

# THE LETTERS OF MARTIN LUTHER

## 1525

In this year Frederick the Wise died (1463-1525). His Successor, John the Steadfast (Frederick's brother 1468-1532) was a warm friend to Luther. Luther finishes lecturing on Deuteronomy. Luther married Katharina von Bora (1499-1552) in June. Peasant revolt.

To John Brismann, Konigsberg

Luther sent Brismann to Konigsberg to promote the Reformation in Prussia, which he did.

January 11, 1525.

Grace and peace in the Lord! It is the letter-carrier's fault, my Brismann, that you have not heard from me, and I almost lost this chance also.

**Carlstadt, who is quite given over to the devil, rages against me, having issued various writings full of poison. He, with his followers, denies that the body and blood of Christ are present in the Sacrament. I am ready to confute him, although through artifice, as he has led many astray in different places. I shall answer Erasmus as soon as I have leisure.**

That Amand has forsaken our party does not grieve me; perhaps I am rather glad, as he seems to be animated with Carlstadt's spirit. Our Henry von Zutphen, the Bremen evangelist, was hanged and burned with cruel fanaticism in Dietmarschen. These prophets' turbulent doings prevent me getting on with my Deuteronomy.

All else pursues its everyday course. We have received the highly esteemed Peter Weller with joy. Thomas Munzer is meandering about, uncertain where to settle. He made a dangerous disturbance in Miihlhausen. The prophets are increasing steadily, a trial for true believers. The Papists rejoice over our differences, but God will expose Carlstadt in His own time. For it seems as if Carlstadt despaired of becoming a partaker of Christ's kingdom, and has cast himself away, in order to plunge many others into destruction, and with a great following hurry on to hell, which he has been actually heard to declare.

Pray for me, and remember me with the highest esteem to Herr Bishop. I am much occupied, and over and above am a prisoner through a burning abscess on the thigh.

Perhaps you do not yet know that Anna Graswitzinn von Sausselitz, with three others, Barbara Beckenberg, Catherine Taubenheim, and Margaretha Zirstorf, have escaped from their prison. The first of these remained here, and married Hans Scheidewind. She desires me to send you her compliments. Herzog George himself undertook to visit the cloister, and seeing the abominable excesses, at once banished the brothers, fathers, bridegrooms, or rather relations of those noble ladies, from the place.

Farewell.

Martin Luther.  
Wittenberg.

To the Abbot Friedrich of Nurnberg

Luther congratulates him on his marriage.

January 17, 1525.

Grace and peace! I have delayed wishing you happiness on your marriage, esteemed sir, and am sure you believed I had cause for this, and I had. I have been ill, and had books to publish, letters to write, friends to help, etc., and, in addition, the things most nearly concerning the house and Church — not to speak of the worries caused by Satan and my enemies.

But I have remembered you in my prayers, and rejoiced over your happiness, and trust you may receive much blessing in this estate ordained of God and therefore see clearly that it has been instituted by Him who will maintain it to His own glory. For where were the kingdoms and rulers of the world when Adam and the patriarchs lived simply as married men? For how many kingdoms have come and gone since then, and marriage continues over all? I Therefore, thank God for bestowing this privilege upon you, and conducting you out of the stormy billows into the haven, and from the world into Paradise. In such a relation there may be trouble in the flesh at times, as St. Paul says, but there is consolation of the spirit, and, as Solomon says, he will receive joy from the Lord. And why are the powers that be so averse to marriage? Is it not because they dread the troubles which may ensue?

The world is cowardly enough to avoid it for that reason, but by and by they will most surely experience that evil in themselves which they always considered peculiar to

matrimony. May Christ give us a better spirit, and enable us to overcome tribulation, disregarding drawbacks, because of the many benefits it brings with it. Many so love a little glory or worldly advantage that they are insensible to the countless evils of celibacy. They resemble the soldier who is so prodigal of his life, yet prizes a golden gulden more than his temporal and spiritual welfare.

So let us enjoy present blessings, that when misfortune comes we may consider it a blessing in disguise. My pen runs away with me when I extol God's works.

May the Lord bless you and ever remember me in prayer. Give my kindest regards to your Frederika, but in Latin; the rest she will understand for herself. Written in great haste at supper, so forgive me if I have eaten too much, or been too prolix. . . .

Martin Luther.  
(Walch, V. 21.)

To Frederick Myconius in Gotha

This letter acted like the dew of the morning on his friend.

May 3, 1525

Grace and peace in Christ, who has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but in me ye shall have peace. Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

I write this to you, dear Frederick, as one stranger to another, because I would gladly share with you all the consolation I enjoy in Christ. So, seeing that Christ has overcome the world, then all which is done, except by Him, is mere outward show; and the victory is His alone, and His will be the glory, when the world with all its pomp has passed away. No one who believes in Christ can really doubt this.

I pray Him to counsel you with His Spirit, and strengthen you and yours by His Almighty power. Persevere, dear Frederick, in the Lord. Greet and admonish my Basil in the Lord.

Martin Luther.  
Weimar.  
(Walch, V. 21. 496.)

To the Magistrates of Dantzic

So early as 1518 the new teaching was proclaimed in Dantzic, and Johannes Knade, preacher in the Marien Church, married that year. Luther wrote of the "wondrous things Christ had done in Dantzic in 1521.

