

LUTHER AS AN EDUCATOR

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By

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PREFACE

Martin Luther is not universally recognized today as an educator of renown. A sympathetic world reveres him as the great religious Reformer of the sixteenth century, unmindful oftimes of his influence as an educational Reformer. This study, though in no wise exhaustive, is an attempt to evaluate Luther's work in the field of education and confirm the eminent position he justly holds among the educators of the world.

Though written four-hundred years ago, Luther's educational treatises are fresh and vital to this day. The influence they bear upon modern educational standards is little short of astounding. One will not do amiss, therefore, to re-study Luther's educational theories in the light of modern progress.

I should be ungrateful, indeed, should I fail to acknowledge my indebtedness to prominent educators and historians who have so ably "plowed this field" before I set my hand to it. It is my desire to express my sincere appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Glenn B. Hawkins, whose undeserved friendship, scholarly influence, ready assistance, and unflinching encouragement was the sole inspiration for this my work. To the College librarian officials, for their interest and help, my thanks. For the use of Luther's works in the original language I am gratefully indebted to the Rev. Edward Hauer of Perry, Oklahoma. While I have

given the translations of Luther as found in the Holman edition and Harvard Classic series as references in the footnotes, almost invariably they were collated with copies of the originals as found in the St. Louis edition of Luther's collected works.

If the author appears to idolize Luther, or at times paints him in too glowing a color, he begs the reader's forbearance. Any apparent over-statement is the result of his deep admiration for and full harmony with the religious principles of this truly great man.

For signs of immaturity in the completed work I alone am responsible. The writing of a truly scholarly thesis on this fascinating subject must be left to hands more able than mine.

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CHAPTER I

MARTIN LUTHER

Biographical Sketch

November the 10th is an occasion of commemoration and thanksgiving throughout the Lutheran Church, for it was on that day, in 1483, that Martin Luther first saw the light of day in the little town of Eisleben, Prussian Saxony. Though humble and poor, his parents were honorable and self-respecting, and imbued with that German characteristic, thriftiness. Devout in their Catholic faith, they placed a high value upon an early religious training and did not spare the rod in their disciplinary measures at home. As a promising youth of 15 years Luther was sent away to school at Eisenach. As was the custom with indigent students of the times, young Luther, in company with other students, sang before the doors of the town's wealthier citizens. A pious and interested matron, Frau Cotta by name, favored the boy and provided him with room and board for the remainder of his three year's stay in Eisenach. His preparatory education completed, Luther, because his father was now in a better financial condition, matriculated at the then famous university of Erfurt to prepare himself for the

legal profession. He won his bachelor's degree in 1502 and was created a master of arts (probably equal to our present-day doctor's degree) in 1505. It was in the university library at Erfurt that he first discovered and read the Bible (Vulgate). In May, 1505 he took up the study of law, but forsook it, contrary to his father's will, and entered the Augustinian convent at Erfurt in July of the same year.

In the loneliness of the cloister cell the full realization of his sins came upon him, and his total inability to merit the justice of God by the performance of good works gradually grew more evident. Never had a monastery seen a more devout inmate nor yet one so deeply concerned about his soul's salvation in view of universal sin. Luther at this time, good Catholic that he was, knew not the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and therefore sought peace with his Maker in the abomination of work-righteousness. He well-nigh ruined his health in the convent in his hopeless attempt to do penance for sin.

In 1507 Luther was ordained a priest and in the following year the Duke of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, summoned him to a professor's chair at the newly-founded university of Wittenberg. He held this position until his death in 1546. Though called to teach the pagan philosophy of Aristotle, Luther soon exchanged this for the Scriptures. He earned the degree of bachelor of divinity in 1509 and in

1512, after diligent study, was created doctor of divinity. The monotony of teaching and studying was broken during the winter of 1510-1511 by a trip to Rome in the interest of his monastic order. His experience in the Eternal City proved invaluable to him later on in the pursuance of his work of reformation.

The latest research fixes the time of Luther's conversion--that is, the time when he came to a full realization of the doctrine of justification by faith alone--at about 1513, in his cell at the Wittenberg convent. His lectures in the classroom indicate how he gradually but surely became convinced of this teaching which proved to be the "material principle" of the entire Reformation. Blinded by a thousand years of papal fraud, Luther but slowly had his eyes opened and saw how this teaching forms the fundamental doctrine of all Scripture and runs through it, from Genesis to Revelation, like a golden thread. It alone can and does give life and hope to a perishing, sinful world, and it, in turn, was the chief weapon wherewith Luther assailed the papacy and all its institutions.

The actual work of the Reformation, however, was not to begin until 1517, when, aroused by the sale of indulgences by John Tetzel in a neighboring province, Luther posted 95 theses on the Castle Church door at Wittenberg on the 31st day of October, commonly called the birthday of the Reformation. Almost over night, and as a complete surprise to Luther, these theses spread to the far parts of the

Catholic world, and instead of scholars only, most every one began discussing them. The Reformation had begun!

Though at first the pope had pronounced the disturbance in Germany as a mere "monkish squabble", he later sent his legate Cajetan, for the purpose of consultation, and when he failed, Miltitz to confer with that "German beast", Luther. No reconciliation being found possible, particularly in view of the tremendous popularity Luther had already found among his countrymen, he disregarded the threats and bribes of the papal see, and entered into a lengthy debate with John Eck at Leipzig in 1519. This disputation only served to confirm Luther in his conviction of the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures as well as of the fallacy and vanity of the papacy. During the following year he composed three of his most memorable writings and employed the printing press for the promulgation of his teachings to the fullest extent. On December 10, 1520 he publicly burned the papal bull which excommunicated him from the Catholic fold and proclaimed his irrevocable renunciation of the authority of the Roman Church.

In the spring of 1521 Luther was summoned by Emperor Charles V to appear before the Diet of Worms. He went in spite of the imminent danger of violent death. Before this world power he was bluntly asked to recant all that he had said or written, but refused to do so unless shown his error from the plain words of Scripture. His memorable stand at Worms before the greatest ecclesiastical and secular power the world had ever seen is rightly called by Carlyle, the

English historian, "the greatest moment in the Modern History of men",¹⁾ while Dr. Seiss fittingly says, there "modern freedom drew its first breath".²⁾

Concealed in the Wartburg castle for almost a year as a measure of protection against the ban of the emperor, Luther accomplished his most useful task, the translation of the New Testament into the German tongue. Back in Wittenberg in 1522, he quickly quelled the confusion caused there by Carlstadt and began the work of reformation with fearless energy. In spite of the Peasants' War of 1525, instigated principally by Thomas Muenzer and his "heavenly prophets",³⁾ his following and influence grew, while at the same time Catholic opposition became more organized and intense. Emboldened by the victories of Charles V, the Catholic Party, at the Diet of Spires in 1529, issued a decree to restore papal authority and worship in all places where it had not been abandoned. This aroused the entire evangelical party who entered a protest against this action and thus received the name Protestant. In 1530 Charles attended his second German Diet in the city of Augsburg, hopeful of restoring unity in the church once more. The Lutherans presented their "Confession", and, though it was not instrumental in effecting unity, the position of the Lutherans was strengthened

1) Thomas Carlyle, Hero and Hero Worship, Boston, 1897, p. 181.

2) W. A. Zundel, Lutheran Influence in American Affairs, Freedom, Pa., 1914, p. 7.

3) Thomas Lindsay, History of the Reformation, New York, 1906, p. 326-330.

by their heroic stand and clearly defined, Biblical teaching. The Augsburg Confession thus became the Magna Charta, not only of Lutheranism, but of modern civil, educational, and religious liberty as well.

Luther's life work was now drawing to a close. His accomplishments after 1530 are only incidental and secondary compared to his gigantic, world-moving tasks since 1517. He completed his translation of the Old Testament in 1534, issued the Smalkald Articles in 1537, and continued to lecture at the university. He lived to see unity effected between the Germans and the Swiss, a strong league of Smalkald formed to defend his cause, and the spread of his reformatory work throughout most of Europe. He died, firmly believing what he had taught, at Eisleben, on the 18th of February, 1546, honored by the millions who followed him and hated by his foes who revered the pope. Dr. Bugenhagen preached the funeral sermon while Philip Melancthon delivered a Latin oration which was more wept than spoken. He was buried near the pulpit of the Castle Church where he had often preached.

A CHARACTERIZATION

To characterize Luther is no easy task. The man is so great, so imposing, so unusual that words fail to describe him adequately. Not since the days of St. Paul had the world beheld so great a man,--a mind of massive strength and quick comprehension, a heart of fearless bravery, a soul of deep

consecration and earnest devotion to its Maker. Luther is a Titan among great lights on the canvas of the sixteenth century. He is not a mere reformer among others; he is the reformer of the church, and as such, a political and educational reformer as well, for "he freed religion, and by that he freed all things".⁴⁾ Luther is an orator, a preacher, a pastor, a theologian, a professor, and here of the first caliber. He is a literary genius a second like whom the world has not seen. Luther is above all a Christian gentleman whose life, whose talents, whose heart were all consecrated to the service of his God. Well then might Robert Southey cry out, "Blessed be the day of Martin Luther's birth!"⁵⁾

Towering far above the mighty men and gigantic accomplishments of his times stands the Reformer with his Open Bible. He is clearly the central figure of his age about whom all else revolves.⁶⁾ His age is at once the age of the Renaissance, the age of a new birth, of a new interest in life, in truth, in facts, an age of giants in intellect and conviction and power. In such a time as this--of Reformation and Renaissance--all things political, educational, social, and religious were made to cooperate so as to effect a change such as the world had never seen. Men of great learning now arose who were to delve into the hitherto unknown mysteries

4) W. H. T. Dau, Four Hundred Years, St. Louis, 1917, p. 296.

5) William Dallmann, Martin Luther, St. Louis, 1917, p. 1.

6) The world famous painting of William Kaulbach "The Reformation" showing Luther in the midst of all 16th century luminaries holding aloft the Open Bible well portrays this truth.

of useful arts and sciences. The classical languages were given a renewed emphasis and studied assiduously by the Humanists. The invention of printing, the discovery of unknown shores, as well as the political, social, and religious unrest of the times were all designed to assist in that one supreme need, the preaching of the Open Bible. The Renaissance with its new interest in life and freedom, Humanism with its revival of learning and literature, together with the general enlightenment of the times, these all were to become the hand-maidens of the Reformation, of the Gospel, lending a helping hand to cast off once and forever the ghastly arms of the Roman octopus which had strangled the civilized world for nearly one thousand years!

Over and above all, however, there was to be "a man from God", a second Moses, called to free his people Israel from the bondage of the papacy, and hold high above all the torch light of the truth, of freedom, of the everlasting Gospel, causing it to shine like a beacon light into the Egyptian darkness that hovered over every kindred, and tongue, and people of the Mediaeval world.

The life of Luther is at once a history of the Reformation. His life and work are inseparable from the great Protestant movement of the sixteenth century. Other reformers arose in his day either to abet or hinder the Protestant cause, but none so great as to shape and mold the form of that new day as was done by that master sculptor, Martin Luther. Melanchthon and Zwingli, Calvin and Knox took

positions of leadership in their respective fields; but Luther towers above them like a mighty, magnificent mountain peak above the landscape. He outshines them like the rising sun the morning stars. Other reformers saw their work advance swiftly and hit its mark well, but only after Luther had "cleared away the forests and removed the stumps". He blazed the trail, he cleared the road of the jungles of Mediaeval popery. It was Luther who first successfully broke the power of Rome; it was Luther who first shook the man-made framework of the papacy to its very foundation; it was Luther, indeed, who first challenged the authority of the church councils, church tradition, and the pope himself, and heroically laid siege, almost single-handed, against the entrenched hosts of the most invincible power the world has ever seen-- the Mediaeval Church! This done, and done thoroughly, the way lay open for others to tread in his footsteps. Without his bold stand at Worms against the marshalled might of church and state, without his courageous confession at Augsburg, whereby the embattled armies of Popedom were tested and found wanting, not with might of guns and swords, armies and fortifications, but by the simple truth revealed in Scriptures but long since shrouded in darkness, no secondary Reformer could have spoken long without paying the price of his head! Without Luther's pioneer work, without his heroism, his overwhelming conviction of the truth revealed from God in the Bible, as well as his enthusiasm for the Gospel, tireless

energy, and unimpeachable piety, without all this, there would be no reforming Melanchthon, no Calvin, no Knox, and even the tasks of Zwingli would soon have fallen into disrepute. These men, able and useful as they were, can in thought be removed from the Reformation without seriously affecting its purpose and description; but "Luther, apart from the Reformation, would cease to be Luther".⁷⁾ He is forever identified with his life's work; in fact, the Reformation is Luther.

Luther was a "German of the Germans". In him the noblest characteristics of his race found expression. He inherited the most useful of his people's traits. His rugged frame, his indomitable spirit, his bravery, his high-seriousness, his thoroughness, and devotion to duty--these all were typically German. He was a man among men with friends in high and low places, for in that rugged countenance there was an expression of kindness. His fearless spirit was softened by a loyal submission to authority. His seriousness and earnestness was balanced by conviviality and social gaiety. And though his sense of duty drove him to his daily tasks almost relentlessly, he did find time to play with his children and took an interest in the beauties of nature about him. Some of the finest pictures of parental home life are the scenes of Luther singing with his children.

