

Standard Edition of Luther's Works

THE PRECIOUS AND SACRED
WRITINGS OF
MARTIN LUTHER

*The Hero of the Reformation, the Greatest of the
Teuton Church Fathers, and the Father of
Protestant Church Literature*

BASED ON THE KAISER CHRONOLOGICAL EDITION
WITH REFERENCE TO THE ERLANGEN
AND WALCH EDITIONS

EDITED BY

JOHN NICHOLAS LENKER, D. D.

IN CONNECTION WITH LEADING SCHOLARS
OF ALL PARTS OF THE CHURCH

LUTHERANS IN ALL LANDS CO.,
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., U.S.A.
1904

LUTHER ON THE CREATION

A CRITICAL AND DEVOTIONAL

COMMENTARY ON GENESIS

BASED ON DR. HENRY COLE'S TRANSLATION FROM THE
ORIGINAL LATIN. REVISED, ENLARGED, PARTS RE-
TRANSLATED AND EDITED IN COMPLETE FORM

BY

JOHN NICHOLAS LENKER, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF OLD TESTAMENT EXEGESIS, AUTHOR OF
"LUTHERANS IN ALL LANDS" AND PRESIDENT OF THE
NATIONAL LUTHERAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

VOL. I.

LUTHERANS IN ALL LANDS CO.,
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., U.S.A.
1904

SECOND INTRODUCTION

—to—

LUTHER'S WORKS IN ENGLISH.

This introduction or prospectus is supplementary to that in the first volume on the Psalms, in that it likewise emphasizes, though from different view-points, the history and fruits, as well as the present need and future mission of the Protestant Classics of the greatest of all reformers in their relation to the development of the human race.

Let us in this introduction briefly notice the following: The progress of the movement to translate and circulate Luther's works in English, and then emphasize the need of developing an interest to read them; first, because of the relation of Luther and his writings to the public library; and secondly, because as the chief of the Teuton Protestant Church Fathers, we need to understand Luther in his relation to the Greek and Latin Church Fathers, and our true historic relations to them all.

THE PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT.

With profound gratitude to Almighty God for his rich blessing bestowed upon the publication and quick sale of the first volume, Luther's Commentary on the Psalms, a book "the mourning soul cannot well be without," we now send forth the first volume of his Commentary on Genesis, with the confidence that those, who think with Melancthon that "a single page of Luther contains more sound divinity than many whole volumes," will not change their opinion by studying this volume. Having purchased all the copies of Luther on Galatians and his Notes on the Gospels by Dr. P. Anstadt, and the right to reprint them, with two other volumes about ready for the press, one by Prof. E. F. Bartholomew, D. D., and another by Dr. Bernhard Pick, our progress is encouraging, especially since the movement has taken an intersynodical character with colaborers from every branch of our polyglot communion.

LUTHER ON THE OLD TESTAMENT NEEDED FIRST.

This volume on Genesis follows the first volume on the Psalms because the volumes ought to be published first that are needed most and will do the most good. As Professor of Old Testament Exegesis I found that like "Luther on the Psalms" so "Luther on Genesis" was not accessible to the English, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish students of theology, Prof. Bugge's Norwegian trans-

COPYRIGHT, 1904,

BY

PROF. J. N. LENKER, D.D.

lation of extracts from it being out of print. Therefore we believe this volume also will be welcomed by all Old Testament professors and students. While both these volumes will be a healthy corrective to the Old Testament critics, their contribution to the biblical knowledge and the devotional life of Protestantism cannot be exaggerated. Though first delivered to critical students they have also been extensively read in family worship. Luther began and closed his blessed ministry in the church of God not by fighting the Pope, but by expounding the Word of God. He began by explaining the whole Psalter from 1513 to 1516 (before 1517) forming volumes III and IV of the Kaiser Chronological Edition and closed his life's labors by expounding the first book of the Bible, Genesis, which composes volumes I and II of the St. Louis Walch edition. He commenced with the penitential Psalms of David and ended with Moses, the earliest writings of the Old Testament. The reason so many preachers and congregations neglect the Old Testament is because it is neglected in the seminaries. God willing a volume of Luther on the Prophetical Books will be issued and then in all three years at the seminary the students may have something of Luther on the Pentateuch, Psalms and Prophets.

