

**APOSTOLIC MISSIONS**

Apostolic Missions  
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**“HOW READEST THOU?!”  
– LUKE 10:26**

’Tis one thing now to read the Bible through,  
And another thing to read and learn and do:  
’Tis one thing now to read it with delight,  
And quite another thing to read it right.  
Some read it with design to learn to read,  
But to the subject pay but little heed;  
Some read it as their duty once a week,  
But no instruction from the Bible seek:  
Whilst others read it with but little care,  
With no regard to how they read, nor where!  
Some read it as a history, to know  
How people lived three thousand years ago.  
Some read to bring themselves into repute,  
By showing others how they can dispute:  
Whilst others read because their neighbors do,  
To see how long ’twill take to read it through.  
Some read it for the wonders that are there,  
How David killed a lion and a bear;  
Whilst others read, or rather in it look,  
Because, perhaps, they have no other book.  
Some read the blessed Book they don’t know why,  
It somehow happens in the way to lie;  
Whilst others read it with uncommon care,  
But all to find some contradictions there!  
Some read as tho’ it did not speak to them,  
But to the people at Jerusalem;  
One reads it as a Book of mysteries,  
And won’t believe the very thing he sees;  
One reads with father’s specks upon his head,  
And sees the thing just as his father said,  
Another reads through Campbell or through Scott,  
And thinks it means exactly what they thought.  
Whilst others read the Book through H. Ballou,  
And if it cross his track, it can’t be true!  
Some read to prove a preadopted creed—  
Thus understand but little what they read;  
For every passage in the Book they bend,  
To make it suit that all important end!  
Some people read, as I have often thought,  
To teach the Book, instead of being taught,  
And some there are who read it out of spite,—  
I fear there are but few who read it right.  
So many people in these latter days,  
How read the Bible in so many ways,  
That few can tell which system is the best,  
For every party contradicts the rest!!

— UNIVERSALISM AGAINST ITSELF,  
by Alexander Hall, 1846

*The Drunkard’s*

O, feel what I have felt,  
Go, bear what I have borne;  
Sink ’neath a blow a father dealt,  
And the cold, proud world’s scorn;  
Thus struggle on from year to year,  
The sole relief—the scalding tear.

Go, weep as I have wept,  
O’er a loved father’s fall,  
See every cherished promise swept—  
Youth’s sweetness turned to gall;  
Hope’s faded flowers strewed all the way  
That led me up to woman’s day.

Go, kneel as I have knelt;  
Implore, beseech, and pray,  
Strive the besotted heart to melt,  
Be cast with bitter curse aside—  
Thy prayers, burlesqued, thy tears defied

Go, stand where I have stood,  
And see the strong man bow;  
With gnashing teeth,  
lips bathed in blood,  
And cold and livid brow;  
Go, catch his wandering glance, and see  
There mirrored, his soul’s misery.

Go, hear what I have heard—  
The sobs of sad despair,  
As memory’s feeling fount hath stirred,  
And its revealings there  
Have told him what he might have been,  
Had he the drunkard’s fate foreseen.

Go to my mother’s side,  
And her crushed spirit cheer;  
Thine own deep anguish hide,  
Wipe from her cheek the tear.  
Mark her dimmed eye,  
her furrowed brow,  
The gray that streaks her dark hair now;  
Her toil-worn frame, her trembling limb,  
And trace the ruin back to him  
Whose plighted faith, in early youth,  
Promised eternal love and truth;  
But who, forsworn, hath yielded up  
That promise to the deadly cup,  
And led her down from love and light,  
From all that made her pathway bright,  
And chained her there ’mid want and  
strive,  
That lowly thing, a drunkard’s wife!  
And stamped on childhood’s brow so mild,  
That withering blight, a drunkard’s child!

Go, hear, and see, and feel, and know,  
All that my soul hath felt and known,  
Then look upon the wine-cup’s glow;  
See if its brightness can atone;  
Think if its flavor you will try,  
If all proclaimed, “’Tis drink and die!”


Tell me I hate the bowl;  
Hate is a feeble word:  
I loathe, abhor—my very soul  
With strong disgust is stirred  
When’er I see. Or hear, or tell,  
Of the dark beverage of hell!

