

## Virginia Synod Luther Studies 2016-17

Why the Books of the Pope and His Disciple Were Burned (LW 31: 383-395)

Introduction

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This is the final installment of what turned out to be five years of studies in Luther in preparation for this fall, the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation. Like so many of you, I am indebted to our retiring bishop James Mauney and would like to use this opportunity to thank him for entrusting me with this task. I want to share with readers what I have already shared with him, my own way of publicly showing thanksgiving for his ministry. Next year Baker Academic will publish my new book, *Luther as Theologian: A Reintroduction for Evangelicals*. The book is dedicated in part to Bishop Mauney and in the Acknowledgements this explanation of the dedication is given:

**James Mauney has been my bishop for the eighteen years since we left Slovakia in 1999 and came to Roanoke College. I know of no bishop today who is a more passionate proclaimer of the crucified and risen Lord. He welcomed me and sustained pastoral friendship with me through thick and thin – no easy task in the case of the prickly personality who is your present author! Much of the material in the present book is adapted from studies in Luther which Mauney commissioned me to write for the pastors of our synod in preparation for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. I am happily in his debt and salute his episcopal “mission accomplished” on the occasion of his retirement.**

I would also herewith express my thanks to the many faithful readers of these studies with the prayer that these meditations would abound to the glory of God and the good of suffering humanity. As Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has recently written:

“In a recent survey of ELCA Lutherans, Kenneth Inskeep, director for research and evaluation, asked the question: “What must you do to be saved?” Fifty percent answered: “Do good works.” Fifty percent of Lutherans. At least half of us admit that, deep down, we believe it's still up to us. Let's not beat ourselves up-this isn't a Lutheran phenomenon, this is not an American phenomenon, this is not a 21st-century phenomenon-it's a human phenomenon. We either disbelieve for joy or don't want to give up control.

“This is precisely why we need well-trained confessional, scriptural, theological, liturgical, compassionate pastors and deacons: to keep us pointed to Jesus, to the law, to the cross, to the resurrection and away from the world's siren song of self-help, self-determination and self-righteousness. And this is precisely why we need confessional, scriptural, theological, liturgical, compassionate laypeople: so we “... fear and love God, so that we do not despise preaching or God's word, but instead keep that word holy and gladly hear and learn it” (Martin Luther's Small Catechism).”

My hope is that these studies have worked to these ends.

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The editor of our English translation describes the burning of the Papal Bull of Excommunication as the act of an “irrevocable and formal break with Rome.” And indeed, as Luther had already instructed Leo X in his Open Letter, as we saw last time, he regarded the Curia as beyond redemption. Now he justifies burning the books of the “adversaries” since “their improvement is not to be hoped for.” When we give up on opponents this way, there is nothing left but war.

Luther notes that he is burning their books “in turn.” The reference is to the papist spectacle that preceded Luther’s act, orchestrated by Johannes Eck. As Eck solemnly publicized the Bull of Excommunication against Luther touring through German cities, he would collect Luther’s books for a spectacular pyre. In this counter-burning, Luther is trying to turn the accusation of “obstinacy” on the head of his accusers: even though the doctrine of the gospel has been clearly and abundantly explained to them in the books that they are burning, they show how they deserve the judgment he now pronounces on them: beyond redemption.

The treatise is of interest because it shows how Luther’s doctrine of vocation can and did empower his resistance to tyranny. He notes at the outset that he is called as a teacher of Scripture as also a baptized Christian, and further as a pastoral preacher to “ward off false, corrupt, unchristian doctrine.” Silence in the face of false teaching and bullying compromises this calling; it is his duty to protest and resist publically, not to have his own way, but to have the case decided in a truly churchly and theological way.

The vocation of a theologian as such a calling to truth does “not shun judgment, yes, love[s] nothing more than light and judgment, gladly permit[ting itself] to be examined and tried.” *Nemo iudex in causa sua*, “no one is judge in his own case” was Luther’s oft repeated principle. So little, then, is he guilty of the papist charge that he reduces everything to subjective opinion and opens the door for free thinking – not Luther whose conscience is captive to the Word of God! Rather, the church is to be governed by free disputation in the common quest for theological truth. To be shown from Scripture with evident reason where he has gone astray—this, formally, is all that Luther had asked for from the beginning of the controversy. “But the pope wants to blind everyone’s eyes, let no one judge, but alone judge everyone.”

