJB 15 (1933), 39 ff.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 10, 134.¹

To the excellent man, Marcus Crodel, a most faithful and upright teacher of the young people at Torgau,
my most beloved friend in the Lord

Grace and peace! As you and I have agreed,² my Marcus, I am sending my son John³ to you so that you may add him to the boys who are to be drilled in grammar and music.⁴ Also, keep an eye on his conduct and correct it, for in the Lord I have great confidence in you. I shall liberally pay for your expenses, and you will please inform me how much he has progressed in [a certain] time, and how much one might expect of him.⁵ I have added the boy Florian,⁶ especially since I see that these boys need the example set by a crowd of many boys; this seems to me to accomplish more than individual, private education. But be very strict with this one, and if you can place him with a citizen,⁷ do it; otherwise send him back. May God prosper what has been begun.

If I see success with this son, then soon, if I live, you will also have my other two sons.⁸ For I think that after you there will be no teachers as diligent as you, especially in grammar and in strictness so far as conduct is concerned. Therefore “make use of the moment, for time races with a swift foot,”⁹ and diligent teachers disappear even faster. Thereafter the boys will return here for higher studies for which they will then be better equipped.¹⁰

Farewell in the Lord, and tell John Walther¹¹ that I pray for his well-being, and that I commend my son to him for learning music. For I, of course, produce theologians, but I also would like to produce grammarians and musicians.¹² Again farewell, and also greet Gabriel and his family.¹³ Farewell for the third time and for eternity!

August 26, 1542

Yours,
MARTIN LUTHER

297

To Marcus Crodel

[Wittenberg,] August 28, 1542

Luther asks Crodel to punish Florian von Bora for having stolen a knife.

On Marcus Crodel, see p. 231.

Text in German: WA, Br 10, 136–137.¹

To the excellent man, Marcus Crodel, a devout and faithful teacher of the young people at Torgau, my dearest friend in the Lord²

Grace and peace! Dear Marcus! I shall be the first to file a complaint against that scoundrel Florian³ whom I have sent to you along with John.⁴ I ask you to have a severe thrashing⁵ administered to him daily, on three consecutive days, without any pity as a welcome present.⁶ He thinks he has escaped the whip, but the whip shall be his reception committee.⁷

He should receive the first thrashing because on the way [to Torgau] he brazenly took away the knife or dagger⁸ from my [son] Paul;⁹ the second, because he lied and said that I presented the knife to him¹⁰ (because of the lie this thrashing should draw blood); the third, because without my knowledge and consent he has thus taken away and stolen the knife from me.¹¹ This thrashing should be the best one. Or send the scoundrel back here. John should take the knife and look after it. If that rascal were still here I would teach him [what it means] to lie and steal. He did not do it previously.

With this I commend you to God. Amen.

August 28, 1542

MARTIN LUTHER

298

To Marcus Crodel

[Wittenberg,] September 6,¹ 1542.

In September of 1542 Luther's daughter Magdalen became so seriously ill that she was expected to die.² Lenchen, as she was called (the second of Luther's living children), was especially close to her older brother John and desired to see him. Consequently Luther dispatched a carriage to Torgau (where John was studying with Marcus Crodel)³ in order to bring John home to the bedside of his ailing sister. In the following letter Luther informs Marcus Crodel of Magdalen's illness and asks that John be sent home at once. Crodel is to make some pretense for the trip but is not to tell John the real reason for the sudden trip to Wittenberg. John will return to Torgau soon, says Luther, either when Magdalen has recuperated, or fallen asleep in the Lord.

On Marcus Crodel, see p. 231.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 10, 147.⁴

Grace and peace!

My Marcus Crodel! I ask you to be quiet to my son about what I am writing to you: my daughter Magdalen is iii and almost in her last hour; in a short while she might depart to the true Father in heaven, unless God has decreed otherwise. She herself longs so much to see her brother that I feel compelled to send a carriage [for him]. They loved each other so much; perhaps his arrival could bring her some relief. I am doing what I can so that later the knowledge of having left something undone does not torture me. Therefore without giving John any reason, order him to fly back in this carriage; he will return soon, when Magdalen either has fallen asleep in the Lord, or has recuperated. Farewell in the Lord! Tell John that something is the matter which is to be entrusted to him in secret. Otherwise everything is fine.

September 6, 1542⁵

Yours,
MARTIN LUTHER

To Justus Jonas [Wittenberg,] September 23, 1542

In the first portion of this letter Luther comments on the negotiations between the Elector of Saxony and the Archbishop of Mainz concerning the possible sale of the lordship connected with the castle at Halle. The Archbishop, Luther points out, will never spend the money to acquire this lordship, and he most certainly will not do so under the condition that the gospel must continue to be preached in Halle. The Archbishop sees in the negotiations, says Luther, only an opportunity to make the Elector look ridiculous and a chance to have his fun worrying the people in Halle that this lordship might be sold. Then Luther informs Jonas about a serious talk he has had with Jonas' oldest son, whom he strictly admonished to show obedience to and appreciation of his father, and whom he urged to be grateful to God for having a father who could guide him during the years of growing up. In the last paragraph Luther talks about the death of his daughter Magdalen. He knows that he and his wife should be grateful for the blessed departure of their daughter. Yet his love for her and the memory of this child make it difficult for him to be grateful just now; therefore Luther asks Jonas to give thanks to God in his stead for Magdalen's blessed end.

On Justus Jonas, see LW 48, 275, n. 3.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 10, 149–150.¹

To the illustrious man, Mr. Justus Jonas, Doctor of Theology, the provost at Wittenberg,² Christ's ambassador³ in Halle/Saxony,⁴ my elder⁵ in the Lord

Grace and peace in the Lord! I still think, my Jonas, that it will never happen that the Satan at Mainz⁶ will buy⁷ the lordship connected with the castle at Halle, especially not for such a high price and on the condition that he is to let the gospel have its free course. All that that cursed son of perdition⁸ does or says is a lie and hypocrisy. You will remember that I used to say that not even the sun has seen anything more sly than this⁹ fellow.¹⁰ He only wants to make a laughing stock of our Sovereign,¹¹ as he does of all people. Therefore I think that you people at Haile have been disturbed for no reason, or terrified by a tempest in a teapot.¹² This, of course, has been most welcome to that monster who, as the most demonic devil, lives precisely for such a thing, that is, to see the tragedy of wretched people, or, in case the woe is not real, to rejoice that nevertheless they are terrified by an imagined calamity.

As¹³ you had requested, I admonished your son in a strict and serious talk. I exhorted him to be appreciatively obedient to his father—on top of it, such a father—and to remember that God has blessed him so abundantly that this father is still alive and around him in the years of his puberty.¹⁴ [I further pointed out] what help this father's advice and aid can be in guiding such an impressionable age and controlling [the effects of] original sin in a world which is so full of evil and the fury of the devil. He has promised to be obedient and to heed your advice and that of his teachers.

I¹⁵ believe the report has reached you that my dearest daughter Magdalen has been reborn in Christ's eternal kingdom. I and my wife should only joyfully give thanks for such a felicitous departure and blessed end by which Magdalen has escaped the power of the flesh, the world, the Turk, and the devil; yet the force of [our] natural love¹⁶ is so great that we are unable to do this without crying and grieving in [our] hearts, or even without experiencing death ourselves. For the features, the words, and the movement of the living and dying daughter who was so very obedient and respectful remain engraved deep in the heart; even the death of Christ (and what is the dying of all people in comparison with Christ's death?) is unable totally to take all this away as it should. You, therefore, please give thanks to God in our stead! For indeed God did a great work of grace to us when he glorified our flesh in this way. Magdalen had (as you know) a mild and lovely disposition and was loved by all. Praised be the Lord Jesus Christ who has called, elected, and made her glorious. God grant me, and all my [loved] ones, and all our friends such a death—or rather, such a life. This alone I ask of God, the Father of all comfort and mercies.¹⁷ In him, farewell to you and your whole family. Amen.

September 23, 1542

Yours,
MARTIN LUTHER

300

To Marcus Crodel

[Wittenberg,] December 26, 1542

After John Luther had returned to Torgau from Wittenberg, where he had been on the occasion of his sister Magdalen's illness and death,¹ he became homesick and, misunderstanding a statement made by his mother at his departure from Wittenberg (see letter No. 301), wanted to come home. In this situation Luther approaches John's teacher in Torgau, Marcus Crodel, and, mentioning the good rapport that (according to John) exists between John and the Crodels, asks Crodel to help John overcome "that childlike weakness." Under the present circumstances Luther does not want his boy to return home, but Luther does ask Crodel to inform him should John get sick.

On Marcus Crodel, see p. 231.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 10, 228–229.²

Grace and peace!

I readily believe, my Marcus, that my son turned soft through the words of his mother, in addition to mourning over his sister's death. Talk seriously with him.³ For when he was here he certainly praised you and your wife, saying how well he is treated by you there, even better than by us here. Order him, therefore, to curb that womanish feeling, to get accustomed to enduring evil, and not to indulge in that childlike weakness. For this is the reason that he has been sent away, namely, that he learn something and become hardened. I do not wish him to return if there is no other reason. Should another illness come to him, however, please inform me. In the meantime he should be diligent in fulfilling that for which he has been sent away, and [thus] obey his parents.

We here are fine and healthy by God's grace. Farewell!

December 26, 1542

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

301

To John Luther¹

[Wittenberg,] December 27, 1542

Luther assures his son John that the family is fine, and then encourages him to master "those tears." He suggests that obedient dedication to his studies will help him forget "that softness." Then Luther clarifies a statement made by his wife: when she had said that John should return home if he feels poorly, she was thinking of an illness. In closing Luther also tells John that his mother wishes him to put aside his mourning over Magdalen's death so that he can study in a peaceful frame of mind.

On John Luther, see LW, 49, 152, n. 7.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 10, 229.²

To John Luther, my dearest son, at Torgau

Grace and peace in the Lord! My son John: I and your Mother, along with the whole house, are fine. You see to it that you overcome those tears like a man, so that you do not cause your Mother additional pain and worry, for she worries easily and becomes anxious. Be obedient to God who through us has ordered you to be educated there, and you will [more] easily forget that softness. Mother was unable to write, and also thought it unnecessary. She says all that she said to you (that you should return if by chance you feel poorly) was meant to refer to an illness, so that you would inform us at once if you got sick.³ In addition she wishes you to put aside this mourning so that you may study in a happy and peaceful frame of mind.

With this farewell in the Lord!

December 27, 1542

Your father,

MARTIN LUTHER

302

To Wenceslas Link

[Wittenberg,] June 20, 1543

Luther announces that a preface he had to write has finally been written and is being sent along with this letter. As reasons for the delay Luther mentions his physical condition and his work load, as well as the fact that he is not the right man for writing prefaces. Then Luther makes certain observations: He is tired and longs for a peaceful departure from this world; his work is done, and “our congregations” are in good shape; the arrogant people of Zürich and Switzerland condemn themselves; he is praying against the Turks, about whom “we” hear monstrous things, but the German sovereigns behave every bit as badly as the Turks; all the godlessness in the world is a sure sign that the world is working its way toward its end. Luther ends the letter with greetings to Link’s family and friends in Nürnberg.

On Wenceslas Link, see LW 48, 169 f.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 10, 335.¹

To the distinguished and excellent man, Mr. Wenceslas Link, a true Doctor of Theology, a most faithful minister of Christ in the church² at Nürnberg, my dearest friend in the Lord
Grace and peace in the Lord! My preface comes to you rather late,³ my Wenceslas, and the reason for this is that your thoughts are different from my thoughts.⁴ You think that I am healthy and have little to do, and, what is even less the case, that I am the right man to write decent prefaces. I think quite differently: I am more dead than alive,⁵ yet I am overwhelmed with writing letters and books; the theological lecture,⁶ the stone⁷ and much else⁸ weigh me down. Consequently I am very seldom free to read or say my prayers, which is enough of a problem for me. But, anyway, here you have the preface, however it turned out. If you do not like it, you can either change it if you wish, or throw it out.

