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The Contribution of Katherine Luther to the Homelife and Ministry of her Husband Martin

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF KATHERINE LUTHER TO THE HOMELIFE
AND MINISTRY OF HER HUSBAND MARTIN

A Research Paper
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Religion

by
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my lord, Ruth Ellen

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1. The Problem Area

Katherine von Bora Luther does not command a great deal of space in any Church History textbook. What is known about her life is in connection with that of her husband and Reformer Martin Luther. Katherine Luther stands in the shadow of her great husband Martin but it was possible to catch a glimpse of her character and contribution to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin.

2. The Problem

The problem was to discover the contribution of Katherine Luther to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin.

The underlying thought of this paper was that Katherine provided her husband Martin a strong homelife from which he could carry on his ministry.

3. Limitations of the Study

The topic ^{was} self limiting due to the scant amount of information recorded about Katherine von Bora Luther. There are few paragraphs about her life before and after her marriage to Martin. Ernst Kroker's book, Katherine von Bora, Martin Luthers Frau (Swickau, 1925), Second Edition, could not be located. This book was quoted a number of times by Luther historians.

The study did not limit itself to the period of the marriage but reached out in two directions. From the time of her birth to the time of her death, Katherine's life was filled with good works and a special ministry unique to her time.

4. Assumptions of the Study

The solution to the problem of Katherine Luther's contribution to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin was based upon the following assumptions:

- (1) That the books consulted were historically reliable.
- (2) That the information about Katherine was reliable.
- (3) That those who translated the words of German or Latin were accurate in their translation.
- (4) That those who wrote damaging remarks about either Katherine or Martin were doing so from an opposing religious view or in order to make money from slanderous gossip.

5. Importance of the Study

The study was important in that Katherine did have an impact upon Martin Luther, the Reformation, and upon the Protestant Movement. The study allowed us to gain a deeper insight into the life of the Reformer as well as an insight into the life of Katherine, his wife.

If the study was correct; that Katherine did make a contribution to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin; that evidence of this contribution will be of value to those who wish to gather a complete picture of the life of Martin Luther and of the person who made the contribution.

6. Procedure for the Solution

In order to establish a reasonable solution to the problem of the contribution Katherine Luther made to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin, it was necessary to present facts that showed that Katherine did contribute to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin. The life of Katherine von Bora Luther was traced from her birth to her death in order to show the contribution that she made to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin.

The second chapter presented a brief account of her birth, her early education, and her entrance and exit from a Roman Catholic Convent.

The third chapter covered a two year period from the time of her arrival in Whittenberg to her marriage with Martin Luther.

Chapter four told of the changes the marriage caused Martin and the Reformation.

Chapter five identified the contribution that Katherine made to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin.

Chapter six gave an account of her life following the death of her husband Martin.

Chapter seven gave the testimony of Martin Luther in behalf of his wife Katherine.

Chapter eight presented Katherine Luther as a model for the Protestant Parsonage.

In chapter nine a summary/conclusion was given of the investigation made in chapters two through eight; of the contribution Katherine Luther made to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin.

Chapter 2

THE CHILDHOOD AND CONVENT LIFE OF KATHERINE VON BORA

In order to become acquainted with Katherine von Bora Luther it was necessary to examine her childhood and convent life. The information that has come down to us helped in gaining some understanding of her character and upbringing.

1. The Birth of Katherine von Bora

Little information exists about Katherine's birth. It is reported that Martin Luther gave her a locket with the date, January 29, 1499 inscribed in it.¹ This, no doubt, is the birth date of Katherine von Bora. She was probably born in the small village of Lippendorf three miles south of Leipzig, Germany.²

The von Bora's were descendents of loyal knights who, many years before, had settled in the area. It is interesting to note that "bora" is a Wendist word meaning, "fir trees".³

A book by Ernst Kroker mentions that Katherine had three brothers and maybe a sister. It also states that she was first educated at the Benedictine school at Brehna.⁴

¹E.G. Schwiebert, Luther and His Times (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), p. 583

²ibid.

³ibid.

⁴ibid.

2. Katherine Put Into a Convent

Katherine's mother died while Katherine was a very young child. Following the death, her father re-married in 1505. From the beginning there was a certain amount of tension between Katherine and her step-mother. This tension grew to such a point that finally Katherine was placed in the Cistercian nunnery, Marienthron. The year is uncertain, but sometime between 1508-1509 is most likely.⁵ Here she trained for Holy Orders according to the precepts of Bernard of Clairvaux. On October 8, 1515 Katherine von Bora, then sixteen, was taken into the Cistercian Order.⁶

This Cloister, called the Nimbschem Cloister, was located near the border of the Elector of Saxony. It is little wonder that the news of the Reformation found its way into this and other cloisters. While Katherine was at the cloister she performed her duties with dedication and said her prayers faithfully.

At Marienthron Katherine enjoyed the company of two relatives. One was the sister of her mother, Aunt Margarete von Haubitz. She was the abbess of the cloister. A second aunt was the sister of her father. Her name was Magdalene. She was the one who was to escape with Katherine and ten other nuns from the cloister.

The cloister provided the nuns with an intense prayer life. In later years Katherine would remember this part of convent life.⁷

⁵ibid. p. 584

⁶ibid.

⁷William H. Lazareth, Luther on the Christian Home (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p. 17

3. Katherine's Escape From the Convent

The nuns in Nimbschen heard the monks from Grimma had left their monastery. Perhaps the sermons and tracts of the Reformer Martin Luther had found their way into the cloister. At least twelve nuns received the news with gladness and made a formal appeal to their families to help them leave the cloister. When the families refused to help a special letter was smuggled out to Martin Luther asking for help.⁸

It was indeed a dangerous undertaking to assist nuns in an escape. According to Civil and Canon law those involved in such a kidnap crime might be put to death.⁹

Only a few details of the escape are known. The whole undertaking was a well kept secret. The scant amount of information is good evidence of this secret.

Martin Luther contacted two friends who lived in the city of Torgau. These were Leonard Koppe and Wolf Tommitzsch. The former held a contract to supply the cloister with fish and beer.¹⁰ E. Jane Mall in her book, Kitty My Rib gives an account of the escape. The book, although fiction, follows the facts as recorded by historians. On Easter eve, April 4--5, 1523, twelve nuns made an opening in the clay wall, ran across the small court yard, and were quickly hidden in the fish barrels by Mr. Koppe. It was only a short distance to the Saxon border and to freedom. Three of the nuns were received by their

⁸ R. W. Czamanske, Four Hundred Years, ed. W.H.T. Dau (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1917), p. 139

⁹ Schweibert p. 585

¹⁰ Lazareth p. 14

¹¹ E. Jane Mall, Kitty My Rib (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), p. 7-18

families soon after the escape. The other nine rode through the night until they came to Torgau on Easter morning. At Torgau, Gaberiel Zwilling joined the group. The entire group came on to Whittenburg.¹² Martin Luther was waiting to welcome the free but homeless nuns. He set about to find lodging for them. For those willing to marry he set about to find them husbands.