All the same it is fascinating to observe that Luther stills holds out hope for Leo X: “I also do not believe that they have command from Pope Leo X, so far as his person is concerned.” Leo X is in many ways a kind of tragi-comic figure. Great Florentine aesthete, he sincerely wanted to turn a page away from the tyrannical and murderous ways of his immediate predecessors, especially the “warrior pope,” Julius II, whom he served as secretary of state and papal understudy. His moral reputation was beyond dispute. This point is worth noting, because as unpalatable as close examination of Luther’s doctrine of the Antichrist is and must be, it is not attached to a person like Leo X but to an institution and, further, it has the curious twist to it: Antichrist can only arise for Luther in the *true* Christian church!

This is a nuance in Luther’s view that is often obscured. Luther was never against the Catholic Church, because he never ceased to be a Catholic Christian. His opposition was narrowly focused on the modern (in his times, i.e. in the preceding medieval centuries)

institution of the papacy that had developed increasingly absolute claims for itself, as identified in the list of 30 errors from the Canon Law enumerated in *Why the Books of the Pope Were Burned*.

Luther regards the tyranny explained in # 10 as at the heart of the complaint. He identifies the confusion of the 2 kingdoms as the source of such tyranny in # 21 and articulates his judgment on the papacy as Antichrist in # 27 and 30. As he put the point some years later in the short but decisive essay, *Concerning Rebaptism*, from 1527 that *just because* "Antichrist" is to "take his seat in the temple of God...", [so] the Christendom that is now under the papacy is truly the body of Christ and a member of it. If it is his body, then it has the true spirit, gospel, faith, baptism, sacrament, keys, the office of the ministry, prayer, holy Scripture, and everything that pertains to Christendom. So we are all still under the papacy and therefrom have received our Christian treasures."

# WHY THE BOOKS OF THE POPE AND HIS DISCIPLES WERE BURNED BY DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER

*Let whoever wishes also declare why they have burned  
Doctor Luther's books*

*Jesus*

*God grant grace and peace to all who love Christian truth*

I, Martin Luther, called a doctor of Holy Scripture, an Augustinian of Wittenberg, notify all men that by my will, advice, and help the books of the pope of Rome and some of his disciples were burned on the Monday after Saint Nicholas<sup>1</sup> in the year 1520. If somebody wondering about this should ask, as I indeed foresee, on what ground or mandate I have done it, let this be his answer.

In the first place, it is an ancient traditional practice to burn poisonous evil books, as we read in chapter nineteen of the Acts of the Apostles. There they burned books for five thousand pennies [fifty thousand pieces of silver], according to the account of St. Paul [Acts 19:19].

Secondly, I am, however unworthy, a baptized Christian, in addition a sworn doctor of Holy Scripture, and beyond that a preacher each weekday whose duty it is on account of his name, station, oath, and office, to destroy or at least to ward off false, corrupt, unchristian doctrine. And even though many more who are similarly duty-bound nevertheless do not wish or like to do the same, perhaps as a result of a lack of understanding or frail fear, I would still not be justified in letting someone's example stop me, if my conscience were sufficiently instructed and my spirit, awakened by God's grace, bold enough.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1520 the day of St. Nicholas, observed on December 6, fell on a Thursday.

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Thirdly, for all that I still would not have attempted an undertaking of this kind, had I not experienced and observed that the pope and the papal seducers do more than err and lead astray. Even after the many instructions which I gave in vain, they are so completely obdurate and callous in their unchristian error and corruption of the soul that they do not want to be guided or taught. Rather, with closed ears and eyes they blindly damn and burn evangelical teaching in order to confirm and preserve their anti-christian, devilish doctrine.

Fourthly, I also do not believe that they have the command from Pope Leo X, so far as his person is concerned, unless I shall learn differently. I also hope that such books as I burned were not pleasing to him, even though they belonged to his predecessors. And if they pleased him, it is still a matter of indifference to me. I know, too, and have reliable information that the people of Cologne and Louvain who boast they have his Imperial Majesty's permission and command to burn my little books are sparing of the truth, for they have bought their way into such a project from several magistrates with bribes worth many thousand gulden.

Fifthly, since, then, through their kind of book burning great damage to truth and a false delusion among the plain common people might result, to the destruction of many souls, I have on the prompting of the Spirit (as I hope), in order to strengthen and preserve the same, burned the books of the adversaries in turn, since their improvement is not to be hoped for.

