

CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

**SAINTS AND  
HEROES: TWO**

George Hodges

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

This edition published 2023  
by Living Book Press  
Copyright © Living Book Press, 2023

ISBN: 978-1-76153-072-2 (hardcover)  
978-1-76153-073-9 (softcover)

First published in 1912.

This edition is based on the 1912 printing by Henry Holt and Company.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any other form or means – electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner and the publisher or as provided by Australian law.



A catalogue record for this  
book is available from the  
National Library of Australia

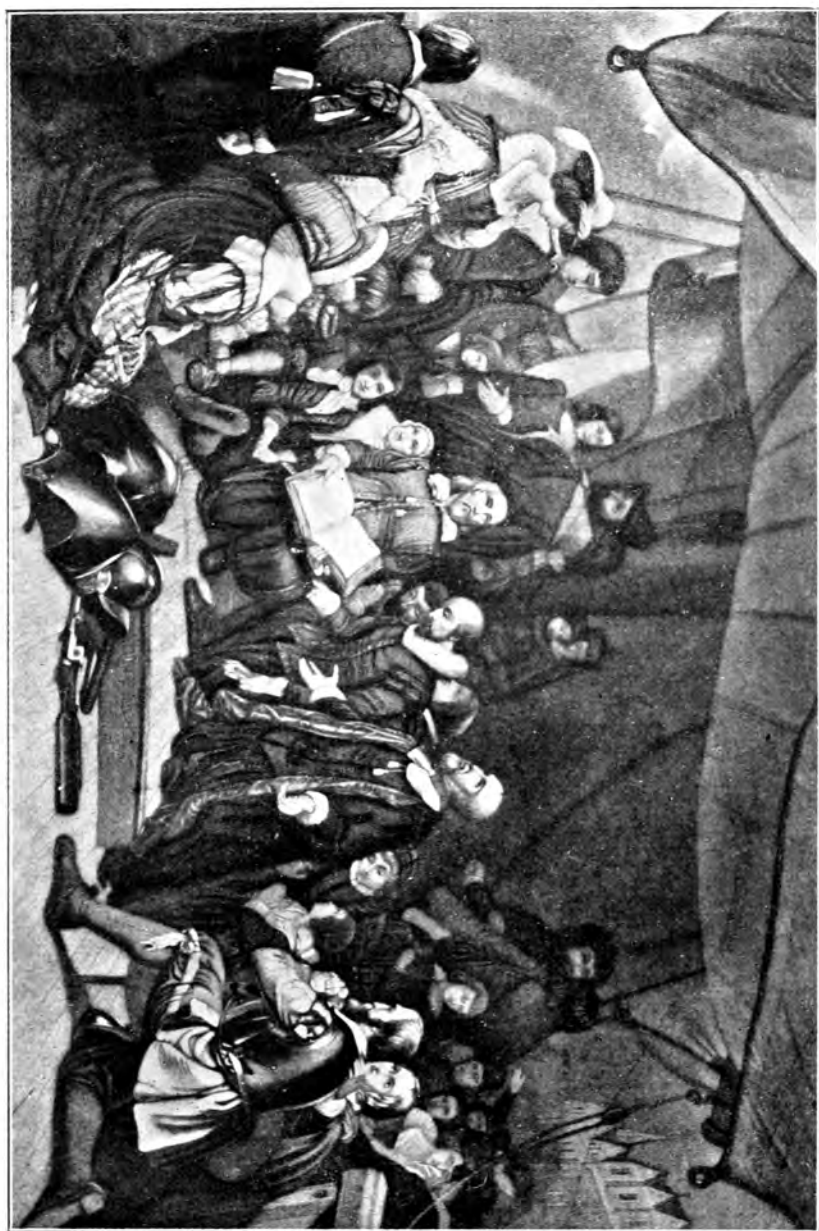
# Saints and Heroes

SINCE THE MIDDLE AGES

*by*

GEORGE HODGES





## CONTENTS

1.	Luther	1
2.	More	15
3.	Loyola	27
4.	Cranmer	37
5.	Calvin	49
6.	Knox	61
7.	Coligny	73
8.	William the Silent	85
9.	Brewster	96
10.	Laud	107
11.	Cromwell	w119
12.	Bunyan	131
13.	Fox	141
14.	Wesley	151



MARTIN LUTHER

From a Print in the Possession of the New York Public Library

# LUTHER

1483-1546

ON the last day of October, in the year 1517, a German monk posted a paper on a church door in Wittenberg. It was written in Latin, and was addressed to theologians. It contained a series of statements concerning the doctrine and practice of indulgences. The writer desired to have the matter discussed. It seemed to him that there was something wrong about it, and he would be glad to hear what wiser men might say. Here, he said, are indulgences preached and sold throughout the Church; is it right? is it in accordance with the gospel and the truth? The paper was a question.