For myself I desire a good hour of passing on to God. I am content, I am tired, and nothing more is in me. Yet see to it that you pray earnestly for me, that the Lord takes my soul in peace. I do not leave our congregations in poor shape;⁹ they flourish in pure and sound teaching, and they grow day by day through [the ministry of] many excellent and most sincere pastors.

The people of Switzerland and Zürich are bent on condemning themselves, as Paul says,¹⁰ through their haughtiness and madness.¹¹ May the Lord enlighten and convert their hearts. Amen.

About the Turk we hear monstrous things.¹² I am praying against him, but I am uncertain against which Turks [God] will hurl my prayer. For if our Rephaim, Nephilim, Zamzumim, Emim, and Anakim continue to act as they do, then we will be ruled by them no less tyrannically than by the Turk.¹³ They rage furiously, according to their lusts. Now is the time which was predicted to come after the fall of Antichrist,¹⁴ when people will be Epicureans¹⁵ and atheists,¹⁶ so that the word of Christ might be fulfilled: “As it was in the days of Noah and Lot, so will it be on the day of the arrival of the Son of man.”¹⁷

Farewell in the Lord to you and your family! I greet your friends reverently.

June 20, 1543

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

303

To James Propst

[Wittenberg,] December 5,¹ 1544

Luther is tired and sluggish, and feels like an old useless man for whom nothing remains but to die. He believes his end is near, and perhaps the end of the world as well. So he asks for Propst’s prayer that his death may be pleasing to God and salutary for himself. Having made these sober observations, Luther sends thanks from his daughter Margaret to her godfather Propst for a gift he had sent her; Luther adds that she has been seriously ill for the last ten weeks. Continuing in the somber mood of the first part of the letter, Luther says he would not feel angry with God if Margaret were to be taken from this satanic world. In closing Luther extends greetings from his wife and all their friends, and asks for Propst’s prayer in their behalf.

On James Propst, see LW 48, 233, n. 34.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 10, 554.²

Grace and Peace in the Lord!

I am writing very briefly, my James, so that I do not avoid writing altogether and thus give you the impression that I have either forgotten you or that I would neglect you.³ Yes, I am sluggish, tired, cold—that is, I am an old and useless man.⁴ I have finished my race;⁵ it remains only that the Lord call me to my fathers,⁶ and that my body be handed over to decomposition and the worms. I have lived enough, if one may call it living.⁷ Please pray for me that the hour of my passing will be pleasing to God and a blessing for me.

I care nothing for the Emperor⁸ and the whole Empire except that I commend them to God in my prayers. It looks to me as if the world, too, has come to the hour of its passing,⁹ and has become an old wornout coat (as the Psalm says),¹⁰ which soon has to be changed. Amen.

There is nothing of heroic virtue left in the sovereigns, but only hatred and discord, avarice and selfish lusts which cannot be healed.¹¹ So the commonweal has no men, and the third chapter of Isaiah¹² runs [toward us] head-on. Nothing good can be expected, therefore, except that the day of glory of the great God of our salvation may be revealed.¹³

My daughter Margaret thanks you for your gift.¹⁴ Along with all her brothers¹⁵ she was sick with the measles.¹⁶ Although they have long ago recuperated, she has caught a very high and persistent fever which has lasted now for almost ten weeks; she still hangs between life and death, and the outcome is uncertain.¹⁷ I shall not be angry with the Lord, if he takes her out of this satanic age and world¹⁸ from which I, too, desire quickly to be taken, together with all my loved ones. For I long for that day and for the end of the raging of Satan and his followers.

Farewell in the Lord Jesus Christ! Greetings to your flesh,¹⁹ and also to you, in behalf of my Katie and all our friends. Pray for us!

December 5,²⁰ 1544

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

304

To Justus Jonas

[Wittenberg,] January 26, 1545

Urged by Jonas' son, Luther writes this letter though he feels that he has nothing to say. Luther mentions two items, however, which he thinks might be news for Jonas, and briefly comments on them: The Pope has issued a brief in which he chastises Emperor Charles for engaging in religious colloquies with the evangelicals; at the pending diet the Emperor intends to propose a reform of the church. Luther concludes his letter by asking for Jonas' prayers in his behalf.

On Justus Jonas, see LW 48, 275, n. 3.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 11, 29–30.¹

To the most illustrious man, Mr. Justus Jonas (the Elder), Doctor of Theology, the true and faithful bishop of the church at Halle,² my elder³ in the Lord

Grace and peace in the Lord, and a most happy [new] year. Amen. Your son, Justus Jonas,⁴ who, of course, is not [yet] a *magister noster*, but rather one of our Masters [of Arts],⁵ has [nevertheless] admonished me to write to you, my Jonas; indeed, he said that you desire a letter, and that you would welcome one. Therefore I am writing now, though I have nothing important to write about, since you are always faster in writing about news [than I am]. Yet perhaps you do not know the following: A letter⁶ of the Pope is circulating which the brethren have sent to Veit Dietrich from Venice; it is written in an absolutely arrogant and violent tone, and is addressed to Emperor Charles V. In this letter the Pope, with great and typically Italian arrogance,⁷ demands to know from the Emperor why the Emperor dares to permit and promise colloquies about religion since it is not the Emperor's place to teach but rather to listen to and learn from Mother Church and the teacher of faith. (These are words well known to you as an apostate jurist.)⁸ Many question whether this is a serious affair or the joke of a libeler; yet it certainly appears to me to be something.

In addition there is much ado about the fact that at the pending diet⁹ Charles intends to propose a reform in accordance with the example set by the church at the time of the Council of Nicaea. What a lively reformation that will bet If this is true, then the pope's goose is really cooked.¹⁰ If it is a trap set up

in order to coax us to an agreement (as I rather assume), then the pope, the one who [only] makes promises,¹¹ really will ridicule us who fell into the trap. For to believe the promises of the pope is the same as to believe the father of lies¹² (whose real son the pope is). Yet I do wish that the pope would be forced to abide by the ways of the church at the time of the Council of Nicaea. Good God, where would this leave your Coadjutor—your torturer—your¹³ Cardinal?¹⁴ Let us pray earnestly while they play and make a mockery of God and all his creation. For it will be that they cease to play; then they will really weep in hell.¹⁵

Now you have what I was able to write, for I wanted to write something.

Farewell, and pray for me!

January 26, 1545

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

305

To King Christian of Denmark [Wittenberg,] April 14, 1545

On a date unknown to us King Christian III of Denmark pledged to send annually a certain amount of butter and herring to Luther, Melanchthon, and Bugenhagen.¹ Since it proved difficult to keep this promise,² on January 6, 1545,³ the King changed this pledge into an annual stipend of fifty Taler⁴ for each of the three Wittenberg theologians.⁵ In letter No. 305 Luther first of all thanks the King for this stipend. Then he briefly mentions that the Diet of Worms is getting off to a slow start, that the council “behaves like a crab,” that Emperor Charles suffers from arthritis, and that he himself has no news about the Turks. In closing Luther recommends Tobern Anden, who has been one of his boarders.

On Christian III, see p. 147, n. 18.

Text in German: WA, Br 11, 70.⁶

Grace and peace in the Lord, and my humble *Pater noster*!⁷

Mighty, Most Illustrious, Noble, Most Gracious Sir [and] King! I most humbly thank Your Royal Majesty for such a gracious pledge which I do not deserve. May our dear Lord God abundantly grant his Holy Spirit to Your Royal Majesty to govern blessedly, and to fulfill his divine, good will. Amen.

The diet is getting under way slowly,⁸ the council behaves like a crab,⁹ His Imperial Majesty is in the Netherlands and is supposedly suffering severely from arthritis, and the sophists¹⁰ boldly rage against God. We do not know what the Turk is doing.¹¹ May God the Almighty help [us] so that all turns out well—which certainly will not happen unless the Last Day comes soon. Amen.¹²

Master Tomvernus,¹³ who for some time has been my companion at my table and my boarder, is now returning home to Your Royal Majesty. I humbly recommend him to Your Royal Majesty. He is a godly and learned man, and I am confident that God intends to accomplish much good through him; for this I pray with all my heart.

With this I commend Your Royal Majesty to the dear God. Amen.

April 14, 1545

Your Royal Majesty's dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

306

To Duke Albrecht of Prussia [Wittenberg,] May 2, 1545

Luther gives as reasons for writing this letter the request for a recommendation made by Christopher Albert von Kunheim, and his own knowledge that Duke Albrecht would patiently accept his letter. Luther disposes of the request in one short sentence at the end of the letter. In the remaining portions of the letter Luther communicates news: Nothing certain is known about the movement of the Turks; no one in the Empire is prepared for the possibility of a Turkish attack; the Emperor persecutes the gospel in the Netherlands; the Archbishop of Cologne remains steadfast in his support of the cause of the gospel, and

“this Easter” the Elector of the Palatinate has publicly affirmed the gospel; the Pope continues to play games with the council, of which the opening date has been postponed.

On Duke Albrecht of Prussia, see LW 49, 60.

Text in German: WA, Br 11, 88–84.¹

Grace and peace in the Lord!

Illustrious, Noble, Gracious Sir! The bearer of this letter, Christopher Albert von Kunheim,² has asked me for it and urged me [to write it], though I have no special reason for writing. Yet his desire to be recommended to Your Sovereign Grace by me and to bring my [letter of] testimony [to Your Sovereign Grace], and in addition my knowledge that Your Sovereign Grace would endure my writing with gracious patience—these were sufficient reasons for me [to write this letter].

We have no news. One says the Turk is coming, the other says he is staying away.³ It is certain, however, that neither Emperor,⁴ nor King,⁵ nor sovereigns are preparing for war.⁶ The Emperor is beginning to persecute the gospel severely in the Netherlands.⁷ May God prevent it. Amen.

By God’s grace, the [Arch]bishop of Cologne still stands firm.⁸ Further, Count-Palatine Frederick, the elector, and his wife have accepted the gospel.⁹ This Easter they publicly took the sacrament in both kinds and [thus] affirmed [the gospel]. God be praised and honored; may he strengthen them.¹⁰ Amen. The Roman abomination¹¹ continues to mock the Emperor and the Empire with his council;¹² he has postponed it from Laetare Sunday to [St.] Michael’s Day.¹³ In Ferrara it is said that it is a long time till then.¹⁴ For once this is at least a word of truth coming from this lying mouth,¹⁵ since for all eternity the papists are unable to endure a council.¹⁶

With this I commend [Your Sovereign Grace] to the dear God. Amen. I also commend this Kunheim¹⁷ to Your Sovereign Grace, for he is a good chap who behaved very well here.

May 2, 1545

Your Sovereign Grace’s willing servant,

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

307

To Elector John Frederick [Wittenberg,] May 7, 1545

Luther sends some material pertaining to articles issued by the Theological Faculty of Louvain and deplores the fact that the Emperor has affirmed these articles. Luther also comments on news and rumors about the Council of Trent; he considers such news to be gossip spread by the papists, who he thinks will do everything possible to forestall the opening of the council for they fear that a council would endanger them. Should there be a council anyhow, says Luther, it would accomplish nothing but nonsense.

On Elector John Frederick, see LW 48, 181 f.

Text in German: WA, Br 11, 88.¹

To the Most Illustrious, Noble Sovereign and Lord, Sir John Frederick, duke in Saxony, archmarshal and elector of the Holy Roman Empire, landgrave in Thuringia, margrave in Meissen, and count of the castle in Magdeburg, my Most Gracious Lord

Grace and peace in the Lord, and my poor *Pater noster*!² Most Illustrious, Noble Sovereign, Most Gracious Lord! I am sending to Your Electoral Grace my answer to the articles issued at Louvain, for about eight days ago we also received them in print.³ It is very good that these miserable people betray and destroy themselves in this way. In the Emperor’s letter they are called his, that is, the emperor’s daughter.⁴ O unfortunate emperor who must be the father of such a great, disgraceful, abominable whore! All right, the pope⁵ is mad and foolish from the top of his head to his heels, so that his followers do not know what they are doing or saying. There is no doubt that, should a council be opened, the papists would produce similar wisdom, and even worse, in this council. But I think they certainly are clever enough—especially their holy spirit, [the man from] Mainz⁶—to let the council remain out in the field like unripe barley,⁷ even though they cannot stop prating about it.

