



MARTIN LUTHER 1483 - 1546.

Martin Luther

AND THE JEWS

Martin Luther and the Jews

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Printed by SONS OF LIBERTY
P.O. Box 1896
Hollywood, Calif.
90028

First Printed 1939
Second Printing 1967

Note: The quotations from Luther's works marked (W) originate from the WEIMAR Edition, those marked (E) from the ERLANGEN Edition. The passages reproduced on pages 5 to 10 are taken from Luther's principal work entitled "Jews and their Lies", those on pages 11 to 16 from smaller essays written by Luther.

Preface

NONE of the measures adopted by National Socialist Germany have found so little sympathy and understanding abroad as the defensive provisions undertaken to protect the German Nation against the Jewish race. Not merely political motives influence this attitude, on the contrary, foreign protest is usually based upon the plea for Christian charity, upon theological and clerical doctrines upholding the sacred relation between the Old and the New Testaments, and these ideas serve as a forum from which National Socialist strivings and ideology are indignantly apostrophized as the "rule of demonism".

In fact, the Anti-semitism entertained by the Church during its times of potential splendour has been utterly forgotten. Similarly, the Protestants of the whole world seem to overlook the fact that, although Luther interceded on behalf of the Jews during the first stages of the Reformation, he gradually developed into one of their most energetic adversaries, an attitude which was forced upon him as his primary ignorance in this question was dispelled by his later increase of Christian wisdom, national and social experience and his generally broader outlook on life, which compelled him to recognize that the Jewish race is the fundamental and supreme enemy of Christianity.

To-day, international Protestantism is faced by the necessity of taking a decision of greater importance than any other since the times of the Reformation. There are two alternatives: either the Protestant world decides to follow Luther, without whose knowledge, wisdom and initiative Protestantism is inconceivable, or else it unites its strivings with those of the Jewish race, against which Luther fought with all the power of his whole being to the very last breath in his body.

At the present critical and decisive hour, calling for a final determination on the part of the Protestant world, we, the Christians living in the country which has given birth to the Reformation, raise our voices and point to Luther, who re-discovered the eternal Truth of the Gospels for the whole world, to him who, not from motives of fanatic demonism, but solely induced by fervent Christian conviction, called for categoric measures against the Jews, maintaining that "with prayer and all piety we must practise severe justice".

The present pamphlet repeats the words of the great and earnest Christian Luther, who demanded that fire should be set to Synagogues and Jewish schools, who recommended the confiscation of Jewish capital, the prohibition of Jewish teaching and, finally, that the Jews should be expelled from the country and that "this shall be done in the name of our Lord and in glorification of all Christianity, to show God that we are good Christians and that we have never knowingly tolerated nor approved the public falsehoods, the maledictions and blasphemy of His Son and of His Flock".

Only ignorance of the true facts can induce Christians to tolerate Jews. Only absolute misapprehension as to Luther's aims and ideas can permit Christians to take the part of and intercede for Jews. This pamphlet has been issued in Luther's town Eisenach, at the foot of the Wartburg, and has been disseminated in all countries to prevent that the lack of knowledge in regard to the situation as it really presents itself shall develop into the instrument by the means of which Christ may be disavowed and the honour of the Church blemished. As Protestant Christians we fully recognize the great debt of gratitude we owe to Luther and we feel it our duty to warn all Protestant Christians in the whole world against the Jews and their protectors with Luther's very own words.

EISENACH, the town of the Wartburg.

MARTIN SASSE, Bishop.

Luther's accusation: Jews and their lies

Necessity of combatting the Jewish race

I have circulated this pamphlet because I desire to be included amongst those who have warned Christianity against the Jews.