⁷⁾ G. F. Fisher, History of the Christian Church, New York, 1887, p. 290.

Here, then, was a true representative of his people, a German prophet. When he spoke, they listened; when his trumpet sounded, they marched!

Luther was a man of the people. He loved to call himself "a peasant's son". His preaching, his writing, his every task was designed to interest the common man. When he preached he spoke plainly and repeated often, so that the servant and child might understand him. He spent many hours in search of popular German words when translating and revising his German Bible, so that the simple folk might read with profit.⁸⁾ Luther never felt at home in the presence of nobility and was ostensibly concerned about his lack of polish before the papal legate Cajetan at Augsburg. Rugged, bold, and frank Luther just could not acquire the grace and comeliness of the Italians. He was a German--more than that, the child of many generations of peasants. He therefore loved the common man. He therefore served the common man. He therefore freed the common man from the thralldom of the Middle Ages.

God frequently accomplishes his tasks through common people. Great men in past history have generally sprung from a lowly origin. Moses and David were shepherds. The apostles were fishermen. Jesus was born in great poverty and followed the carpenter's trade. Luther was a poor miner's son. But when such weak instruments receive the

8) William Dallmann, op. cit., p. 181.

call from heaven, they are no longer weak. Working under the unction of the Holy Spirit, they become men of strength, of experience, of wisdom. Moses stood before Pharaoh and demanded his people's release from bondage; David became Israel's "beloved" king; the apostles filled the world with the new doctrine of Christianity. And as for humble Luther, he became the world's Reformer as well as the greatest benefactor of the modern world.

The foundation of Luther's character was rugged honesty. With him truth was all-important. Dishonesty and lies were to him an abomination. He could not endure duplicity and intrigue. Never did he stoop to the use of flattery, cajolery, or even underhand methods to obtain his end. He was honest to himself and therefore honest to the world. He laid his cards on the table, as it were, and would brook no bribery, however tempting, lest he deny the truth. Through severe struggles of the soul he had been brought to a clear understanding of the Gospel and of the whole plan of salvation. When he arrived at this truth it became fixed in the bottom of his heart. Nothing, not even a cardinal's hat, could dissuade him from it. Though forced into a bitter conflict with the existing church government, though berated by the state and driven unwillingly to attack his spiritual father, the pope, he clung to that precious gem of truth with inflexible honesty in the face of threatened dungeon and stake. With Luther honesty was not only the best, but the only policy.

Luther was a man of preeminent heroic faith. If armor he had, it was the shield of faith. After years of praying, searching, and soul struggle he arrived at the truth, and this truth he believed with his whole heart. He made it his very own. His continued study of the Scriptures and ready acquaintance with its teachings, his ceaseless praying and religious experience, gave him a faith in God, a conviction of the truth which is simply astounding. This faith is revealed in all his writings. It gave him courage and strength during those dark days at Worms and Augsburg. It afforded him a thorough understanding of God and His purpose, and filled him with trust that the work he was driven to perform would meet with success in the end. This faith made of Luther a true child of God who could speak to his Father in a most intimate manner, and pressed onward where others grew pale with fear.

Luther's faith made him brave--the bravest of the brave. No soldier on the field of battle had greater struggles to face.⁹⁾ He was not foolhardy in that he was brave, for his bravery was born of conviction. He knew he was right, and therefore went on. Not once did he stoop to court the favor of Rome by a fawning servility. The situation is far different. A young professor rises to instruct the pope! A miner's son defies the authority of church councils! An obscure

9) Julius Koestlin, Life of Luther, New York, 1881, p. 236.

professor challenges the power of Henry VIII, Duke George and Duke Henry! Timid Melancthon and shrewd Erasmus would have shrunk from the idea. But not so Luther. He challenges the world to debate, he thunders from the pulpit, he scatters the truth afar by means of the press. He meets with bitter, organized opposition, to be sure, but Luther is ready for the oncoming battle. Challenged by Eck, he enters the fray. Excommunicated by a formal bull, he throws it into the fire. Summoned to Worms, he is ready to defend his writings and actions. Warned that he would meet with foul play, he affirms that he will go though there be as many devils in Worms as tiles on the roofs, and though they build a fire that should rise up to heaven between Wittenberg and Worms!¹⁰⁾ Even with the ban of the emperor on his head, he could not but speak Christ. Commanded to be silent, he spoke, he wrote, he preached. Even those out of sympathy with Luther's religious teachings today laud the bravery of this dauntless man. Elbert Hubbard concludes his lecture on Luther with the words:

There never lived a braver man--there never lived a more earnest and sincere. He fought freedom's fight with all the weapons God had given him; and for the liberty we now enjoy, in great degree, we are debtors to Martin Luther.¹¹⁾

Because he was human, Luther had his faults. Had he none, he would cease to be human and normal. There is a great deal of comfort to be found in the frailties of eminent

10) Ibid., p. 235.

11) Elbert Hubbard, Little Journeys to the Homes of Eminent Orators, New York, 1896, p. 202.

men. Moses showed signs of rashness. David was a fornicator. Peter denied his Lord. Luther at times gave vent to an unbridled violence against the enemy. The fury which he unleashed against the peasants in 1525 overcomes one unprepared for it. Of course, his times were known for their roughness and coarseness, and his enemies often began the attack with calumny and upbraiding, but, it must be admitted in all fairness, Luther often outdid his ablest opponents in this respect! However, one would hardly expect to find a calm temper in a man of his brilliance and power! As far as his violent words against the peasants are concerned, one may regard them as the righteous indignation of a believing soul whose patience was exhausted. He feared that the foolish farmers would, by their social warfare, destroy the fine work of the Reformation now well underway. He was justly incensed at the way in which they rose up against all authority and imperilled the entire social order. Only after he had written to them in a gentle fashion and advised them to seek peace by arbitration with the princes and they had flatly refused, did Luther issue his scurrilous attack against the murderous peasants so severely criticized by students of the Reformation today.

Jacobs says:

It was against the peasants in arms, murdering and burning, and robbing that he wrote the little tract here presented (Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants). The dispassionate tone of the "Admonition" is entirely abandoned. The rebellion is a reality, and Luther's one hope is to see it put down as rapidly as possible. The time for half-way measures, for conciliation, and for making

concessions has passed; government is threatened with destruction and anarchy is at the door.¹²⁾ This explains the violent language of the tract.

Luther was conscious of his rough and ready style. He had no time to return and polish his sentences. He once complained that he could not "tread so softly" as Melancthon. Luther was a man of action, and since the "style is the man", Luther's style was all action; it was thunder, betimes, and fire and deluge, devouring as it went! But Luther was not all lion! He could mix delightful humor with holy wrath or commingle pathos and sorrow with admonition.

Luther was a gifted pulpit orator. When he spoke he threw his very soul into his message. He preached with boundless energy and held his audiences spellbound. No one could escape the attraction of his eyes. The secret of his tremendous power in the pulpit lay in his deep conviction and utter sincerity. Luther was a ready speaker, often preaching several times a week, in addition to his other manifold duties. He was filled with his subject and appeared to be exhaustless in ideas. His appearance before his audiences was imposing, and his voice was clear and sonorous. He has been called the greatest preacher of his age. The power of his delivery is readily felt even today from a mere perusal of his many extant sermons.

The writings of Luther fill twenty-four folio volumes. The fecundity of his pen is most amazing. Where he found

¹²⁾ Charles M. Jacobs, Works of Martin Luther, Philadelphia, 1931, IV, 247.

the time to compose his many volumes passes understanding when one recalls how varied and many his other duties were.¹³⁾ A thousand tasks demanded his attention each week, but due to his indefatigable industry and remarkable fecility in writing, Luther kept the printing presses of Wittenberg running over time! And what he wrote went straight to the mark! His aim was true and never failed of its purpose. With remarkable alacrity he could grasp a problem and return an answer in writing which, though not polished, was clear and forceful. Luther gave a 15,000 word reply in 1518 to Sylvester Prierias in two days, and Luther wrote in Latin! Anthony Trollope, one of the swiftest literary workers that ever lived, said it would have taken him fifteen hours without laying down his pen , and using his native English, to write that much. Many of his writings were done by his own hand, and much of it dictated to friends.

By nature Luther was not only a sturdy oak; he also loved the aesthetic, the beauties of nature, and good music. While confined on the Wartburg he once went out hunting, but could not bear killing an innocent hare. On the Coburg he playfully refers to the congress of crows and jays amidst the trees and compares it to the Diet at Augsburg then in session. To his servant Lieberger he writes a formal protest against his cruelty in behalf of the thrushes, blackbirds, finches, and jays which inhabited his yard--all done, of course, in a

13) Koestlin, op. cit., p. 248-250.

jocose manner. His letter to his son Hans written from the Coburg is a classic in point of tenderness, beauty, and imagination. Luther, too, was fond of music. He was a good singer from his youth, and was skillful with the flute. His many hymns bear out this testimony.

Luther, then, was a leader of leaders. In the thick of the fray, he did not lose his head. The Reformation, once begun, never got out of his hands. He held the reins with a firm and steady grasp and drove it to a successful conclusion. He was a preacher, a teacher, an educator, a moralist, Bible expositor, writer, poet, translator. If genius is an inexhaustible capacity for going on, then Luther was a genius. If genius connotes the brilliance of a single faculty of the mind at the expense of the others, Luther was not a genius. He was as many-sided as he was brilliant; for just as the diamond sparkles from whatever angle you behold it, so the life of Luther, viewed from whatever viewpoint, is resplendent with sparkling radiance.

Among the most versatile of men, Luther's life does not admit of exact description. To do full justice to his fascinating character and winning personality one must needs write a book. The most eloquent, though concise, tribute to Luther that has come to our notice is that of Dr. W. A. Maier who sings this lofty praise:

↓ When we survey all history as in a panorama, this broad sweep of the ages reveals a group of commanding figures,--tall, Titan leaders who range high above

the compact level of the masses, geniuses who have helped to shape the epochs of men and to mold the destinies of entire nations. And every century or two a leader of these leaders arises, a super-gifted master mind of achievement, whom the reverent hands of posterity enshrine in the high niches of the Hall of Human Fame. But only once in the repetitious records of all history, since the days of Christ and His disciples, have men beheld the superlative and supreme in human greatness; only once since the early church has there been a dynamic pivot of the ages around whom the cherished hopes of a happy life, the blessings of intellectual freedom and political liberty and the visions of an opened Heaven have revolved; only once, since the apostolic days, a dominant figure for all lands and ages!

This personality of towering pre-eminence is not a Napoleon, nor any of the brilliant military strategists who have brought the world to grovel at their feet; nor a Columbus, nor any other of the intrepid company of discoverers and explorers who have steadily broadened the horizon of human experience; not a Shakespeare, a Michaelangelo, a Davinci or any luminary in the constellation of literary genius or artistic creation; not a Pasteur nor any other keen-minded experimenter who has found immunity against insidious bacterial attacks. To skip over the legislators and diplomats, patriots and emancipators of nations, the prodigious and encyclopedic minds in any field of human attainment, this super-man--to apply with unique appropriateness that term which the cruel philosophy of Nietzsche misapplied to the bloody phantasies of his ruthless selfishness--is to be found in the person of that rugged hero of all modern ages to whom we in the United States, as well as all others under every form of liberal and popular government, owe the basic principles of this national liberty, but, above and beyond that, to whom, under God, unnumbered myriads owe their faith in a reconciled and loving Father and the pre-vision, sealed by the blood of Christ Himself, of indestructible mansions in a perpetual homeland,--that true super-man stands before all history in the person of Martin Luther, champion of the rights of men, exponent of human liberty, emancipator of the human mind, reformer of the church, and above all this, God's instrumentality in raising the cross of our Lord and Savior from the dust and debris, with which it had been covered by decayed and destructive delusions, to

Its original and sacred position as the very center of all human hope, the pivot of all spiritual existence.¹⁴⁾

Such, then, was Martin Luther. Truly, a marvel among men. To know him is to love him, and to love him is to praise him. The apt words of Thomas Carlyle will bring this brief study to a fitting close:

I will call this Luther a true great man; great in intellect, in courage, affection, and integrity, one of the most lovable and precious men. Great, not as a hewn obelisk, but as an Alpine mountain--so simple, honest, spontaneous, not setting up to be great at all; there for quite another purpose than being great! Ah yes, unsubduable granite, piercing far and wide into the heavens; yet in the clefts of it fountains, green and beautiful valleys with flowers! A right spiritual hero and prophet; once more, a true son of nature, and fact, for whom these centuries, and many that are yet to come, will be thankful to heaven.¹⁵⁾

14) Walter A. Maier, "Back to Luther", Walther League Messenger, (Milwaukee), Nov. 1933, pp. 136-137.

15) Carlyle, op. cit., p. 191.