¹²Schwiebert p. 585

Chapter 3

KATHERINE'S LIFE OUTSIDE THE CONVENT

Katherine had left the beautiful setting of the Nimbschen Convent for a new life. The city of Whittenburg was not the most beautiful city or setting in which to begin a new life, but there is no evidence that Katherine had problems in making the change. The wagon, containing the nine nuns and three escorts, must have attracted attention as it came into the city across the bridge. Martin Luther, who was not above begging, set about to find provisions for the now freed sisters.¹

1. Whittenburg in the Days of the Luthers

The city of Whittenburg dates back to 1180. "Whittenburg was a fortified city surrounded by a wall of earth and brick and a very deep moat. The wall had a thickness of sixty feet and was pierced by three gates."² We may assume that each gate had a bridge that crossed the moat. The population of Whittenburg was 3,000 people in the days of the Luthers. The citizens were mostly farmers, artisans, and tradesmen. The homes of Whittenburg were small buildings. Homes were made of wood, clay, and thatched roofs.

¹ibid. p. 586

²Koepchen, Four Hundred Years p. 173

The streets of Whittenburg were narrow and unimproved. Cattle, pigs, geese, and chickens roamed the streets freely. At night those wishing to venture out carried a lantern and walked carefully. Houses were not numbered but there were names given to streets such as, Kacoegien, Schlosz, Buergermeister, and Juristenstrasse.³

The town's water supply came from two brooks, the Lazy and the Quick. There were a number of wells also. These wells and brooks were not covered or protected from contamination. This health hazard, no doubt, was instrumental in the spreading of the plagues that frequented the city. Each family had responsibility for its own fire protection. We assume the neighbors would help in an emergency, but each family had to keep fire-fighting equipment and a barrel of water near the front of the house.⁴

The city of Whittenburg had its own court, coined its own money, and collected taxes from its citizens. It also owned other villages and managed the wine trading business within the city.⁵

The great show-place of the city was its own university. The Collegium of Fridericianum opened October 18, 1502. This school provided some income for the citizens of the city as well as for the family of Martin Luther, as we shall see later.⁶ Even though the city had its own college, the majority of the citizens were not educated and many could not sign their own name.⁷

At this time the Black Cloister was the most popular place in the city. Martin Luther, the town's most noted citizen, lived there. The cloister, complete with bathroom and tubs, was remodeled according

³ibid.

⁴ibid.

⁵ibid.

⁶ibid. p. 175

⁷ibid.

to Luther's wishes.

2. Katherine Finds a Home

Katherine was 24 years of age at this time. For some reason or another her family was unable to care for her. Some believe that her father had just died and that the brothers and step-mother were unable financially to take on another person. Kroker, according to Schwiebert, points out that Katherine stayed with professor Reichenback and his wife.⁸ There are others who believe she stayed with Lucas Cranach and his wife. We do know that Katherine spent a great deal of time in the Cranach home. It was here that she met the King of Denmark, Christian III, who would later play an important part in her life. He is reported to have given her a ring.⁹

Katherine soon found a place to work. She became a good manager of the Cranach home. What she learned here would be of great value in less than two years time.

We wonder what Katherine looked like. There are few paintings to be found of Katherine von Bora. These show her as having some African features as opposed to European ones. Plass reports that Kroker's portrait, shows her to be the opposite.¹⁰ Katherine seems to follow the pattern of the Wendish people. A medallion of 1540 shows her a little plump, mouth and nostrils delicately molded, with wide set, intelligent eyes, broad brow, and well proportioned face.¹¹ Her portraits

⁸Schwiebert p. 586

⁹ibid.

¹⁰Ewald Plass, This is Luther (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Pub. House, 1948), p. 253

¹¹Schwiebert p. 586

show a spirited lady and one who, according to Erasmus, was "remarkably gracious".¹²

3. Katherine's Courtship With Jerome

Katherine was well beyond the age when most girls were married. It was more common for a girl to be married in her early teens than in her mid-twenties. While at the Cranach home Katherine met and fell in love with one Jerome Baumgaertner, a student at the university. He likewise fell in love with Katherine. He proposed marriage while in Whittenburg, without his family's knowledge. Due to her poverty and the high hopes of Jerome's parents for a more suitable mate, Jerome did not marry Katherine. She became ill over the breakup. The fictional book, Kitty My Rib by E. Jane Mall gives a delightful account of this time in Katherine's life.¹³

When the engagement was broken Martin Luther set about to find another match for Katherine. Luther soon had a suitor for Katherine's hand in marriage. The Reverend Glatz, pastor at Orlamuend was suggested to Katherine. He was not well liked by the young people or by Katherine. It seems that her instincts were well founded, for sometime later he left the church and disappeared.¹⁴

At this time Katherine made her own choice in the matter. She was willing to marry either Professor Amsdorf or Martin Luther.

¹²ibid.

¹³Mall pp. 24-32

¹⁴Elgin S. Moyer, Who's Who in Church History (New Canaan, Conn.: Keats Pub. House, 1962), p. 258

This bit of daring gives us some insight into the personality of Katherine von Bora. Katherine told this to Amsdorf who in turn relayed the message to Martin Luther.

4. Katherine's Courtship and Marriage to Martin Luther

Martin Luther was determined not to marry. This was his view in 1521 and it seems it had not changed until Katherine made her own announcement of willingness to marry either himself or Amsdorf. Nothing is recorded about a formal courtship between the two. We only know that Katherine would be willing to marry Martin if he was of a mind to do so. Luther did not want to marry because he was not in a position to support a wife. He was expecting to be killed at any time for his faith and work as a reformer. Certainly he did not want a wife to live with this sense of fear.

Martin was aware that the Elector Fredrick did not approve of the marriages between nuns and monks. Since Fredrick was his sponsor Luther would do nothing to spoil their relationship by marriage to Katherine.¹⁵ Luther also knew that his father wanted him to marry and give him grandchildren. His parents had followed their son into the new faith and saw no reason why Martin should not marry as others of the clergy were doing. Luther had been in favor of marriages between nuns and monks but he himself had not practiced what he had preached. At best there must have been some struggle of heart and mind before Luther was willing to take the step himself. Much prayer went into his own decision to marry.