THE Jews are veritable liars and vampires. . . . All their heart's desire, their hopes and aspirations are actuated by their craving to be able to treat us Gentiles as they treated the Heathens in Persia in the days of Esther.*

A more bloodthirsty and vindictive race has never seen the light of day. They regard themselves as the Chosen of the Lord and believe they are destined to annihilate and torture all Gentiles. The first and foremost task they expect their Messiah to accomplish is that he shall murder and slay all human beings with his sword. From the very earliest days they have undertaken all in their power to practically demonstrate this to the Christians and have continued to do so whenever they could. (W. 55, p. 443)

Therefore, my beloved Christians, be on your guard against this race doomed to eternal damnation, whom God has allowed to sink into such a mire of disgusting horrors and lies that all their deeds and words must necessarily be converted into falsehood, blasphemy and wickedness, as good and generous as such deeds may appear at first sight. (p. 454) The entire existence of the Nation of Israel and the People of Judea is devoted to blasphemy against God's Word, its persecution and ridicule and the torture of the Prophets.

* Esther, the Jewess, whom the Persian King Ahasuerus (485—465 B. C.) was persuaded to take as Queen, induced him to give his consent that the Jews be allowed to massacre their enemies, including many of the most influential personalities of the Persian Kingdom. In the Palae of Shusan 800 Persians were killed and further 75,000 in the Provinces. Mardocai, the Jewish councillor to the King of Persia, and formerly Esther's legal guardian, ordained "that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed". (Esther 9, 28.)

History shows that one can but regard this nation as a race of veritable murderers of Prophets and adversaries of God's Holy Word. (p. 436) Therefore, beloved Christians, let me warn you against this desperate nation which is doomed to eternal damnation, from whom you can learn nothing but disbelief, blasphemy and false interpretation of God and His Holy Bible, to murder Prophets and to haughtily despise all other inhabitants of the world. (p. 439) They display nothing but malice, avariciousness, envy and hate towards each other; their intercourse with us Gentiles is full of contempt, usury, pride and imprecations, so that even a Jew would fain have very sharp eyes to detect a pious Jew ... (p. 442) With the same justification all murderers, prostitutes, thieves, scoundrels and all other wicked people might boast of being God's Holy Chosen People.

The Synagogue, the Lair of Satan

THEREFORE be on your guard against the Jews and be warned that their Synagogues are nothing but a lair of Satan, where boastfulness, pride, falseness and blasphemy are practised and taught and where the image of God and Man are disgracefully violated in the manner of the Evil One himself. Whenever you see or hear a Jew teaching, remember that you are being confronted by a venomous basilisk* which poisons and kills by its mere regard. (p. 446)

This race has been possessed by Lucifer and all his angels ... Their breath reeks of the Gentiles' gold and silver. There is no more miserly nation under the sun and their disgraceful usury shows that they will remain so for ever. One of their most consoling thoughts is that at the advent of their Messiah he will pile together all the gold and silver of the whole world and distribute it amongst the Jews. ... The Israelites covet gold and silver more than any nation of the world. ... Cursed be the vile race of Jews and cursed be their iniquity!
(W. 53, p. 477/78)

Therefore, my beloved Christians, be on your guard against the Jews whom our Lord, in His wrath, has surrendered to the Evil One. ... Consequently, whenever you encounter

* Basilisk, fabulous reptile hatched by serpent from cock's egg, blasting by its breath or look.

a real Jew you may, in good faith, make the sign of the cross and openly and fearlessly pronounce the words: This is a veritable devil. (W. 53, p. 479)

The Jews long to see the detested Gentiles as their slaves &c. they expect them to give their gold and silver to the Jews and to let themselves be slaughtered like cattle.

They have been taught so much deadly hatred against the Gentiles by their parents and Rabbis since their earliest youth and continue to feed their hate during all the years of their lives, that this hatred has saturated their very blood and flesh, fills the very marrow of their bones and has become inseparable from their whole being. Just as it is impossible to alter flesh and blood, marrow and bones, it is impossible for them to refrain from pride and envy. They are doomed to remain as they are and miserably perish. (p. 481) Therefore do not doubt and never forget, beloved Christians, that, apart from Satan himself, you possess no more deadly, poisonous and dreadful enemy than a real Jew. . . . For this reason they have often, in the course of history, been accused of poisoning wells, kidnapping and maltreating children. They themselves deny this. — Be that as it may, I positively know there is no lack of will on their part to accomplish such deeds.