CHAPTER II

EDUCATION BEFORE THE REFORMATION

The age before Luther was an age of darkness. The masses were kept in ignorance because the papacy, by virtue of its very origin and nature, could not tolerate popular education. Were the pope to permit general enlightenment in the rank and file of his church body, the fraud of the papacy may one day be exposed! Because the framework of Catholicism did not rest upon the solid foundation of Holy Scriptures, the common people, those who did not revel in, but rather supplied the Vatican millions, must be denied the privilege of reading the Bible! To enhance the sale of indulgences, relic veneration and the worship of the saints must be encouraged, superstition must be promoted, tradition made a doctrine, but enlightenment, knowledge, and truth suppressed! Popular education, individual thinking, intellectual freedom are of necessity positive dangers to the Roman see!

Human achievement, in isolated instances, continued during the gloom of the Mediaeval world. Splendid buildings were erected. Gothic architecture was fostered, fine paintings were made, and there was even an interest in good

literature. But the masses of the people were "ground between the upper and nether millstones of the nobility and the clergy", the one as oppressive and ruthless as the other! Great scholars appeared on the scene in the persons of William of Occam, Peter Abelard, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, but the scholarship of the ordinary priest was nothing short of a mockery.¹⁾ To be sure, they performed a memorable achievement in the copying of manuscripts and books, but beyond that their educational heritage to modern times is almost nil.

The Roman pontiff does not reconcile himself with modern progress, liberalism, and civilization. He is out of sympathy with intellectual freedom and opposed to a broad and tolerant spirit. The infamous "Syllabus of Errors" issued by Pope Pious IX in 1864 expressly condemns the enlightenment of modern science, education, and discovery and would lead the masses back once more to the despotism of the Dark Ages. In so doing, the papacy is only consistent with ancient policy and practice. An intelligent laity spells danger to the papal tiara!

As the pope claims authority over the minds of men, he sets himself up as the universal teacher. He is the dictator in regard to books, the purger of all literature. Protestant books, he insists, must be avoided like the pest, burned where

1) Martin Luther, "Preface to Small Catechism", (1529), Triglet Concordia, St. Louis, 1921, pp. 533-535.

possible, or placed on the Catholic Index. The fact that the Roman Index Librorum contains some of the ablest authors of modern learning, Hume, Gibbon, Ranke, Kant, Locke, Bacon, Des Cartes, Cousin, Montesquieu, Milton, and, of course, the Protestant reformers, forces the conviction that the papacy is a reactionary body out of sympathy with the best that the human brain has produced during the past four-hundred years.

The Jesuits may well be lauded for their early activity in the field of education, but they never had the intellectual elevation of the common people at heart. With them education was a means of combating Protestantism. Their schools were organized as a measure of propaganda for Catholicism. They held that the most elementary subjects, reading and writing, were sufficient for the masses, while a thorough education for a few, under the eagle eye of the church together with a thorough inoculation of Romanism and blind attachment to the mother church, may make of them "defenders of the faith!"²⁾ This system proved admirably effective in such countries as Italy, Spain, and Mexico where even today a low level of literacy obtains among the common classes, while at the same time the leaders in the military and social life of these lands show a spirit of hopeless bigotry towards the sanctions and decrees of the Holy Father. In Protestant lands, on the other

2) F. V. N. Painter, Luther on Education, St. Louis, 1889, p. 50.

Ellwood P. Cubberley, The History of Education, Cambridge, 1920, p. 344.

hand, popular education became a "consummation devoutly to be wished". Some of the most enlightened nations on the globe today, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, have for the most part followed the Reformer's footsteps--a significant fact! Denmark ranks highest of all countries today for its low average of illiteracy. Already under king Christian III Catholicism was driven from its shores and Bugenhagen, with the support of Luther, invited to introduce the new Protestant school system. The Reformation is the cradle of popular education!

Schools obtained throughout the civilized world long before the days of Luther, but they were poorly equipped and improperly conducted. Instead of training the children they devoured them with papal superstition.³⁾ The scope of the curriculum was pitifully limited. Luther, in recalling his own school days, complains about

***that hell and purgatory in which we were tormented with cases and tenses, and yet learned less than nothing with all the flogging, trembling, anguish, and misery. ***How I regret now that I did not read more poets, historians, and that no one taught me them! I was obliged, instead, to read, at great cost, labor, and injury, that devil's filth, the philosophers and sophists, from which I have all that I can do to get myself clean.⁴⁾

The teaching staff of the Mediaeval school was wholly unprepared and turned out "blockheads and dunces" instead of pupils able to think for themselves. Luther deplored the

3) Luther, To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that they Establish Christian Schools, (1524), Philadelphia, 1931, IV, 110.

4) Ibid., 122-123.

fact that oftentimes students would sit for twenty and thirty years over their books without acquiring either Latin or German;⁵⁾ The teachers themselves could not speak these languages fluently while their lectures consisted in the desultory practice of dictating text-books! Luther frequently recalled with regret the insufficient training he received as a boy. He tells the councilmen of the German imperial cities:

Such teachers and masters we were obliged to put up with everywhere, who knew nothing themselves, and could teach nothing good or worthwhile, nay, who did not even know how to study and teach. Where was the fault? There were no other books than those stupid books of the monks and sophists.⁶⁾

The schools which were conducted before the dawn of the Reformation era were of different kinds and for varied purposes. In order to present a picture of the educational system in vogue before the Modern Era, these schools will now be discussed briefly in succession.

Monastic Schools - By the tenth century the monasteries, in so far as the heathen schools had now disappeared, developed both inner and outer schools. The inner school was intended for those who planned to take the vows of the order (*oblatis*), while the outer school was arranged for such who had no such intention (*externi*). Instruction in the inner school was meager, and in the outer school probably even more so. The curriculum generally consisted of the most elementary subjects

5) Ibid., 107-123.

6) Ibid., 128.

such as reading, writing, music, and simple arithmetic. Latin pronunciation received special attention since it had now become a dead language. It became the basis of all instruction plus various rules of conduct, the "oblats" were declared prepared for the study of theology and a career in the Church.

Song and Parish Schools - The musical part of the service in the Mediaeval cathedral churches was very important. In order to secure boys for the choir and other church duties these churches organized what became known as song schools. Though pupils in such schools received much the same instruction as given in the monastic schools, the liturgical element of the service and music received particular attention. Religious instruction, too, seems to have been more prominent here than in the convent schools. As the parish churches in the diocese later demanded boys trained in a similar manner for the proper conduct of the worship service, parish schools very similar to the song schools sprang into existence throughout western Europe, under the supervision of the priest.

Chantry Schools - Another type of elementary school was the "foundation fund" school which came through the wills of the wealthy. Oftimes men on their deathbed, who felt the weight of their sins and were particularly concerned about their soul's escape from purgatory, would leave a stipulated sum of money to endow a priest or two whose duty it would be to chant masses each day for him after his demise. In time such endowed priests voluntarily began instructing the young, or the will expressly ordered the priest to teach a school. The

"endowed" school was most elementary, designed to offer only the simplest religious training, as for example, the Lord's Prayer and Creed, certain psalms plus the sign of the cross.

Cathedral and Higher Monastic Schools - These were the advanced schools of the Middle Ages and constituted what might be called a secondary school system. For at least six hundred years they were the only advanced teaching institutions in western Europe.⁷⁾ The universities which were to flourish at a later period took their rise from the more important of these secondary schools. The course of instruction comprised what was then called the Seven Liberal Arts commonly divided into two divisions, the Trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic or logic) and the Quadrivium (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy). With a knowledge of these gained one entered the field of Ethics or Metaphysics, and began specialization in the highest of all studies, Theology. All primary and secondary education tended to serve this last study. All else was made to serve its end for it was the one specialized field in these times. With a doctor's degree in Theology one had "taken all knowledge to be his province"!

Secular Education - Secular education properly so-called came into being during the latter half of the Middle Ages. It assumed two forms, that of chivalry which fostered knightly education, and the city or burgher education. It is not

7) Cubberley, op. cit. p. 153.

incorrect to say that this form of instruction arose as a reaction to the purely religious schools of the convent and parish. In the knight schools physical culture, polished manners, and the sports were carefully drilled. There were few books and no training in Latin. Young men were taught to look upon womanhood as the embodiment of virtue. Intellectual pursuits were not wholly neglected, for music and poetry received considerable emphasis. The large collection of minne-songs are traceable to knightly instruction. The burgher school or writing school was also established as a sort of protest against the church-controlled schools. In addition to the most elementary subjects taught in all beginner's schools, more practical studies such as geography, history, and German were pursued in a small way. Latin, too, received its necessary emphasis. Wherever the civil authorities had control, especially in the imperial cities, laymen were hired to teach; otherwise the clergy had control.

The Universities - The university, which has its origin independent of either church or state, received a sudden momentum toward the end of the Middle Ages. In the beginning they comprised free associations of learned men and ambitious youths held together by a common interest in the acquisition of knowledge. The University of Bologna was established thus in the interest of the study of law, while the University of Salerno became influential for the study of medicine. The cathedral school of Paris in the twelfth century grew into a

university and at one time had an enrollment of 20,000 students. Special colleges or departments were founded in the university and four faculties established--philosophy, theology (Sorbonne), medicine, and jurisprudence. Little intellectual freedom obtained for the teachers were bound by the teachings of Aristotle who lived and taught in the fourth century B. C. In many schools graduates were obliged to swear they would teach nothing contrary to Aristotle and so independent research was stifled. Lombard's "Sentences" comprised the burden of the theological course to the utter neglect of the Scriptures.

CHAPTER III

LUTHER'S EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

The Basic Reason

The educational reforms of Luther, as did also his theological and church activity, found expression in the great religious doctrines which he propounded. The entire work of the Reformation was based upon religious doctrine taught by Christ in the days of the Apostles and rediscovered by Luther in the sixteenth century. A teaching, an idea, it may be said, pulled down the curtain on the Middle Ages and ushered in the Modern World. Luther's vigorous activity in pedagogical reform is traceable, in the last analysis, to the three fundamental religious doctrines by which Lutheranism differentiated itself from Catholicism. These three principles, to which the public school of today and modern enlightenment as well, owe their origin, are (1) the Scriptures are the sole rule and norm of faith, (2) justification by faith without the deeds of the law, and (3) the universal priesthood of believers. In these teachings lies the germ of modern enlightenment and education.

Luther early arrived at the conviction that the Scriptures alone are and must be the sole authority in points of religious

dispute. The Bible stands on an high pedestal, as it were, and no man-made teaching, not even the decrees of the church councils nor yet the dicta of the pope, dare supplant it.

"What saith the Scripture?" became the watchword of Luther's battle against Rome. The divine authority of the Bible gave him courage when others lost hope and comfort when days looked dark. All belief must be tested by the touchstone of God's Word. It is the sole guide and rule in religious truth for it is the inspired, inerrant record of an infallible God. All must bow to this one, supreme authority. As early as 1517 Luther began to see this truth for he begins his ninety-five theses with the oft-quoted words, "Our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, in saying 'Repent ye', etc." Luther was invincible at Leipzig in 1519 when he countered the church fathers with the Scripture, and set himself up as a new defender of John Hus since Hus, though contrary to church tradition, was "in the Scriptures". His famous writings of 1520 are replete with proofs from the Bible and reveal the trend the Reformation shall take--along the line of God's Word. On this point the mighty Luther stood like a lone oak in the meadow, defying all wind and storm. When arraigned before the highest ecclesiastical and secular court the world was able to muster at Worms in 1521, Luther, when asked to recant, gave answer in these words:

Unless I am overcome and convinced by proofs from Holy Scriptures or by manifestly clear grounds and reasons,--for I believe neither the pope nor the councils alone, because it is an open and known

fact that they have often erred and opposed each other,--and I am convinced by those passages adduced and introduced by me, and my conscience is bound in God's Word, I can or will recant nothing, since it is neither safe nor advisable to do aught against conscience. God help me! Amen.¹⁾

The Scriptures then shall decide all truth!

Since, therefore, the Scriptures are so important and necessary for Christian life and doctrine, the Bible must be opened and placed in the hands of all who can understand. It must be translated into the vernacular. Men must know its contents, think for themselves, read with understanding, and regulate their life accordingly. No longer shall the laity accept doctrines ready-made from the hands of the priest, but know from the Bible personally what is error and what is truth. This way lies salvation! And to accomplish that blessed end the common man must be sent to school and taught to read. Education must be popularized! Religious enlightenment will follow in the wake of Bible study, and it will serve as well as an instrument of culture. One with a knowledge of the Bible will normally yearn for an education.

The doctrine of justification by faith without the deeds of the law is the central doctrine, the pivot, about which the entire Reformation revolved. It is the "material principle" of the Lutheran Church. With it the Christian church stands and without it she falls. It forms the foundation of true Christianity.