The other item—the news⁸ about the council at Trent and those who supposedly are present there—I consider to be gossip and nonsense spread by the men at Rome and Mainz,⁹ [and] they certainly will have

to regret it, should it come true.¹⁰ God does not want them and they do not want him either. So let it be; all will turn out well.

With this I commend Your Electoral Grace to the dear God who, for the sake of putting his gracious and perfect will into operation, is to rule and protect Your Electoral Grace. Amen.

May 7, 1545

Your Electoral Grace's dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

EXCURSUS

In the opening sentence of letter No. 307 Luther referred to thirty-two theses issued in December of 1544 by the Theological Faculty of the University of Louvain, in which the teachings of the evangelicals were summarized, briefly explained, and refuted (text of theses: WA 54, 417 ff.; LW 34, 346 ff.). At the end of April/beginning of May, Luther and Melancthon had these theses in hand; they had received a printed copy of the theses from a "certain friend." See the statement above, p. 256, and p. 251, n. 10; WA, Br 11, 85 (May 2); C. R. 5, 753 (May 1); Kawerau, *Jonas Briefwechsel* 2, 161. Shortly thereafter the Elector also sent a copy of these theses to Luther, which the Elector had received from Landgrave Philip of Hesse (see LW 49, 124 n. 8). On June 6 (not May 10 as is stated in WA 54, 414) the Elector returned this copy to the Landgrave, saying that Luther had returned the copy to him and enclosing a copy of Luther's "writing"; see C. G. Neudecker (ed.), *Merkwürdige Aktenstücke aus dem Zeitalter der Reformation* 1 (Nürnberg, 1838), 450 f. It is commonly assumed (Neudecker, *loc. cit.*; Clemen, see p. 256, n. 3) that the enclosed copy of Luther's "writing" was a copy of letter No. 307, and that letter No. 307 was the covering letter with which Luther returned the Elector's—i.e., the Landgrave's—copy; Luther had no use for this copy since about eight days earlier he had already received a copy of the articles (see p. 256), and since he was requested to return this copy (see Neudecker, *loc. cit.*). Consequently one would have to translate Luther's statement as: "I am returning ... the articles, issued at Louvain," as Clemen argues (see p. 256, n. 3). That Luther did indeed return the articles to the Elector is obvious from the fact that the Elector returned the articles to the Landgrave; and it is almost certain that Letter No. 307 was the covering letter.

In light of the notation on the autograph of letter No. 307 (see p. 255, n. 1), however, the situation is more complex than it seems to be at first glance, and the translation "I am returning" is problematic, a fact overlooked by Clemen. The notation clearly states that, along with this letter, Luther is sending something which he *has written against* the theologians of Louvain. This suggests that as early as May 7 Luther's refutation of the Louvain articles was completed, at least the manuscript of it, and that on May 7 Luther not only returned the Landgrave's copy to the Elector, but also sent a copy of his own refutation to the Elector. He was able to work on this refutation because he had received a copy of the Louvain articles almost eight days ago. If this were indeed so then one wonders why it took so long (from the beginning of May to the end of August/beginning of September,) to have this refutation (in the form of theses; WA, 54, 425 ff.; LW 34, 354 ff.) of six pages in quarto published. One may want to get around this difficulty by arguing that the notation was made *after* the refutation had been published and found its way to the Electoral court, i.e., some time in September, or that the notation was made even later than that date at a time when the clerk or whoever made the notation no longer knew the precise circumstances. These arguments are weak, for if the "writing" of Luther, of which the Elector sent a copy to the Landgrave on June 6, was indeed letter No. 307 then this letter must have been in the chancellery by June 6 for the purpose of being copied; it is extremely awkward to assume that the notation was not made at that time, i.e., at the time of receipt of the original, but later on.

A closer examination of the text further makes clear that Clemen's interpretation and the alternate translation, presented on p. 256, n. 3, are not as definite as they appear to be. Luther wrote: *Ich Schicke Ekfg* [to your Electoral Grace] *wider die Artickel zu Loüen gestellet*. The problem is caused by the word *wider*. Clemen assumes that *wider* (in the sense of the present-day German *wieder*, i.e., "again, anew, afresh") is to be connected with *schicke* to mean "I am sending again," or "I am returning." This meaning is supported by the circumstances surrounding this copy (Luther had received it from the Elector, did not need it, returned it to the Elector who, in turn, returned it to the Landgrave). But this adverbial usage of *wider* is not the only meaning which Luther used, in fact it is not even the predominant one. (For details, see J. Erben, *Grundzüge einer Syntax der Sprache Luthers* [Berlin, 1954], s.v. *wider*.) *Wider* in the sense

of the present-day German *wider* or “against” can be connected with *gestellet* so that one would have to translate: “I am sending [what I have put together] against the articles issued at Louvain.” In this case *wider* would be understood as a preposition which has its object in “the articles issued at Louvain.” And the whole prepositional phrase would be the object of *ich schicke*. Since the text and context do not help us to establish which meaning Luther had in mind one has to rely on the surrounding circumstances, i.e., the notation on the autograph. Certainly the clerk or whoever made this notation understood Luther to say that he, Luther, was sending his refutation of the Louvain articles. Or should one have to suggest that the clerk totally misunderstood Luther, or that the notation was made at a time so far removed from the event that no one knew any longer what actually happened? This is of course possible, but is it probable?

If one adopts the prepositional meaning of *wider* then one would have to suppose that on May 7 Luther sent to the Elector a manuscript of his refutation of the Louvain articles; he also returned the copy of the Louvain articles which he had received from the Elector, though he did not specially mention it because he considered them a part of his refutation. Since Luther had been in possession of the articles for approximately eight days, he had had time to work on his reply; since the reply was in the form of theses, rather than a pamphlet or book, Luther could easily have “dashed it off” in this short time, esp. since at the conclusion of the theses Luther “promised” to say more on the subject soon (WA 54, 430; LW 34, 360). Thus Luther’s *Against the Thirty-two Articles the Louvain Theologians* would have been written in the first week of May, 1545, and not some time during the summer of 1545 (as one has to assume on the basis of WA 54, 422).

(That Luther’s refutation was completed by May 7 can be also seen from the following observations: On April 14 Luther informed von Amsdorf that he had not yet decided whether he would respond to the latest attack of the Zwinglians; if he would respond at all then it would be only briefly. See WA, Br 11, 71. On May 8, i.e., one day after Luther [supposedly] sent a copy of his refutation of the Louvain articles to the Elector, Luther informed von Amsdorf that he has decided not to reply to the Zwinglians, except for a brief indirect remark, and that he has more to do than read the writings of the Zwinglians who never come to terms with the issues anyhow; WA, Br 11, 95. Luther arrived at this decision because he could consider his brief remarks made in the refutation of the Louvain articles [see Luther’s theses, Latin text, Nos. XV, XXVII] sufficient, at least for the time being. By June 15 Luther had changed his mind, for on that day he informed von Amsdorf that he was in the process of planning a short book against the sacramentarians, but that a sudden stone attack “last night” interrupted his work; WA, Br 11, 120 f.)

If Luther’s refutation of the 1544 articles of the Louvain theologians had indeed been completed by May 7 why did Luther send a manuscript copy of this refutation to the Elector, and why did it take so long (i.e., from the beginning of May to the end of August/beginning of September) to have the refutation published? The answer to the first question can be derived from the nature of the Louvain articles. Because of the Emperor’s approval of the articles (see p. 256, n. 4), they were not only a theological “slander” of the evangelicals, but also a political and legal document which could have major consequences; therefore Luther felt it necessary to inform his territorial lord of his own position on the articles at the earliest possible moment. The second question cannot be exactly answered but the following observations may help to understand the situation. At the time that Luther became acquainted with the Louvain articles he was occupied with the question whether to write something against the Zwinglians (see above; April 14, May 8, June 15). He was also occupied with planning and was actually working on another book against the papacy; WA, Br 11, 72 (April 14), 91 (May 7), 120 (June 15), 177 (September 23). Further, Luther’s health was poor (see p. 267, n. 14); in July and August Luther was away from Wittenberg (see pp. 273 ff.), and Melancthon had ideas about a response to the articles (C. R. 5, 758; May 22). And finally, the printers might have been busy. In view of these circumstances it is not quite as strange as it appears at first glance for Luther to have put his refutation aside for a while—perhaps even until after he returned to Wittenberg in the middle of August—esp. if one considers the fact that Luther could have felt at ease about the matter since his position on the articles had been made known to the Elector. In any case, Luther considered his refutation, once it was printed, insufficient—was this because he had “dashed it off” in the first week of May?—and at once prepared a book against the theologians of Louvain (WA, Br 11, 177 [September 28]; C. R. 5, 848 [September 9]) and started to work on it (see p. 317).

To Nicholas von Amsdorf [Wittenberg,] June 3, 1545

Luther replies to von Amsdorf's inquiry about a "monstrosity" pertaining to foxes, and admits that he and the hunters with whom he has talked about this incident have no way of explaining it, except perhaps that it might be an omen of the end of the world. Then Luther makes a pessimistic statement about the Diet of Worms and the pending council, and reports that the people of Nürnberg have captured a nobleman whose freedom they hope to exchange for the freedom of one of their citizens, Jerome Baumgartner, currently being held by a relative of the nobleman they captured. He also comments briefly on a picture of the Pope. In a postscript Luther mentions that the Emperor has ordered the people of Augsburg to accept their newly appointed bishop, and that the people of Augsburg plan to resist this order.

On Nicholas von Amsdorf, see LW 48, 218.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 11, 115.¹

To the Most Reverend Father in the Lord, Sir Nicholas, bishop of the true and holy church at Naumburg,²
a sincere minister of Christ, my esteemed superior³

Grace and peace in the Lord! Most Reverend Father in the Lord: I have presented your question about that monstrosity pertaining to the foxes⁴ to people who are experienced in and who practice the art and occupation of hunting, and who really are masters of this art. At first they said what I had told them could not be true. Then, when I had shown them your letter, they were amazed beyond all measure.

Unanimously they declared that a fox is too cunning to prey where he has his den. The case of Köthen was cited, where foxes have dens in the (so-called) city moat but do not harm anyone there.⁵ I do not know what this is supposed to mean except, perhaps, that a change of all things is pending,⁶ for which we pray and which we await. Amen.

I do not care about diets and councils, I do not believe anything about them, I do not expect anything from them, I do not worry about them. Vanity of vanities.⁷ The people of Nürnberg have captured a certain nobleman in the hope that in return for his freedom they might free their Baumgartner.⁸ Unless God intervenes, this incident might well be the spark of some future fire⁹ [which might come] as a punishment on Germany; but may God take us and those who belong to us from this misery prior to that. There is no justice, no central authority, and the Empire is without power. This is the end and finish of the Empire.¹⁰

Your nephew George¹¹ has shown me the picture of the Pope,¹² but Master¹³ Lucas is a rough painter. He could have spared the female sex for the sake of God's creation and of our mothers. He could have painted other images suitable to the pope, that is, more devilish ones. But you will judge for yourself.

Farewell in the Lord, farewell in Christ!

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

The Emperor has commanded the people of Augsburg to receive the Cardinal, that is, their bishop, along with the clergy and the papal ceremonies. But the people are getting ready to protect themselves by means of arms.¹⁴ The priests do not wish to have peace or possess what is theirs in peace—so let what they seek happen.

To Nicholas von Amsdorf [Wittenberg,] July 9, 1545

Even though Luther thinks that von Amsdorf is better informed about "all things" than he himself is, he reports two news items and comments on them: The Emperor demands that the evangelicals consent to the council, even though the Pope has declared the evangelicals to be heretics who are not to participate in the council. Luther sees in this situation a trap laid by the papists for the evangelicals, who will be caught regardless of their response to the Emperor's demand. Therefore, Luther argues, the evangelicals must

continue to reject the council as long as the Pope insists on being superior to the council. The second item Luther reports is that the Emperor is trying to make peace with the Turks and that this fact raises the possibility that, having finally established this peace, the Emperor might turn his force against the evangelicals. In closing Luther mentions a severe stone attack he has had recently and says that he would prefer death to the pain caused by such an attack.

