

Footstep #14 - First Footsteps From Reform Toward Revolution! – 1518

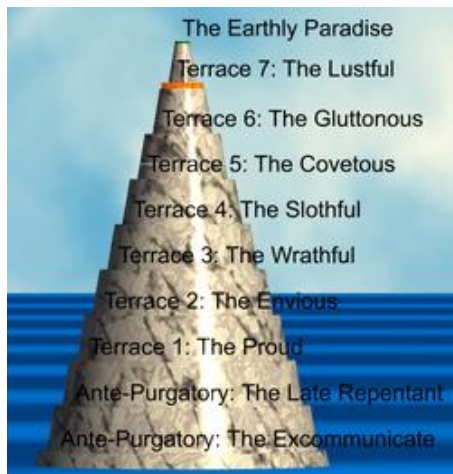
Luther to Staupitz

“I venture to say they are wrong who make more of the act in Latin than of the change of heart in Greek.” (Roland Bainton. *Here I Stand*, p. 67)

This is what Luther himself called a ‘glowing’ discovery. In his reading of the translations by Erasmus, Luther discovered that a sacrament of the Church (penance) did not rest on the institution of Scripture. Johann Staupitz was Luther’s mentor/advisor at the Augustinian monastery by 1518, Luther is beginning to teach his teacher what he has learned through the process of inquiry and research.

This was a bold statement by Luther and one viewed as extreme and radical by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. There was no scriptural foundation for the price of an indulgence or for payments to be released from purgatory. In addition, Luther would raise the question in his sermons that ***“the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church was a historical development due rather to the exigencies of history than to divine ordination reaching back to the very founding of the church.”*** (Roland Bainton. *Here I Stand*, p. 67)

As a result of the claim that penance was not a sacrament, Luther was placed under a ban to cease his preaching and public statements. The foundation of the medieval church, both spiritually and financially was based on the teaching in James that salvation involved a high price that could only be paid through good works and letters of indulgence of pardons. In the first 100 days after the posting and discussion of the 95 Theses, the “reform movement” is beginning to become more radical in its theology.



Dante's Purgatory Plan in *The Divine Comedy*

Luther was popular in all of the German states for challenging the pope and the Roman Catholic Church. The people were frustrated with the outflow of money from the German states to Rome and Luther’s statements against indulgences gave them hope. This becomes the beginning of a movement for nationalism among the people in the German states.

Philipp Melancthon is appointed professor of Greek at the University of Wittenberg and he will become one of Luther’s closest friends in the development of Lutheran theology. For the upper class in 1518, porcelain dishes replace wood dishes and spectacles helped the near-sighted to see better.