¹⁵Albert Hyma, New Light on Martin Luther (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1958), pp. 228-229

In April of 1525 Luther visited his parents. Perhaps this visit was another encouragement to marry. As far as a chronological order of events goes, Hyma does a good job in listing dates and places that show a steady progression towards the altar for the Reformer.¹⁶

Luther, who did not wish to offend the Elector, was waiting to hear of Fredrick's death. The Elector Fredrick died May 5. Following the news Luther was free to go to the Cranach home and talk to Katherine about marriage.¹⁷ It seems that Luther was already making plans for marriage; Hyma favors a time in late April for an engagement between Martin and Katherine.¹⁸ Some believe there was an agreement between the two, but only at the time of the wedding was there any formal notice of Luther's intentions.¹⁹

Katherine and Martin were married on June 13, 1525. The ceremony took place in the Black Cloister. A small group of friends witnessed the ceremony. Lucas Cranach and his wife substituted for the parents of Martin. Three others were present: Jones, Prior of the Castle Church; Apel, law professor from the university; and Burgenhauen, the officiating clergyman. Noticeably absent was Luther's close friend Philip Melancthon.²⁰ The Reichenbachs were also absent.

A small party followed the ceremony. Katherine and Martin began a new life together. The Black Cloister was now Katherine's new home. Their first house guest, Karlstadt, was given refuge during their first week of marriage.²¹

¹⁶Hyma p. 231

¹⁷Hyma p. 230

¹⁹Schwiebert p. 589

²¹Lazareth p. 28

¹⁸ibid.

²⁰ibid. p. 590

5. Reactions to the Marriage

Reaction to the marriage of Katherine and Martin was soon incoming. While some of his closest friends did not know of his plans to marry, they, nevertheless, defended him and his new bride. Philip Melanchthon, who at the outset of the marriage was discouraged by the marriage, became a regular visitor in the Luther home. Philip rushed to the defense of Luther when someone suggested that they had to get married because Katherine was pregnant.²²

Henry VIII of England thought the marriage was incest. For a monk to marry a virgin of the church could only be incest. Others believed that Anti-christ would be born from such a union. To such a statement Erasmus is reported to have said; "If the prophecy is true, what thousands of anti-christs must already exist in the world".²³ The Roman Church hailed this as Luther's greatest sin. The marriage between Martin and Katherine forever burned the bridge that might have allowed Luther to rejoin the Roman Church.

The marriage, of course, made the parents of Martin very happy. They were eager to welcome Katherine into the family. They were invited to a public ceremony on June 27. This public service for the benefit of friends and foes alike would seal and ratify the marriage and, "help to pronounce the benediction".²⁴

²² *ibid.*

²³ W. Carlos Martyn, The Life and Times of Martin Luther (New York: American Tract Society, 1866), p. 479

²⁴ W. M. Czamanske, Four Hundred Years p. 144

One opponent of the marriage nick-named Luther, "the new Pope under petticoat government".²⁵

So far as we know Luther and his bride were not greatly affected by the criticism. As long as Luther's enemies denounced what he was doing, Luther felt that he was in the Lord's will.

²⁵J. Verres, Luther an Historical Portrait (New York: Burns and Oates, 1884), p. 223

Chapter 4

THE CHANGES CAUSED BY THE MARRIAGE

When the Luthers set up house-keeping in the Black Cloister, Katherine Luther was at least one-half, if not the greater half, of this home and reformation contribution. The reformation of the home was as necessary as the reformation of the church. The Protestant Parsonage became a reality.

"Luther's marriage remains to this day the central evangelical symbol of the Reformation liberation and transformation of the Christian daily life."¹

1. The Change In Martin

Martin Luther had now put aside his own celibacy. He had preached against it and now he gave the best example of all. His own marriage opened the way for the honorable estate of marriage for the clergy. He believed that celibacy was still a special gift for some but for the most part, and for the majority, marriage was the intention of the Creator.

There was a period of adjustment for both Martin and Katherine to go through. Criticism continued to come to them but they seem to have taken little time to notice it. Martin was forty-two years old at this time and his daily schedule was quite routine: for example,

¹ Lazareth p. VII

awakening in the morning to find, "pigtails on the pillowcase".²

Katherine was an excellent housekeeper. No doubt her care for Martin added years to his life. His health was already broken. She was able to stabilize, to some degree, his broken health and provide him with a regular schedule of good meals, rest, and recreation.

The marriage was the best possible thing that could have happened to Martin. Luther states; "Before I married, the bed was not made for a whole year and became foul with sweat, at night I fell into bed without knowing anything was amiss".³ One can only guess at his physical condition after the life he lived in the monastery and then the life of a bachelor reformer for so many years. Martin Luther's health was not good.

As family physician, Katherine made little distinction between the curing of animals and humans. The same medicine was used for all creatures. Many of her home medicines were crude and distasteful, but she did the best she could. The next chapter discusses the role she played as household nurse.

2. The Change to the Reformation

Martin Luther was not the first member of the protestant clergy to marry, but the fact that the Reformer himself had taken a wife placed a stamp of approval upon such Christian unions far greater than anything he might have written on the subject. The clergy now admitted that they had longed for marriage, but could not marry, because of the unholy order of forced celibacy.

²ibid. p. 23

³ibid. p. 28

The Black Cloister became a parsonage. The quietness was forever replaced with the noise of fellowship. The Cloister became a center for activities in the community as well as for church and reformation business. Martin Luther was a sociable person. He was always inviting people to come over to his home for a talk or dinner or to stay the night. It seems Katherine was well up to these sudden guests and did not complain. The parsonage served the community in times of joy as well as in times of the plague.⁴

The marriage added a new identity for the lady who would become the wife of a clergyman. The Parson's wife became a fixed part of the Reformation. Katherine Luther, more than any other, created this role for herself. Thousands and millions of ladies have followed in her footsteps becoming parson's wives.⁵ At this time the role of a woman was not highly regarded. Katherine brought about a change by a merger of the religious nun and the housewife into one and the same person. The wife of a preacher developed into a special office, although not recognized by the church, of great importance to the total work of the ministry.

As stated before, the marriage widened the gap between the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. Articles from John Eck, Jerome Emser, and Duke George of Saxony, took this opportunity to attack the marriage and the two people involved in this marriage.⁶

⁴ ibid.