Now the meaning of an indulgence was this. Every sin deserves the punishment of God. The sure consequence of sin is eternal suffering in hell. But by the grace of God, and the cross of Christ, and the ministry of the Church, there is a way of escape. Every sin may be forgiven, if the sinner is truly sorry and repents. In order, however, to obtain this forgiveness, the repentant sinner, they said, must confess his sin to a priest, and be, by him, assured of the pardon of God, and in addition must do what the priest tells him as a penance. The priest, in the old time, told him to fast, or to give money to the poor, or to go on a pilgrimage. In the days of the crusades, sinners were told that, in the place of the former penances, they might enlist as soldiers in the armies which were going to the Holy Land to take Jerusalem from the Turks. By-and-by, they were told that they might be assured of forgiveness if they paid the expenses of somebody else who was willing to go in their place. Then they were told they might gain

the same blessing by giving money for some other good purpose; for example, for the building of a church. These substitutes for the old penances were called indulgences.

Gradually and naturally, this doctrine gave rise to grave errors and evils. One of the errors was that simple and ignorant people believed that the forgiveness of God was gained, not by repentance, but by indulgence. If they sinned, they could make it right, they thought, and escape punishment, by the payment of money. And this payment, they imagined, would affect them, not only in this world, but in the world to come; and would obtain pardon not only for themselves, but for others who had gone already into that other world. One of the evils was that this error was made a means of raising money for the Church. People gladly paid for the building of cathedrals and monasteries in the belief that they were thereby gaining forgiveness for their sins, and salvation for their souls and for the souls of their friends.

So when Pope Leo X wished to raise a great sum of money for the rebuilding of St. Peter's Church at Rome, he undertook to do it by the sale of indulgences. It seemed as right in those days to build a church by means of indulgences as it seemed right in this country a hundred years ago to build a church by means of lotteries. The raising of this money in Germany was put into the hands of man named Tetzal. He was a frank, straightforward person, with a better head for business than for religion, but with a great ability to appeal to the people. He knew how to speak to crowds. Tetzal took the doctrine of indulgences as he found it, and used it, as the phrase is, for all it was worth. He went about as a revival preacher goes to-day, having preparations made for his coming, enlisting all the ministers of the place, and holding great meetings. But his purpose was simply to get money. He began by preaching about sin and about hell. Now, he said, what have you done? All sins may be forgiven. Here is the promise of the pope, here are letters of indulgence, here is the opportunity



for a little money to save your souls. And your friends,—perhaps you have a father or a mother, perhaps you have children, gone into the other world, in purgatory,—you may save them also. “Do you not hear your dead parents crying out, ‘Have mercy upon us? We are in sore pain and you can set us free for a mere pittance?’ ”

This was what Martin Luther had in mind when he posted his paper concerning indulgences on the church door in Wittenberg.

Luther was already one of the foremost men in the Church in Germany. Born the son of a miner, among hills filled with copper, he had made his way by his own efforts through school and college, and had begun to study law. Suddenly, amid the terrors of a thunderstorm, he had changed his mind and had given himself to the ministry. He had entered a monastery in Erfurt. There he had gone through long seasons of deep depression, trying to save his soul by fasting and pain and prayer. For days he went without food, for nights he went without sleep, hoping thus to gain the good-will of God. He was terribly afraid of God, and feared that he would be lost at last in the torments of hell. But in the monastery he found wise advisers. One good brother said, “Martin, you are a fool. God is not angry with you; it is you who are angry with God.” Another good brother, Staupitz, the head of the monastery, to whom Luther cried, “Oh, my sin, my sin, my sin!” replied, “You have no real sin. You make a sin out of every trifle.” Staupitz urged him to trust in the mercy and love of God who freely forgives those who put their faith in Christ. He saw also that what Luther needed was an active life, and to be occupied, not in thinking about himself, but in ministering to others.