On Nicholas von Amsdorf, see LW 48, 218.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 11, 18.1–132.¹

To the Reverend Father and Lord in Christ, Sir Nicholas, true bishop of the church at Naumburg,² my superior³ venerably to be esteemed in the Lord
Grace and peace in the Lord. If I had something to write, I would write, Reverend Father in Christ. But I suppose that all things are better known to you than to us.

From the diet they write⁴ that the Emperor strongly insists that our party consent to the council. Since our friends do not wish to do this he is angry, so they say. What kind of a monstrosity this is, I do not understand: the Pope shouts that we are heretics and that we must not have a place in the council; the Emperor wants us to consent to the council and its decrees. Perhaps God is making fools out of them;⁵ indeed Satan reigns, [and] all of them are so totally mad that they condemn us and at the same time ask for our consent. But this seems to be their raging wisdom; since thus far they were unable to scare us with their very evil cause by using the authority and power of the pope, the church, the Emperor, [and] the diets, they are now thinking of operating with the authority of the council; thus they could be in a position of publicly decrying us as incorrigible people who are willing to listen neither to the pope, nor the church, nor the Emperor, nor the empire, and now not even to the council, which we ourselves have so often requested. Look at this wisdom of Satan in contrast to that foolish God!⁶ How will that God be able to escape such clever plans? But it is the Lord who will ridicule the mockers.⁷ If we now have to consent to such a council, why did we not twenty-five years ago agree with the lord of the councils, the pope, and his bulls? Let the pope first acknowledge that the council is superior to him,⁸ and let him listen to the council [even] if it speaks against him—just as his conscience testifies against him—[and] then we shall discuss the whole matter. They are insane and stupid.⁹ Thanks be to God.

The Emperor, Ferdinand, and the Frenchman are trying to make peace with the Turk,¹⁰ and some think that the Emperor might turn his weapons against us.¹¹ But David says: “Yet I was praying.”¹² “May the Lord’s will be done.”¹³

Farewell in the Lord, my Reverend Father! Both of us are old; perhaps in a short while we will have to be buried. My torturer, the stone, would have killed me on St. John’s Day, had God not decided differently.¹⁴ I prefer death to such a tyrant.

Again farewell!

July 9, 1545

Your Reverend Lordship’s dedicated
MARTIN LUTHER

310

To Justus Jonas

[Wittenberg,] July 16, 1545

Luther hopes that Jonas has recuperated from the stone (gall stone?) which had troubled him, and suggests that by avoiding certain foods further problems might perhaps be eliminated. Then Luther communicates some news: The Archbishop of Mainz has sent “ridiculous delegates” to the Council of Trent; God will disperse the council; on June 21 a legation of the Emperor and others left Venice in order to establish peace with the Turks; the envoys dressed themselves in Turkish clothing so as not to be despised by the Turks. In this pragmatic action on the Emperor’s part Luther sees a sign of capitulation of those who previously have decried and fought the Turks as enemies of Christendom. Luther underscores the ridiculousness of the situation by pointing out the financial manipulations of the popes in connection with the wars against the Turk, this enemy of Christendom, with whom one now is trying to make peace. For Luther all this is a sign that the end of the world is near.

On Justus Jonas, see LW 48, 275, n. 3.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 11, 142.¹

To the reverend man, distinguished by godliness and virtue, Mr. Justus Jonas, Doctor of Theology, my
dearest brother

Grace and peace. I pray God to give you something better than what you write about your stone,² my Jonas. Why do you not give up your *Faliscum*³ and similar things⁴ so that they do not, as one says, make you imagine such horrible things?⁵ May God have mercy upon us.

The man of Mainz has sent some ridiculous delegates to the council,⁶ but that monster laughs at the same time about us and the pope. The council is really *Tridentum*, that is, in German, torn apart,⁷ split up, and dissolved,⁸ for God disperses it and will disperse it together with all its delegates. I absolutely believe that they do not know what they are doing⁹ or are supposed to do. God has cursed their plans, as is written: Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his arm.¹⁰

I believe you have heard (it¹¹ is true) that on June 21¹² a splendid legation of the Emperor, the Frenchman, the Pope, [and] Ferdinand, loaded down with precious gifts, left Venice for the Turks in order to seek peace. What is most honorable and worthy of eternal remembrance is the fact that all of the envoys have laid aside their native clothing and have decked themselves out in Turkish clothing, that is, in a longer [tunic], so that the Turks should not despise them.¹³ This is the way in which they conduct the war against him whom for so many years they have decried as the enemy of the Christian name, [and] against whom the Roman satan, by means of indulgences, annates,¹⁴ and endless rapacity has wrung so much money from the people. Can you see the downfall of the Empire? Can you see that the day of our salvation is at hand?¹⁵ We shall be happy, glad, and rejoice; the end of the world is here. Praise and glory be to God through all eternity. Amen.

July 16, 1545

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER

311

To Nicholas von Amsdorf [Wittenberg,] July 17, 1545

Replying to a no-longer extant letter of von Amsdorf, Luther states that he is not disturbed by the news which von Amsdorf has written to him. Luther also mentions that it is no wonder that a wooden statue of Elector John Frederick toppled over, since it was poorly set up. Then Luther reports the presence of twenty-three bishops and three cardinals in Trent, and comments briefly on the unimpressive delegation sent by the Archbishop of Mainz to the council. In the remaining portion of the letter Luther tells von Amsdorf about the legation sent by the Emperor and others to the Turks for the purpose of reaching a peace agreement, and comments on this event.

On Nicholas von Amsdorf, see LW 48, 218.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 11, 143–144.¹

To the Reverend Father and Lord in Christ, Sir Nicholas, true and faithful bishop of the church at Naumburg,² my superior³ in the Lord, etc.

Grace and peace in the Lord! I am not disturbed by the events about which you write,⁴ Reverend Father in Christ. Do not worry about dreams, says [Cato].⁵ Scripture teaches the same thing, “unless someone is a prophet,” as is stated in Numbers 12 [:6]. But that sexton is no prophet. Further,⁶ that statue of the Sovereign⁷ which was erected in Torgau was made of wood. I saw it in Luke’s⁸ house before it was painted. No wonder that this statue fell down; it’s a miracle that it stood so long. Everyone has said that it could fall by itself any day now, even without any wind, so poorly had it been set up. May these things pass away.

From Trent comes news⁹ that twenty-three bishops and three cardinals are present, and that they wile away their time and do not know what they are supposed to do or what they will be doing. The [Arch]bishop of Mainz,¹⁰ or rather that scoundrel of all scoundrels, has sent envoys there, one suffragan bishop and a Franciscan. I do not know whether he intends to mock them¹¹ or us with this ridiculous delegation—that such an important man sends such envoys to such important men. But the council will be worthy of such [representatives]. May they have a bad time, as the wrath of God moves them.

Listen to something else if you do not know it already:¹² the Pope, the Emperor, the Frenchman, and Ferdinand have dispatched a very splendid legation, loaded down with precious gifts, to the Turks for the purpose of establishing peace. The nicest thing about this is the fact that in order not to offend the eyes of the Turks, all of the envoys have laid aside their native clothing and have decked themselves out in long tunics, according to the custom of the Turks. It is said that they departed from Venice on June 21. These are the people who until now have decried the Turk as the enemy of the Christian name, and using this pretext have wrung money from the people and agitated the inhabitants of their territories against the Turks. In order to make war against the Turks, the Roman satan has bled the world of its money by means of indulgences, annates, and endless sly thievery. What Christians, or rather hellish idols of the devil [!] I hope that these are very cheerful signs of the nearness of the end of all things. Therefore, while they¹³ worship the Turk, let us shout to the true God who will listen to us, and who through the splendor of his future arrival will humiliate even the Turk, along with them.¹⁴ Amen.

July 17, 1545

Your Lordship's dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

312

To Mrs. Martin Luther [Zeitz,]¹ July 28, 1545

On July 25 Luther, his son John,² and one of his boarders, Ferdinand von Maugis,³ joined Caspar Cruciger⁴ on a trip to Zeitz, where Cruciger was to try to settle a bitter controversy between some pastors who stood under the jurisdiction of Nicholas von Amsdorf, the evangelical bishop of Naumburg.⁵ Luther was in Zeitz on July 27,⁶ and on July 28 he wrote the following letter to his wife.

In this letter Luther tells Katie first that John will report details about the trip, and that they all received much hospitality on the way. Then Luther informs Katie that he is disgusted with moral conditions in Wittenberg and would like to arrange matters so that he would not have to return to Wittenberg. He feels that the people of Wittenberg would make difficulties for his family anyhow, once he had died; and so he suggests that Katie now dispose of their properties in Wittenberg and move to Zölsdorf. He hopes that the Elector will continue to pay his salary for this year, which he feels might well be the last year of his life, and that this salary would enable him to improve the estate in Zölsdorf. Luther tells his wife that "the day after tomorrow" he will drive to Merseburg to visit George of Anhalt. In closing, Luther leaves it up to his wife to decide whether to inform Melanchthon and Bugenhagen of his intention not to return to Wittenberg; if his wife does tell them, then she is to ask Bugenhagen to inform the congregation of Luther's decision, and to say farewell to the congregation in Luther's name.

Luther had considered leaving Wittenberg in protest before⁷ he wrote the present letter. But the determination with which Luther spoke in the present letter was a considerable shock for the University and the town. Luther's colleagues immediately conjectured that Luther wanted to leave Wittenberg because of doctrinal differences which existed between Luther and "one" of Luther's colleagues.⁸ On August 1 the University wrote to Elector John Frederick, enclosing a copy of the present letter,⁹ and informing the Elector that the University would deputize Bugenhagen and "some others" to negotiate with Luther for his return. The University requested the Elector to summon Luther and try to influence him to change his mind.

As a result of this request, the Elector deputized his personal physician, Matthias Ratzeberger,¹⁰ to deal with Luther; Ratzeberger was to confer with Melanchthon first, however.¹¹ Ratzeberger was to give Luther the Elector's personal letter¹² (a masterpiece of psychological diplomacy) and, along with von Amsdorf, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, and Major, to persuade Luther to change his mind.

Meanwhile Luther had gone from Zeitz to Merseburg,¹³ where he met with Ratzeberger on or after August 6.¹⁴ It becomes difficult to reconstruct Luther's activities for the days after August 6. On August 7 or 8 Luther left Merseburg;¹⁵ we find him next in Leipzig, where he preached on August 12. On August 16 he was at the Electoral court in Torgau.¹⁶ He left there on August 17 and was in Wittenberg again shortly after midnight on the same day, tired and suffering from a recurrence of his stone problem.¹⁷

Contrary to Melanchthon's assumption¹⁸ that Luther's decision to leave Wittenberg had something to do with doctrinal matters, it is clear, on the basis of a letter written by Ratzeberger,¹⁹ that Luther's decision was based on his disappointment with and anger about the conditions in Wittenberg; the decision was apparently actually made (on the spur of the moment) under the impact of some stories about Wittenberg which Luther heard in the countryside.²⁰ The Elector and Brück had a much more realistic view of the situation than Melanchthon had.²¹ The Elector simply talked about those complaints Luther had which he felt could be settled. And Brück argued that one should not make so much ado about it all, saying that, thank God, it would not be as easy to dispose of the property as Luther thought it would be; while Brück was well aware that Luther might be stubborn and remain "sitting on his head," he also realized that in view of the problems which would arise in connection with the sale of Luther's property, the last word on this matter had not yet been spoken.