Therefore let no one be impressed by the lofty titles, names, and prestige of the papal estate, of canon law, and by the use of these burned books, which is of long standing. Rather listen and look first at what the pope teaches in his books, what poisonous and frightful doctrines are contained in the holy canon law, and what until the present time we have worshipped instead of the truth, and then judge freely whether I have burned these books justly or unjustly.

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Articles and Errors in the Canon Law and  
Papal books on account of which they are  
rightly to be burned and shunned.

1

*The pope and his men are not bound to be subject and obedient to God's commands.*

He records this atrocious teaching clearly in the chapter<sup>2</sup> where he explains the words of St. Peter, who says, "Be subject to every human institution," [I Pet. 2:13] thus: St. Peter did not thereby refer to himself or his successors, but rather to his subjects.

2

*It is not a command, but a counsel, of St. Peter, where he teaches that all Christians should be subject to kings [I Pet. 2:13].<sup>3</sup>*

3

*The sun symbolizes the papal, the moon the secular power in Christendom.<sup>4</sup>*

4

*The pope and his see are not bound to be subject to Christian councils and decrees.<sup>5</sup>*

5

*The pope has in his heart full power over all laws.<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> *Solita*, *Decretalium Gregorii IX* i. tit. XXXIII: *De maiestate et obedientia*, cap. 6. *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. Aemilius Friedberg (Graz, 1955), II, cols. 196-198.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Significasti*, *Decretalium Gregorii IX* i. tit. VI: *De electione et electi potestate*, cap. 4. *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, II, cols. 45-50.

<sup>6</sup> Luther has: *in prologo Sexti*. Cf. *Decretalium Gregorii IX* i. tit. II: *De Constitutionibus*. *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, II, cols. 7-16.

6

*From this it follows that the pope has the power to break up, change, and establish all councils and all decrees, as he does daily, so that no power or usefulness remains for councils and Christian orders.*

7

*The pope has the right to demand oath and fealty of the bishops for their pallium.<sup>7</sup>*

The saying of Jesus, "You received without pay, give without pay" [Matt. 10:8] is opposed to this.

8

*Even if the pope were so wicked that he would lead innumerable people in great masses to the devil, nevertheless, no one would be permitted to punish him for it.<sup>8</sup>*

This article alone would be enough cause for burning all the pope's books. What devilish unchristian thing would they not undertake, if they shamelessly hold and teach such frightful things? See there, Christian, what canon law teaches you.

9

*Next to God the salvation of all Christendom depends on the pope.<sup>9</sup>*

The statement, "I believe in one holy church, etc.," is opposed to this. All Christians, then, would have to perish as often as the pope is wicked.

10

*No one on earth can judge the pope. Also, no one can*

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<sup>7</sup> The pallium is a circular band of white wool with pendants, worn by archbishops over the chasuble, the outer vestments of the celebrant at mass. Luther refers the reader once again to the chapter, *Significasti*. Cf. note 5 above.

<sup>8</sup> *Decreti Prima Pars*, dist. XL, cap. 6: *Si Papa Suae. Corpus Iuris Canonici*, I, col. 146.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

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*judge his decision. Rather, he is supposed to judge all people on earth.*<sup>10</sup>

This is the main article. In order that it may become deeply imbedded, it is always quoted again and again through many chapters and almost through the whole canon law, so that it indeed appears as though the canon law were devised only in order that the pope could freely do and leave what he wished, to give permission to sin, and to be a hindrance to good. If this article stands, then Christ and his Word are defeated. But if it does not stand, then the whole canon law, together with the pope and see, is defeated.

However, it cannot stand, for St. Peter commands in I Pet. 6 [5:5], "Clothe yourself with humility toward one another." And St. Paul wrote in Rom. 12 [:10], "Outdo one another in showing honor." And Christ often says: "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant" [Matt. 20:26-27; 23:11]. In the same way St. Paul chastises St. Peter, Gal. 2 [:11-21], that his actions are not in accord with the gospel. And in Acts 8 [:14] St. Peter was sent out with St. John by the other apostles as a subordinate. Therefore it is not and can not be true that the pope is subject to or to be judged by no one, but he shall be subject to and judged by every man, inasmuch as he wishes to be supreme. And the canon law, because this is its foundation and whole essence, contends in all its parts against the gospel.