If, however, they happen to do good, do not believe their actions are the fruits of benevolent feelings towards you or that they were undertaken for your benefit, on the contrary, they are compelled to act charitably ever and anon because they desire to be granted the room to live with us. Their hearts, however, remain as black as I have described them. . . . They dwell in our country and are at home there, live under our protection, make use of the land and the highways, markets and streets. Our potentates and aristocracy idly look on, gape, and undertake nothing to prevent the Jews from stealing what they covet from their open purses and chests. They allow the Jews to totally impoverish them by the extortion of exorbitant sums of money by usury from them and their subjects, so that even their own wealth, having passed into Jewish hands, becomes the instrument through which they are reduced to penury. Indeed, the Jews, who are foreigners, ought to possess nothing. All they own should certainly be ours. They do not work. We, on the other hand, give them nothing. In spite of that they possess our money,

goods and chattel are consequently our masters in our own country. Whenever a thief steals ten guilders, he is hanged, if he commits robbery on the open street, he is decapitated, but if a Jew steals and extorts ten tons of gold with his usury, our princes regard him with more love than they feel for God himself. The proof is that the Jews themselves vaunt that they do not work, but that they live in ease and idleness and that the cursed Gentiles are compelled to toil for them and that they, the Jews, obtain the Gentiles' money and are thereby their masters and the Gentiles their slaves.

(W. 53, p. 482/83)

Jewish Lies

It is an exorbitant and ridiculous falsehood on their part to complain they are prisoners. . . . Until the present day we are at a loss to know what evil spirit brought them to our country; we certainly never enticed them away from Jerusalem to our country. Apart from that, no one entertains the wish to prevent them from leaving us. The country and highways are at their disposal. They may return to their own country whenever they please. Indeed, we are even ready to heap presents upon them, merely to be rid of them, for they are a heavy burden for our country, comparable to a plague, pestilence or other calamity. (p. 520) They let us work and toil in the sweat of our brows to earn money and goods, whilst they sit at the warm fireside in idleness, baking pears, eating and drinking, enjoying an easy life at our expense, scoffing at us and ridiculing us because we work. Thus they are our masters, and our very earnings, our work and the sweat of our brow make us their slaves. Satan may well laugh and dance with glee for having found such a perfect Paradise amongst us Christians and because he can swallow our property through the intermediary of the Jews, his beloved disciples. In the times of David and Solomon in Jerusalem, their own country, the Jews did not live in such ease and plenty as they now enjoy by the means of our property, which they continuously steal and rob. And yet they complain we have made them prisoners. (W. 53, p. 521)

It is our own fault that we have not avenged the sacred blood of our Saviour and the innocent blood of countless Christians and children, spilled since the demolition of Jerusalem until

now; it is our own fault that we have not annihilated them but placidly let them stay where they are in spite of all their murders, their cursing, blasphemy, lies and violation and that we even protect their schools, their dwellings, their persons and property. (W. 53, p. 522)

Jewish Criminal Literature

THEIR Talmud and their Rabbis teach them that a murder shall not be regarded as a sin whenever a Jew kills a Gentile, but only if a Jew murders a brother in Israel. Neither is it a sin to break an oath sworn to a Gentile, similarly they regard the stealing and robbing they commit with their usury as a deed gratifying their God. The Jews of our days still keep to these doctrines and follow the example of their fathers, taking every opportunity to practise their deliberately false interpretation of the Lord's Word, their avariciousness, their usury, their thefts, their murders, and teaching their children to do likewise. (W. 53, p. 489—490/91)