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**THE WORD DECLARES THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST**

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Sometimes we are told that there is no verse in the New Testament that says "Jesus is God," with the implication that there is no straightforward claim to his divinity to be found in its pages. Such, however, is not the case. For instance, in the following passages the deity of Christ is either explicitly asserted or strongly implied. In Titus 2:13, Paul speaks of believers "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." Read also how Peter opens his second epistle greeting in 2 Peter 1:1. Luke records Paul's words to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:29 where he reminds them that they are overseers of "the church of God which he purchased with His own blood." Such a statement makes no sense unless we accept the full force of the doctrine of God manifest in the flesh: Jesus Christ was God in the flesh, therefore we may speak of God shedding his own blood. John testifies to Jesus (whom he calls the Word) in the foreword to his Gospel: "In the beginning was

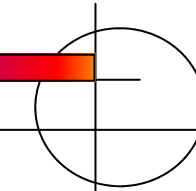
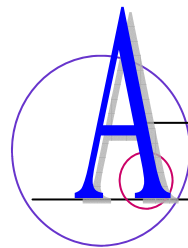
the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn. 1:1). It is thus not surprising that Thomas confesses Jesus to be "My Lord and My God" in John 20:28. The author of Hebrews identifies Jesus, the Son as the person about whom the Psalmist (Ps. 45:6) said: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" (Heb. 1:8). Paul, Peter, Luke, John, Thomas, and James—all of these unambiguously and unanimously testify of the One True and Living God as being Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus Christ as God is set forth in Scripture in numerous other places and in a variety of other ways as well. First, the attributes of the one, true God of Israel are ascribed freely and without apology to Jesus by the writers of the New Testament. No first-century Jew could have done so without fully understanding the radical theological significance of such an ascription. The author of Hebrews applies Psalm 102:25-26, which asserts the eternity of God, to Christ in He-

brews 1:11-12 ("you are the same, and your years will not come to an end"), and as we have already seen John declares the Word's eternity in the prologue to his Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word." Our Lord's immutability is asserted in Hebrews 13:8 where we are told that Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Jesus himself claims the attribute of omnipresence in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:20. "I am with you always," he says. This is only possible if he is the Everlasting Father. Jesus' omniscience is regularly stressed in the Gospel records, as for instance John's astounding declarations that Jesus "knew all men" and "knew what was in man" (Jn. 2:24-25) or Luke's almost incidental comment that Jesus knew what the Pharisees were thinking (Lk. 6:8). The New Testament also indicates that Christ possesses the divine attribute of sovereignty. Jesus himself claims unlimited divine authority when he announces

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**THIS ISSUE'S GUEST ARTICLE**

**Bro. James Groce presents the powerful evidence of the deity of Jesus found in the Scriptures in "The Word Declares The Deity Of Jesus Christ."**



DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

(continued from page 1)

"All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18) and Paul reiterates the point when he says: "in [Jesus Christ] all the fullness of the godhead dwells bodily...and he is the head over all rule and authority" (Col. 2:9-10). To claim that a person is eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, is to claim that person to be God — which is precisely what the New Testament does declares of Jesus Christ.

A second way in which the Scriptures testify to Christ's deity is that the great Old Testament names of God are applied to him. Repeatedly the divine names of Israel's God are taken up by Jesus Christ or employed by his disciples in reference to him. For instance, the great Old Testament covenantal name of God, Yahweh, or Jehovah, which is translated Lord (kurios) in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament) nigh unto seven thousand times is applied in its fullest sense to Christ on numerous occasions. Paul indicates that the fundamental confession of a Christian is "Jesus is Lord" (Rom. 10:9). He considers such a profession necessary for salvation, and evidence of the work of the Holy Ghost in a person's life (1 Cor. 12:3). Furthermore, he indicates that there will come a day when the whole world will confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:11). This declaration of Christ's divine lordship is perhaps the earliest confession of the Church, and in the light of the Old Testament significance of the term and the early Christian's steadfast defense of Christ's unique lordship, it is apparent that "Lord" is far more than a polite title of address or mere acknowledgment that he is our master. We may add that New Testament writers routinely apply Old Testament "Lord" passages to Jesus (e.g., Jn. 12:41 says that Isaiah's vision was of Christ on the throne in Is. 6:10, see also Rom. 8:34, Acts 2:34, and 1 Pet. 3:22). We may mention in passing that Jesus

refers to himself with the exalted "I AM" formula repeatedly in the Gospel of John (Jn. 8:58, 6:35, 8:12, 24, 11:25, 14:6, and 18:5-8), and calls himself "the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" in Revelation 22:13. All these divine names, constitute an argument of significant force to prove Jesus Christ is God Almighty.