1) Dau, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

✓
 Luther arrived at this fundamental doctrine through a gradual process. Already in the convent cell at Erfurt, 1505-1508, he underwent severe spiritual struggles because of the condemning power of sin. With anguish of heart he sought refuge from the woeful wages of sin. Sin virtually crushed the man in his search for peace with God, but he found no such peace. Penance, good deeds, floggings, self-denials, prayers, fastings, great piety--all this availed him nought in his attempt to free his conscience from the burden of condemning sin. In all Catholicism there was no relief for this man in distress of body and mind and soul. He wrestled with this problem as a monk, as a priest, and later as a professor at Wittenberg, and finally, by the never-failing grace of God, he found the light. It happened in his cloister cell at Wittenberg about 1513 while meditating on Romans 1, 16 and 17²⁾ in preparation for his lectures at the university. Now for the first time he understood the words "The righteousness of God" as God's justifying righteousness, not His punitive justice. "The righteousness of God", he now realized, is not the righteousness which God demands of the sinner, but the righteousness which God gives him in view of faith in the atonement of Christ. This changed his entire understanding of the Bible. All Scripture was now seen in a new light. His eyes were opened. This

2) For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith. Romans 1, 16-17.

marked his conversion! Before this time, as he himself often says, he fled from the word "righteousness" and harbored an inner loathing for Romans 1, 17. It now became the joy of his life and the keynote of the Reformation.³⁾

When once this light of truth was kindled in Luther's heart and he at length found refuge from the storm of sin and punishment, he could not contain himself for joy. His life, his whole being reflected the new-found joy. He delved into the Scripture as a man in eager search for gold, and the more he read, the more the conviction grew upon him--the just shall live by faith alone! And soon thereafter his lips, his actions, his pen showed forth that divine teaching. His memorable stand at Worms, his famous publications, his bold confessions are all the result of that one supreme teaching of Scripture, justification by faith without the deeds of the law!

This doctrine made Luther free, free from the rules and laws of the pope, free from the bondage of Aristotle, free from work-righteousness and the wages of sin which is death. It is the true freedom-maker. Without it there was no freedom in all the Mediaeval world; without it there can be no freedom whether religious, political, or educational. It is truth, and therefore spells freedom, for "the truth shall make you free". Rightly, then, do men use the phrase "Luther the Liberator", for in teaching this doctrine of justification by faith alone he freed all things. Religious liberty could not but eventuate into political liberty and constitutional law. From his lonely

3) B. K. Kuiper, Martin Luther, The Formative Years, Grand Rapids, 1933, pp. 198-208 (Dramatic description of Luther's conversion).

cell in Wittenberg the first toll of modern liberty rang out, and by his heroic stand at Worms the infant child of Liberty took its first step. Where liberty reigns, there popular education is bound to follow. When religious and political freedom obtain, there general enlightenment is an inevitable result. Education follows in the wake of freedom. Here was freedom! And the public school was not far distant. Moreover, if salvation is by faith alone (and so Luther taught) then everything depends upon the individual in his relationship to his God. His faith is a means of immediate access to the Father without the mediation of a papal priesthood. Salvation becomes a very personal matter. Formerly it was not so. The church took the place of Christ, as it were. If one believed in the church and its institutions, the individual's soul was in safe-keeping. With solifidianism restored to man once more, however, the individual becomes important; he dare not be lost in the corporate body of the church; he must believe for himself or salvation will never be attained. To believe he must know, and to know he must read and understand. This is the first step to free, popular education and enlightenment.

Luther based his doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers on I Peter 2, 9, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" etc. If every Christian is a priest, then there is no need of a special Sacerdotal class. All believers then have the privileges once claimed by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Every Christian may now preach the Gospel, administer the

Sacraments, forgive, and retain sins. He is a priest by virtue of his Christian faith. And this in turn requires an enlightened laity. As a priest he is now to take an active, intelligent part in public worship, help build the walls of Zion, understand the affairs of his church and its program, and be responsible to any who would ask him to give an account of his faith. He is no longer a puppet or figure-head. Hierarchy is at once abolished as a purely human invention. The individual believer stands forth as a priest of God and, therefore, an equal to any in the church.

If he is such, he has a right to demand instruction in the Word of God, first of all, as well as in all secular branches of study. The universal priesthood of believers is, therefore another step in the direction of popular education. If he is a priest of God he is independent. If he is to perform the duties devolving upon the priesthood, he must be educated.

These three principles of the Reformation, the Scriptures are the sole rule and norm of faith, justification by faith alone, and the universal priesthood of believers, were not an invention of Luther. They are truth, and therefore existed from time immemorial. The fact that they were shrouded darkness for a thousand years in no way falsified them. They but needed to be revealed and clarified. It took a Luther to do this.

The Immediate Reason

In 1520 Luther wrote his three epoch-making works, "The Address to the Christian Nobility", "On the Freedom of the

Christian Man", and "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church". In his Address he calls upon the German princes to undertake the reform of the church. Among other things, he suggests that the university curriculum be revised and hints at elementary education for both boys and girls in which "the chief and most common lesson should be the Scriptures". His "Freedom of the Christian Man" is a dynamic work. The growing sense of independence among the Germanic races here found expression. The lower classes particularly found courage and strength in the bold statements Luther makes. Throughout it breathes a new sense of liberty for the common man and opens the roadway for popular enlightenment later on. In his third great writing of 1520, "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church", Luther, enflamed with holy wrath, employs bold words in denouncing the doctrines and practices of the papacy. With it he formed his decision to break with Rome definitely and forever.

Scattered abroad by means of the press, the people devoured these writings and their eyes were opened. They had long felt the abuses of the Italians and groaned under the burdens they were forced to bear; but no one rose up with strength to champion their cause. Here now was a man who "spoke their language"! Here was a leader whom they could understand! Here was a second Elijah! The smoldering fires of their hatred towards Rome now burst forth. The enthusiasm, the boldness, sureness, and forceful sweep of Luther's German at once gained an army of recruits to his side. Though Luther was later excommunicated and banned,

the common people, and many of the nobility too, sympathized with his views. They hailed him as a heaven-sent prophet.

As was inevitable, however, in such a time and circumstance, confusion arose. The church began to suffer. Monasteries lost their inmates quite rapidly and monks forsook their vows. The enrollment of the universities saw a marked decrease and many Latin schools were deserted. With the coming of the gospel to the people they began to think there was no more need of priests and nuns and feared, moreover, that their sons would not find a livelihood in the priesthood since the new reform would sweep away all benefices and prebends.

Luther, however, was quick to apprehend the danger ahead, and, like a true leader, took effective measures for a solution of the problem. In 1524 he issued his long "Letter to the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools", one of the most remarkable educational works now extant. Painter has high praise for the Letter when he writes:

If we consider its pioneer character, in connection with its statement of principles, we must regard the address as the most important educational treatise ever written.⁴⁾

Luther's chief motive for writing and urging the establishment of schools is best expressed in his own words:

Yea, even among the nobility there may be found some louts and scrimps, who declare that there is no longer any need either for pastors or preachers; that we have everything in books, and every one can easily

4) Painter, op. cit., p. 67.

learn it by himself; and so they are content to let the parishes decay and become desolate and pastors and preachers to suffer distress and hunger aplenty just as it becomes crazy Germans to do. For we Germans have such disgraceful people and must endure them.⁵⁾

And to the councilmen he says:

Tell us, they say, why should we send them to school if they are not to become priests, monks, muns? They had better learn such things as will help them to make a living.⁶⁾

The Letter was sent to the councilmen of the cities, that is to the mayors and aldermen, because for centuries these free towns had conducted burgh Latin schools. Since Luther had now definitely decided to overthrow the papal institutions, it was only natural for him to appeal to these city authorities to promote new schools in conformity with Protestant principles. The free cities were, as a whole, more independent of Roman influence and their schools were usually not under church control.

Purpose or Aim of Education

Luther's first interest lay with the church. His life's work was centered about an ecclesiastical reform. His educational program was designed, therefore, for the training of intelligent laymen in the church. He launched his great pedagogical treatises and advocated school reform in sermons and addresses primarily for the effective promulgation of the Gospel and the development of efficient church workers and worshippers.

5) Luther, The Large Catechism, (1529), Triglot Concordia, 1921, p. 569.

6) Luther, To The Councilmen, etc., (1524), Philadelphia, 1931, IV, 104.

Christians are all priests, he proclaimed, and therefore are under obligation to know what the church stands for and participate intelligently in its services. Pastors, too, must be well-trained, students of the Scriptures, and apt to teach. More of them will be needed from year to year. In his School Sermon he waxes eloquent in a plea for properly trained ministers of the Word. Parents of his day must have felt the intense vigor with which Luther admonished them to give their sons to the ministry. He appeals to them in the words,

How will you raise them up for God's service if the office of preaching and the spiritual estate have gone down? And it is your fault; you could have done something about it and helped maintain it, if you had allowed your child to study. If you can do it, and your child has the ability or the desire, and you do it not, but stand in the way, listen to this,--You are guilty of the harm that is done if the spiritual estate goes down, and neither God nor God's Word remains in the world. In so far as you are able, you are letting it go down; you will not give one child to it, and you would do the same thing about all your children, if you had a world full of them; thus, so far as you are concerned, the service of God simply goes to destruction.

In order that you may not think that I am too severe with you in this, I shall lay before you a partial statement of the profit and loss (for who can tell it all) that you experience, so that you yourself may be compelled to say that you belong to the devil and ought rightly to be damned eternally in hell, if you find yourself guilty in this matter and do not reform; or else that you may rejoice and be glad from the heart, if you find that you are chosen by God, with your wealth and labor, to raise a son who will be a pious Christian pastor, preacher, or school-teacher, and thereby had raised for God a special servant, nay (as has been said) an angel of God, a true bishop before God, a savior of many people, a king and prince in the kingdom of Christ, and a teacher of God's people, a light of the world. Who can tell all the glory and the virtue that a real and faithful pastor has in the eyes of God? There is no dearer treasure, nor any more precious thing on earth or in this life than a real and faithful pastor or preacher.⁷⁾

7) Luther, Sermon on Keeping Children in School, (1530), Philadelphia, 1931, IV, 145-146.

However, it is a mistake to say that Luther was interested in education solely for the benefit of the church and its advancement. He understood the importance of educated men in the secular and civil affairs of this world as well. When urging parents to train their sons for the ministry, the highest spiritual office in the church, he adds,

By what I have said I do not want to insist that every man must train his child for this office, for not all the boys must become pastors, preachers, and school-masters. It is well to know that the children of lords and great men are not to be used for this work, for the world needs heirs and people, otherwise the government will go to pieces.⁸⁾

As today, so then, not only the clerical profession, but civil offices and the like required trained leaders. They will be of great benefit in maintaining a high level of efficiency in government and find themselves better qualified to trample under foot all manner of abuse and tyranny. An educated individual outside the ministry will be an asset to the State; "his knowledge does not hurt him", as Luther adroitly puts it, "in the earning of a living".⁹⁾

The office of preaching, divinely ordained, bestows eternal righteousness, peace, and life; secular government, however, maintains temporal peace and life. Existing also by divine ordinance, it has an important function to perform. Luther shows himself to be more than a theological reformer when he maintains that civil government is indispensable in

8) Ibid., p. 153.

9) Ibid., p. 154.

the words:

Nevertheless, it is a glorious ordinance of God and splendid gift of God, who has established and instituted it, and will have it maintained as something that men cannot do without. If there were no worldly government, no man could live because of other men; one would devour the other as the brute beasts do. Therefore, as it is the function and honor of the office of preaching to make sinners saints, and dead men live, and damned men saved, and and the devil's children God's children; so it is the function and honor of worldly government to make men out of wild beasts and to prevent men from becoming wild beasts.***It is certain, then, that government is a creation and an ordinance of God, and that for us men in this life it is a necessary office and rank, which we can no more do without than we can do without life itself, since without government this life cannot continue.***Now who will maintain it except us men, to whom God has committed it, and who varily need it for ourselves? The wild beasts will not maintain it, nor will wood and stone. But who are the men that can maintain it?¹⁰⁾

Luther goes on to answer his own question by stating that "the jurists and scholars in this worldly government" are the persons who preserve law and maintain good government. Parents must learn to educate their sons for such positions in life for neglect to do so gives evidence of ingratitude and disloyalty. Luther is deeply moved when writing in defence of this purpose in education.

You must be a gross, ungrateful cled, worthy that men should drive you out among the beasts, if you saw that your son could become a man to help the emperor preserve his empire, sword, and crown; to help the prince rule his land; to council and help cities and territories; to help protect so many men's bodies, wives, children, property, and honor; and would not risk enough on it to permit your son to study and come to this position.¹¹⁾

Luther saw many minor purposes and rewards in an education also. Aside from religious and civil duties, a good education

10) Ibid., pp. 158-159.

11) Ibid., pp. 162.

affords much pleasure and broadens the intellect and improves the tastes of the gentleman. Towards the close of his School Sermon he comments on such "by-products" of an education in the words,

I shall say nothing here about the fine pleasure that a man gets from having studied, even though he never has an office of any kind; how at home by himself he can read all kinds of things, how he can talk and associate with the learned; travel and do business in foreign lands; for perhaps there are very few people who are moved by this pleasure.¹²⁾

Home Training

Children are gifts of God. Parents are the stewards of their children whom God has given them. By divine right they therefore have authority to train the young and give them proper religious instruction in the home. Such is Luther's position throughout his theological writings, but he complains bitterly that no one cared about or saw the dire need of childhood training. He says in part:

But here again the sad plight arises that no one perceives or heeds this and all live on as though God gave us children for our own pleasure or amusement, and servants that we should employ them like a cow or ass, only for work, or as though we were only to gratify our wontonness with our subjects, ignoring them, as though they were no concern of ours what they learn or how they live; and no one is willing to see that this is the command of the Supreme Majesty, who will most strictly call us to account or punish us for it.¹³⁾

Luther not only shows parents their divine duty in training the young at home, but rouses them to action with the full

12) Ibid., p. 165.