It is indeed true that the secular power shall not be subject to its inferiors, but Christ reverses and changes that order, saying: "You shall not be as the secular overlords" [Cf. Luke 22:25-26]. And he desires that the leaders of his people should be subject to every man and should allow judgment from them. As he says in Luke 22 [:25-26], "The kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves." How can he be beneath anyone, if he does not want to let anyone judge him?

If one wants to distort the words of Christ (as some do), namely, that he ought to regard himself as the lowliest in his heart

<sup>10</sup> *Decreti Secunda Pars*, causa IX, ques. III, cap. 17: *Cuncta per mundum novit ecclesia. Corpus Iuris Canonici*, I, col. 611.



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and not show it outwardly, then one must also infer that he ought to regard himself in his heart as superior and not show it outwardly. Thus one must either hold both spiritually in the heart or show outwardly, so that Christ's words can stand.

This is the article from which all misfortune has come into all the world. Therefore the canon law is rightly to be destroyed and rejected as a poisonous thing. For from it follows, as it actually has happened, and is evident to everyone, that one can check no evil, can demand no good, and we have to let the gospel and the faith go under before our very eyes.

### 11

*The Roman see indeed imparts authority and power to all laws, but it is subject to none of them.*<sup>11</sup>

That is as much as to say that what he wants is right, yet he is bound to keep none of them. Even as Christ says in Matt. 23 [:4] of the Jewish Pharisees, "They bind heavy burdens on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with their finger." Against this St. Paul says in Gal. 6 [5:1]: "Stand fast in your freedom and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."

### 12

*The rock on which Christ builds his church, Matt. 16 [:18], is called the Roman see,<sup>12</sup> although Christ alone is that very rock, I Cor. 10 [4].*

### 13

*The keys are given to St. Peter alone, even though in Matt. 18 [:18] Christ gives them to the whole congregation.*

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<sup>11</sup> *Decreti Secunda Pars*, causa XXV, ques. I. cap. 1: *Confidimus*. See *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, I, col. 1007. Cf. also ques. I. cap. 16: *Ideo permittente*. *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, I, col. 1010.

<sup>12</sup> Luther's reference is to dist. XIX, *Ita Dominus*. Cf. *Decreti Prima Pars*, dist. XIX, cap. 7. *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, I, col. 62. Cf. also dist. XXI, cap. 2: *In novo testamento*, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, I, cols. 69f.; dist. XXI, cap. 3: *Quamvis universae*, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, I, col. 70; and dist. XXII, cap. 2: *Sacrosancta Romano*, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, I, cols. 73f.

14

*Christ's priesthood was transferred from him to St. Peter.*<sup>13</sup>

Against this David in Psalm 109 [110:4] and Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews [5:6; 6:20; 7:21-28] say that Christ is a unique, eternal priest whose priesthood would never be transferred.

15

*The pope has the power to make laws for the Christian church.*<sup>14</sup>

Against this St. Paul says in Gal. 5 [:13]: "You were called by God to freedom."

16

*He interprets the passage, "Whatsoever you shall bind, etc." [Matt. 16:19], to mean that he has the power to burden all Christendom with his wanton laws. Christ intends nothing else thereby than to drive sinners to punishment and penance and not at all to burden the other innocent ones with laws, as the words clearly read.*

17

*Under threat of excommunication and of committing sin, the pope has commanded not to eat meat, eggs, butter, and other miscellaneous things on certain days.*

He has no authority to do this but rather should only admonish people in a friendly manner to heed his advice, leaving each man to act with complete freedom and without pressure.

18

*He has forbidden marriage to the whole priesthood.*

He thereby increases many sins and scandals without cause, con-

<sup>13</sup> *Translatio, Decretalium Gregorii IX i. tit. II: De Constitutionibus, cap. 3. Corpus Iuris Canonici, II, col. 8.*

<sup>14</sup> *Decreti Secunda Pars causa XXV, ques. I, cap. 16: Ideo permittente. Corpus Iuris Canonici, I, col. 1010.*

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trary to God's command and Christian freedom.

### 19

*Pope Nicholas the third or fourth proposed among the many bad articles in his antichristian decretal that Christ has given to St. Peter and his successors power over the heavenly and earthly kingdom together with the keys.*

Everyone well knows how Christ fled from the earthly kingdom [John 6:15] and that all priests have the keys, even though they are not all emperors of heavenly and earthly kingdoms.