In reply to those who may think I exaggerate, I can only state that I am not saying enough. I have studied Jewish literature. They curse us Gentiles and in their schools and prayers they wish us all evil. They rob us of our money and our property through their usury and, wherever they can, they try to injure us. The worst is that they pretend they are acting for the best, are even carrying out God's will in so doing, and that they are educated in this spirit. (W. 53, p. 491)

They know and practise many a dark and magic art and are full of covetousness and pride. They are veritable thieves and robbers. Not one morsel of the food they swallow nor one inch of the apparel on their bodies has not been extorted and robbed from us with their accursed usury. Therefore they and their families derive their livelihood from daily theft and robbery and in spite of belonging to the very worst category of arch-thieves and villains, they live in an unrepentant state of security. A usurer is indeed an arch-thief and robber who deserves to be hanged on a gallows seven times higher than ordinary thieves. (W. 53, p. 502)

It is impossible to convert Satan himself and his devils, and our Lord never bade us do so. It suffices if we disclose their lies and reveal the truth. — Such is the nature of the noble

guests we poor and pious Christians have to harbour in our own country in the shape of the Jews. . . . (W. 53, p. 514)

They even want to teach God His duties and prescribe in what manner He is to redeem them . . . to whit; He shall instruct His Messiah to kill and totally annihilate all Gentiles, so that the Jews shall obtain possession and rule over the territories and goods of the whole world.

**Their innate craving is that the sword and war,
terror and all mishaps shall blight and demolish
the accursed gentiles**

It is a custom of theirs to publicly pronounce such curses every Sabbath in their schools and day for day at home. They teach such curses to their children, accustoming them, to these imprecations from their very earliest youth, so as to ensure that they will always remain deadly, vicious enemies of Christianity. (W. 53, p. 520)

Luther demands the abolition of synagogues and the expulsion of all Jews

WHAT are the Christians to do with this iniquitous and depraved race of Jews?

Seeing we know of their lies, their blasphemy and their maledictions, we cannot tolerate their presence here . . . or else we should ourselves be jointly responsible for all their lies, curses and profanations. . . . With prayer and all piety we must practise severe justice. . . . I myself give the following advice (W. 53, p. 522): —

1. Fire should be put to their synagogues and schools; all parts which do not burn should be covered and hidden with earth to prevent any human being ever setting eyes upon one single stone or any of the cinders. This shall be done in the name of our Lord and in glorification of all Christianity, to show God that we are good Christians and

that we have never knowingly tolerated nor approved the public falsehoods, the maledictions and blasphemy of His Son and of His Flock, whilst our Lord will forgive us what we have tolerated in our ignorance. (I myself knew it not). But now our eyes have been opened it would be just as great a sin were we to protect a Jewish house where the name of Jesus Christ is blasphemed, profaned and where we are violated and cheated as if we were to commit these sins ourselves (W. 55, p. 525);

2. Their dwellings should be destroyed in like manner, in as much as they practise the same wantonness there as in their Synagogues. Instead, they may be lodged in garrets or barns, similarly to the Gypsies. This will show them that they are not the masters in our country, as they boast, but that they are foreigners and our prisoners;
3. To confiscate all their prayer-books and Talmuds in which such idolatry, malediction and blasphemy are taught;
4. To categorically forbid their Rabbis to continue their teaching;
5. Jews should not be granted the privilege of safe-conduct and the right to use the highways. They have no business in the country and should rather stay at home. . . . If our Sovereigns and potentates do not emit the necessary laws to deny Jews the right to use the highways, it may occur one fine day that a valiant guard of men at horse assemble against the Jews, because this book will have taught them the true nature of the Jew, how he should be treated and that he does not deserve protection;
6. Their usury should be forbidden; all ready money, gold and silver jewelry should be confiscated, for all their possessions have been stolen from us by their usury;
7. Young and healthy Jews and Jewesses should be equipped with flails, axes, mattock, spades, distaffs and spindles and should be compelled to earn their living by the sweat of their brows. It is intolerable that they should make us work and toil to enable them, the so-called Chosen People, to sit at the fireside in idleness.