13) Luther, The Large Catechism, (1529), Triglot Concordia, St. Louis, 1921, p. 629,

might of his language when he cries:

Here consider now what deadly injury you are doing if you be negligent and fail on your part to bring up your child to usefulness and piety, and how you bring upon yourself all sin and wrath, thus earning hell by your own children, even though you be otherwise pious and holy.¹⁴⁾

And again:

Let every father of a family know that it is his duty, by the injunction and command of God, to teach these things to his children, or to have them learn what they ought to know.¹⁵⁾

Luther clearly understood that the Christian home is the foundation of a good government. The God-fearing home makes for a Christian, well-governed nation. It is and must be the bulwark of any land. Remove the Christian home, and the scaffolding of the government will topple and fall. To arrive at a well disciplined, Christian home, the entire household must show obedience and respect to authority as is enjoined in the Fourth Commandment. In this commandment parents first received the authority¹⁶⁾ to train the child in the home and God gave them this privilege, Luther taught, for the perpetual maintenance of pious homes and sound government. Parents who refuse to follow this divine injunction invite the wrath and punishment of divine justice upon their own heads.

Above all things Luther would have religion taught in the home. Luther emphasizes this point again and again in his educational treatises. The chief study must be the Scriptures.

14) Ibid., p. 773.

15) Ibid., p. 631.

16) Luther, Large Catechism, Fourth Commandment, (1529), in Triglot Concordia, St. Louis, 1921, p. 629.

It is the foundation of good character. Without religion there can be no true guidance; without religion one will train little heathen, polished in manners, but lacking in Christian virtue and faith. Parents and tutors, too, must set a good example, for the mind of the child is plastic and will be influenced for the good or evil by the character and manner of the teacher. Under such a system of training, all things being equal, children would later go forth into life as honored and useful members of society.

School Training

Luther did not only stress the proper training of children at home, but became an advocate of school training as well. His first educational classic, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that they Establish Christian Schools" is devoted entirely to the problem of establishing schools in Germany. Already in 1520 in his "Address to the Christian Nobility" Luther appealed to the princes of Germany to maintain schools.

Schools and teachers were necessary in Luther's opinion because of inability of the parents to instruct their children sufficiently. Often they were lacking in piety and interest and allowed their children to grow up without any instruction whatsoever. They found it more profitable to use their children as slaves in their own selfish interests. Other parents were simply unqualified to teach even though they manifested a willingness to do so.¹⁷⁾ They had never gone to school themselves,

¹⁷⁾ Luther, To the Councilmen, etc., Philadelphia, 1931, IV, 110-111.

or their education had been so meager they were unable to help their children. In most cases, however, parents had no time to act as tutor. If they were serfs, their time was taken up in working their own plot of ground or in tilling the farm land of their lord. If they were freemen or of the nobility, they were too busy with the trifles of life to concern themselves with the education of their offspring.

Luther charged the mayors and aldermen with inconsistency in spending huge sums for public welfare, for roads, bridges, dams, and firearms, but withheld their funds from establishing schools and engaging competent teachers.¹⁸⁾ "There is not an irrational animal", he says, "but looks after its young". The mayors may well take pride in the outward appearance of their respective cities, they may point to their towering spires and solid walls, but a city's glory consists in a firmer wall and more beautiful building, as Luther points out:

The welfare of a city consists not alone in gathering great treasures and providing solid walls, beautiful buildings and a goodly supply of guns and armor. Nay, where these abound, and reckless fools get control of them, the city suffers only the greater loss. But a city's best and highest welfare, safety and strength consists in its having many able, learned, wise, honorable, and wellbred citizens; such men can readily gather treasures and all goods, protect them, and put them to a good use.¹⁹⁾

Of all countries in the Holy Roman Empire, Germany perhaps had the best and first opportunity to establish schools

18) Ibid., p. 106.

19) Ibid., p. 111.

in the sixteenth century. Opportunity stood at their door as at no other time. The power of Rome had been broken. The papal exactions, its iron-clad rule, its supervision over the religion, social and civil affairs of the people were greatly diminished. Conscious of this opportunity, Luther ascends his world pulpit, calls for schools while they can be had, sounds this significant note of warning:

If we permit it to go by without thanks and honor, it is to be feared that we shall suffer a still more dreadful darkness and plague. Buy, dear Germans, while the fair is at your doors; gather in the harvest while there is sunshine and fair weather; use the grace and Word of God while they are here. For, know this, God's Word and grace is a passing rainstorm which does not return where it has once been. It came to the Jews, but it passed over; now they have the Turk. Rome and the Latins had it, too; but it passed over; now they have the pope. And you Germans must not think that you will have it forever; for ingratitude and contempt will not suffer it to remain. Take and hold fast, then, wheeyer can; idle hands cannot but hand a lean year.²⁰⁾

Popular Education

Before Luther's time popular education was almost null and restricted to the teaching of the Catechism in Latin. The Catholic Church of the Middle Ages together with its hierarchy was of necessity antagonistic towards the education of the masses; they considered it dangerous to include enlightened laymen in their ranks. Popular education was a foreign term until the days of the Reformation. Various kinds of schools were established, but these were not common schools. In fact, the masses received no incentive to go to school, even though

²⁰⁾ Luther, Ibid., p. 108.

an opportunity presented itself. Luther, by his insistence upon home and school training, was the first educator to insist on popular education in a systematic and effective way. There is fire in his appeal when he cries out:

O woe unto the world forever and ever! Children are daily born and grow up among us, and there is, alas, no one to care for or to direct them; we let them go on as they will. The monasteries and foundations should see to it, but they are the very ones of whom Christ says in Matthew 18, 'Woe unto the world because of offences! Whoso shall offend one of these young ones that believe in me, it were well for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were drowned in the depth of the sea'.***'Ah', you say, 'but all that is addressed to parents; what business is that of councilmen and magistrates?' ***How will magistrates and councilmen excuse themselves by saying it is no business of theirs?²¹⁾

Popular education is but a corollary of religious freedom. When Luther proclaimed and established the latter, the former was but a natural consequence. The education of the masses goes hand in hand with Protestantism. The Reformer was only consistent with the general principles he stood for when he published his ringing appeals for public schools throughout Germany. In fact, had he not done so he would have been untrue to his own religious convictions. Zundel:

It is an historical fact that the same great heart and mind that proclaimed religious, mental, and civil liberty to the modern world also started the common school to foster that liberty.²²⁾

Popular education was unknown in civilized countries outside Germany in Luther's day. France inaugurated her public

21) Ibid., p. 109.

22) Zundel, op. cit., p. 9.

school system after the Revolution of 1789. England had none. The United States was not yet settled (St. Augustine, 1565; Plymouth, 1620). The Jews had schools for their children but they were restricted to members of their race only.

If Luther has any reputation as an educator at all, it is because of his defence of popular education. His Letter to the Nobility as well as his School Sermon portray him as the true champion of the public school. Educators the world over acknowledge him as such and pay fine tributes to his common school system. Seeley says in just recognition of Luther's merits as an educator:

To Luther in the sixteenth and to Comenius in the seventeenth,***must be ascribed the honor of having first organized schools for the people. In its origin, the primary school was the child of Protestantism and its cradle was the Reformation.²³⁾

In his eagerness to give all children an equal opportunity, Luther proposed free scholarships at least for more advanced pupils. He urged the people to contribute liberally for the maintenance of schools in order to make the way open for promising boys and suggested that "the rich make their wills with this work in view".²⁴⁾

Since Luther's reform proclaimed education as the birth-right of every child, it had room for the education of girls.²⁵⁾

23) Levi Seeley, History of Education, New York, 1904, p. 167.

24) Luther, Sermon on Keeping Children in School, (1530), Philadelphia, 1931, IV, 178.

25) Painter, op. cit., p. 139.

The Reformer was not the first to promote the education of girls. Women in the upper classes had opportunity for education before his time. The convents, too, were established for this purpose. But it is to Luther's credit that he popularized coeducation, and it was but natural for him to do so in view of his basic reason for all education. Though Luther did not first appear as an advocate of girls' education, he, through his popularization of such instruction, did much towards the general elevation of womanhood, admitted her to the teaching profession, and lent a mighty impetus towards coeducation as it now obtains. The following statement is well taken:

Unquestionably, Luther accorded women a higher status than she had previously occupied in civilization.²⁶⁾

It was an inevitable outgrowth of Luther's educational program that he advocated compulsory education. The importance of instruction, he felt, demanded authority to compel the children to attend school, not to mention the covetousness of some parents in working their children for their own selfish ends. Eby and Arrowood accord Luther the honor of being the first advocate of compulsory school attendance. In the last paragraphs of his School Sermon Luther minces no words in calling upon parents and civil authorities in this forthright manner:

But I hold that it is the duty of the government to compel their subjects to keep their children in school,***For it is truly its duty to maintain the offices and classes that have been mentioned, so that preachers, jurists, pastors, writers, physicians, schoolmasters, and the like may continue, for

26) Eby and Arrowood, The Development of Modern Education, New York, 1934, p. 94.

we cannot do without them. If it can compel its subjects who are fitted for the work to carry pike and musket, man the walls, and do other kinds of work, when war is necessary; how much more can and ought it compel its subjects to keep their children in school***. ²⁷⁾

Hand in hand with Luther's advocacy of popular education went his appeal for the establishment of libraries. If the youth is to receive an education, they must have free access to good books. Where students are denied the use of the best books, popular education will be automatically defeated. As a means of beginning his novel scheme of a chain of libraries, Luther would have the larger cities found them first in order that the Bible as well as the arts and languages might be preserved. The councilmen of the German cities must have been impressed by the vision of their new educational prophet for

***no effort or expense should be spared to found good libraries, especially in the larger cities, which can well afford it. For if the Bible and all the arts are to be preserved, they must be contained and held fast in books and writings, as was done by the prophets and apostles themselves, as I have said above. This is necessary, not only that those who are to be our spiritual leaders may have books to read and study, but that the good books, the arts and the languages that we now have through the grace of God may be preserved and not lost. ²⁸⁾

When we consider the backward state of education in general at this time, as well as the lack of good books in the vernacular, Luther's system of libraries appears to be a grand vision far in advance of his times. In a certain sense there were libraries before Luther's day; there were book

27) Luther, Sermon on Keeping Children in School, Philadelphia, 1931, IV, 177-178.

28) Luther, To the Councilmen, Etc., (1524), Philadelphia, 1931, IV, 126.

collections at the universities and monasteries, but books were few, duplicates rare, and prices prohibitive. Even the Bible, copied as often as it was, was chained to a post in the Erfurt University library because of its value and the danger of theft. Could the people read Latin they could not easily procure a Bible because of its forbidding price. Before Luther, the Bible sold for \$200.00 a copy! Certainly, with the popularity of the printing press which Luther so continuously used, books would become more common in a short time and the price would drop accordingly. With this in mind Luther could well envision a chain of libraries throughout Christendom.

Luther would exercise care in the selection of books for the library. If one is to go to the care and expense of establishing a library, only the best books should be chosen, and

~~cannot~~ huddle together indiscriminately all sorts of books and to look only to their number and quantity. I would gather only the best***First of all there should be in it the Holy Scriptures in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, and in whatever other languages they might be had. Then the best commentaries, and if I could find them, the most ancient in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Then books that aid us in acquiring the languages, such as the poets and orators, no matter whether heathen or Christian, Greek or Latin; for it is from such books one must learn grammar. Then should come books of the liberal arts and all the other arts. Lastly, books of law and of medicine, though there too a careful choice among commentaries should be made.²⁹⁾

Studies

Luther attached great importance to the study of religion. It is the foundation of correct living. Where religion is

²⁹⁾ Luther, To the Councilmen, etc., (1524), Philadelphia, 1931, IV, 128.

rightly taught and diligently lived there all good virtues appear. The study of religion is the finest of character-builders; it offers that something for the soul which secular subjects cannot hope to give. It prepares one for complete living; it fits one for service to both church and country. Luther, therefore, is insistent in the study of religion in the schools. As early as 1520 he writes to the Christian Nobility:

Above all, in schools of all kinds the chief and most common lesson should be the Scriptures**** Where the Scriptures are not the rule, I advise no one to send his child.³⁰⁾

The means of providing such religious instruction Luther offered in his inimitable Small Catechism. He would have the child learn and memorize the six chief parts of Christian doctrine therein, and urged parents to examine their children at least once a week to see what they have learned.

Next to the study of the Bible and the Catechism, Luther placed a high value upon the study of the classical languages. He saw in such study not only a fine educational gymnastic, but great utility in service to the church. Without the classical languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, one cannot arrive at a correct understanding of the Scriptures nor engage in a religious controversy intelligently. In order to go to the sources one must, of course, have a reading knowledge of the Biblical languages.