How serious Luther was about his decision to leave Wittenberg could not be ascertained. His continued absence from Wittenberg without any given reason seems to indicate that Luther was indeed serious. On the other hand, while in Merseburg, Luther supposedly was promised "in the name of the church and the state" that the poor moral conditions in Wittenberg would be corrected;²² according to Köstlin-Kawerau,²³ after Luther's return to Wittenberg, the city council and the University did indeed draft (upon the Elector's orders) ordinances directed against the poor public behavior which supposedly had caused Luther's anger. Since Luther left Merseburg on August 7 or 8, the issues must have been well on the way to being settled by that time. In any case, Luther did eventually return to Wittenberg, and Ratzeberger and Melanchthon²⁴ had accomplished their missions. While obviously the promises made to Luther at Merseburg and the "arm-twisting" by his friends played some part in Luther's change of heart, the fact that Luther may in any event have had second thoughts about his decision to leave Wittenberg must not be discounted.

Text in German: WA, Br 11,149–150.²⁵

To my kind and dear mistress of the house, Luther's Catherine von Bora, a preacher, a brewer, a gardener,²⁶ and whatever else she is capable of doing²⁷

Grace and peace! Dear Katie! John²⁸ surely will tell you everything pertaining to our journey; I am not yet certain whether he should stay with me, but Doctor Caspar Cruciger²⁹ and Ferdinand,³⁰ of course, will tell you.³¹ Ernst von Schönfeld has treated us graciously at Löbnitz,³² and Heintz Scherle at Leipzig even more so.³³

I would like to arrange matters in such a way that I do not have to return to Wittenberg. My heart has become cold, so that I do not like to be there any longer. I wish you would sell the garden and field, house and all.³⁴ Also I would like to return the big house³⁵ to my Most Gracious Lord.³⁶ It would be best for you to move to Zölsdorf³⁷ as long as I am still living and able to help you to improve the little property with my salary.³⁸ For I hope that my Most Gracious Lord would let my salary be continued at least for one [year], that is, the last year of my life.³⁹ After my death the four elements⁴⁰ at Wittenberg certainly will not tolerate you [there]. Therefore it would be better to do while I am alive what certainly would have to be done then. As things are run in Wittenberg, perhaps the people there will acquire⁴¹ not only the dance of St. Vitus⁴² or St. John,⁴³ but the dance of the beggars or the dance of Beelzebub, since they have started to bare women and maidens in front and back,⁴⁴ and there is no one who punishes or objects.⁴⁵ In addition the Word of God is being mocked [there]. Away from this Sodom!⁴⁶ If Leeks Bachscheisse,⁴⁷ our other Rosina,⁴⁸ and [her] seducer⁴⁹ are not yet imprisoned, then help as much as you can to see that this scoundrel loses what he has gained.⁵⁰ While in the country I have heard more than I find out while in Wittenberg.⁵¹ Consequently I am tired of this city and do not wish to return, May God help me with this.

The day after tomorrow⁵² I shall drive to Merseburg, for Sovereign George⁵³ has very urgently asked that I do so.⁵⁴ Thus I shall be on the move, and will rather eat the bread of a beggar than torture and upset my poor old [age] and final days with the filth at Wittenberg which destroys my hard and faithful work.⁵⁵ You might inform Doctor Pomer⁵⁶ and Master⁵⁷ Philip⁵⁸ of this (if you wish), and [you might ask] if Doctor Pomer would wish to say farewell to Wittenberg in my behalf. For I am unable any longer to endure my anger [about] and dislike [of this city].

With this I commend you to God. Amen.

July 28, 1545

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

To Count Albrecht of Mansfeld [Wittenberg,] December 6, 1545

In 1420¹ the Grafschaft Mansfeld, which Luther often called his fatherland or his native land, had been divided between the two sons of the then ruling count, and in 1501 it was once more divided into three parts, whereby Count Albrecht III received the area around Eisleben, the town in which Luther had been born. Notwithstanding these divisions, the rich mining business of the territory (as well as other business matters) was jointly administered by the whole ruling family. This proved a constant source of irritation to the various members of the three branches of the Mansfeld dynasty especially since, much to the dismay of the other counts, Albrecht (the most capable ruler among the counts) operated with farsighted, innovative, perhaps even ruthless administrative policies. In addition Albrecht supposedly usurped the rights and property of one of the members of another branch of the family, founded a new town for the miners outside Eisleben (which the other counts thoroughly disliked), and jeopardized the law of patronage of one of the wealthy churches in Eisleben. Real and imagined rights and privileges were violated by Albrecht, real and imagined advantages were gained by him. Notwithstanding constant negotiations, mediations, and partial compromises, there was ever increasing bitterness dividing the ruling family of Mansfeld. The situation was right for one of those private, local feuds which were typical of Germany at that time.

Luther was genuinely distressed by these developments.² After 1540 he became increasingly involved in these matters, first by way of the personal affairs of relatives and friends “back home,”³ and then officially, because of the patronage law of the church in Eisleben⁴—and apparently also because Count Albrecht wanted him as mediator. At the beginning of October, 1545, Luther, Melanchthon, and Jonas were, therefore, in Mansfeld, but accomplished nothing since some of the counts were absent.⁵ In a pleading letter⁶ Luther urged Counts Philip and John George to make peace with Albrecht, who in turn, so Luther assured the counts, would also be willing to come to terms. Luther also offered his further services to help bring the quarreling parties together.

In the following letter Luther informs Count Albrecht of the willingness of Counts Philip and John George to make peace, and tells of their request that he, Luther, set the date for a meeting. As a result of this request, Luther says, he is changing his plans to go to Eisleben now and then on to Mansfeld for Christmas. He promises to come to Eisleben after January 1 in order to get the mediation negotiations started in spite of other pressing tasks. He expresses his confidence that Count Albrecht will stand by his offer to negotiate, and thus demonstrate his good will toward ending this quarrel.

On Count Albrecht, see LW 49, 103, n. 6.

Text in German: WA, Br 11,225–226.⁷

To the Magnanimous, Noble Lord, Sir Albrecht, count and lord at Mansfeld, my gracious and dear lord of my [native] land

Before all else, grace and peace in the Lord, and my poor *Pater noster*!⁸ Gracious Lord: I was willing to be with Your Grace once again⁹ this coming Monday,¹⁰ as I had offered. Yet today, at this hour, a letter¹¹ from my gracious lords, Count Philip and Count John George,¹² arrived in which they give me a very gracious answer to my previous letter;¹³ I am extremely pleased with this. The counts very kindly offer to participate in negotiations with Your Grace. They indicate that I am to name a [meeting] day after the upcoming Leipzig Fair.¹⁴ Therefore, once again I have to remain here, though I had made up my mind to spend this Christmas at Mansfeld. Since the counts demonstrate such kindness toward Your Grace and such graciousness toward me, I shall appear in Mansfeld soon after the close of the Leipzig Fair; I shall let you, the two parties, yourselves name a day, and shall summon whomever you wish to appear or have present. I am ready to give up eight days, one way or the other, for this matter—though I have very much to do—so that I may lie down in my coffin with joy, having previously been able to reconcile the dear lords of my native land and having seen unity of hearts established.¹⁵ I have no doubt that Your Grace will comply with Your Grace’s [previous] offer,¹⁶ and that [Your Grace] would like to see this quarrel settled.

With this I commend Your Grace to the dear God.

December 6, 1545¹⁷

Your Grace’s willing [servant],

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

314

To Mrs. Martin Luther
Halle, January 25, 1546

“I am writing, my James, as an old man, decrepit, sluggish, tired, cold, and now also one-eyed,¹ and as a man who now that he has died would be given the highly deserved rest (as it seems to me) he was hoping for. [But] as if I had never worked, written, said, or done anything, so I am now overloaded with matters on which I have to write, speak, negotiate, and act. Yet Christ is all in all; he is capable of doing all things, and he does them; blessed be he in eternity. Amen.” So wrote Luther to James Propst, his friend of many years, on January 17, 1546.² Approximately a week later, on January 23, Luther embarked on yet another journey to the counts of Mansfeld to mediate their controversy,³ that “pig business” as Gregory Brück called it.⁴ And three weeks later, while in his native town of Eisleben, Luther passed away in the early hours of February 18, having successfully accomplished his mission.⁵

It is one of the ironies of history that the man who for approximately one half of his life had stood at the center of controversy, and who in the words of the Edict of Worms of 1521 was “like a madman plotting the manifest destruction of the holy church,” who “writes nothing which does not arouse and promote sedition, discord, war, murder, robbery and arson”⁶ was to spend his declining physical strength in efforts to bring about peace among the ruling family of his native land.

Letters Nos. 314 through 325 are all of the extant letters which Luther wrote during these final weeks of his life while he was away from Wittenberg.⁷ In letter No. 314, written from Halle two days after Luther had left Wittenberg, Luther informs his wife that he is unable to continue his journey because a flood and the drifting of the ice on the Saale River make the crossing of this river too dangerous. Jokingly he mentions that under these circumstances Katie would certainly have suggested not going on; by not continuing the journey, Luther gently teases, Katie could see that he at least once followed her advice.

Text in German: WA, Br 11,269.⁸

To my kind and dear Katie Luther,⁹ a brewer and a judge¹⁰ at the pig market¹¹ at Wittenberg: *Personal Grace and Peace in the Lord!* Dear Katie! Today at eight we drove away from Halle, yet did not get to Eisleben, but returned to Halle again by nine. For a huge female Anabaptist met us with waves of water and great floating pieces of ice; she threatened to baptize us again, and has covered the [whole] countryside.¹² But we are also unable to return because of the Mulde [River] at Bitterfeld,¹³ and are forced to stay captive here at Halle between the waters—not that we are thirsty to drink of them.¹⁴ Instead we take good beer from Torgau and good wine from the Rhine, with which we refresh and comfort ourselves in the meantime, hoping that the rage of the Saale [River] may wear itself out today. For since the ferryman and the people themselves were of little courage [to try to cross], we did not want to go into the water¹⁵ and tempt God. For the devil is angry at us, and he lives in the water.¹⁶ Foresight is better than hindsight, and there is no need for us to prepare a fool’s delight for the pope and his hangers-on,¹⁷ I did not think that the Saale could create such a flood¹⁸ and rumble over the stones¹⁹ and everything in such a way.

No more for now. You people pray for us, and be good. I am sure that, if you were here, you too would have advised us to proceed in this way; [so,] you see, at least once we are following your advice. With this I commend you to God. Amen.

On the day of the conversion of St. Paul,²⁰ when we too turned away from the Saale and returned to Halle.²¹ 1546²²

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

315

To George of Anhalt
Eisleben,¹ January 29, 1546

Luther arrived in Eisleben on January 28. The next day he wrote the following letter to George of Anhalt, confirming the receipt of a letter from him. Luther also tells George that Melanchthon stayed in

Wittenberg because he was sick. Then Luther assures George that he remembers well his promise to visit George, that he cannot keep this promise at the moment, since he is an official guest of the counts of Mansfeld, but that he intends to fulfill it in the spring; he hopes George will understand this. Luther mentions that the Council of Trent has been officially opened, but adds that he has little hope that it will accomplish anything positive.

On George of Anhalt, see p. 280, n. 53.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 11,278.²

To the Most Reverend Father and Lord in Christ, Sir George, most worthy bishop³ of the church⁴ of Merseburg,⁵ most illustrious sovereign of Anhalt, noble count of Ascania, and famous lord of Bernburg,
my Lord to be venerably esteemed

Grace and peace in the Lord! Most Illustrious Sovereign, I have received Your Lordship's letter⁶ addressed to Master⁷ Philip⁸ and me. Because of illness, Master Philip has stayed at home.⁹ Only I am here, along with Doctor Justus Jonas.¹⁰ I remember well the promise I made and have not yet fulfilled,¹¹ but carriage and horsemen are not at my disposal. The counts of Mansfeld have summoned and conducted me [to this town] with many horsemen¹² with whom I have to travel using a route they themselves¹³ determined. Yet I shall do all in my power to fulfill my promise sometime this coming spring. For I hope that then everything will be safer. Therefore in the meantime I ask Your Highness to accept this delay with good grace.