If, however, we have cause to fear that they will personally injure us, our wives and our families, our domestics or our

cattle, then let us account with them for all they have extorted from us with their usury and let us expel them from our country for ever. . . . For God's wrath is upon them and His anger is so mighty that they only become the worse if they are treated with mildness, whilst severity can improve them but little. Therefore — cast them out! (W. 53, p. 526)

People say that the Jews give large sums of money and are therefore useful to the rulers. But from where do they take this money? Not from their own belongings, but from the property of the rulers and their subjects, from whom they have stolen and robbed the money by usury. Have the Jews not every cause to laugh at us and ridicule us for letting ourselves be so ignominiously cheated and duped, for giving our money and letting them remain in our country to practise their treachery? (W. 53, p. 526)

Warning to clergymen and preachers

LET me admonish you, gentlemen and colleagues, clergymen and preachers, in the name of the office you hold, that it is also your duty to admonish your congregation to beware of the Jews and to shun them. (W. 53, p. 527)

Whenever you see a Jew or whenever you think of a Jew you should say to yourself: "Every Sabbath the mouth of that man has cursed, profaned and blasphemed Jesus Christ, my Beloved Saviour, and has prayed to God that I, my wife and child and all Christians be slaughtered and annihilated. He would fain have done so himself and desires, whenever possible, to obtain our possessions. . . . How can I eat, drink or speak in the company of such a mouth? Were I to do so, I should imbibe the evil spirits from the very dishes and pots and would surely be possessed of all the devils abiding in the Jews." (W. 53, p. 528)

. . . We must avoid all that is apt to support them in their deliberate lying, blasphemy, cursing and profanations, and we should neither protect them, eat or drink with them, nor give them shelter or render them other neighbourly services, so as not to share in the responsibility for their satanic abuses and sins. The Jews are thoroughly and irredeemably bad and full of devilry and have been our plague, our pestilence and misfortune for 1400 years and are so still to-day. (W. 53, p. 528)

Moreover, if your parish is situated in such a district where many Jews reside, you should not omit to influence your regents and those in authority to fulfil the official duties incumbent upon them according to God's desire, by compelling the Jews to work and by prohibiting usury. . . . What reasons have we to feed and to enrich such an indolent, idle, useless, wicked and injurious race from our own pockets? . . . Even if they claim to have been granted certain privileges, these should be of no avail to them as it is in the power of no one to grant the right to practise such horrors. (W. 53, p. 529)

If we desire to remain unpolluted by the Jews' blaphemies and not be made responsible for them, we have to part with them and they must be expelled from our country. That is the most evident solution and the best advice for all concerned. In this case and because they are loth to leave our country, they will no doubt deny all charges brought against them and will offer the rulers and potentates great sums of money to induce them to give their consent to allow them to remain in our country. Woe be upon those who accept such money, and a curse be upon such money. . . . (W. 53, p. 538)

The duties incumbent upon the State

I pray all our rulers, in whose territories there are also Jewish subjects, to practise severe justice in regard to this despicable race . . . similarly to a wise surgeon who, without false pity, severs such limbs, flesh, arteries and all other parts which are infested with gangrene. The same method should be applied to the Jews. Burn their Synagogues, prohibit all the practices I have described and compel them to work. . . . If all this is of no avail, they must be cast out like rabid dogs.

I have done my part — now do you yours. I am exculpated. In conclusion and with regard to my own person, I want to add the following: Were God to grant me no other Saviour than the Messiah the Jews await and pray for, I should rather be an animal than a human being. . . . The Jews simply expect their Messiah to hold the office of a temporal King who is to kill all Christians and distribute the world amongst the Jews and give them the absolute power over all and everything.