³⁰⁾ Luther, To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, Harvard Classics, New York, 1910, XXVI, 342-343.

Luther experienced some difficulty in convincing the people of the need for a study of the languages. The common people took the attitude that, since they now had the Bible in their native tongue, why must students be required to study Greek and Hebrew? It was for this reason that Luther, in reply, complained that they were "justly dubbed German fools and beasts".³¹⁾ If the new doctrine was to be defended, the study of the languages must continue unabated. On the basis of these could the new church organization defend its stand against the sophistry of the papacy. Luther waxes truly eloquent in his advocacy of a study of the classics. His underlying reason, of course, is to be found in the preservation of the Gospel from insidious attacks of the enemy. He makes the study of the languages contingent upon one's love of the Gospel and adds the oft-quoted words:

In proportion, then, as we prize the Gospel, let us guard the languages. For not in vain did God have His Scriptures set down in these two languages alone--the Old Testament in Hebrew, the New in Greek. The languages, therefore, that God did not despise but chose above all others for His Word, we too ought to honor above all others*** Let us be sure of this: we shall not long preserve the Gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which we carry this jewel.³²⁾

Luther does well in linking a study of the languages together with the preservation of the Gospel. The two go

31) Luther, To the Councilmen, etc., Philadelphia, 1931, IV, 113.

32) Ibid., p. 114.

hand in hand. Religious controversy is frequently dependent upon the understanding and grammar of the original tongues, and the words of Dr. Nohle are aptly spoken:

As the reformatory movement, at least among the leaders, had started over a scientific dispute over the foundations of church doctrine, so the future existence of the new church was dependent upon the possession of scientific weapons in the battle for the right creed, and for this purpose a knowledge of the three ancient languages was absolutely necessary.³³⁾

Though Luther laid great emphasis upon the study of the ancient languages, he remained loyal to his native tongue. He was at home in and understood how to write a forceful German unlike any other man of his century. His German Bible is recognized as a literary classic by friend and foe. German literary lights of later centuries read Luther's Bible if for no other reason than to learn to write a good German. He gave High German a literary form and popularized it to such an extent that all Germany spoke and understood it. Up to Luther's day the public service was conducted in the Latin language. Luther introduced German into the worship³⁴⁾ of his people and to facilitate that end he composed German hymns so that the people could take part in it. Elementary religious instruction was also to be given in the German language through the medium of his Small Catechism. According to the Saxony School Play, however, Luther sanctioned the practice of teaching all secular

33) E. Nohle, Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 85.

34) Luther, German Mass, (1526), St. Louis, 1927, p. 228.

studies by means of the Latin tongue. The neglect of the vernacular in Luther's school plan is somewhat disappointing and wholly unexpected in view of his deep interest in the mother tongue. It must be remembered, however, that for generations the monastic, parish, and burgh schools used Latin as a medium of instruction and it would be difficult to break away from this system at once. Doubtless Luther would have altered this practice had he lived another decade.

Luther regarded history not simply as a source of valuable information, but also as a portrayal of God's wonderful dealings with man and a guide to experience in life. Historians he held to be the most useful people and excellent teachers who are deserving of our thanks and praise. He would have lords, kings, and emperors compose histories of their times and spare no expense to procure competent instructors to teach it.

Luther was a lover of nature and promoted the study of the same. During his stay on the Wartburg and on the Coburg his eyes were open to the beauties of nature around him, as his letters abundantly testify. As for the natural sciences he could rightly say that students now observed creatures properly and not as formerly under the papacy when such things were forbidden! The method of inductive reasoning was taking its rise at this time of Protestant freedom. It was given great momentum in the seventeenth century under Francis Bacon. Luther as the hero of Protestant freedom rose up in defense of

examining actual objects as a source of information and challenged the church's right to forbid such study. The works of Aristotle, written nine-hundred years before the Reformation, were the only legal source of scientific information until Luther's day! In the sixteenth century the Reformer exposes this folly and asks,

Why shall we not, instead of dead books, open the living book of nature? Not the shadow of things, but the things themselves, which make an impression on the senses and imagination, are to be brought before youth. By actual observation, not by a verbal description of things, must instruction begin. From such observation develops a certain knowledge. Men must be led as far as possible to draw their wisdom not from books, but from a consideration of heaven and earth, oaks and beeches; that is, they must know and examine things themselves, and not simply be contented with the observation and testimony of others.³⁵⁾

The Reformer's fondness for music is remarkable. He himself was a skillful musician and had a good singing voice. At the University of Erfurt he was nicknamed "the musician". He was particularly proficient with the flute and doubtless used it to compose his great church hymns. In 1524 there appeared the first Protestant hymnbook of twenty-eight hymns, twenty-four of which were composed by Luther with his usual felicity of pen and might of thought. In all he is credited with the composition of thirty-six hymns which assisted him mightily to win the battles against an armed foe. It has been said that had Luther accomplished nothing else than the composition of his

³⁵⁾ Painter, op. cit., p. 163.

hymns he would have won immortal fame. His battle-hymn of the Reformation, "A Mighty Fortress is our God," composed in 1527, carried the message and spirit of the Reformation into the very hearts of the common people and performed untold blessings in paving the way for the success of Protestantism. Today this hymn is found translated in every Protestant hymn-book and, with some modifications, even in Roman Catholic hymnology!

It was but natural that Luther should insist on the inclusion of music as a regular subject in his school curriculum. He thought music an indispensable qualification for a teacher, and for that reason posterity may well say,

No educator since Plato had ascribed a higher educational value to music than did Luther.³⁶⁾

Gymnastic exercise, too, received attention in Luther's system of education. He considered it salutary in so far as it acted as a deterrent for unchastity and intemperance, while at the same time it made the body elastic and preserved health.

Though Luther was a profound student himself, he did not believe in over-emphasizing the theoretical side of education. Like the Jewish boys of the Old Testament, he would have the pupils of his day learn a trade together with book knowledge. Thus when the boys became men they would be insured a livelihood. Vocational training, so highly developed in schools at the present time, has its first beginning here in the program of the Reformer. Differing from the system in vogue today,

³⁶⁾ Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 95.

however, Luther would not have the boys learn their trade in school, but at home after school hours. Likewise the girls were to be taught domestic science at home after an hour's study in school. There is time enough for both, for the boys spend ten times as much time in playing ball and the girls in sleeping and dancing.³⁷⁾

Methods

Simplicity was one of Luther's first principles in all instruction. He forcefully wrote against any sort of confusion or repeated change in text or method as this only tended to confound the pupils. Simplicity, Luther knew, was particularly important in his day because of the primitive state of education in general. Change of methods and confusion of texts would prove disastrous to his new educational program, would nip it in the bud. He appeals to instructors with the following impressive words:

Let the preacher above all be careful to avoid many kinds of or various texts and forms of the Ten Commandments, etc., but choose one form to which he adheres, and which he inculcates all the time, year after year. For young and simple must be taught by uniform, settled texts and forms, otherwise they easily become confused when the teacher today teaches them thus, and in a year some other way, as if he wished to make improvements, and thus all effort and labor is lost

When you preach in the presence of learned and intelligent men, you may exhibit your skill, and may present these parts in as varied and intricate ways and give them as masterly turns as you are able. But with the young people, stick to one, fixed, permanent form and manner.³⁸⁾

37) Luther, To the Councilmen, etc., (1524), Philadelphia, 1931, IV, 123-124.

38) Luther, Preface to Small Catechism, (1529), in Triglot Concordia, St. Louis, 1921, pp. 533-535.

Repetition, too, along with simplicity, Luther felt, was highly necessary. Both adults and children forget in time and must go over the same ground again and again until they have mastered the subject well. One cannot learn everything by studying a subject once. Even the great ones in the earth must review!

For myself I say this: I am also a doctor and preacher,***yet I do as a child who is being taught the Catechism, and every morning, whenever I have time, I read and say, word for word, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, etc. And I must still read and study daily, and yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and a pupil of the Catechism, and am glad so to remain***there are manifold benefits and fruits still to be obtained, if it, ^{be} daily read and practiced in thought and speech.³⁹⁾

Luther found it necessary to repeat--he who is recognized as a genius, he who is called the greatest intellect in the Modern World! How much more little children!

Luther placed great value on memorizing. Certainly, he did not overburden the children nor expect too much of the weak. He required no more than the least gifted were able to render. Luther, a father himself, understood the child's mind, and made provision for its proper development. Throughout his educational system he thinks of the average child, not of his own giant intellect and ease of comprehension. When teaching young people,

***stick to one fixed, permanent form and manner, and teach them, first of all, these parts, namely, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, etc., according to the text, word for word, so that

39) Luther, Preface to Large Catechism, (1529), Triglot Concordia, St. Louis, 1921, p. 569.

they, too, can repeat it in the same manner after you and commit it to memory.⁴⁰⁾

Memorizing, however, was not to be of a mechanical nature; pupils were to know and understand what they memorized. After children have well learned the text, Luther says, "then teach them the sense also", so that they know what it means. This maxim Luther also put into practice in the construction of his Small Catechism. After each of the commandments and other parts of doctrine he puts the question, What does this mean?

Throughout his Small Catechism (which was designed for the instruction of the young) Luther employed the Socratic or question and answer method. He would ask, What does this mean? and then proceed to give a brief, concise answer. To this day this system is effective and thousands are indebted to this method of instruction for their comprehension of Bible truths.

An important principle in teaching was advocated when Luther urged the teachers to adapt themselves to the children. Just as Christ became a man, so the teacher is to become a child. They should prattle with the children, that is, make themselves understood.

In the instruction of language Luther again went far in advance of his age in appealing for the direct method so popular today in most schools. Grammar is necessary for the mastery of a language; but by means of grammar alone no one can

40) Luther, Preface to Small Catechism, (1529), in Triglot Concordia, St. Louis, 1921, p. 533.

learn to speak a foreign tongue properly. One must speak it and thus learn it from actual practice.⁴¹⁾

The Reformer, strenuous in his appeals for a good school training, yet frowned upon undue severity and punishment. Many a fine character, he said, had been ruined by the stupid brutality of the pedagogues. He remembered too well his own childhood when children were brought up under the rod! This had a lasting effect upon Luther who, as a good pedagogue, ever afterward understood that love is a better method of winning the child than hate and rebuke. We can well understand his position after reading his childhood recollection in which he justly complains:

My father once flogged me so severely that I fled and had a grudge against him. My parents were so hard on me that I grew shy. On account of a miserable nut my mother once beat me till the blood flowed.⁴²⁾

He was once flogged fifteen times in one afternoon over the conjugation of a verb! Luther, however, forgave his parents for their "well-meant" severity. With his own children he was kind and gentle, but used sternness when necessary. He loved them and spent many happy hours together with them at home singing hymns, playing games, and hearing them recite the Catechism. When absent from home he remembered them in fond letters and reminded them of their lessons.

41) Painter, op. cit., pp. 157-159.

42) Dallmann, op. cit., p. 4.

Large and Small Catechisms

Without a discussion of Luther's two Catechisms an account of his pedagogical work would be incomplete. While his Letter to the Councilmen and his School Sermon stand undisputed as his most famous educational treatises, his two Catechisms may be classed as his finest text-books on religion. They definitely created a mighty stir in the field of religious education at Luther's time and lent a new impetus toward systematized thorough instruction.

As early as 1526 Luther had expressed the desire to compose a "rough, simple, good catechism". The opportunity presented itself in 1529. In the fall of 1527 a general visitation of the parishes was inaugurated in Saxony. Different commissions were to work simultaneously in the different districts. Each consisted of a theologian, a few laymen, jurists, councillors, and state officials. Luther was to head the commission of the Electoral District. His party was the first to begin its work. The shortcomings brought to light by the visitation were most amazing. The decay of all Christian knowledge was far worse than Luther had anticipated. Gross ignorance prevailed, not only among the laymen, but also among the clergy. An old priest near Torgau was hardly able to repeat the Lord's Prayer and Creed, but had an high reputation in the surrounding territory as an exorcist--and profited greatly from the trade!⁴³⁾ Priests as a whole were guilty of immorality, drunkenness,

43) Koestlin, op. cit., p. 369.

irregular marriages, and the like. Some had to be forbidden to keep beer-houses! Poverty and destitution prevailed everywhere. Luther tells of one place in which the peasants knew not a single prayer. Others refused to learn the Lord's Prayer because it was too long! The Roman church system had robbed them of even a desire to know the fundamental truths of Scripture. For the most part they were content if the "clerk" taught the children the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments. A knowledge of this was obligatory for admission to the Lord's Table. Luther offers a most trenchant description of the prevailing conditions in the Preface to his Small Catechism and uses the full might of his language in an effort to correct the shameful situation. He writes:

The deplorable, miserable condition which I discovered lately when I, too, was a visitor, has forced and urged me to prepare this Catechism, or Christian doctrine in this small, plain, simple form. Mercy! Good God! What manifold misery I beheld! The common people, especially in the villages, have no knowledge whatever of the Christian doctrine, and, alas, many pastors are altogether incapable, and incompetent to teach. Nevertheless, all maintain that they are Christians, all have been baptized and receive the holy Sacrament. Yet they cannot recite either the Lord's Prayer, or the Creed, or the Ten Commandments; they live like dumb brutes and irrational swine; and yet, now that the Gospel has come, they have nicely learned to abuse all liberty like experts. O ye bishops! What will ye ever answer to Christ for having so shamefully neglected the people and never for a moment discharged your office? May all misfortune flee you! You command the Sacrament in one form and insist on your human laws, and yet at the same time you do not care in the least whether the people know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, or any part of the Word of God. Wee, wee unto you forever.⁴⁴⁾

44) Luther, Preface to Small Catechism, (1529), Triglot Concordia, St. Louis, 1921, p. 533.