Then Staupitz became dean of the theological faculty of the University of Wittenberg, and he called Luther out of the monastery to be professor of logic and ethics. Presently he sent him on an errand to Rome, to see a bit of the great world. On his

return Luther took his degree of doctor of divinity, and began to preach in the city church. He was appointed to teach theology to the young monks in the Wittenberg monastery, and men came to be instructed by him till the place was overcrowded. When he was but thirty-one he was made district-vicar, and put in charge of eleven monasteries. His hands were full of business. Then Staupitz made him his successor, in the chair of biblical theology.

There was already a new interest in the study of the Bible, and Luther entered into his new duties with enthusiasm, learning Greek and Hebrew, and reading all the latest books. He was at the same time the most popular preacher in the town, and the most popular professor in the university; and his fame began to go abroad. He had a practical mind, and was interested, not only in doctrine, but in conduct. And he had a remarkably strong and free and original way of expressing himself. Thus he criticized the common way of thinking about the saints. Instead of trying to be like them, people were praying to the saints to help them. "We honor them," said Luther, "and call upon them only when we have a pain in our legs or our head, or when our pockets are empty."

This was the man who posted on his church door a proposition that the theologians should look seriously into the matter of indulgences.

Luther's thesis, as his paper was called, set all Europe talking. People were ready for great changes. It was as when the spring comes after a long winter, and the brooks begin to flow again, and the grass grows green, and buds appear upon the trees. The invention of the mariner's compass had enabled Columbus to steer due west across the Atlantic, and the new land which he had discovered showed that the world was much bigger than men had thought. The invention of powder and of printing had given men a gun in one hand and a book in the other, which were changing the conditions of society. The plain man with

the gun was able to face the knight on horseback, and the plain man with the book was able to test the teachings of the scholar. It was the day of a new independence.

Thus, although Luther's questions as to the doctrine of indulgences were received by the theologians with suspicion and by the authorities with alarm, in both Church and state, the common people heard them gladly. They were translated out of Latin into German. "In fourteen days," says Luther, "the theses ran through all Germany; for the whole world was complaining of indulgences." And of other matters also; of other evils in religion, against which there seemed to have at last appeared a leader.

For the indulgences had been sold in the name of the pope, and by his authority; and Tetzl, in defending them, had declared that the pope could do no wrong. "The pope," said Tetzl, "cannot err in those things which are of faith and necessary to salvation." And to this he added, "They who speak slightly of the pope are guilty of blasphemy."

And the pope was against Luther. At first, he had considered the theses as of no importance. "A drunken German wrote them," he is reported to have said. "When he is sober, he will think differently." But the more he heard about the matter, the less he liked it. Then he summoned Luther to Rome to be put on trial. And Luther, being protected by his prince, the Elector Frederick, refused to go.

Mititz, on behalf of the pope, met him with persuasions to hold his peace. He told him that if he would change his mind the pope would make him a bishop, or an archbishop, or a cardinal. Eck, on behalf of the pope, met him with arguments. He told him that his opinions were like those for which John Hus had been burned at the stake.

Luther, on his side, appealed, at first, from the pope ill-informed to the pope better-informed, and then from the pope to a general council of the Church. The question of indulgences

fell into the background. The debate now turned upon the power of the pope. Was he indeed the representative of Christ on earth, in such a sense that his word was truth, and his will was law? Luther declared his determination to think for himself, and to make up his own mind, and to say that which he believed to be right and true. He would be bound, he said, neither by the pope nor by the Church. He would be guided by the Bible and his own conscience.

There are two ancient and universal parties in religion. On one side are those who are interested in the institution, in services and sacraments, in customs and traditions. They were represented in the Old Testament by the priests, in the New Testament by the Scribes and Pharisees. On the other side are those who are interested in the individual, in the relation of religion to actual, present conditions. They were represented in the Old Testament by the prophets, in the New Testament by the apostles. The motto of one party is "It is written"; they refer to the law and authority, and desire to keep in the old ways. The motto of the other party is "It seems good to the Holy Ghost and to us"; they refer to the voice of God speaking in their own souls, and are ready to change as their knowledge of the truth changes, or their understanding of the needs of men. One party is conservative, the other is progressive. They are both right, but they are never both right at the same time. Now the conservatives are right, and contend on the side of God against the progressives who are attacking that which is both old and true, and are throwing the Church into disorder. Now the progressives are right, and contend on the side of God against the conservatives who are maintaining that which is not only old but mistaken, and are trying to keep out the light, and are resisting information.