Third, the Scriptural writers announce that Christ does divine works, activities that are ascribed to God alone in the Old Testament. At least four examples come to mind.

(1) John, Paul, and Hebrews speak of Christ as the agent of creation and the providential upholder of all things (Jn. 1:1-3, Col. 1:15-17, and Heb. 1:1, 3, 10). That God alone is the author and upholder of creation is, of course, a fundamental axiom of Hebrew theology.

(2) The Gospels indicate that Jesus performed miracles and saving acts by virtue of his own innate power. Though the prophets and apostles, too, did signs and wonders, they did so with derivative power. "The Son gives life to whom he wishes" (Jn. 5:21) is not the statement of a mere disciple or holy man. "I myself will raise [them] up on the last day" (Jn. 6:40) is not the word of even the most exalted prophet of Israel. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn. 2:19) is a challenge which admits of no parallel amongst even the greatest of the servants of God. Jesus' disciples clearly understood this difference, as Peter explains in Acts 4:7-10. Jesus Christ's power was not only of a different order than theirs, but also intrinsic and underived.

(3) The Gospels depict Jesus Christ as forgiving sin. For instance, to the scribes of Capernaum, Jesus says: "in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...I say to you [the paralytic], rise, take up your pallet and go home" (Mk. 2:10-11). Who but the Almighty may forgive sins?

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DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

(continued from page 2)

(4) The New Testament ascribes the right of final judgment of men and angels to Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament this is the right of God alone. As Paul says, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:10) and according to Jesus himself, the Father "has given all judgment to the Son" (Jn. 5:22). All these divine activities attributed to Jesus Christ from yet another line of witnesses to Him being nothing less than God Almighty.

Fourth, the worship of God was freely offered to Christ by his disciples, all of whom were Jews and who knew that to worship one other than God constituted idolatry and blasphemy. The New Testament is peppered with doxologies to him (e.g., Rom. 9:5, 2 Tim. 4:18, and 2 Pet. 3:18). Prayers are offered to him (e.g., Acts 7:59-60, 9:13-14, and Rev. 22:20). When the disciples met their resurrected Lord, instinctively, "they worshipped him" (Mt. 28:17). John declares him to be worthy "to receive...honor and glory and praise" (Rev. 5:12).

The force of such testimony constitutes yet more incontrovertible evidence of the New Testament view of the deity of Jesus Christ. Truly, our brief review is sufficient to indicate the weight of evidence for the divinity of Jesus Christ in the Gospels and Epistles. Now the Scriptural testimony may not convince some people of the claims of Christ, to be sure. But it is ridiculous to even suppose that Jesus Christ's divinity is not the claim or view of the Scriptures.

"Who is Jesus Christ?" is a question we cannot dodge. We cannot distance ourselves from it. No one can. We cannot muse upon it in a state of detached ambivalence, because we are inescapably involved in its answer. We cannot be neutral about it, because Jesus Christ will not let us. We may either answer "God incarnate—God in flesh" and bow our knees, or we must answer something—anything—else and reject him. There are no other options. You must accept or reject the scriptures. To reject the scriptural proof is to reject the Word Himself—Jesus Christ, God Almighty!

HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

In the offering of Isaac we have one of the most perfect pictures of the great sacrifice offered on Calvary that we find in the Bible. Let us tread softly as we follow it step by step, for we are on holy ground.

MOUNT MORIAH

MOUNT CALVARY

Gen. 22

Ver. 2. Take now thy son.

Thine only son.

Whom thou lovest.

And get thee into the land of Moriah.

Upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of.

And offer him there for a burnt offering.

Ver.4. Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the off.

Ver.6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son. And they went both of them together.