⁵ Erick H. Erickson, Young Man Luther (New York: W. W. Morton and Company Inc., 1958), p. 71

⁶ Lazareth p. 28

Luther's marriage had shut the mouths of "scandalmonsters", but he had also lost the support of many of the German people.⁷ From now on the Reformation was to be both a political and a religious struggle.⁸ Leaving the religious camp and entering into the secular world via marriage put Luther into a new relationship to the people who at one time were his allies.

The marriage took place during the Peasant War. The country was torn apart by religious riots and plundering. Thousands lost their lives.⁹ It seems that right in the middle of this cruel war Martin found a bright spot and tried at least to restore some form of order in the midst of a mass crisis.

⁷Richard Friedenthal, Luther His Life and Times (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1967), p. 433

⁸ibid. p. 434

⁹Verres p. 221

Chapter 5

THE CONTRIBUTION OF KATHERINE LUTHER TO THE HOMELIFE AND MINISTRY OF HER HUSBAND MARTIN

The contribution of Katherine to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin went far beyond the four walls of the cloister. Besides being wife, mother, and hostess she was the family nurse, farmer, business executive, livestock manager, and hotel director.

1. The Children of Katherine and Martin Luther

The Luthers were blessed with six children. The first born was a son. He was named Hans, after his grandfather. He was born June 7, 1526. His birth was a reason for celebration. Gifts and well-wishes came from all over Germany.

The second child, Elizabeth, was born December 10, 1527 and died August 3, 1528. The death of this infant revealed the deep emotional character of Luther. Nothing is recorded of Katherine's feelings, only that Luther tried to comfort her at the time.

A third child was born on May 4, 1529. Her name was Magdalena. She too would die at an early age. She was thirteen at the time of her death. Luther was deeply moved at her passing.¹

¹Schwiebert p. 599

The fourth child, a son, was born on November 9, 1531. He was named Martin because he looked so much like his father.

The fifth child, Paul, arrived on his mother's birthday January 29, 1533.

The youngest child, Margarethe, was born December 17, 1534.²

The children were joined by a total of ten nieces and nephews of Martin. Six out of the ten came from one of Martin's sisters. A second sister accounted for another nephew. Each of Martin's two brothers sent a niece and a nephew. There was also one great niece.³ There was a lady teacher named Margarethe von Mochau that taught the Luther children. There may have been as many as six other tutors in the household. The aunt that came with Katherine, when she escaped from the Roman Convent, was a resident in the parsonage. There were a number of homeless nuns and monks in the Cloister. There were paying students who lived in the Cloister while attending the university.⁴

Each resident of the house was expected to participate in family devotions, the study of the catechism and prayer.⁵

The house was full of people, but Katherine tried to keep the noise down so Martin could spend time in his study and not be interrupted by the activities of this community within the larger community of Whittenburg.

The family, in larger or smaller numbers, would gather together and sing songs, play musical instruments, and enjoy games. Luther was fond of chess.

²ibid. p. 595

³ibid. p. 597

⁴ibid.

⁵ibid.

The records point out that anyone who wanted shelter and good food was welcomed at the Cloister. In a larger sense everyone in need was a member of the family.

The surviving children of Katherine and Martin Luther did well in life. Hans studied law and became an advisor to the local officials. Paul became a physician and served in the noble courts of the area. Margarethe married a wealthy man named George von Klinheim. They had a happy marriage. She died in 1570.⁶

The remaining son, Martin, began a study of theology. Martin Luther Sr., always wanted a son to follow in his footsteps. It seems that he died before he could complete his studies.⁷

2. The Homelife

There is no doubt that Katherine was the mistress of the house. It is true that she had some help in caring for the yard and help in the kitchen, yet overall it was Katherine who was the manager of the Black Cloister. In this home there were often thirty or forty for each meal. The work was great and demanding but there is no record of a complaint from Katherine. She took care of the cattle, pigs, the brewery, the storehouse, the cellars, barn, gardens, and the fish pond that she had made.⁸

Katherine was an active worker. Her day began at four in the morning and lasted until the children were in bed. Then she found time to do the family sewing.

⁶ibid. p. 602

⁷Bessie G. Olson, Martin Luther A Great Reformer (Chicago: Van

⁸Friendenthal p. 435

The life of the family was, for a large part, dependent upon the abilities of the woman of the house. It was a true saying; "a good wife was a blessing, a bad one a dreadful misfortune".⁹ At a time when death was the only release from poor management the value of a good wife was beyond measure. Those who lived at the Black Cloister whether children, guests, or paying students were given good food and comfortable surroundings.

The role of wife and mother included being the family nurse. Luther could not have chosen a better nurse than Katherine. The many years he had lived in a monastery and the work that he was doing as a Reformer had taken their toll on the man. His health was broken and Katherine worked to keep him as healthy as possible. Luther suffered from headaches, ringing in the ears, gall stones, and kidney stones.¹⁰

Luther was not an easy man to treat. The local doctors used enemas as a cure-all for any illness. On the other hand Katherine used what home cures she knew. These were practices of the day but nevertheless they seemed to help some. Katherine used dung mixed with wine. Human and animal dung served to help ease the pain. Luther, on the other hand, took large doses of wine and drank lots of water.¹¹

The home provided many pleasures for the Luthers. "Delightful children, pleasant company, good friends, and loyal neighbors,"¹²

⁹ ibid.

¹¹ ibid. p. 448

¹⁰ ibid. p. 437

¹² ibid. p. 447

were unsought rewards that the Luthers enjoyed.

Martin and Katherine were not as strict as his parents had been with him. As a child Martin was beaten by both parents for minor wrongs.¹³ Martin's parents were superstitious. This was not passed on to the Reformers' children.

The home was a place of learning not only for the children, but for paying students who would listen to the words of Luther and record what he said about any given topic. The conversations at dinner became known as "Table Talk". Martin Luther would not write for pay but many of the students sold their notes to publishers and pocketed the money. Students regarded the meal time as an opportunity to continue their education. Luther would talk at lengths about his battles with Satan. Not to be outdone by the Doctor, Katherine went into the bedroom, fainted, and returned telling of her own battle with evil.¹⁴ She announced this in Latin. She was able to dialogue with students and could pick up Latin conversations easily.