In Luther's time it was the progressives who were right, and he was the leader of them.

Matters came rapidly to a crisis. In 1520, the pope issued a

bull of excommunication against Luther. The word bull is from the Latin *bulla*, meaning the leaden seal which was attached to important documents. It came to be applied to the documents themselves. The effect of an excommunication was to expel the offender, not only from the Holy Communion, but from intercourse with his neighbors; nobody was allowed to trade with him or speak to him. This, however, depended on public opinion. In order to make an excommunication effective, people must believe that the pope had the power to issue it, and that in issuing it he was expressing the will of God. Wherever this was not believed, the bull was worth no more than the paper on which it was written. Already there were so many persons in Germany who were disposed to disregard the bull, called together the professors and students of the university and burned the thing.

And so strongly was Luther supported by the nobles, the lawyers, the priests, and the people of Germany, that in spite of the excommunication he was permitted to plead his cause before the emperor, and the representatives of the states and cities of the land. The council met at Worms, and to that city Luther went in spite of dangers. He knew that he might be set upon by the way and killed: he knew that he might be condemned and burned alive, as Hus had been. He said afterwards, "Had I known as many devils would set upon me as there were tiles on the roofs, I should have sprung into the midst of them with joy."

Thus he stood before the representatives and rulers of Church and state. A pile of books which he had published was upon the table. They asked him if he wrote them, and he said that they were his. They asked him if he was prepared to stand by all that he had written, and he answered that some of the books were composed of sermons, concerning which nobody had raised a question: some were controversies with various persons, whom he had, perhaps, called harder names than was necessary, for he did not claim to be a saint; some were against the pope; he

was prepared to stand by these, and to withdraw from them not a word. Nevertheless, he was willing to change his mind, if he could be proved wrong out of the Bible. "You demand a simple reply," he said, "and I will give it. Unless convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by clear reason, I cannot and will not revoke anything, for it is neither safe nor right to act against one's conscience. God help me. Amen."

The result was a formal condemnation. Luther's books were to be burned, nobody was to be allowed to read them, he himself was to be seized and sent to the emperor to be put in prison. Thus he was under the ban of the state as well as of the Church, and was declared an outlaw. This decision continued without repeal all the rest of Luther's life. But it had no more effect than the pope's bull. For even the laws of the civil courts depend on the will of the people. Luther lived all his days thereafter under the protection of the people.

For the moment, however, it seemed prudent to remove him from the hands of his enemies. One night, as he was taking his journey, returning from Worms to Wittenberg, he was met in a lonely road by a company of armed horsemen, his companions were put to flight, and he was taken by secret paths through the woods to the castle of the Wartburg. There he found himself among friends, who had taken this way to bring him into a safe hiding-place. He lived in this friendly imprisonment for nearly a year, while all the world wondered what had become of him. That he was still alive was made plain by the fact that he continued to write and publish letters, tracts, and pamphlets. One time the Archbishop of Mayence ventured to begin again the sale of indulgences, but on the receipt of a single letter from the hidden Luther he changed his plans in a fright.

It was during his year in the Wartburg that Luther made his translation of the New Testament out of Greek into German. Afterwards, with the help of others, he translated the Old Tes-

tament, completing the whole work in 1534. This became the Bible of the German people, and had the effect of determining the German language. It had been spoken in a great number of different dialects; thenceforth it was spoken and written in the manner of Luther. And thus appearing in a form which became the German of old Germany, the Bible was brought into the possession of all the people. The prophets and apostles spoke to them in their own speech.

Meanwhile, outside the Wartburg, and apart from the direction of Luther, events of importance were taking place. The Reformation was becoming a general movement. When Luther returned, he found much of which he disapproved. Rising up, as he did, in the face of authority, and declaring his individual and independent conviction, other men were moved to follow his example. And they were as ready to disagree with Luther as Luther had been ready to disagree with Rome. The Protestants were divided amongst themselves.