Scum of mankind

Jews are young devils condemned to Hell. (E: 32 p. 276)

Maybe mild-hearted and gentle Christians will believe I am too rigorous and drastic against the poor, afflicted Jews, believing that I ridicule them and treat with much sarcasm. By my word, I am far too weak to be able to ridicule such a Satanic breed. I would fain do so, but they are far greater adepts at mockery than I and possess a God who is master in this art; it is the Evil One himself. (E. 32, p. 286)

Even with no further evidence than the Old Testament, I would maintain, and no person on earth could alter my opinion, that the Jews, as they are to-day, are veritably a mixture of all the depraved and malevolent knaves of the whole world over, who have then been dispersed in all countries, similarly to the Tartars, Gypsies and such folk, to afflict the different nations with their usury, to spy upon others and to betray, to poison wells, to deceive and to kidnap children, — in short, to practise all kinds of dishonesty and injury. (Extract from the Pamphlet "Vom Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi", 1543.)

Luther's advice regarding the baptism of Jews

If I were to baptize a Jew I should conduct him to the Bridge leading over the River Elbe, I should fasten a stone to his neck and should thrust him into the waters, saying "I baptize thee in the name of Abraham". (Extract from "Speeches at Table", No. 1795.)

Luther tells the following narrative about a baptized Jew: At the portal of a Church in Cologne there is a statue of a former dean. In one hand he holds a cat, in the other a mouse. This dean had been a Jew, but was baptized and had changed to the Christian confession. He desired that, after his death, his effigy should be hewn in stone as a symbol which was to demonstrate that a Jew can no more be animated by generous feelings towards a Christian than a cat can be on terms of friendship with a mouse. . . . Verily, the Jews wish us no good and we are as obnoxious to them as death or misfortune. (E. 62, p. 371).

The Jewish Danger

THOSE Jews professing to be surgeons or doctors deprive the Christians who make use of their medicaments, of health and prosperity, for such Jewish doctors believe they find especial favour with their God if they torment and furtively kill Christians. And we, fools that we are, even turn for succour to our enemies and their evil ways in the times when our lives are in danger, which is indeed sorely trying God's patience. (E. 62, p. 367)

Luther's Legacy

As soon as my principal business* has been accomplished, I shall have to devote myself to the expulsion of the Jews. Count Albrecht is hostile towards them and he has already abandoned them; but as yet they are being molested by none. With the help of God I shall, in the sermons I hold from the pulpit, assist Count Albrecht and shall also abandon them. (Extract from one of Luther's letters to his wife, shortly before his death.)

Luther's last Sermon:**

"Warning against the Jews"

"... Besides, you also have many Jews living in the country, who do much harm. ... You should know that the Jews blaspheme and violate the name of our Saviour day for day ... for that reason you, Milords and men of authority, should not tolerate but expel them. They are our public enemies and incessantly blaspheme our Lord Jesus Christ, they call our Blessed Virgin Mary a harlot and her Holy Son a bastard and to us they give the epithet of changelings and abortions. If they could kill us all, they would gladly do so, in fact, many of them murder Christians, especially those professing to be surgeons and doctors. They know how to

* The divergencies between the Counts of Mansfeld which were the cause of his journey.

** held at Eisleben, a few days before his death, February, 1546.

deal with medicaments in the manner of the Italians — the Borgias and Medicis — who gave people poison which brought about their death in one hour or in a month."

Therefore deal with them harshly as they do nothing but excruciatingly blaspheme our Lord Jesus Christ, trying to rob us of our lives, our health, our honour and belongings. ... For that reason I cannot have patience nor carry on an intercourse with these deliberate blasphemers and violators of our Beloved Saviour.

"As a good patriot I wanted to give you this warning for the very last time to deter you from participating in alien sins. You must know I only desire the best for you all, rulers and subjects." (E. 62, p. 189)

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