Katherine helped Martin change from his sour, rugged disposition to a more polite and cheerful person. This happiness never left him but stayed with him throughout their marriage.¹⁵ This was an age of crude, course language. Luther's speech was just as frank as the times. When he spoke of natural body functions he did not mince words but told it in the vulgar terms of the day. This was the tone of the age. Katherine was not above reminding the Doctor when his language was

¹³Erickson p. 68

¹⁴Ronald H. Bainton, A life of Martin Luther HERE I STAND (New York: Mentor Books, 1950), p. 230

¹⁵Martyn p. 481

getting course or crude.

Katherine was a tidy person. The grounds of the Black Cloister were kept nicely. There was a gardener to help her with her work. Flowers bloomed, in season, around the entrance of the Cloister.

3. The Financial Abilities of Katherine Luther

Katherine did not bring a dowry to the marriage. She was from a poor family. Her family could not support her after she left the convent and they could give her nothing at the time of her marriage. Katherine made up in ability what she lacked in actual cash. The small salary that Martin received was the only money they had to start life together. They received some money from paying students who lived in their home.

Luther's charity to others caused Katherine much concern.¹⁶ He was not above taking the last penny in the house and giving it to a needy person. Luther would pawn anything of value to help those in need.¹⁷ Martin's salary at the time of the marriage was equal to \$800.00 a year. Considering the number of people in the household there was little left over for pleasures of any sort.¹⁸

A wedding gift equal to \$250.00 was refused by Luther but quickly accepted by Katherine without the Doctor's knowledge. He learned about the matter later. He was deeded the Black Cloister February 4, 1535. In 1532 his salary was equal to \$2500.00 a year. In 1536 another \$800.00 was supplied.¹⁹

¹⁶ Plass p. 195

¹⁸ *ibid.* p. 280

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *ibid.* p. 281

Extra money came to the household via pensions and legacies.²⁰

The Luthers were able to purchase some land near the Cloister.

There was a garden, a hop field, and a summer house close by the Cloister. In 1540 Martin bought the farm at Zuelsdorf from Katherine's brother. The soil was better than farms nearby. This was Katherine's favorite spot. Katherine never liked Whittenburg. She looked forward to the visits to the farm and to the time when she and Martin could retire there.

Katherine also rented a small pasture from the Elector. Here she grazed cattle and a few hogs.

A few years before his death Martin Luther thought his land holdings amounted to about \$9000.00. The land was a good investment but it did not provide ready cash in times of need.²¹

4. Other Duties

Katherine brewed the family beer. Luther was very pleased with the way Katherine prepared the drink. At times Luther drank a little too much. It is not clear if he drank because of his poor health or because it was the common practise of the day.

Katherine served good meals to her family and guests. There were fresh meat, vegetables, fruit, and baked items. Luther was fond of pork; he also liked apples.²²

Katherine and Martin served the community well. They were host and hostess to many travelers. During the plagues they stayed to help.

²⁰ ibid.

²¹ ibid.

²² ibid. p. 273

Katherine sought ways to please her husband. Once when Martin was away Katherine and Cranach built a new gateway over the Cloister door. The Luther coat of arms, a black cross on a red heart in a white rose, on a field of blue; greeted the returning Reformer.²³

Luther maintained a steady travel and speaking schedule. Appendix A gives a brief outline of important dates in the lives of Martin and Katherine. The Diets and Councils attended by Luther meant that Katherine was alone at home. From the schedule it appears that she was in charge a good deal of the time.

Two books that Luther wrote were at the insistence of his wife. The first one was, The Book of Beggers.²⁴ The second book was entitled, The Will in Bondage. The book was addressed to Erasmus and gives some record of the Peasant War.²⁵ Katherine must have had a strong influence upon Martin at the outset of their marriage in order for him to write these books.

Luther's study was a mess of papers, books, and notes. While Luther worked over the tower of papers Katherine would sit by the window doing needlework. She would not disturb him but supported him with her silent presence.²⁶

Her busy day did not allow her much free time to read the Bible. She attended family worship and the services in the church. Her life was lived out of the deep faith and courage within her heart.

²³Theodore J. Kleinhaus, Martin Luther Saint and Sinner (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Pub. House, 1956), p. 117

²⁴ibid. p. 114

²⁵Friendenthal p. 450

²⁶Schwiebert p. 598

For more than twenty years Katherine had been a faithful worker to the duties of the Black Cloister. Only illness and the giving birth to the six children forced her to leave her tasks for short intervals.

Martin Luther died February 18, 1546 in the city of his birth, Eisleben. He had failed to provide a proper will because he did not trust lawyers. There was little cash on hand. What land remained was soon taken away from Katherine by war and dishonest people. Now all the years of skill and ability would serve her well as she fought to keep her family together.

Chapter 6

KATHERINE'S LIFE WITHOUT MARTIN

Katherine Luther began a new life without her husband Martin with the same determination and courage that carried her away from the convent and into the Black Cloister.

The Black Cloister was hers. She continued to take in paying students. She also had four children living with her at the time. There may have been other relatives but it is not known for sure how many lived in the Cloister after Martin's death. Katherine made sure her children were educated. There was little cash on hand. Katherine fought hard to keep the family together.

The church, at that time, did not support the widows of its clergy much better than it does today. She received gifts from the Princes of Anhalt, Elector John Fredrick,¹ and from the King of Denmark, Christian III.²

The Schmalkaldic War broke out the same year as Martin's death. Her buildings were burned and plundered. Her livestock was run off and she was left penniless. Katherine was dependent on a few close friends; Melanchthon, the Duke of Prussia, and Christian III.³

¹Schwiebert p. 599

²Moyer p. 258

³Schwiebert p. 601

For six years Katherine struggled in Whittenburg, making a small income from the students who lived in the Black Cloister. In the summer of 1552 a plague broke out in Whittenburg. The country was in turmoil and general unrest. Katherine decided to leave and try to make her way into Denmark. Katherine could go no farther than Torgau. Katherine was riding in a carriage when suddenly the horse bolted and Katherine jumped from the carriage, landing hard on the ground. This misfortune and numerous others led finally to her last illness. Her health was broken and her many friends neglected her. She died December 20, 1552. Her gallant spirit had endured much hardship. She was buried in Pfarrikirche at Rorgau.⁴

⁴Moyer p. 258

Chapter 7

WHAT LUTHER SAID ABOUT KATHERINE

The written words of praise that Luther gave to his wife are not hard to find. These testimonies show his love and admiration for her in a deep personal and religious manner, he writes:

I would not exchange my Kate for France nor for Venice to boot; to begin with, (1) because God has given her to me and me to her; (2) because I often find out that there are more short comings in other women than in my Kate; and although she, of course, has some too, these are nonetheless offset by her greater virtues; (3) because she keeps faith and honor in our marriage.¹

Martin Luther writes; "I have been very happy in my marriage; thank God I have a faithful wife according to Solomon, 'The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her'" (Proverbs 31:11)²

Luther says; "She spoils nothing for me...marriage is not something natural and physical, but it is a gift of God, ... it is above all celibacy."³ The marriage of Martin and Katherine was the best case against the forced celibacy of the Roman Church.