### 20

*He holds to be true and fosters the great unchristian lie that Emperor Constantine has given him Rome, land, empire, and power on earth.<sup>15</sup>*

Against this Christ says, Matt. 6 [:19], "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth;" likewise, "You cannot serve God and mammon" [Matt. 6:24].

### 21

*He boasts he is the heir of the Roman empire,<sup>16</sup> although everyone well knows that the spiritual and secular realms do not get along well with each other.*

And St. Paul enjoins that a bishop should serve the word of God [Cf. Titus 1:9].

### 22

*He teaches that it is right for a Christian to defend himself against force with force.*

This is contrary to and above what Christ says in Matt. 5 [:40]: "If anyone take your coat, let him have your cloak as well."

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<sup>15</sup> Luther gives no reference here to canon law, but cf. *Decreti Prima Pars*, dist. XCVI, cap. 13: *Constantinus imperator*, and cap. 14: *Constantinus imperator quarta*. *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, I, col. 342.

<sup>16</sup> *Pastoralis, Clementinarum* ii. tit. XI: *De sententia et re iudicata*, cap. 2. *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, II, cols. 1151-1153.

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23

*Subjects can be disobedient to their overlords and the pope can depose the kings, as he writes in many places and has often done, against and above God.*

24

*He claims to have the power to dissolve all oaths, alliances, and obligations arranged between the higher and lower estates.*

This is against and above God, who ordered every man to keep faith with the other [Zech. 8:16].

25

*The pope has the power to dissolve and alter vows made to God.<sup>17</sup>*

That is also against and above God.

26

*Whoever delays fulfilling his vow upon the command of the pope is not guilty of breaking the vow.<sup>18</sup>*

That is as much as to say, "the pope is above God."

27

*No one who is married is able to serve God, even though Abraham and many saints have been married and God himself established marriage without a doubt.*

Thus the Antichrist again rises above God.

28

*He makes his useless laws equal to the gospels and to Holy Scripture, as he repeatedly indicates in the decretal.*

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<sup>17</sup> *De peregrinationis quoque votis, Decretalium Gregorii IX iii. tit. XXXIV: De voto et voti redemptione, cap. 1. Corpus Iuris Canonici, II, col. 589.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid., cap. 5: Non est voti. Corpus Iuris Canonici, II, col. 590.*

*The pope has the power to interpret and to teach Holy Scripture according to his will and allows no one to interpret it otherwise than he wants.*

He thereby puts himself above God's word, dismembers and destroys it, as St. Paul says in I Cor. 14 [:30], the superior should yield to the revelation of the inferior.

*The pope does not derive authentic existence, strength, and dignity from Scripture, but Scripture from him, which is one of the main articles.*

Therefore, as a true Antichrist he deserves to have Christ from heaven itself destroy him together with his government, as Paul predicted [II Thess. 1:7-10].

These and similar articles which are without number—all of them aim at exalting the pope above God and man. Everyone, even God and the angels, is subject to him, while he is subject to no one, so that even his disciples say he is an extraordinary creature, being neither God nor man (perhaps the devil himself). So now the saying of Paul is fulfilled, "the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship . . . by the activity of Satan," and so on [II Thess. 2:3-12]. When he calls him a man of lawlessness and a son of perdition, he does not mean his person alone, for that would cause little damage, but rather that his government is nothing else than sin and perdition and that he will rule only to lead all the world to sin and hell. It can readily be observed, then, and is clear from such articles that nothing except sin and perdition have come into the world through the pope, and more keeps coming daily.

Those very men who observe canon law, although in out-of-the-way places, have confessed that it smells of nothing but greed and power. That is true indeed, and whoever does not want to lie must admit it. For if you want to know in a few words what the canon law contains, then listen. It is, to put it briefly, the following:



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The pope is a god on earth over everything heavenly, earthly, spiritual, and secular, and all is his own. No one is permitted to say to him: "What are you doing?"

That is the abomination and stench of which Christ speaks in Matt. 24 [:15]: "So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel [Dan. 9:27; 12:11], standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)," etc. And St. Paul writes: "He will take his seat in the temple of God (that is, in Christendom), proclaiming himself to be God" [Cf. II Thess. 2:4].