I have no news, for I assume that Your Highness has heard that the council has been opened (as they call it) by the Pope; that is, it has begun.¹⁴ But the middle will be slow [in coming], and the end will be nothing,¹⁵ [except] that the Roman Sirens¹⁶ will vex the people, as is the custom, style, nature, and age-old wickedness in that Babylon.¹⁷ May the Lord arise¹⁸ and scatter his enemies.¹⁹ Amen. Amen. Amen. In him farewell to Your Highness, to whom I commend myself with devout prayer.

From Eisleben, January 29, 1546

Your Highness' dedicated

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

316

To Mrs. Martin Luther [Eisleben,]¹ February 1, 1546

In Luther's last years he became even more firmly set against those who he felt were enemies of Christ; these included not only the enthusiasts and the papists, but also—on the basis of their religion—the Jews.² In the following letter Luther informs his wife that on the journey to Eisleben he had become dizzy, that this had been due to his own carelessness, but that she would probably have said it was the fault of the Jews. He mentions that he passed through a village in which “many” Jews are living, that more than fifty Jews are living in Eisleben, that Count Albrecht has outlawed them, and that he would have to deal with this problem. Luther assures his wife that he is well again and that the beer of Naumburg agrees with him and even provides him with a laxative. He also tells his wife that their sons have gone to Mansfeld. Luther closes by extending greetings to the whole house.

Text in German: WA, Br 11, 275–276.³

To my dearly beloved mistress of the house, Catherine Luther,⁴ a doctor, the lady of Zölsdorf [and] of the pig market,⁵ and whatever else she is capable of being
Before all else, grace and peace in Christ, and my old, poor, and, as Your Grace knows, powerless love. Dear Katie. Yes, on the way, shortly before Eisleben, I became dizzy.⁶ That was my fault. Had you been here, however, you would have said that it was the fault of the Jews or their god. For shortly before Eisleben we had to travel through a village⁷ in which many Jews are living, [and] perhaps they have attacked me so painfully.⁸ At this time over fifty Jews reside here in the city of Eisleben.⁹ It is true that when I passed by the village such a cold wind blew from behind into the carriage and on my head through the beret, [that it seemed] as if it intended to turn my brain to ice. This might have helped me somewhat to become dizzy. But thank God now I am well, except for the fact that beautiful women tempt me so much that I neither care nor worry about becoming unchaste.¹⁰

After the main issues¹¹ have been settled, I have to start expelling the Jews.¹² Count Albrecht¹³ is hostile to them and has already outlawed them.¹⁴ But no one harms them as yet. If God grants it I shall aid Count Albrecht from the pulpit, and outlaw them too.¹⁵

I am drinking beer from Naumburg which tastes to me almost like the beer from Mansfeld which you praised to me. It agrees with me well and gives me about three bowel movements in three hours in the morning. The day before yesterday your little sons¹⁶ drove to Mansfeld because John of Jena¹⁷ so humbly begged them to do so. I do not know what they are doing there. If it were cold they could join the people who are freezing; however, since it is warm they certainly could do or endure anything else, as they are pleased.

With this I commend you and the whole house to God; give my greetings to all the table companions.
February 1, 1546

Your loving

MARTIN LUTHER, who has grown old¹⁸

317

To Philip Melanchthon Eisleben,¹ February 1, 1546

Luther thanks Melanchthon for his prayers and urges him to continue them. He points out that he himself is old now and ought to be retired. But notwithstanding his age, Luther continues, he is now being drawn into a struggle, and he wishes Melanchthon could be with him, were this not harmful to the health of his friend. Then Luther informs Melanchthon about recent developments: "Today" the most difficult issue in the controversy among the counts of Mansfeld has been settled; from now on the battle should be less severe, though Luther does expect that Wolf Pucher, a wealthy citizen and official of Eisleben, might still cause problems; he admits that with his criticism of legal sophistry he himself has deeply offended one of the jurists; on his journey to Eisleben he had been ill because he carelessly overexerted himself. Throughout the letter Luther asks repeatedly for Melanchthon's prayers. He closes with greetings to his co-workers in Wittenburg and thanks them for their prayers.

On Philip Melanchthon, see LW, 48, 77, n. 3.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 11,277–278.²

To the man of outstanding learning, Mr. Philip Melanchthon, Master [of Arts],³ theologian and servant of God, my dearest brother in the Lord

Grace and peace in the Lord! I do thank you,⁴ my Philip, for your prayers for me, and I ask you to continue to pray. You know that I am an old man, and a man who ought to be retired.⁵ [But] now I am being drawn into a struggle⁶ which is troublesome to my studies, totally incompatible with my disposition, and quite bothersome to my old age; consequently I certainly wish you were here, were it not that consideration for your health forces me instead to think it is good that we left you at home.⁷ With God's help we have slain today the most bristly of all porcupines, the case concerning Newtown⁸—though not without a great fight. We hope that finally the battles will be less pitched if it pleases God.

I have deeply offended Doctor Melchior⁹ (as I see) since I really growled at the rigidity or bristles of the law—even though he himself had offended me first by the tremendously rude loudmouthedness¹⁰ with which, even prior to the battle, he bragged about gloriously exaggerated victories. The jurists¹¹ are fooling themselves with their little bits of knowledge of the law, while in my opinion they all together have not the slightest idea of the usage of the law. Like hired pettifoggers they behave without any honor; they care nothing about peace, the commonweal, or religion. As usual, however, these are the things we are concerned about.

During the trip¹² both a loss of consciousness¹³ and that illness which you usually call *humor ventriculi*¹⁴ caught me. For I went on foot, but this was beyond my strength, so that I perspired. Afterwards in the carriage when my shirt also had gotten cold from the sweat, the cold grabbed a muscle in my left arm. From this came that tightness of the heart and something like shortness of breath.¹⁵ It is my own stupid fault. But now I am quite well again; how long—well that, of course, I do not know, since one cannot trust old age, in view of the fact that youth ...¹⁶

Thus far God has at least granted that all the counts,¹⁷ together and individually toward one another, are demonstrating extraordinary good will. Pray that God may continue and increase this. Now that we have defeated Enceladus and Typhoeus¹⁸ we shall tomorrow pursue the remaining [monsters], among whom we suspect that Pucher will give us something to do.¹⁹ But God lives, and he is to retain the victory.²⁰ Amen.

Farewell in the Lord, my Philip, and greet all—especially the Doctor Pastor²¹ [and] Doctor Cruciger²²—for whose prayers we are thankful, surely trusting that God will hear them.²³

Eisleben, February 1, 1546

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

318

To Philip Melanchthon [Eisleben,]¹ February 3, 1546

Luther tells Melanchthon that, contrary to statements made in the letter of February 1, the most important issue in the controversy among the counts of Mansfeld has not yet been settled. He thinks that an ill fate is harassing the Grafschaft, that the devil has a hand in all this, and that the ruin of the Grafschaft might be followed by the ruin of Germany. Then Luther tells of a fire he had in the chimney of his quarters, and asks Melanchthon to see to it that this event does not give rise to any rumors. He informs Melanchthon that Justus Jonas will write the news concerning political developments and, in closing, asks for Melanchthon's prayer that he might soon return home.

On Philip Melanchthon, see LW 48, 77, n. 3.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 11,279–280.²

To the distinguished man, Mr. Philip Melanchthon, a faithful servant of Christ, my dearest brother Grace and peace in the Lord. I wrote to you the day before yesterday, my Philip, that we had slain the porcupine.³ But this was really rejoicing before the victory,⁴ [for] this territory is indeed harassed by a certain ill fate, whoever might be to blame. I fear that the ruin of Germany also will follow, once this territory has passed away. Until now I have played the role of the sick goat,⁵ almost in despair concerning the successful outcome of this tragedy or comedy. Satan lets loose all his forces. Thus far we have resisted him by prayer. Yesterday after my sermon⁶ the chimney of my quarters was set on fire,⁷ no doubt by Satan himself who has very much frightened my poor hosts.⁸ I suspect Satan of ridiculing our efforts, or of threatening [us with] something else. You see to it that no one interprets this event as being worse [than it really is], and that the rumormongers at Leipzig⁹ do not blow it out of proportion and spread rumors they themselves have invented. Doctor Jonas¹⁰ will write you about the news we recently received concerning the Emperor and the Pope, and their war plans.¹¹

Pray for me that the Lord may bring me back [home] before I am killed by these battles of the wills!¹² Farewell in the Lord!

February 3, 1546

Yours,

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

319

To Philip Melanchthon [Eisleben,]¹ February 6, 1546

Luther informs Melanchthon about the lack of progress in the negotiations among the counts of Mansfeld,² and asks that Melanchthon and Brück try to see to it that Elector John Frederick recall him. Luther hopes to use such an order as a means of pressuring the parties into coming to terms, “for I feel they could not tolerate my departure without the affair having been settled.” Luther also mentions that he now sees a possible way of reaching an agreement, and that some progress is being made in the affairs of Newtown. He blames the slowness in the negotiations on the jurists, the “plagues of the human race,” and their “ambiguities, sophistries, and chicaneries,” which are poisoning the climate of the negotiations and which make clear that some of the people partaking in the negotiations lack good will and faith.

On Philip Melanchthon, see LW 48, 77, n. 3.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 11,285–286.³

To the most distinguished man, Mr. Philip Melanchthon, a faithful servant of God, my dearest brother Grace and peace! We are sitting and lying around here, idle and busy, my Philip; idle, because we accomplish nothing, busy because we are enduring endless torture since Satan harasses us with his wickedness. Among so many ways we finally found one which showed hope; [but] Satan blocked that one again. Then we turned into another way where we thought that all problems were already settled; [but] Satan blocked that one too. Now we have picked a third route which looks as if it is absolutely safe and as if it cannot fail; but the end of the road will show the result.⁴

I would like—and I am asking you for this—you and Doctor Brück⁵ to negotiate with the Sovereign⁶ so that he will call me home with a letter for some necessary business; perhaps in this way I can force them⁷ to speed up the settlement. For I feel that they could not tolerate my departure without the affair having been settled. Therefore I shall give them this one week, and thereafter I intend to threaten them with [this] letter of the sovereign.

Today is about the tenth day⁸ that we have started to regulate [the affairs of] Newtown⁹ properly. I think it was much easier to establish Newtown than it is for us to regulate its affairs. Mistrust on both sides is so great that they suspect poison is being served to them in each syllable. You may say this [whole business] is a word-war or a word-insanity, a pleasure one owes to the jurists,¹⁰ They have taught the whole world so many ambiguities, sophistries, and chicaneries—and are still doing so—that [their] jargon is certainly more confusing than all the tongues of Babylon. For as no one there was able to understand the other,¹¹ so here no one is willing to understand the other. Woe to those parasites, woe to those sophists, those plagues of the human race. I am writing in anger; I do not know whether I would speak more appropriately if I were more composed. But the wrath of God looks at our sins. The Lord will judge his people, but may he have more compassion on his servants.¹² If this is the art of the jurists, then there is no reason for jurists to be as proud as they all are.¹³ Isaiah 3 [1:] declares: “The Lord is taking away from Judah and Jerusalem the man,” etc.

Farewell, and pray for me!

February 6, 1546

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

320

To Mrs. Martin Luther
[Eisleben,]¹ February 6, 1546

In this hastily written note Luther informs his wife that he will not be able to come home for the next eight days, that their sons are still in Mansfeld, and that he himself could have a good time in Eisleben were it not for the negotiations among the counts. This affair both disgusts and tortures him, says Luther, but pastoral considerations compel him to stay. He also suggests that his wife tell Melanchthon to correct the interpretation of Luke 8:14 in the Postil.

Text in German: WA, Br 11,284.²

To the highly-learned woman, Catherine Lütther,³ my gracious mistress at the house at Wittenberg Grace and peace! Dear Katie! We are sitting here allowing ourselves to be tortured. Though we want to leave, it will not be possible for us to do so for eight days (as it looks to me).⁴ You might tell Master⁵ Philip⁶ to correct his *Postil*, for he has not understood why in the gospel the Lord calls riches “thorns.”⁷ Here⁸ is the school where one learns to understand this. But I am horrified that everywhere in Scripture the thorns are threatened with fire.⁹ Therefore I am even more patient that with God’s help I might accomplish something worthwhile. Your little sons are still at Mansteld.¹⁰ Except [for this, nothing is new]; we have enough to eat and drink,¹¹ and could have a good time, were it not for this disgusting business. It looks to me as if the devil mocks us; may God mock him in return.¹² Amen. Pray for us. The messenger was in a great hurry.