When Luther traveled he missed his family, he writes;

Ah, how I was oppressed by natural affections when lying at the door of death in Smalcald. I thought I would never see my wife and children. How the separation effected me. And I now really believe that the dying feel these natural affections most intensely. But having come home well again, I love my wife and children the more.⁴

¹Ewald M. Plass, What Luther Says An Anthology (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House.), p. 868

²ibid.

³ibid

⁴ibid.

Martin Luther had asked God to give him a pious spouse.

There is no reason to doubt that his prayer was answered in Katherine.

Luther states;

Now a pious spouse is as necessary as a sound hand or leg. You need not consider or hold praying for a pious spouse a matter for laughter or mockery; for if a married life is to turn out well, it must begin with God.⁵

Luther's will refers to Katherine as "a godly, faithful, upright wife who has always shown herself worthy of all love and praise".⁶

Luther had many "pet names" for Katherine. Some describe her work in the Cloister while others seem directed towards her quick wit and courageous spirit. These include; Most Holy Mrs. Doctor, Domina et hera mea Ketha, Dear Master Keth, Maus Ketha, and his Moses.⁷ He also calls her, "my rib", queen of the pig market, and Kette meaning "chain".⁸ At one point Luther equates Katherine to St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.⁹

These testimonies of Martin Luther to his wife Katherine are a fitting tribute to the contribution she made to his homelife and ministry.

⁵ ibid,

⁶ Czamanske, Four Hundred Years p. 146

⁷ Veeres, p. 222

⁸ Bainton p. 227-229

⁹ ibid.

Chapter 8

KATHERINE LUTHER, A MODEL FOR THE PROTESTANT PARSONAGE

The marriage of Martin and Katherine, "was an important public event because by this event he founded the evangelical parsonage. His happy and beautiful family became a model. His home became a center of . . . generous Christian hospitality".¹ The contribution of Katherine Luther to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin has been outlined in the previous chapters. Katherine Luther made a great contribution to the Protestant Parsonage as well. Katherine's faithfulness to Martin, her concern for her home, her courage to overcome harsh criticism and her ability to adjust to new surroundings sets forth a model for the Protestant Parsonage second to none.

1. Her Ability to Adjust to New Surroundings

Katherine adjusted to new surroundings quickly. She was placed in a convent at an early age. She adjusted to convent life easily. She escaped from the convent and had to adjust to the life of Whittenburg. Katherine married Martin Luther in 1525, this was her greatest adjustment up to that time. Katherine made the adjustment well and thus she began to create for herself the role of the parsonage hostess.

¹Lars P. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1933), p. 245

Katherine Luther adjusted to people easily. The Luther household was large. There were family, relatives, friends and guests; these were the regular people that Katherine worked with day in and day out. The Black Cloister welcomed the rich and the poor into its rooms. Katherine's ability to deal with many classes of people^{was} one of her greatest talents.

2. Her Ability to Endure Harsh Criticism

Katherine's personal life was made the butt; "of endless vilivication".² One writer of pornography, Simon Lemnius, called Katherine a; "religious nymph".³ In Lucifer Whittenbergensis, Katherine is said to have been a nymphomaniac. Katherine, it is said, jumped into bed with any willing student because Martin was impotent.⁴ These stories, none of which can be proven, demonstrate the depth to which some went to slander Katherine and Martin. These fictional pieces of crude literature are mentioned only to give the reader an idea of how great the matter was discussed in Whittenberg. The resentment of the marriage by Luther's enemies lead to the personal attack upon the morals of his wife Katherine. There can be no question of the crudeness of the time and language but the way in which the criticism was leveled against the innocent Katherine was totally unadvised.

Katherine's ability to endure harsh criticism is a model for those who follow in her step into the protestant parsonage. There are still a few people who enjoy this type of gossip. The good wife must be able to cope with this type of slander.

²Friedenthal p. 432

³ibid. p. 437

⁴ibid. p. 432

3. Katherine, A Model Of Household Management

Martin Luther was incapable of organizing the affairs of the smallest household. Katherine, on the otherhand, brought order to Martin's life and to the Black Cloister. Friedenthal points out:

His Augustinian monastery became a pension, an inn at which princes put up, a large business undertaking with stock-breeding and rented land; later it grew into a small estate. . . . breeding its own cattle, and with its own brewery, storerooms, cellars, barn and vegetable garden.⁵

Katherine was the hostess of the Black Cloister as well as its manager. Her work gave Martin a good home and the time he needed for his ministry. Her fine meals helped Martin to keep his health although he was, for the most part, not in good health.

Katherine did much with the little cash provided by the salary given to Martin. She was thrifty and managed what money there was very well.

4. Katherine, A Model Wife

Katherine was a faithful wife to her husband Martin. Martin and Katherine developed a strong love for each other after their marriage. "Romantic love was not a prerequisite for marriage",⁶ in those days this attitude was not uncommon. Katherine, for the twenty years of her marriage to Martin, loved him a great deal and cared for him in the best possible way. It seems that they grew into love for one another rather than falling into love as many of their friends had done. This ever growing love reflected in all the things that Katherine did for her husband Martin.

⁵Friedenthal p. 434

⁶Lazareth p. 23

5. Katherine, A Model of Courage

The life of Katherine von Bora Luther is one of courage. From the time she was placed in the Convent, to the time of her escape and marriage to Martin Luther, she demonstrated courage of the highest order. Her life with Martin, the plagues, the wars, the criticism, and the total problems of management of the Black Cloister took a great deal of courage.

Katherine endured the loss of two children, the loss of her husband, the loss of her estate, and the loss of her husband's friends. Her courage in and out of the Black Cloister, is most remarkable.

6. Katherine, A Model Without Martin

When Martin Luther died, Katherine was left with four children, and very little cash. Katherine rented rooms in the Black Cloister. This provided a small amount of money. She was given small amounts of money but for the most part she was always poor. Her lands and animals were taken from her during the Smalcaldic War. At the close of her life she was totally dependent upon the small amount of money given to her by a few remaining friends.

As a model Katherine; "made a position for herself. . . that many of her emancipated successors might have envied".[?]