Now the fact that no one or few people have been permitted to speak out to the pope about his abomination is not amazing, for it has been announced that he will have all those burned who oppose him and that he will have the consent of all the kings and princes. If the seduction of the Antichrist were so gross that everyone could notice it, or so trifling that the kings and big-wigs would not be most distinguished men in it, then the prophets and apostles would have cried out and written so much and so earnestly in vain.

When Christ was on earth, many people who heard his word and saw his work spoke against those who did not want to let him be Christ: "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?" [John 7:31]. Even now that mumbling goes on in similar fashion: "Even if the Antichrist appears, what greater evil can he do than the pope's rule has done and does daily?" For it is simply inconceivable that if his government were from God, he should allow so much corruption and sin to come out of it and let the evil spirit rule in it so powerfully. Yet we do not believe it until we are lost, and we all too slowly recognize the Antichrist.

Likewise from the beginning of all creatures the greatest evil has always come from the best, for in the highest choir of angels, where God had worked most mightily, Lucifer sinned and did great harm. In paradise, the greatest sin and harm occurred in the first, best man. According to Gen. 6 [:4] the giants and tyrants came from none other than the holy children of God. And Christ, the Son of God, was crucified nowhere else than in the holy city of Jerusalem where he had been honored most of all and where he had done many miracles, and by none other than the princes and chief priests and the most learned and holy. And Judas also had to com-

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promise not simply a humble station in life, but the position of an apostle. Thus God has also blessed no city on earth with so much grace and so many saints as Rome and did more for her than for any other. Therefore she, too, like Jerusalem, in gratitude to God, must do the greatest harm and give the world the true and most destructive Antichrist who does more harm than the good which Christ has done before. That is the way it happens. And it must all transpire in the name and under the pretext of Christ and of God, so that no one believes it until Christ himself comes and enlightens such darkness with the light of his advent, as St. Paul says [II Thess. 2:8; I Cor. 4:5].

These articles must suffice this time. If, however, someone is the pope's ally and is itching to undertake to protect and defend the same, then I shall indeed paint them more clearly for him and bring up much more of the same sort. These articles are to be only the beginning of dealing seriously with matters pertaining to the pope, because until now I have only toyed and played with them. I have begun it in God's name. I hope the time has come for the cause to move forward in his name without me. Hereby I also wish to embrace all the articles as Christian and true which were damned and burned in the last bull by the nuncio of Antichrist now come from Rome and on the other hand to charge just as many articles of the pope with being antichristian and unchristian as the number of my articles which have been condemned.<sup>19</sup> If they are allowed to burn my articles, in which there is more gospel and more of the true substance of Holy Scripture (which I can say truthfully without boasting, and prove also) than in all the pope's books, then I am justified much more in burning their unchristian law books in which there is nothing good. But even if there were some good in them, as I must acknowledge of the decretal, nevertheless everything is so distorted as to do harm and strengthen the pope in his antichristian rule. In addition, none of it is observed with very much diligence except to retain what is evil and harmful in it.

I am willing to let everyone have his own opinion. I am moved

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<sup>19</sup> The papal bull *Exsurge Domine* was signed by the papal chancery on June 15, 1520 and brought north by Aleander, papal nuncio. Cf. also p. 381.

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most by the fact that the pope has never once refuted with Scripture or reason anyone who has spoken, written, or acted against him, but has at all times suppressed, exiled, burned, or otherwise strangled him with force and bans, through kings, and other partisans, or with deceit and false words, of which I shall convince him from history. Nor has he ever been willing to submit to a court of justice or judgment, but at all times bawled that he was above Scripture, judgment, and authority.

Now it is always true that truth and righteousness do not shun judgment, yes, love nothing more than light and judgment, gladly permit themselves to be examined and tried. The apostles in Acts 4 [:19] granted the right of judgment to their enemies and said: "Whether it is right to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge." So certain was the truth. But the pope wants to blind everyone's eyes, let no one judge, but alone judge everyone. That is how uncertain and fearful he is for his cause and affairs. This dealing in the darkness and shying away from the light has the effect that, if the pope were nothing but a pure angel, I still could not believe anything that came from him. Every man rightly hates dark dealings and loves the light. Amen.

In all this I offer to give an account in the  
presence of every man.

Samson, Judges 15 [:11]:

"As they did to me, so have I done to them."