Ver.7 Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

Ver.8 God will provide Himself the lamb. R.V.

So they went both of them together.

Ver.9 Abraham built an alter there, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the altar upon the wood.

Ver.10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

Ver.11 The angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven.

Ver.12 Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son.

Ver.13 Abraham took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

Heb.1:2 God...hath spoken to us By His Son.

Jn.3:16 God...gave His only Begotten Son.

Jn.1:18 The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father.

2 Cron.3:1 Soloman began to build the house of the Lord... in Mount Moriah. (Thus what was probably the same spot became the place of the Temple sacrifices.)

Lk.23:33 And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him.

Heb.10:5-10 Sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Acts 3:18 God before hath showed by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

Jn.19:17 And He bearing His cross, went forth. (See John 10:17-18; 18:11)

Jn.1:29 Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

Rev.13:8 The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Ps.40:8 I delight to do thy will, O My God.

Acts 2:23 Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. (Is.53:6)

Is.53:10 It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. (Matt.27:46)

Contrast. (No voice from heaven) Mt.26:53,54; Mt.27:42 He saved others, Himself He cannot save.

Jer.6:26 (When God speaks of deep grief He compares it to the loss of an only son.)

Is.53:7,11 He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter... He shall bear their iniquities.

— From the book, "Christ In All The Scriptures," by A.M. Hodgkin, 1914

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Since our first publication in the Philippines in the early eighties, our mission has been to provide "doctrine and instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16) to the churches in the Philippines. By request, we are expanding our circulation, trusting that God will bless and use it for the benefit of His Kingdom.



## MODALISM

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the Modalists.

The Arian heresy taught that Father and Son are not only two distinct Persons, but that they do not even share the same nature. Christ was a divine being, but was not God. The orthodox party held that God was one in nature, but three in Persons. From the Arian perspective, orthodox Catholics and Modalists were not significantly different in their views. Both equated God and Christ at some level.

During the stormy debates that rocked the late Roman Empire over the Arian controversy, the charge of Modalism was frequently leveled at the orthodox position. The reason for this misunderstanding was largely linguistic. The Roman Catholics, writing in Latin, often used the word *persona* to refer to the idea of a divine Person. For Greek speakers, such as the Arians, however, the word *persona* was understood to mean “mask” or “role.” The Arians thought that when the orthodox spoke of three “personae” in the Trinity, they meant three “masks” that God wore when performing various “roles”—in other words, Modalism. German historian Adolf von Harnack believed that the early Catholics actually *were* Modalists, and that they abandoned Modalism for what is now known as the orthodox formula later in the fight with Arianism.

— From the book, “CRIMES OF PERCEPTION,” by Leonard George, 1995

## THE BOOK OF MORMON

The central sacred text of the MORMONS, this work was dictated by JOSEPH SMITH, the founder of the movement, and published in 1830. Smith claimed that seven years earlier he was visited by an angelic being named Moroni, who appeared by his bed. Moroni said he was the son of a man called Mormon, who had composed a divinely inspired book that he wrote on gold plates and buried near Smith’s home in New York State many centuries earlier. In 1827, Smith received another revelation that indicated the exact location of the plates. His followers believe that he excavated at the spot and uncovered the text published as *The Book of Mormon*.

The book was written in “Reformed Egyptian.” Translating the text should have been challenging because Egyptologists have no record that such a language ever existed. However, along with the plates, Smith found a special pair of spectacles that enabled him to understand the mysterious inscriptions. When the translation was completed, Smith reported, he gave the plates and spectacles to Moroni, who whisked them into the spirit world.

The writing style of *The Book of Mormon* is reminiscent of the King James translation of the Bible. In fact, the text contains many passages identical to the King James version (including translation errors), as well as many paraphrases from that work. Critics cite these passages as evidence of plagiarism; Mormons hold that the resemblances demonstrate that the same divine

source inspired both the King James and Mormon translators.

But much of the content of *The Book of Mormon* resembles no other known work. It tells the story of two ancient civilizations of the New World. The first, called the Jaredites, migrated to Central America from the Middle East before 2000 B.C. and were destroyed by God for their sins. In 600 B.C., a group of Jews traveled from Jerusalem to the Americas. In time, they divided into two hostile cultures, the Nephites and the Lamanites.