February 6, 1546

MARTIN LUTHER DOCTOR

321

To Mrs. Martin Luther

[Eisleben,]¹ February 7, 1546

Luther, realizing his wife is worried about him, tries to give her some comfort by urging her to read the writings of St. Iorn and the Small Catechism. He tells her to stop worrying about him since he has Jesus Christ, who can care for him better than she and all the angels. Then Luther muses about the situation in which he finds himself: All the devils seem to have congregated at Eisleben; many Jews are living in Eisleben and Rissdorf, and though they have been outlawed, no one does any harm to them; “today” Luther voiced his opinion on the Jews bluntly; he was angry enough that he almost left for home today; he has become a jurist, and intends to attack vigorously the haughtiness that the jurists demonstrate in the present negotiations; though busy (so that he is unable to write to Melanchthon, a fact which Luther hopes Melanchthon will take in good spirit), Luther is living well, and the beer and wine agree with him (though he thinks that the beer from Naumburg congests his chest). In closing Luther assures his wife that all her letters, and those of Melanchthon, have reached him.

Text in German: WA, Br 11, 286–287.²

To my dear mistress of the house, Catherine Ludher, a doctor, the lady of the pig market³ at Wittenberg—
placed into the hands of, and at the feet of, my gracious lady⁴

Grace and peace in the Lord! You, dear Katie, read John⁵ and the *Small*⁶ *Catechism*, about which you once said: Everything in this book has been said about me. For you prefer to worry about me instead of letting God worry, as if he were not almighty and could not create ten Doctor Martins, should⁷ the old one⁸ drown in the Saale,⁹ or burn in the oven,¹⁰ or perish in Wolfgang’s bird trap.¹¹ Free me from your worries. I have a caretaker who is better than you and all the angels; he lies in the cradle and rests on a virgin’s bosom, and yet, nevertheless, he sits at the right hand of God, the almighty Father. Therefore be at peace. Amen.

I think that hell and the whole world must now be empty of all devils, who, perhaps for my sake, have congregated here at Eisleben, so hard has this affair¹² run aground. There are also Jews here, about fifty in one house,¹³ as I have written to you previously.¹⁴ Now it is said that in Rissdorf—close to Eisleben, where I became ill during my journey¹⁵—there are supposedly about four hundred Jews living and working.¹⁶ Count Albrecht, who owns all the area around Eisleben, has declared that the Jews who are caught on his property are outlaws.¹⁷ But as yet no one wants to do them any harm. The Countess of Mansfeld, the widow of Solms,¹⁸ is considered to be the protector of the Jews. I do not know whether this is true. Today I made my opinion known in a sufficiently blunt way if anyone wishes to pay attention to it.¹⁹ Otherwise it might not do any good at all. You people pray, pray, pray, and help us that we do all things properly, for today in my anger I had made up my mind to grease the carriage. But the misery of my fatherland, which came to my mind, has stopped me.²⁰

I have also now become a jurist,²¹ but this will not be to their²² advantage. It would have been better had they let me remain a theologian, for if I meddle with them, should I live, I will turn out to be a goblin who by God’s grace will attack vigorously²³ their haughtiness. They behave as if they were God; certainly they had better abandon this attitude soon, before their god turns into a demon,²⁴ as happened to Lucifer, who because of his haughtiness simply was unable to remain in heaven. Well, God’s will be done.

Please let Master²⁵ Philip²⁶ read this letter, for I have no time to write to him. [Instead I wrote to you, however,] so that you could comfort yourself with the knowledge that I would love you if I could, as you know, and as Melanchthon perhaps also knows as far as his wife is concerned, and as he well understands.

We are living well here; for each meal the city council gives me one half *Stübig*²⁷ of Italian wine²⁸ which is very good.²⁹ Sometimes I drink it with my companions. The native wine is also good, and the beer of Naumburg is very good, except I think that because of its pitch³⁰ it congests my chest. In all the world the devil has spoiled the beer for us with pitch, and among you people [he has spoiled] the wine with sulphur.³¹ But here the wine is pure, if one disregards the particular quality of the native wine.

So that you do not get confused, you should know that all the letters³² you had written have arrived here; today those have arrived which you wrote last Friday³³ and sent along with Master Philip’s letters.³⁴

February 7, 1546

Your loving³⁵

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

To Mrs. Martin Luther [Eisleben,]¹ February 10, 1546

Luther writes with both gravity and humor in this letter. He thanks his wife for her great concern on his behalf and tells her that her worries have almost resulted in his death. Since she has begun to worry he has almost been burned to death and struck by a large stone that could have squashed him, had the angels not protected him! Citing Psalm 55:22, Luther admonishes his wife to put into practice what she has learned from the Catechism. Then Luther informs his wife that he is healthy, that Jonas had a slight accident, and that he is eager to come home, if this be God's will.

Text in German: WA, Br 11, 291.²

To the holy lady, full of worries, Mrs. Catherine Luther, doctor, the lady of Zölsdorf,³ at Wittenberg, my gracious, dear mistress of the house

Grace and peace in Christ! Most holy Mrs. Doctor! I thank you very kindly for your great worry which robs you of sleep.⁴ Since the date that you [started to] worry about me, the fire in my quarters, right outside the door of my room, tried to devour me;⁵ and yesterday, no doubt because of the strength of your worries, a stone almost fell on my head and nearly squashed me as in a mouse trap. For in our secret chamber⁶ mortar has been falling down for about two days;⁷ we called in some people who [merely] touched the stone with two fingers and it fell down. The stone was as big as a long pillow and as wide as a large hand; it intended to repay you for your holy worries, had the dear angels not protected [me]. [Now] I worry that if you do not stop worrying the earth will finally swallow us up and all the elements⁸ will chase us. Is this the way you learned the *Catechism* and the faith?⁹ Pray, and let God worry. You have certainly not been commanded to worry about me or about yourself.¹⁰ "Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you," as is written in Psalm 55[:22] and many more passages.

We are chipper and healthy, praise be to God, except that the affair¹¹ is disgusting to us and that Jonas¹² would also like to have a bad calf;¹³ and so he accidentally bumped into a chest. So great is human envy that he did not want me to have a bad calf all by myself.¹⁴

With this I commend you to God. We would gladly be free [of the matter] now¹⁵ and drive home, if God would will it. Amen.

February 10, 1546

Your Holiness' willing servant,

MARTIN LUTHER

EXCURSUS

Luther's statement in his letter of February 10 (No. 322) that his wife worried so much that she was unable to sleep suggests that Luther had in hand a letter in which his wife made a statement to this effect. This was the latest in a series of letters sent by Katie to her husband, letters which reflected Katie's increasing fears over the welfare of her husband. Luther had left Wittenberg in the midst of a bitterly cold winter; see WA, Br 11, 277, n. 12. Then a sudden thaw occurred; p. 292. Rumors about the breakup of the ice and the flooding of the Mulde and Saale rivers, which Luther had to cross, reached Katie and she started to worry about her husband. Luther's letter of January 25 (No. 314) arrived in Wittenberg on or shortly prior to January 31 (see p. 287, n. 22); in it the rumors about the breakup of the ice and flooding were confirmed, but more importantly, Katie was assured that her husband and her sons were in good condition, and that her husband had been sensible enough to wait out the bad weather in Halle. In the meantime, not at all at ease, Katie had apparently written to her husband in Eisleben (see p. 290, n. 6) asking him how he was, and pleading with him to take care of himself. Perhaps Melancthon, too, wrote a similar letter (see p. 295, n. 22). By February 1 Luther had these letters in hand, and on that day he answered both Katie and Melancthon (Nos. 316, 317). Quite matter-of-factly he informed his wife and Melancthon of his illness; but he also assured them that he was now totally well again. Thus Luther apparently thought that he had dissolved his wife's fears, and in the following letters (Nos. 318, 319, 320) Luther concentrated on day-by-day affairs. When the February 1 letters arrived in Wittenberg cannot be established. But the news about the cold wind which made Luther's brain turn almost to ice (see p. 291) did not put the Wittenbergers at ease, notwithstanding Luther's assurance that he was now well. Thus the

letter which Melanchthon supposedly wrote on February 5 (see p. 304, n. 34) reflected some worry over Luther's health in view of the climate; WA, Br 11, 281. Simultaneously Katie wrote several times to Luther voicing her anxieties (see p. 302) which were heightened when she received Luther's February 1 letter telling her of his illness. How many letters Katie sent cannot be established. It is safe to suggest that Katie sent some medicine with one of these letters (see Strieder, p. 1). Katie wrote for the last time on February 5; Luther had all these letters in hand on February 7 and answered them on that day. In his long letter, No. 321, Luther tried to put things in the proper perspective for his wife and comfort her, not realizing that in the meantime his wife's worries on his behalf had been substantially increased because she found out that there had been a fire in the chimney of Luther's room. Luther mentioned this incident for the first time in his February 3 letter to Melanchthon. This letter was not in Melanchthon's hands by February 5 when Melanchthon and Katie wrote to Luther. While the argument based on silence is always a dangerous one, it is nevertheless significant that in his February 5(?) letter Melanchthon did not mention this incident; he dealt only with those threats to Luther's well-being which the Wittenbergera knew about from Luther's January 25 (No. 314) and February 1 (Nos. 316, 317) letters. That Luther mentioned the fire in his February 7 letter need not have been in response to a possible statement made by Katie about this incident in her February 5 letter; the casual reference to the fire could have been made simply because Luther realized that by the time Katie received this February 7 letter she also would have heard from Melanchthon about the fire. Before this long letter of comfort (No. 321) reached Katie, she wrote another letter in which she confessed her fright for him, saying that she worried so much that she could not sleep. The date on which Katie wrote this letter cannot be established, but it is safe to suggest that she wrote it after she had found out from Melanchthon about the fire incident, i.e., shortly after February 5. In any case, Luther received the letter after he had dispatched his February 7 letter, so that he felt it necessary to write letter No. 322.

323

To George of Anhalt

[Eisleben,]¹ February 10, 1546

Luther returns a document which deals with questions pertaining to matrimonial matters and on which he has briefly noted his opinion; he promises to elaborate further on these problems when he has more time. Luther underscores the fact that something must be done regarding these matters in order to avoid scandals lest conditions similar to those described in Genesis 6:2 develop. He points out that dispensations from the law can cause serious problems for a person's conscience, as can clearly be seen in the case of Henry VIII of England.

On George of Anhalt, see p. 280, n. 53.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 11, 292.²

To the most Reverend Father and Illustrious Sovereign and Lord, Sir George, bishop of the church at Merseburg³ and prior of the church at Magdeburg, sovereign of Anhalt, count of Ascania, lord at Bernburg, most illustrious and famous lord

Grace and peace! Most Reverend Father in Christ and Most Illustrious Sovereign! As briefly as I was able I have noted my opinion in the margin. I am ready to elaborate further on the matter at some other time and when I have more leisure, though in view of Your Highness' very great wisdom further material is not necessary. Certainly one has to meet head-on the scandals into which the thoughtless and wild ones plunge themselves, as if one must live without any laws. Otherwise that which Moses tells us⁴ happened prior to the flood will happen again, namely, that they took for wives whomever they desired,⁵ even sisters, mothers, and those whom they stole from their husbands. I hear that some similar events are definitely occurring in secret. May God prevent them⁶ from ruling in broad daylight, as one has seen in the cases of Herod⁷ and the kings of Egypt,⁸ etc. The King of England was an unhappy husband; his example always should be avoided, for although he was granted a dispensation, in the end his conscience was not calmed by it. People are able to get a bad conscience unnecessarily, even in affairs which are correctly handled, a fact which by itself causes us enough of a problem; doesn't it? More at some other time, God willing; in him farewell to Your Illustrious Highness.