[?]Friedenthal p. 434

Chapter 9

A SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

The problem of the Study was to show the contribution Katherine Luther made to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin.

In order to show the contribution Katherine Luther made to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin it was necessary to examine material relevant to her life before, during, and after her marriage to Martin. Chapter two presented material about her early life, from the time of her birth to her escape from a Roman Catholic Convent.

Chapters three through six gave information to support the claim that Katherine Luther did contribute to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin.

In chapter seven, words of testimony from Martin Luther were given to support the claim that Katherine did contribute to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin.

Chapter eight presented Katherine Luther as a model for the Protestant Parsonage.

Chapter nine recorded the conclusions that were drawn from the total study. In chapters two through eight the material supported the study that Katherine Luther made a contribution to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin.

The following findings are concluded as a result of this study:
(1) that Katherine was more than an ordinary housewife of the times,

- (2) That Katherine Luther came into Martin's life when his own health was broken, due to his heavy work load and his poor care for himself.
- (3) That Katherine was able to bring a delightful change to the Reformer's life. (4) That in the crisis of the death of two of his children, Martin Luther showed a deeper emotional side of himself that would have gone unnoticed. (5) That Katherine was an influence in his writing two books. (6) That Katherine, as a part of the Protestant Parsonage, helped to establish it as an outgrowth of the Reformation. (7) That together Martin and Katherine set an example against forced celibacy.

The findings of this study concluded that Katherine Luther made a contribution to the homelife and ministry of her husband Martin.

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE AGE OF LUTHER

- 1439--1493 Frederick III (IV) Emperor of Germany.
- 1440 (?) Gutenberg invents printing-press.
- 1450 Vatican Library founded by Pope Nicholas V.
- 1453 Mahomet II takes Constantinople.
- 1455 Gutenberg prints his first Bible.
- 1467 (?) Erasmus born at Rotterdam.
- 1471--1484 Sixtus IV Pope.
- 1477 First watches made at Nuernberg.
- 1483 Richard of York smotheres the princes; is proclaimed King of England.
- November 10. Martin Luther born at Eisleben.
- 1484 William Tyndale born.
- January 1. Ulrich Zwingli born.
- 1484--1492 Innocent VIII Pope.
- 1484--1497 Luther at Mansfeld.
- 1485 August 25. Saxony, by the Treaty of Leipzig, divided into two parts: Electoral, or Ernestine, and Ducal, or Albertine Saxony.
- 1485--1500 Albert Duke of Saxony.
- 1487--1525 Frederick the Wise Elector of Saxony.
- 1488 Henry VII founds English navy.
- 1489 John Wessel dies.
- 1492--1503 Alexander VI Pope.
- 1492 Fall of Granada; end of Moorish reign in Europe
- October 12. Columbus discovers America.
- 1494--1547 Francis I King of France.
- 1494--1547 Henry VIII King of England; ascends throne 1509.
- 1497 Melancthon born.
- Cabot reaches coast of Newfoundland.
- 1497--1498 Luther at the school of the Nullbrueder at Magdeburg.
- 1498 Savonarola burned at the stake
- Columbus reaches mouth of Orinoco.
- India reached by sea from Portugal.
- 1498--1501 Luther at St. George's School at Eisenach; received by Frau Cotta.
- 1499 Switzerland establishes its independence.
- 1500--1539 George the Bearded Duke of Saxony
- 1501 Luther begins studies at University of Erfurt.
- 1502 Luther takes degree of Bachelor of Arts.
- Columbus surveys coast of Colombia.
- University of Wittenberg founded.
- 1503 September 22--October 18 Pius III Pope.
- 1503--1513 Julius II Pope.

- 1505 Luther takes degree of Master of Arts.
July 12. Luther enters Augustinian monastery at Erfurt.
- 1506 Building of St. Peter's Cathedral at Rome begun.
 Columbus dies broken-hearted.
- 1507 Spring. Luther ordained priest; first mass, May 2.
- 1508--1567 Philip the Magnanimous, Landgrave of Hesse (born 1504; declared of age 1517).
- 1508 November. Luther called to professorship at Wittenberg; teaches Ethics of Aristotle.
- 1509 March 9. Luther takes degree of Baccalaureus ad Biblia.
 July 10. Calvin born.
- 1510 Autumn. Luther teaches Lombard's Sentences at Erfurt.
- 1511 Summer. Luther returns to Wittenberg to lecture on the Bible.
 October--1512, February. Luther's journey to Rome, where he spends month of December.
 Council of Pisa.
- 1512 October 18. Luther takes degree of Doctor of Theology.
 Ponce de Leon in search of Fountain of Perpetual Youth.
- 1512--1517 Fifth Lateran Council.
- 1513 Vasco de Balboa discovers Pacific Ocean.
- 1513--1521 Leo X Pope (Dies December 1, 1521)
- 1514 Reuchlin's Controversy with Dominicans.
 Cortez begins conquest of Mexico.
- 1515 May. Luther elected district vicar of his order.
"Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum" published.
 Erasmus publishes Greek New Testament.
 Zwingli goes to Maria-Einsiedeln.
- 1517 October 31. Luther posts Ninety-five Theses on Indulgences on Castle Church at Wittenburg.
- 1518 Melancthon becomes professor at Wittenberg.
Luther at Heidelberg.
 October 12-14. Luther's interview with Cajetan at Augsburg.
- 1519 January 1. Zwingli preaches initial sermon at Zurich.
 January 4-5. Luther's interview with Miltitz at Altenburg.
 July 4-14. Luther's debate with Eck at Leipzig.
- 1519--1555 Charles V Emperor of Germany (elected June, 1519; crowned October 23, 1520; retires to monastery of St. Just 1557).
- 1520 Massacre of Stockholm instituted by Christian II, King of Denmark.
 June 15. Leo X signs bull "Exsurge Domine," excommunicating Luther if he fails to recant within sixty days.
 August. Luther publishes "Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation on the Improvement of the Christian Estate."