Christ visited the virtuous Nephites after His resurrection. However, in the fourth century A.D., the Nephites were destroyed in a battle with the Lamanites. God punished the Lamanites by turning their skins dark. Native Americans, Smith taught, are the descendants of these cursed people. Mormon was a Nephite. He buried his historical record at the battle, near Palmyra, New York, where Smith was led to recover them. The stories in *The Book of Mormon* have not been supported by the findings of archaeologists and physical anthropologists.

On the basis of his revelation, Smith preached that the New Jerusalem would one day be established by Christ in America. The central importance given to America by *The Book of Mormon* helps to explain the special appeal and rapid growth of Mormonism in the United States during the nineteenth century.

— From the book, “CRIMES OF PERCEPTION,” by Leonard George, 1995

## MODALISM

*Editors Note: The following article taken from the book, “Crimes of Perception” is written from the Trinitarian perspective. The case that the author presents against modalism, however, seems to ironically support the Biblical view of the Oneness of God. It is nothing new that the Truth is often labeled as heresy. When men of corrupt minds try to understand the beauty of divine revelatory Truth, the end result for them is to simply brush it off as “heresy.”*

This important heresy concerns the nature of the Christian Trinity. Also known as MODALISTIC MONARCHIANISM, Modalism played a significant role in a struggle to formulate a universally accepted Christian doctrine during the third and fourth centuries A.D. Modalism has periodically resurfaced throughout Western history. A simple version of this doctrine is common among Christians today, many of whom would be shocked to learn that their understanding of the Trinity is technically heretical.

The Christian doctrine that God is a Trinity has never been easy to comprehend. Indeed, the orthodox position has been that humans cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity through the use of reason alone. However, during the first four centuries A.D. two important aspects of the Christian view of God became clear: that there is only one God (monotheism), and that God is a Trinity comprising the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. How can God be both one and three? Efforts to clarify this paradox produced several responses in the ancient Christian community.

One of these responses was Modalism. According to the Modalists, God is a single divine person. God’s apparent multiplicity in the terms of the Trinity merely reflects the fact that God has

taken on various roles over time. When he is in heaven, God is called the father; when He incarnated on earth, God was the Son; and when He has affected human life since His incarnation, God is known as the Holy Spirit.

Modalism is perhaps the simplest way to untangle the Trinitarian paradox of one and many. However, the implications of Modalism clashed with several important beliefs of Catholic Christianity, and had to be rejected. For example, if the Son is just another name for God the Father, then Christ, the Son of God, was not human being, but the Creator of the universe masquerading as a man. Catholic Christians have always insisted that Christ was a human being, who was also God (another doctrinal paradox that produced another spate of heresies, climaxing in the disagreements at the COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON).

The Modalists’ idea that God the Father lived on earth produces even more difficulties, according to orthodox belief. If Christ was only God and not a man, then there is no reason to think that He had a human body made of flesh, and, therefore, He could not have been crucified (DOCETISM). If God the Father somehow did appear on earth with a human body, He would have suffered the physical agony of the crucifixion, and for most Christians the idea that the Creator could experience pain inflicted on Him by His own creation (PATRIPASSIANISM) was unthinkable.

The Modalist conviction that Father and Son are one Person fails to explain passages in the New Testament that seem to describe interactions between the Father and Son, the orthodox charged. These Biblical pas-

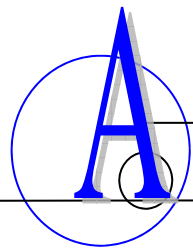
sages form the foundation for the Catholic description of Christ’s role in salvation: Christ’s suffering acted as a sacrifice to God the Father that atoned for the sins of Christians. It would make no sense for God to sacrifice Himself to Himself; therefore, Father and Son must be distinct Persons.

Modalism appeared in Rome at the end of the second century A.D. Immigrant preacher PRAXEAS convinced the bishop of Rome, VICTOR I, that Modalism should be promoted in order to combat another non-Catholic doctrine called ADOPTIONISM. Adoptionism was a threat because it was seen as denying the divinity of Christ. This explains the appeal of Modalism for opponents of Adoptionism; Modalism emphasizes the divinity of Christ to the point of merging Him with the Creator.