February 10, 1546

Your Illustrious Highness' dedicated

To Mrs. Martin Luther Eisleben,¹ February 14, 1546

Luther informs his wife that he hopes to return this week, that practically all the issues have been settled, and that today he will undertake the personal reconciliation of the counts. There is much joy and laughter among the children of the counts, Luther says, and Countess Anna (who gave some trout to Luther which he is sending on to Katie) rejoices about the accord which has been reached. Luther tells his wife that their sons are still at Mansfeld, that although he is healthy and well taken care of, Jonas' leg is not doing well. Luther also reports some rumors: he supposedly has been "led away," the Emperor is "nearby," the King of France and the Landgrave are hiring mercenaries.

Text in German: WA, Br 11, 300.²

To my kind, dear mistress of the house, Mrs. Catherine Luther³ von Bora, at Wittenberg: *Personal* Grace and peace in the Lord! Dear Katie! We hope to return home again this week,⁴ God willing. Here God has demonstrated great grace, for through their councilors the lords have settled almost everything⁵ except two or three issues, among which is the reconciliation of the two brothers, Count Gebhard and Count Albrecht,⁶ which I am to bring about today. I shall ask them to be my guests so that they may talk with each other. For until now they have been silent, and in [their] writings have shown much bitterness toward each other.⁷ Otherwise the young lords⁸ are happy, and ride around together in sleighs decorated with fools bells,⁹ as do the young ladies; they all visit each other in carnival masks,¹⁰ and are of good cheer, even Count Gebhard's son.¹¹ Therefore one is forced to grasp the fact that God is the "listener to prayers."¹²

I am sending to you the trout which Albrecht's Countess¹³ has presented to me; she rejoices from her heart about the accord.

Your little sons are still at Mansfeld,¹⁴ [and] James¹⁵ will take care of them well. We have plenty¹⁶ to eat and drink, [and live] like lords. We are well cared for, even too well, so that we might easily forget about you people in Wittenberg. Also the stone¹⁷ does not bother me, praise be to God.¹⁸ But Doctor Jonas' leg really turned out to be bad because of the holes in the shin.¹⁹ But God will also help [in this]. You might tell all this to Master²⁰ Philip,²¹ Doctor Pomer,²² and Doctor Cruciger.²³

The rumor has arrived here that Doctor Martin has been led away;²⁴ they are saying the same thing at Leipzig and Magdeburg. It is the wisenheimers, your fellow countrymen, who are dreaming up these stories.²⁵ Some say the Emperor²⁶ is thirty miles²⁷ away from here, near Soest in Westphalia;²⁸ some say that the Frenchman²⁹ is hiring mercenaries and that the Landgrave³⁰ is doing the same. But let them say and sing [what they wish]; we shall wait for what God will do. With this I commend you to God. Amen.

Eisleben, February 14, 1546

MARTIN LUTHER, DOCTOR

To Philip Melanchthon [Eisleben,]¹ February 14, 1546

Luther informs Melanchthon that he has received a letter from Elector John Frederick in which he is being called home; since he is disgusted with the negotiations among the counts of Mansfeld, he will hurry to leave Eisleben. He also asks that some medication be sent to him. Then Luther tells Melanchthon of the death of Pope Paul III, and of a pending meeting between the Archbishop of Cologne and the counts of Mansfeld.

On Philip Melanchthon, see LW 48, 77, n. 3.

Text in Latin: WA, Br 11, 301–302.²

To Philip Melanchthon, a most worthy brother in Christ
Grace and Peace! Today I have received the most welcome letter from the Sovereign³ calling me home, my Philip, and I hurry to leave, since I am sick and tired of this affair.⁴ Notwithstanding this, I am asking

you to see to it that, if I should perhaps already be on the way, a messenger would at least meet me and bring some of that caustic with which my calf is usually kept open.⁵ For the wound which was opened at Wittenberg is almost completely healed, and you know how dangerous this might be.⁶ And they do not have any of this caustic here. My Katie knows where in my room⁷ this kind of caustic is, which is so necessary [for me].

Pope Paul III died on January 3⁸ and has been buried; this was written to us as true news. The [Arch]bishop of Cologne has written a letter to Count Albrecht inviting him to Nordhausen for a meeting of counts on March 1, in order to discuss there with them matters which concern them.⁹ For he thinks that the counts will be excluded from the diocese of Cologne by N.N.¹⁰ Other things shortly in person, God willing, for I want to tear myself away [from here].

Farewell in the Lord!

February 14, 1546

YOURS, MARTIN LUTHER

EPILOGUE

On February 14 Luther wrote two letters to Wittenberg, one to his wife (No. 324), and one to Melanchthon (No. 325). In Enders, *Briefwechsel*, and in WA, Br 11, the letter to Luther's wife precedes the one to Melanchthon; this fact suggests that Luther wrote first to his wife and then to Melanchthon. Internal criteria tend to substantiate this suggestion. Luther reported to his wife details about the situation pertaining to the negotiations among the counts of Mansfeld and informed her that he expected to come home "this week," i.e., any time between February 14 and 20; see p. 311. He also told her that she could inform Melanchthon and others accordingly. There was, then, no need for a letter to Melanchthon, unless after the letter to Katie had been sealed, and perhaps also dispatched, "new business" arose. This was exactly the case when Luther received the Elector's letter, a fact about which Melanchthon had to be informed since he had been asked to procure this letter (see pp. 298, 314), and when Luther remembered that he needed the medication. Luther could and should have asked his wife for this medication; he obviously had forgotten to do so. It seems, then, that the letter to Melanchthon was indeed an afterthought. To corroborate this suggestion, one could ask if Luther would not have informed Melanchthon about the successful developments in the negotiations, had he written first to Melanchthon. On the other hand, St. L. 21b and de Wette (*Dr. Martin Luthers Briefe* 5 [Berlin, 1828]) place the letter to Melanchthon before the letter to Katie; this would suggest that Luther wrote first to Melanchthon, and then to his wife, a suggestion which is somewhat romantic since thus Luther's last extant letter would be addressed to his wife. The letters do provide some basis also for such a sequence. Luther said to Melanchthon that he would hurry to leave Eisleben, that he wanted to tear himself away from there, and that he was sick and tired of the affair; see pp. 314, 315. Would Luther have spoken in this way if he already knew that almost everything had been settled? (See p. 311). One is tempted to answer negatively. But then one would be forced to demonstrate (a) that on February 14 a breakthrough in the negotiations did indeed occur; and (b) the role the Elector's letter did or did not play in this breakthrough. The breakthrough would have had to be so sudden that between the time of writing the letter to Melanchthon and the one to Katie all those things occurred of which Luther spoke in the first paragraph of his letter to Katie. This is, of course, possible—but is it probable? As long as no exact record of the negotiations is available, so that one would be in a position to say that on February 14 a breakthrough in the negotiations occurred, it is dangerous to toy with the idea (as does K. Aland, *Luther Deutsch* 10 [Stuttgart, 1959], 394) that the arrival of the Elector's letter influenced the negotiations in such a way that Luther (perhaps in the afternoon of February 14) could quite precisely tell his wife that he expected to be home "this week," after he had told Melanchthon (perhaps in the morning of February 14) that the Elector's letter had (just) arrived and then quite vaguely added that he, Luther, would hurry to leave Eisleben. On the basis of the presently available material the sequence of the February 14 letters cannot be precisely established. Since the tone of the letter to Melanchthon leaves one with the feeling that this letter was an afterthought the sequence of letters established in Enders and WA, Br has been retained.

The letters of February 14 are the last extant letters Luther wrote. They are a part of the very last materials extant from Luther's pen. While Luther was away from Wittenberg he preached, to our knowledge, five times: once in Halle on January 26, and then four times in Eisleben (January 31, February 2, 7, and 14 or 15, though February 15 seems to be the more probable date). It can no longer be

established who recorded these sermons (except in the case of the January 26 sermon) but they were printed in 1546, soon after Luther's death. See WA 51, xii, xiv ff., 135 ff.; LW 51, 381 ff. These posthumous editions of Luther's sermons are of secondary value compared with the other material extant from these days, since it can no longer be determined whether and to what degree the editors used editorial license in their work. Similar care would have to be taken with the dedicatory sentences or paragraphs which Luther inscribed in books during these days. They have been preserved for posterity in the 1547 editions by John Aurifaber and by George Rörer, as well as in a manuscript written by Rörer. In some cases the text and date of these dedications can be exactly verified, in other cases questions remain which cannot be answered. See Enders, *Briefwechsel* 14, No. 3086, Introduction; 17, No. 3628; WA 48, ix–297, and WA, *RN to loc. cit.*

Of more primary value is the material that is extant from Luther's own pen, or at least in reliable copies.

Luther took along to Eisleben an unfinished manuscript of a work "against the asses of Paris and Louvain." He had started this work in September of 1545 (see p. 261), but in view of his involvement with the counts of Mansfeld and his declining health, he did not get far; and so he started over again in January of 1546. While in Eisleben, he supposedly kept the manuscript in the chest into which Jonas accidentally bumped (see p. 306), and he continued to work on it. He did not finish the manuscript, however, and the portion of it which he had completed disappeared; it was finally discovered in the nineteenth century, and is published in WA 54, 447 ff. See WA, Br 11, 177, 264, 265 f.; Strieder, pp. 34 f.

While in Eisleben, Luther planned to write something against the Jews (see p. 291). This plan was apparently not carried out, unless one wishes to see in the *Admonition* (see p. 303, n. 19) the result of this plan.

Some time during his stay in Eisleben Luther and Jonas drafted a brief on the ecclesiastical situation of the old and new town of Eisleben, esp. the various institutions, their relationships to one another, and the duties and privileges of the counts, the clergy, and the teachers. This was one of the sore areas in the relationship among the counts of Mansfeld, and in this brief Luther and Jonas made precise suggestions for a settlement of the problems. This brief became a part of the first document (WA, Br 12, No. 4300) in which the quarrels among the counts were settled. Luther had written this document, and he and Jonas signed it on February 16. On the same day also the very last of Luther's extant written statements was put on paper. This is a short paragraph which deals with the understanding of Holy Scripture, and in which the last line reads: "We are beggars. That is true." See LW 54, 476. (For this translation one should also see the text provided by Aurifaber [he stated that he had copied directly from the autograph; WA, TR 5, No. 5468], and the material provided in WA 48, 241 and WA, *RN to loc. cit.*)

By February 16 Luther's strength was at an end. During his last sermon, he had suffered an attack of dizziness so that he had to end the sermon prematurely; see WA 51, 194; LW 51, 392. He pulled himself together for the negotiations on February 16, which must have exhausted him, for his friends urged him not to attend the session on February 17 (see Strieder, pp. 1, 7, 13, 26); on that day the long, second document (WA, Br 12, No. 4301) was finally adopted in which the many details which had been controversial among the counts were settled. In contrast to the document of February 16, this document of February 17 was formulated without Luther's assistance, though it is sealed with Luther's seal. Whether the Reformer personally signed the document could not be established.

With the letters of February 14, and the document and the short paragraph on the understanding of Scripture, both of February 16, Luther's own literary productivity ended. On February 17 (for the following, see the references cited on p. 285, n. 5) Luther's health fluctuated, with a steady downward tendency, and in the early morning hours of February 18, between two and three o'clock, Luther passed away. He was in pain physically, but contrary to all the wild stories which soon circulated, he was mentally alert, spiritually composed, and steadfastly confessing the faith he had come to embrace. Funeral services were held in Eisleben, and even though the counts of Mansfeld tried hard to have Luther's remains buried in Eisleben, Elector John Frederick insisted that the remains be interred in Wittenberg (WA 54, 493). The funeral procession reached Wittenberg in the morning of February 22 and proceeded to the Castle Church. After Bugenhagen's sermon and Melancthon's eulogy, interment took place near the pulpit, where, again contrary to all the wild stories, Luther's earthly remains have rested throughout the

centuries, “sown in dishonor in order to be raised on that day in eternal glory,” as Jonas and Coelius, quoting I Cor. 15:43, state in the “official” report of the events (WA 54, 496).

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