- October. Luther publishes the treatise "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church."
- November. Luther publishes tract "On the Freedom of a Christian Man."
- December 10. Luther burns the Pope's bull and the Canon Law.
- 1521 March 16. Magellan discovers Philippine Islands.
 April 17-18. Luther appears before Diet at Worms.
 (Edict of Worms signed May 26, dated May 8.)
 Mexico City taken by Cortez.
 May 4--1522, March 1. Luther's exile at the Wartburg;
translation of Bible begun.
 Melancthon's "Loci" published.
 Beginning of the reformation at Riga.
- 1522 March. Luther preaches eight sermons against the
Zwickau prophets at Wittenberg.
 Reuchlin dies.
 Magellan completes circumnavigation of the globe.
- 1522--1523 Hadrian VI Pope.
- 1523 April 4--5. Katherine von Bora (born at Lippendorf
 January 29, 1499) leaves Nimbschen Cistercian
 Cloister, which she entered 1508, and where she
 took the veil October 8, 1515.
 May 7. Sickingen overthrown and revolt of knights
 quelled at Landstuhl.
 Thomas Muenzer at Allstaedt.
 Spanish Inquisition begins reign of terror in Nether-
 lands; H. Voes and J. Esch first martyrs of the
 Reformation.
Luther's controversy with Henry VIII.
- 1523--1534 Clement VII Pope.
- 1524 Staupitz dies.
 Karlstadt at Orlamuende.
 Erasmus attacks Luther in Diatribe on Free Will.
 Diet of Nuernberg. Treaty of Regensburg.
Luther publishes appeal "To the Magistrates of All
Cities of Germany in Behalf of Christian Schools."
Luther publishes tract "On Trade and Usury."
- 1524--1525 May. Peasants' War; suppressed at Frankenhausen.
Luther writes "Against the Thievish and Murderous
Hordes of Peasants."
- 1525 February 24. Charles V. defeats Francis I at battle
 of Pavia.
 June 23. Luther marries Katherine von Bora.
 Anabaptist uprising in Switzerland.
 Beginning of controversy regarding Lord's Supper.
Luther publishes treatise "On the Bondage of the
Will" against Erasmus.
- 1525--1532 John the Steadfast Elector of Saxony.
- 1526 May 4. Formation of League of Torgau between Philip
 of Hesse and John of Saxony.
 June--July. Diet and Recess of Spires.
Luther publishes "German Mass."

- June 7. Hans Luther born.
 Debate at Baden between Zwinglians and Catholics.
 Tyndale publishes English New Testament.
- 1527 Diets of Odense and Esteraes; Gustavus Vasa succeeds
in having Lutheranism adopted.
 May 6. Spanish army sacks Rome and imprisons Pope.
 July. Luther severely ill.
 (?) "Ein' feste Burg."
 December 10. Elizabeth Luther born.
- 1528 First Disputation at Berne.
 August 3. Elizabeth Luther dies.
- 1529 Visitation of churches in Saxony; Luther's Catechisms.
Diet of Spire; Recess April 12; Protest of Lutheran
Princes April 25.
Vienna besieged by Turks.
 May 4. Magdalene Luther born.
 October 2. Luther's Conference with Zwingli at Mar-
burg. First Peace of Kappel between Zwinglians
and Romanists.
- 1530 Diet of Augsburg: arrival of Emperor June 15, pres-
entation of Augsburg Confession June 25, Recess
of Augsburg published in Imperial Edict November 19.
April 23--October 4. Luther's exile at Feste Koburg
during the Diet of Augsburg.
 May 29. Luther's father dies.
 Tyndale publishes his English Pentateuch.
- 1531 Formation of Smalcald League.
 June 30. Luther's mother dies.
 October 11. Zwingli slain in battle of Kappel.
 November 9. Martin Luther, Jr., born.
- 1532--1547 John Frederick the Magnanimous Elector of Saxony
(lived as Duke of Saxony till 1554).
- 1532 February 4. Black Cloister at Wittenberg deeded to
Luther.
Diet of Ratisbon.
Peace of Nuernberg between Catholics and Protestants.
Henry VIII renounces allegiance to the Pope.
- 1533 January 28. Paul Luther born.
Pizarro conquers Peru.
- 1534 Luther completes translation of the Bible.
December 17. Margaret Luther born.
Reformation of Wuerttemberg; Duke Ulrich restored
by Philip of Hesse.
- 1534--1535 Anabaptist uprising at Muenster.
- 1534--1549 Paul III Pope.
- 1535 Calvin publishes his "Institutio Religionis Christianae."
Henry VIII has Sir Thomas More beheaded for denying
his supremacy in the spiritual affairs of his
subjects.
 November 7. Luther confers with papal legate Vergerio
at Wittenberg.

- 1536 Calvin in Geneva.
 Erasmus dies.
 May 29. Luther signs Wittenburg Concordia.
 World's first newspaper, "The Gazetta," published at Bernice.
 Diet of Copenhagen.
 October 6. Tyndale burned at Vilvoorden. ("Lord, open the King of England's eyes!")
- 1537 February. Luther prepares Smalcald Articles, goes to attend Congress at Smalcald, where he is very ill with the stone, and makes his first will February 27.
Controversy with Antinomians.
- 1538 League of Nuernberg formed.
 Calvin expelled from Geneva.
- 1539 February--April. Congress at Frankfort; negotiations with Emperor; Treaty of Frankfort signed April 19, May. Luther at Leipzig; inaugurates reformation in Albertine Saxony.
 Reformation introduced in Brandenburg by Joachim II.
 Diet of Odense.
 December 10. Luther signs "confessional counsel" in the matter of Philip of Hess's second marriage.
- 1539--1541 Henry the Pious Duke of Saxony.
- 1540 January--February. Luther's wife very ill.
 June. Religious Conference at Spires and Hagenau.
 July. Luther at Conference at Eisenach.
Society of Jesus ("Jesuits") formed.
- 1541 April--July. Diet and Religious Conference at Ratisbon.
 Reformation at Halle begun.
 Fernando de Soto discovers the Mississippi River.
- 1541--1546 Maurice Duke of Saxony (becomes Elector of Saxony 1546, dies 1553).
- 1542 January 6. Luther makes his second will.
 War of Smalcald League with Duke Henry of Brunswick, who is expelled and his country opened to the Reformation.
 Beginning of Roman Inquisition; Francis Xavier in India.
 September 20. Magdalene Luther dies.
- 1543 Diet of Nuernberg.
- 1544 Diet of Spires.
 Peace of Crespy.
- 1545--1547 (1563) Council of Trent.
- 1545 Diet of Worms.
- 1546 February 18. Luther dies at Eisleben; buried at the foot of his pulpit in the Schlosskirche at Wittenberg, February 22.
 Religious Conference at Regensburg.

Diet of Ratisbon.

Beginning of Smalcaldic War.

1547 April 24. Defeated in battle at Muehlberg, Elector John Frederick loses his electorate and half of his country.

1552 December 20. Luther's wife dies.¹

¹W. H. T. Dau (ed.), Four Hundred Years (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917), p. 328

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