Praxeas was followed in Rome by a succession of Modalist teachers; Pope Victor was succeeded by ZEPHRINUS, who continued to support the Modalist doctrine. By the time Pope Callistus denounced SABELLIUS, the most prominent Modalist teacher of the time, around A.D. 220, the heresy had begun to spread through the Roman Empire.

By 260, Modalism proved so popular in the Egyptian city of Alexandria that Bishop Dionysius felt he had to magnify the distinction between the Father and Son in response. Many of his contemporaries thought that Dionysius went so far as to threaten the unity of God. Some scholars believe that Dionysius invented the heretical view known as ARIANISM in reaction to the theological provocation of

(See “Modalism” on page 6)



## FATHERS OF THE REFORMATION

*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron 1 Timothy 4:1-2*

### Martin Luther

Such was the situation, especially in Germany, when Leo X commissioned the friar, Tetzel, to preach indulgences and to ask money with which to build St. Peter's and do battle against the Turk.

Whether Tetzel exceeded the due limit or not, is a disputed point. But this made no difference whatever. For, whether he adhered to strict doctrine or not, his mission was unpopular and an attack upon him and his preaching would be welcomed.

This was Luther's opportunity. Not, indeed, that he had any plan, or that he dreamed of the length which he was to go. Nor is it of interest to enquire whether Luther was, or was not prompted by jealousy of Tetzel. The fact was that the friar was asking money from a wretched peasantry and impoverished nobles for the building of a church on the banks of the Tiber.

Luther's system developed slowly, for he accommodated himself to all who might be willing to break with the past. The peasants were pleased to hear that a priesthood is not necessary. Every Christian man, he teaches, shares in the priesthood. They needed no teacher, no guide.

Private judgment became supreme. God's Word was to each one what he thought it to be. There was no need of building churches or supporting a hierarchy. The princes were promised control in spirituals, as well as temporals, each in his own dominion. But, above all, prince and peasant were taught that there was no further need of battling with passion or denying appetite; no need of chastising the body and bringing it under subjection. Faith alone saved. Good works did not avail. Sin, if such a thing could be, did not interfere with one's prospects of salvation. It was a very consoling doctrine in those days of strife and passion.

Such was the situation, and Luther was, above all others, the man of the hour. He was not a scholar, but had a commanding eloquence of popular kind which stirred his followers to their depths. He changed, shifted, temporized, or advanced, as the situation might require. In this manner he brought about what is possibly the greatest revolution of all time, something he could have never have accomplished had not the situation been as I have described it.

Martin Luther was born in Eisleben, Saxony, in the year 1483. He was thirty-five years of age when he commenced his sensational career as a reformer. He was, from an early age, sensitive, morose, gloomy, and subject to fits of melancholy. His parents, like himself, were hot-headed, and sometimes brutal. The punishments they inflicted upon him remained with him as a source of irritation through life. His home was not a happy one.

He vacillated a good deal, as one not

sure of his ground, perhaps not sure of the support he sought for. At one time he professed profound submission to the pope; at another he called the pontiff antichrist, or his apostle. The inevitable result of his views, and the stubbornness in maintaining them, was excommunication which came in 1520, less than three years after his dramatic nailing of the ninety-five thesis to the door of his church in Wittenberg...

Here, then, is the system in a nutshell: faith alone, the Bible alone, interpreted by yourself alone. Any Christian man knows more than the Universal Church. The new faith was evidently subversive. No previous heresiarch ever went so far. But it must not be expected that Luther would live up to his own principles. If he gave his followers the Bible, he insisted that they should accept *his* interpretation of it; if he destroyed the old Church, he would raise on its ruin one of his own creation; if he dethroned the pope, he would set himself up with an arbitrary power such as no pontiff ever assumed. In his (Luther's) treatise, *de Captivate Babilonica*, we find these celebrated words: "Ita vides quam dives sit homo christianus et baptizatus, qui etiam volens non potest perdere salutem suam quantiscumque peccatis, nisi nolit credere. Null enim peccata eum possunt damnare nisi sola incredulitas," which I translate freely as follows: "So you see how rich the baptized Christian man is, since even though he should desire it, he cannot forfeit his salvation, no matter how often he sins: unless he refuses to believe. Sins, no matter how numerous or grievous, cannot damn him if only he clings to faith."