It was the desire of Luther to make few changes in religion. He felt that he and his followers were still in the ancient church, out of which, indeed, they had put the pope and the bishops and the superstition, but whose life and worship and ministry proceeded as before. But others, in the process of making changes, went on and on, till the difference between the old and the new became very great. They destroyed images and closed monasteries; they abandoned ancient customs, introduced strange services, and taught doctrines which had never been heard before.

Luther opposed, not only these radicals, but the great company of learned men called Humanists, who were led by Erasmus. They were quietly trying to establish truth on a basis of reason, and to encourage men to think freely, relying on the good sense and the good will of men. Luther, however, denied the freedom of the will, and put in the place of the authority of the Church the authority of the Bible. His idea was that men were not to

reason about religion, but to take it just as they found it in the Scriptures. Thus he lost the support of the scholars.

At the same time the rebellion of Luther against the pope and the bishops was followed by men who rebelled against their employers and their masters. The Peasants' War was an uprising of the poor against the rich. They went about with clubs and torches, destroying property and lives. Luther's enemies declared that this was the natural consequence of Luther's teaching. He had but the dikes of order and authority and obedience, they said, and, of course, the land was overflowed. Luther was as stout against the men who were claiming their right to live, as he was against those who were claiming their right to think. He denounced the peasants, and urged the princes to shoot them like mad dogs.

Thus he had his limitations, like most people, and having led the people a little way could conduct them no further. He did his great part, and others took up the work and continued it; as Columbus discovered America, but others settled it. Two things, however, Luther admirably taught. He taught the doctrine of salvation by faith, and the doctrine of the goodness of the common life.

When Luther came, men were being taught the doctrine of salvation by grace. Grace was a blessing given by God through the Church. It was bestowed by the priests in the sacraments. And that meant that the Church, the priests, and the sacraments were absolutely necessary to men in order to be saved. It made the Church a supreme power. Luther taught that salvation is by grace, but that grace is given to those who have faith. Faith is the act by which we perceive the love and forgiveness of God. It joins us to God; it gives the believer peace and joy and assurance of salvation. And it is independent of all means. It is between the individual and God, without the need of any priests. The love of God is revealed in the Bible, and it is set forth in the sacraments,



but it is perceived by each person for himself. The effect of the doctrine was to set men free from the Church; they could get along without it, Luther said.

And this idea which made every man a priest to himself, and thus put away the distinction between the clergy and other people, made men see the goodness of all life. God is our father, and He made the world for us to enjoy. The Christian is not to turn his back upon it, and go out of it, but to enter into it freely and gladly, carrying on his business, having his family and friends, and behaving himself naturally. In a world where the ideal of a good life was a separation from all the common concerns and recreations of society, this was a new doctrine. "It looks like a great thing," said Luther, "when a monk renounces everything and goes into a cloister, carries on a life of asceticism, fasts, watches, prays, etc. on the other hand, it looks like a small thing when a maid cooks and cleans and does other housework. But because God's command is there, even such a small work must be praised as a service of God, far surpassing the holiness and asceticism of all monks and nuns. For here there is no command of God, but there God's command is fulfilled, that one should honor father and mother and help in the care of the home."

So Luther was married, and his wife, Katherine von Bora, made him a comfortable and happy home. Now he ate three good meals a day, and slept in a bed which was made up every morning, instead of once a year as when he lived alone. There he gathered his friends about him, and wrote his sermons and his books, and prepared the lectures which he gave in the University of Wittenberg. There he planted a garden, and dug a well; though Katherine could not persuade him to keep his study in order; books and papers were always in a pile upon his desk. He was busy unceasingly, directing a hundred enterprises, answering a hundred thousand questions, the counselor of Protestants. He was often depressed to see how, after all, the Reformation had

not very much reformed the world, and he had his share of pain and sickness.

Luther died in Eisleben, where he was born, and was buried in Wittenberg, where he lived most of his life. A great-hearted man, frank, sincere, full of courage and strength, often angry, often merry, loving God and his friends, and hating evil, he had the qualities of a soldier and of a pioneer. He will always be remembered as the man who broke the power of the Mediaeval Church.