LUTHER'S WORDS ON PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

In the recent marvelous development of public libraries it is held if it is the duty of the state to teach the child to read for the welfare of the child and of the state, it is also the duty of the state to offer the child something to read. Hence the library is being supported by taxation like the public school, and the library buildings are being erected near the high schools. It is as President Roosevelt said while west recently, our civilization rests on the church, the school and the library. The library is the child of the church and school and will in turn greatly influence both. Luther, the founder of the Protestant Church, and the founder of the Public School, is also the founder of the Protestant Library. Yea, more, nearly four hundred years ago he united the school and the library as is proved by the following:

It is noteworthy that Luther closes his "Address to the Mayors and Aldermen of all the Cities of Germany in behalf of Christian Schools," which is considered by educators for its pioneer character and statements of principles "the most important educational treatise ever written," by a powerful appeal in behalf of public libraries which I give in full from Luther on Education by Prof. Painter.

Luther concludes that great educational treatise thus: "Finally, this must be taken into consideration by all who earnestly desire to see such schools established and the study of the languages preserved in the German states; that no cost nor pains should be spared to procure good libraries in suitable buildings, especially in the large cities that are able to afford it. For if a knowledge of the Gospel and of every kind of learning is to be preserved, it must be embodied in books, as the prophets and apostles did, as I have already shown. This should be done, not only that our spiritual and civil leaders may have something to read and study, but also that good books may not be lost, and that the arts and languages may be preserved, with which God has graciously favored us. St. Paul was diligent in this matter, since he lays the in-

junction upon Timothy, 'Give heed to reading,' I Tim. 4:13, and directs him to bring the books, but especially the parchments left at Troas, 2 Tim. 4:13.

"All the kingdoms that have been distinguished in the world have bestowed care upon this matter, and particularly the Israelites, among whom Moses was the first to begin the work, who commanded them to preserve the book of the law in the ark of God, and put it under the care of Levites, that any one might procure copies from them. He even commanded the king to make a copy of this book in the hands of the Levites. Among other duties, God directed the Levitical priesthood to preserve and attend to the books. Afterwards Joshua increased and improved this library, as did subsequently Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, and many kings and prophets. Hence have come to us the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, which would not otherwise have been collected and preserved, if God had not required such diligence in regard to it."

"After this example collegiate churches and convents formerly founded libraries, although with few good books. And the injury from the neglect to procure books and good libraries, when there were men and books enough for that purpose, was afterwards perceived in the decline of every kind of knowledge; and instead of good books, the senseless, useless, and hurtful books of the monks, the Catholicon, Florista, Graecista, Labyrinthus, Dormi Secure (names of Latin grammars and collections of sermons), and the like, were introduced by Satan, so that the Latin language was corrupted, and neither good schools, good instruction, nor good methods of study remained. And as we see, the language and arts are, in an imperfect manner, recovered from fragments of old books rescued from the worms and dust; and every day men are seeking these literary remains, as people dig in the ashes of a ruined city after treasures and jewels.

"Therein we have received our just due, and God has well recompensed our ingratitude, in that we did not consider his benefits, and lay up a supply of good literature when we had time and opportunity, but neglected it, as if we were not concerned. He in turn, instead of the Holy Scriptures and good books, suffered Aristotle and numberless pernicious books to come into use, which only lead us further from the Bible. To these were added the progeny of Satan, the monks and the phantoms of the universities, which we founded at incredible cost, and many doctors, preachers, teachers, priests and monks, that is to say, great, coarse, fat fellows, adorned with red and brown caps, like swine led with a golden chain and decorated with pearls; and we have burdened ourselves with them, who have taught us nothing useful, but have made us more and more blind and stupid, and as a reward have consumed all our property, and filled all the cloisters, and indeed every corner, with dregs and filth of their unclean and noxious books, of which we cannot think without horror.

"Has it not been a grievous misfortune that a boy has hitherto been obliged to study twenty years or longer, in order to learn enough miserable Latin to become a priest and to read the mass? And whosoever has succeeded in this has been called blessed, and blessed the mother that has borne such a child! And yet he has