As to his championship of civil free-

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## REFORMATION

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dom, let us consider his attitude towards the Peasants' War in which 100,000 of them were slain. I quote from the Cambridge Modern History, Vol. II, page 193:

"Terror and proximity to Thuringia, the scene of the most violent and dangerous form of revolt, while they may palliate, cannot excuse Luther's efforts to rival the brutal ferocity of Munzer's doctrines. He must have known that the princes' victory, if it came at all, would be bloody enough without his exhortations to kill and slay the peasants like mad dogs, and without his promise of heaven to those who fell in the holy work. His sympathies with the masses seem to have been limited to those occasions when he saw them a useful weapon to hold over the heads of his enemies."

He said, 'Peasants must bear the crack of the whip and the whiz of bullets; if they refuse to obey, let the cannon balls whistle among them, or they will make things a thousand times worse...' 'Dear Lords,' he urged, 'smite, stab, destroy... Whoever dies fighting for authority is a martyr before God... I pray every one to depart from the peasants as from the devil himself.'

Luther anathematized every one whose belief differed from his own. 'He who does not believe my doctrine,' he once said, 'is sure to be damned.'

The Cambridge Modern History says, "the maxim *Cujus region ejus religio* is as fatal to true religion as it is to freedom of conscience."

The motto *Cujus region ejus religio*, everywhere adopted in Lutheran states, destroyed all liberty of conscience in the subject. The ruler alone enjoyed freedom. It was his privilege to choose what religion he pleased and impose it upon his subjects. Luther would himself be glad to force his religion upon all, but he had to make concessions in order to win the secular princes. The unfortunate people had no choice but to accept what was given them. This is the "freedom of conscience" that Luther gave the world. You have but to consult any candid historian to learn that this situation existed wherever Luther's teaching prevailed. The Encyclopedia Britannica says, "Freedom of conscience was established for princes alone and their power became supreme in religious as well as secular matters."

Luther's life was not a happy one. Towards the end he was wretchedly miserable. He was not quite pleased with his work, and the passions which he unchained were working mischief among his followers. His own habits of indulgence in eating and drinking had their effects upon his health. This was especially felt in his declining years.

But he left a legacy of hatred of Rome that continues to the present day. If the celebration of the four-hundredth anniversary of his nailing the ninety-five thesis to his church door has been a failure, and if the religion he taught would hardly be recognized by him today, still his influence upon the world is vast, and, no doubt, will continue to be. Reformer or deformer, evolutionist or revolutionist, he was and is a striking figure in history. But if the religion

of Christ is one of brotherly love, the religion of Luther is something very different.

— From the book "The Reformation," by Rev. Hugh P. Smyth, 1922

### AN AX TO GRIND

When I was a little boy, I remember, one cold winter morning I was accosted by a smiling man with an ax on his shoulder. "My pretty boy," said he, "has your father a grindstone?" "Yes, sir," said I. "You are a fine little fellow," said he; "will you let me grind my ax on it?" Pleased with the compliment of "fine little fellow," "Oh, yes, sir," I answered; "it is down at the shop."

"And will you, my man," said he, patting me on the head, "get me a little hot water?" How could I refuse? I ran and soon brought a kettleful. "I am sure," continued he, "you are one of the finest lads that ever I have seen; will you just turn a few minutes for me?"

Pleased with the flattery, I went to work; and I toiled and tugged till I was almost tired to death. The school-bell rang, and I could not get away; my hands were blistered, and the ax was not half ground.

At length, however, it was sharpened; and the man turned to me with, "Now, you little rascal, you've played truant; be off to school, or you'll rue it!"

"Alas!" Thought I, "it is hard enough to turn a grindstone, but now to be called a little rascal, is too much." It sank deep into my mind, and often have I thought of it since. When I see a merchant over polite to his customers, methinks, "That man has an ax to grind."

When I see a man, who is in private life a tyrant, flattering the people, and making great professions of attachment to liberty, methinks, "Look out, good people! That fellow would set you turning grindstones!"

— Benjamin Franklin