Soon after the visitations Luther takes the matter of publishing a Catechism in hand. Early in 1529 appeared the Large Catechism, or, as it was originally called, the German Catechism. He intended it principally for the clergy whom he found so incompetent to teach religion. Shortly afterward, probably in the space of a few weeks, his Small Catechism or Enchiridion came off the press. This little booklet was adapted to the children. It contains the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith in a simple, clear, concise language. It is built up throughout in the form of questions and answers after the fashion of the Socratic method of instruction. In addition to simple doctrine Luther includes brief forms of prayer for morning and evening, for mealtime, and a compact outline of household duties. He closes with the little rhyme, "Let each his lesson learn with care, and all the household well shall fare".

The pre-eminent value of the Small Catechism lies in the fact that it restored and clarified the teaching of Christian truth. It became a religious manual for home, school, and church. Dr. Bente's words in this connection are worth noting:

Luther extols it as the great achievement of his day that now every one knew the Catechism, whereas formerly Christian doctrine was unknown or at least not understood aright. And this achievement is pre-eminently a service which Luther rendered. He revived once more the ancient catechetical parts of doctrine, placed them in the proper Biblical light, permeated them with the Evangelical spirit, and explained them in conformity with the understanding of the Gospel which he had gained anew,⁴⁵⁾

45) F. Bente, Trilog Concordia, St. Louis, 1921, p. 65.

This little text-book has stood the test of time and will endure to future generations. In 1929 the Lutheran Church throughout the world observed the four-hundredth anniversary of the booklet and its manifold blessings. Duplicates have appeared since Luther, but the original remains; efforts have been made to improve it, but have only resulted in failure. The booklet has gone through countless editions and elaborations. In three or four decades after its first appearance 100,000 copies of Luther's two Catechisms were in use. As in the past, this handbook will grow in usefulness in future generations. Well might Dr. Bente say, in his study of Luther's Small Catechism, that millions and millions of hands have in the past stretched forth to receive Luther's catechetical classic, and, whereas during the last four centuries, hundreds of catechisms have gone under, Luther's Enchiridion is afloat today and is just as seaworthy as when it was first launched.⁴⁶⁾ Marveling over the well-nigh indestructibility of this little text-book, Dr. Graebner has this praise to offer:

Not a single text-book of science or history, written four-hundred, or even an hundred, years ago is today used in the schools. Not a single religious book of instruction has survived. Luther's Catechism today, it can safely be said, is the text-book supreme of religious doctrine. It is the acknowledged pearl of childhood instruction, its merits being recognized not only by Lutherans, but by men of all denominations.⁴⁷⁾

Saxony School Plan

Though Philip Melancthon is the author of the Saxony

46) Ibid., p. 91.

47) Dr. Theo. Graebner, The Story of the Catechism, St. Louis, 1928, p. 137.

School Plan, a discussion of the same finds a place here because it reflects the type of school Luther would have organized. As is well known, Luther and Melancthon, intimate friends as they were, worked together in carrying out the gigantic achievements of the Reformation. They understood the school situation of their times and showed no signs of disagreement on the plan of an organized school. That Melancthon sanctions the educational ideas of Luther expressed in his Letter to the Councilmen of 1524 is evident from that fact that he wrote the preface thereto and edited it. In the year 1528, as a direct result of the visitation of the Saxon parishes, Melancthon drew up the Saxony School Plan. Ten years later Luther revised it to some extent.

The reason for the schools it proposed to establish, as announced in the plan, was to make one qualified to teach in church and to govern. Three principles were to guide the teachers:

They shall be careful to 1) teach the children only Latin, not German, nor Greek, nor Hebrew, as some have formerly done who burden the poor children with a diversity which is not only unprofitable, but harmful. 2) They shall not burden the children with many books; 3) and they shall separate them into three classes.⁴⁸⁾

The three classes indicated, according to J. W. Richard, were to pursue the following curriculum: First Class, Study of the Primer, alphabet, Lord's Prayer, Creed, and other prayers. Read Donatus (Latin Grammar), listen daily to the

⁴⁸⁾ James William Richard, Philip Melancthon, New York, 1898, p. 134.

explanation of a verse or two from Cato so as to acquire a good vocabulary. Second Class, Learn Grammar, including ethnology, Syntax, Prosody. Read the Fables of Aesop, Dialogues of Mosellanus, and the Colloquies of Erasmus, also Terence and Plautus. Recite the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Ten Commandments, and commit a number of Psalms. Study Gospel of Matthew, the two Pauline Epistles to Timothy, First John, and the Proverbs of Solomon. Third Class, Continue study of Grammar, read Virgil, Metamorphoses of Ovid, Offices or Letters of Cicero, write Latin verse, and study dialectic and rhetoric.

During the first hour in the afternoon all the children, both large and small, were to be trained in music. The boys were required to speak Latin, and the teachers, as far as was possible, were to speak only Latin with the boys in order that they might be encouraged in such exercise.

The three classes do not represent so many years of study. Students were advanced only when they had completed the lower classes. Several years were occupied in completing the three-fold course. Graded instruction was evident throughout the Plan.

From the Latin school the boys were sent to the gymnasium proper, and to the "Fuerstenschulen" which were founded a few years after Luther's death. The gymnasium formed the connecting link between the Latin school and the University even as it does today in the educational system of the Fatherland.

For this Plan as well as similar ones elsewhere plus numerous popular text-books, Melancthon has merited the title of Preceptor of Germany. Save for the neglect of the mother tongue,

educators regard this Plan as a fine, organized school system, far in advance of John Milton's obstruse plan of education (1644) which included the most of the languages and, as a whole, was adapted to children of Milton's caliber only.

Translation of the Bible

Probably the greatest, most far-reaching educational legacy of Luther is his brilliant translation of the Bible into the vernacular of his people. Unlike anything else, it paved the way for the general enlightenment of the Teutonic race. Nothing so powerfully stirred the common classes from their lethargy as did Luther's German Bible. It seized them by the hand, as it were, in the third decade of the sixteenth century and guided them into the land of intellectual, spiritual, political, and social advancement. In the home, in the school, in the church this Book was now read and explained while its grand principles and lofty ideals contributed unavoidably to the general culture of the hearers. It is not incorrect to say that until Luther's day the Bible had been closed, but with Luther's translation it became the Open Bible, open to all who could read or listen. Their eyes were now opened, too, and they realized how the iron hand of Rome had crushed them for centuries. They saw the fraud of the papacy and how they were held in religious and political thralldom. They became conscious of their right to an education and longed for enlightenment. In the wake of the Open Bible went religious freedom, and therefore political, social, and intellectual freedom as well. Luther's

Bible was truly a powerful instrument for the educational uplift of the suppressed, Mediaeval mind, and all historians may well say,

No other thing which Luther ever did contributed so profoundly to the real education of the German people***next to his translation of the Scriptures, nothing he did had so profound an influence on German education as his Catechisms.⁴⁹⁾

And Dr. Schaff does not exaggerate when he says that if Luther had done nothing else than translate the Bible, he would be one of the greatest benefactors of the German-speaking race.⁵⁰⁾

Luther's German Bible was more than a translation; it created at once a common tongue for the dialect-divided German-speaking peoples. It was not written in the Saxon dialect spoken at Wittenberg, but elevated and popularized that dialect for the people throughout the land. Students of philology are generally agreed that Luther, by virtue of his German Bible, is the father of modern High German. Dr. Schaff voices this opinion when he credits Luther with having given shape and form to modern High German and is thus its creator.⁵¹⁾ Previous translations of the Bible were done into dialects foreign to people outside a very limited area. Luther's Bible was intelligent to Germans of any dialect.

Luther took infinite pains with his masterpiece--the German Bible. He delved into proverbs and folk literature to construct therefrom a popular, literary tongue. He studied

49) Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 99.

50) Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, New York, 1888, VI, 341.

51) Ibid., p. 345.

zoology in order to give the right names to the animals in the Bible. He asked the butcher to name the parts of a sheep, so that he could translate correctly. He had the court-preacher, Spalatin to name and describe the gems in Rev. 21, 19 and, if possible, to send specimens from the Elector's collection. Melanchthon was delegated to correspond with learned men regarding various coins. Luther spent years in polishing his translation. He once wrote to a friend:

Sometimes we have sought two, three, four weeks for a single word, and then sometimes we did not find it.

We are now sweating over the Prophets. Good God! What a big job to make the Hebrew authors speak German! How they balk, and will not give up their Hebrew tongue and speak in the barbaric German. Just as if you would force a nightingale to imitate a cuckoo!⁵²⁾

Luther's language effected a fine unifying bond between the divers states in Germany. In an educational and spiritual way, it made for a bond of unification among the Germans as did the sword and cannon of the iron chancellor, Bismark, in a political way. It was this sense of unity that contributed mightily toward the strength of this world power and gave it an interest in and an opportunity for intellectual advancement. Luther's open, High German Bible is an educational factor of the sixteenth century of untold merit and importance.

The Reformer began his task during his confinement on the Wartburg in 1521. After Melanchthon had examined the manuscript, the New Testament appeared in print in the fall of 1522. The

⁵²⁾ Dallmann, op. cit., p. 181.

Old Testament together with the Apocrypha was completed in 1534 with the help of Melanchthon and other scholars at Wittenberg. Luther continued to polish the text until the time of his death in 1546. He was eminently qualified for this task above his fellows because of his familiarity with the original languages, his mastery of the vernacular, and his faith in the revealed Word of God.

Higher Schools of Learning

Luther has been severely criticized by his opponents as a bitter foe of higher schools and universities. It is true that Luther did employ harsh terms in writing about the universities of his day. He called them the "synagogues of Satan", the "gates of hell", and "the devil's taverns". In so doing, however, Luther did not condemn the university as such. If any one, he advocated university work especially for more apt students. He himself taught for over thirty years in the Wittenberg university and promoted its interests until his death. It was not the higher schools as such which Luther attacked, but the curriculum used in his day which had decayed under the reign of the papacy. The scholastics with their insistence on the study of "the heathen" Aristotle had side-tracked the study of the Bible and given the university of Luther's day a purely pagan atmosphere. One did not hear therein the pure Gospel of Christ, but the time was taken up with a discussion of useless, foolish topics: whether God could have made the world better in the beginning, than that which He did create; whether God

can make a father without a son or vice versa; whether God can ordain that that which has already taken place, did not take place, or how many angels can sit on the point of a needle! These questions together with the books of Aristotle occupied the attention of the scholastics to the woeful neglect of the Holy Scriptures. When the Reformer inveighs against the higher schools of his day he has in mind, not the educational system as such, but the subjects offered. The root of the difficulty, Luther contends, lies in Aristotilian philosophy. Imbued with Aristotle's sound logic and reasoning, the scholastics eventually introduced his dialectics into the study of religious questions. They attempted to rationalize everything in the Scriptures according to Aristotle's rules of logic! That, in turn, led to scholasticism and utter folly. Never had higher schools of learning fallen into such decay, not because Aristotle's reasoning was particularly faulty, but because the scholastics hopelessly cast the dialectics of Aristotle and the revealed truth of Scriptures into the same crucible only to produce a n horrible monster! It is for this reason that Luther uses strong language and harsh invective against the higher schools of his day, for Christ and Aristotle had nothing in common. They are as distinct as day and night and have no fellowship whatsoever!

Luther was introduced to the study of the "Stagirite" at the university of Erfurt, 1501-1505. It left a deep and lasting impression on his mind. As Luther gradually came to see the light of truth in the Gospel he developed an undying hatred

for Aristotle whom he scornfully dubbed the "High priest of human reason". Luther's aversion for the philosophy of Aristotle is to be found in the religious or theological difference between it and the Scriptures; whereas the Bible, as Luther convincingly shows in his pamphlets, sermons, and books, teaches justification by faith alone, Aristotle and the Scholastics after him would make salvation dependent upon good works. Luther would accept any doctrine of Holy Writ whether it be above reason or not; Aristotilian philosophy would rationalize everything and accept only that which can be clearly understood. Luther's battle against Aristotle is purely a theological one. It has nothing to do with the principle of higher education.

One of the finest turns Luther did for the universities of his day was the expulsion of Aristotle from the high pedestal he formerly occupied. If he had done nothing else for the schools of his day he would have performed a deed of the first rank. Before he nailed the ninety-five theses to the church door at Wittenberg Luther had already reformed the curriculum of the university there in which he was a professor. Called there in 1508 to teach Aristotelian philosophy, he soon substituted it for theology, and as his influence grew, he modified the entire course of study there, banishing most of Aristotle's books save those which do not deal with subjects opposed to the Christian faith. Later, in 1520, he advises the Christian Nobility:

Now, my advice would be that the books of Aristotle, the Physics, the Metaphysics, Of the Soul, Ethics, which have hitherto been considered the

best, be altogether abolished, with all others that profess to treat of nature, though nothing can be learned from them, either of natural or of spiritual things. Besides, no one has been able to understand his meaning, and much time has been wasted and many noble souls vexed with much useless labour, study, and expense. I venture to say that any pottor has more knowledge of natural things than is to be found in these books. My heart is grieved to see how many of the best Christians this accursed, proud, knavish heathen has fooled and led astray with his false words. God sent him as a plague for our sins.

Does not the wretched man in his best book, Of the Soul, teach that the soul dies with the body***

Then there is the Ethics, which is accounted one of the best, though no book is more directly contrary to God's will and the Christian virtues. Oh, that such books could be kept out of the reach of all Christians! Let no one object that I say too much, or speak without knowledge. My friend, I know of what I speak. I know Aristotle as well as you or men like you.⁵³⁾

In spite of his dislike for the arguments of the Greek philosopher, Luther was charitable towards that which was valuable purely as an intellectual exercise and did not contradict the inspired Word. He modified his desire to remove Aristotle entirely when he said:

I would, however, gladly consent that Aristotle's books of Logic, Rhetoric, and Poetry, should be retained, or they might be usefully studied in a condensed form, to practise young people in speaking and preaching; but the notes and comments should be abolished, and, just as Cicero's Rhetoric is read without note or comment, Aristotle's Logic should be read without such long commentaries.⁵⁴⁾

To dethrone Aristotle was truly an Herculean task in the sixteenth century. During the Middle Ages this pagan philosophy had gradually attained a position of the greatest

53) Luther, To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, (1520), Harvard Classics, New York, 1910, XXXVI, 338.

54) Ibid., p. 339.

pre-eminence. Many, in fact, came to regard him as the precursor of Christ in place of John the Baptist! His logic (dialectics) was the unquestioned authority and was taught in all the schools. Doctors of divinity were imbued with Aristotilian philosophy but were quite untaught in the Scripture themselves. Luther himself was created a doctor of the Holy Scriptures in 1512 before he knew and understood the formal principle of the Reformation, justification by faith without the deeds of the law! One who could master Aristotle and his heathen philosophy became a doctor of theology! The defense of Aristotle was considered a greater virtue than the defense of Christ! Kuiper records that

In some universities candidates for a degree were required to take an oath that they would teach nothing contrary to Aristotle.⁵⁵⁾

Estimate of the Teacher

Luther exhibited a deep interest in the teaching profession and often said that, next to the ministry, he preferred the office of a teacher. He himself was a born teacher and could not only impart his knowledge to others, but fill them with the enthusiasm of his own spirit. From his own experience he was fully conscious of the difficulty attendant upon the teacher and, therefore, could sympathize with him. For a faithful teacher Luther has high praise. In his classical statement regarding the pious instructor he frankly says that,

****a diligent and pious school-teacher, or master, or whoever it is that faithfully trains and teaches

55) Kuiper, op. cit., p. 54.

boys, can never be sufficiently rewarded or repaid with any money, as even the heathen Aristotle says. Nevertheless, this work is as shamefully despised among us as though it was nothing at all. I myself, if I could leave the preaching office and other things, or had to do so, would not be so glad to have any other work as that of school-master, or teacher of boys, for I know that it is the most useful, the greatest, and the best, next to the work of preaching. Indeed, I scarcely know which of the two is the better; for it is hard to make old dogs obedient and old rascals pious; and that is the work at which the preacher must labor, often in vain. But young trees can be better bent and trained, though some of them break in the process. Let it be one of the greatest virtues on earth faithfully to train other people's children; very few people, almost none, in fact, do this for their own.⁵⁶⁾

Luther showed himself a wise educator in upholding the honor of the teacher. Where the teacher enjoys the respect of his pupils, there is apt to be an efficient school. While this is true of a teacher in a secular school, it is particularly true of a religious school. Respect for the teacher is in keeping with the Fourth Commandment which Luther so thoroughly explains in his Large Catechism.

State Control and Support of Schools

Probably the most unusual innovation introduced by Luther into the educational system of his day was the placing of schools under the guardianship of the state. Prior to that time the church, religious orders, and philanthropic persons interested themselves in the establishment of schools and the training of the youth.⁵⁷⁾ But these efforts were sporadic and inadequate; and Luther clearly saw that in order to insure stability and

56) Luther, Sermon on Keeping Children in School, (1530), Philadelphia, 1931, IV, 173-174.

57) R. B. Peery, "Luther's Influence in Education," Education, (Boston), 1917, p. 31.

efficiency, it was necessary that the state assume the responsibility for the establishment and support of both primary and secondary schools.

Progress of Luther's Educational Work

There was no immediate and radical improvement in the educational condition of northern Europe during Luther's day. Historians have shown that there was no rapid upbuilding of schools, no general change in the curriculum, no sweeping innovation of all educational practices. It is true that Melancthon and Bugenhagen established many schools throughout Germany and Denmark, but only to replace those displaced by the Reformation. The actual operation of the Reformer's educational ideals had to wait a century or more after Luther's death. He established the theory; others were to put it into operation. Compulsory attendance, for example, of which Luther was the first protagonist, developed very slowly. The first compulsory attendance law of any moment was passed for the city of Weimar in 1619. In 1642 a similar law was inaugurated in Gotha, and not until 1773 in Saxony. But Luther first suggested the idea.

As a whole, realism in whatsoever field of endeavor, must fight for an existence. Luther's educational principles may rightly be classed under realism in education; for that reason, however, they were long in being realized. A recent writer finds that:

Realism is involved in his (Luther's) plea for a broader curriculum; for the study of things rather than words and including the study of

external nature; for the use of practice and oral methods; for the appeal to the pupil's interest; and for a milder discipline. These matters are now definitely incorporated into school practice, but the world had to wait a long time, after Luther spoke for them. Most of them were reaffirmed by Comenius and again promptly forgotten until the eighteenth century gave them new and enduring life.⁵⁸⁾

It was virtually impossible for Luther's advanced pedagogical ideas to be put into immediate practice everywhere during the turbulent Reformation Era. Any such overturning of established institutions of a thousand years standing as occurred during the sixteenth century could not but be accompanied by strife and confusion. Churches and schools alike suffered from the resulting turmoil occasioned by the political and religious revolt. The entire educational system of old standing was disrupted and could not by any man or party be remedied in a fortnight. It took time and much of it. The Protestant religious theory had it that the elements of education should be extended to all, to entirely new classes of people who had never in the history of the world enjoyed such advantages. Excellent as the theory of Luther was, it took more than a century for its eventual accomplishment. The funds were lacking, teachers were few in number, and opposition everywhere prevalent. The attendant reasons are many as Cumberley admits:

In place of the schools destroyed, or the teachers driven out if no destruction took place, the reformers made an earnest effort

⁵⁸⁾ Harry G. Good, "The Position of Luther Upon Education", School and Society, (Lancaster, Pa.), Nov. 3, 1917, p. 517.

to create new schools and supply teachers. This, though, required time, especially as there were in the world as yet no body of vernacular teachers, no institutions in which such could be trained, no theory as to education except the religious, no supply of educated men or women from which to draw, no theory of state support and control, and no source of taxation from which to derive a steady flow of funds.⁵⁹⁾

The Protestant princes attempted to remedy the deficiency by ordering the establishment of schools. The landed nobility, however, unused or even averse to providing for the education of their serfs, raised serious objections to a school tax. The merchant classes, too, in the cities were not willing to pay taxes for artisans and servants; it had not been done in the history of memory!⁶⁰⁾

The peace of the land, moreover, was continuously disturbed by war and bloodshed. Wars would end in one place only to begin in another quarter. One year after the signing of the Augsburg Confession the League of Smalcald was formed as a measure of defense on part of the Protestants against the insidious attacks of the Catholic Party. From 1546 to 1552 a desultory warfare was waged between these two principal parties and ended finally, after many changes of fortune on either side, in the Religious Peace of Augsburg (1555).

The peace of the church, too, was broken by internal dissension. Violently fought theological controversies were waged on all sides--the adiaphoristic, the Majoristic, the

59) Cubberley, op. cit., p. 351.

60) Ibid., p. 352.

Synergistic, the Flacian, the Osiandrian and Stancarlian, the Antinomistic, and probably the fiercest of all, the Crypto-Calvinistic--only to leave in their wake unrest, hatred, and disorganization. The rapid development of the school system which Luther advocated was a thing impossible under such conditions while the work of the ministry itself was largely undone. The arena of theological debate was not cleared until 1580 (Formula of Concord).

To add to the misery, a religious war broke out in the first quarter of the following century, the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). Fought on German soil, it left that country in virtual destitution and chaos. Homes, churches, and schools lay in ruins while the people were impoverished. It took another generation after the Peace of Westphalia (1648) before Comenius could carry on the Reformer's school work and give popular education a firmer and lasting basis. From then onward the school reform of Luther continued to grow and spread so that it can be said that the public school system of America today has its root in the Reformation.⁶¹⁾

The seed of educational reform had been sown by Luther in the third decade of the sixteenth century. He founded the theory. It was to remain for later leaders in the second half of the seventeenth century to give shape and form to Luther's high purpose. The unrest in the political, religious, and

61) Ibid., p. 351.

economic world forbade the fruition of his plans in the Reformation Era proper.

Estimates of Luther as an Educator

Luther has been severely attacked by foes and highly praised by friends. A man of his position and of his influence and power could not escape the vituperation and invective of his enemies nor yet the encomium of his followers. Among those who have criticized destructively Luther's policies in the field of religion and education are Janssen in his "History of the German People", Paulson, German philosopher, educator, and historian, and Denifle, Catholic historian. Prejudice and bigotry are apparent in most of their attacks.

Protestant educators and historians have the highest praise for the educational reforms of the German prophet. Painter, Bruce, Lindsay, Schaff, Seeley, Eby, and Zundel speak in the loftiest tones when referring to the pedagogical activity of the Reformer. Painter, for example, writes:

In education, as in religion, Luther showed himself great, a seer in advance of his age, the founder of a newer and higher culture.⁶²⁾

Again,

Though it is not generally recognized, yet Luther brought about as important a reformation in education as in religion.⁶³⁾

62) Painter, op. cit., p. 146

63) Ibid., p. iv.

Seeley, too, would give the reformer a well-deserved niche in the hall of fame, commenting thus:

As an educational reformer, he had earned for himself the world's gratitude. It must be admitted that Luther's main purpose was the reformation of the church, and that his educational work merely grew out of the need of general intelligence as a necessary adjunct to that work.⁶⁴⁾

One more quotation in praise of Luther as an educator will suffice, that of Ditte who reasons:

If we survey the pedagogy of Luther in all its extent, and imagine it fully realized in practice, what a splendid picture the schools and education of the sixteenth century would present! We should have courses of study, text-books, teachers, methods, principles, and modes of discipline, schools and school regulation that could serve as models for our own age.⁶⁵⁾

As a whole Luther did not align himself with the work of the Humanists nor advocate their ideas of culture in his reconstruction of the secondary schools. He did, however, buy and read the books of Erasmus as they came off the press, used his 1516 edition of the Greek New Testament in the work of translating the Bible, and espoused the study of the classical languages. Though he may have learned something from the Humanists (Dante, Petrarch, Colet, Boccaccio, de Medici, More, Erasmus), they had not much to offer for the great work he was carrying on, and little, if anything, in the reform of the primary and secondary school systems.

As a whole, Luther has no peer in the field of primary

64) Seeley, op. cit., p. 166.

65) Dau, op. cit., p. 218

instruction in the sixteenth century and his clarion call for popular education has earned for him a pedestal of undying fame.

Conclusion

Such was Luther as an educator. Above everything else he was a church reformer, pointing the sinner to Christ and His gracious forgiveness. The great task of his life was the reform of church doctrine and life in conformity with God's Word. In fact, the entire burden of his message rested upon that one, great religious truth, the heart of which is to be found in the central doctrine of all Scripture, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law".⁶⁶⁾ But in so far as he advocated religious freedom and true Gospel liberty, he became an educational, political, and social reformer as well.

His program of educational reform has won for him the plaudits of the world's renowned. It paved the way for the modern public school system of Germany and the United States, as any impartial investigation will show,⁶⁷⁾ and has during these four-hundred years upheld the right of the common man to an education.

Generations in past history have risen up to praise him

66) Rom. 3, 28.

67) Seeley, op. cit., p. 169; Cubberley, op. cit., p. 351; Peery, op. cit., p. 35.

for his church and school reforms, and countless thousands shall in future days lift up their hearts in thanksgiving to Luther for his heroic defense of popular education, but above all, for leading them back to faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ as the only hope of salvation for each immortal soul.

"God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure
Shall to eternity endure".

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