May 5, 1525.

Grace and peace through Christ our Saviour! Honoured dear sirs and friends. In accordance with your request, I have done my best to send you an able preacher. But it was not to be that you were to have Johann Pomeranus, for whom you asked, and whom I would have gladly sent to you.

But our congregation here would not part with him, wishing to retain such as he to train others who may do good service in other towns. So I send M. Michael Hanlein, an excellent and learned man, whose equal I do not know, and hope that you will cherish him, and like him the better the longer you know him. I commend him to your tender care and wisdom, seeing that he leaves us to go into a strange land.

And I hope you will attend to his bodily comforts in a Christian manner, as Christ and St. Paul so often inculcate, "They which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple," and "They which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

I beseech you also, my dear sirs and friends, do and suffer everything in order to preserve peace among yourselves, and to prevent fanatics getting in among you, who, alas, have done much mischief among us in North Germany, as your Excellencies may perhaps have heard.

If there be anything to alter or destroy, such as pictures, or whatever it may be, see that it take place through an order from the Council, and do not let the mob attack them, which has happened elsewhere, and which has led to the magistracy being held in contempt, whom God commands to be feared and honoured.

But in particular, see that you are not taught to bear rule according to the law of Moses, and still less according to the gospel, which is a spiritual law, and must be kept entirely apart from a worldly government, and proclaimed through the mouths of the preachers. And no one must be coerced in spiritual matters, each exercising his own free will as to what he shall believe; for, it is not the sword which must bear rule here, but the Spirit of God. I have discussed all these matters with your pastor, Herr Michael, who will instruct you, and whom you must obey. I commend you to God, who will strengthen and prosper you, to His praise and honour.

Martin Luther.  
Wittenberg.  
(De Wette.)

To John Frederick of Saxony, called the Magnanimous

Letter of consolation on the death of his uncle, Frederick the Wise.

May 15, 1525.

Grace and peace in Christ! I must try to console your Grace when the Almighty has so tried us; for we have not only lost peace in the land, but also our head, of whom we stand greatly in need at present. God is wonderful in His working, sending at once misfortune, and then removing it, so that we may strengthen ourselves in Him, singing with Christ in the Psalter, "I am desolate and afflicted." But we must remain steadfast. It is impossible the old Adam should not suffer through all this, being too weak to bear the trial, but the inner man finds comfort in God's words that He is nigh unto those that are of a broken heart. There can be no other consolation than God's Word, which bids us trust and call upon Him in all our affliction: "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee," etc.; and again, "I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver and honour him," and such like sweet loving words, of which the Psalms are full. And, indeed, our Prince's death has nothing mournful in it in itself, for it seems as if God had taken him away, like King Josiah, from the evil in the world, because he ruled in a peaceable, quiet way, deserving his name "Friedrich" (peace). And one rejoices when such peace-loving souls are not forced to live on amid such confusion, which would grieve us more than to see his last days passed amid war. Still it is a great affliction, and we hope God will abundantly compensate us for the great loss. Amen.

I have tried to prove my devotion in this letter, although I believe your Grace is too firmly rooted in Christ to need any encouragement from me, and I pray as time passes there may be even less need of it. I herewith commend myself to your Grace.

Martin Luther.  
Wittenberg.

To the Elector John of Saxony, surnamed the Steadfast

The first German Prince who died in the Evangelical faith.

May 15, 1525.

Grace and peace in Christ! Serene Prince. If able to write at all I have good cause to do so, seeing the Almighty has taken our gracious lord, your Grace's brother, from us in such trying times, leaving us to mourn his loss, which falls heaviest upon you, so that with the Psalmist you may exclaim, "Innumerable evils have compassed me about : they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me." But God is faithful, and does not let His wrath rest on those who trust in Him, but inspires them with courage, enabling them again to exclaim with the Psalmist, " The Lord hath chastened me sore : but he hath not given me over unto death"; and once more, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." And Christ

Himself says: " In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

This is the school in which God chastens His people, and teaches them to trust Him, so that their confidence may not always hover on the tongue, but in the heart.

Your Electoral Grace is most surely in this school also, and doubtless God has removed the head in order that He Himself may take His place, and teach you to derive strength and consolation solely from His goodness and power, which is far above all human love and consolation.

I have hurriedly written all this to comfort you. May you graciously receive it, and delight yourself more and more in the Psalter and the Holy Scriptures, which are full of all sorts of consolation. I herewith commit you to God.

Your Electoral Grace's obedient,

Martin Luther.

To John Ruhel

Luther's brother-in-law, a lawyer in Mansfeld. The peasant insurrection endangered the Reformation more than anything else had ever done.

About the Elector's death.

May 15, 1525.

To the learned John Rahel, my good, kind brother- in-law. God's grace and peace! I thank you, dear sir, for your last news, which I was glad to hear, especially about Munzer. I should like to hear how he was taken prisoner, and how he behaved, for it is well to know how such haughty spirits act. That the poor creature should be so treated is pitiable. But what can we do? and it is God's will that fear should be instilled into the people.

If this were not done, then Satan would do even more mischief. The one misfortune is preferable to the other. It is the judgment of God. He who takes the sword shall perish by the sword. So, it is a consolation that this spirit should be made manifest, to let the peasants see how badly they have acted, and perhaps they may cease plotting and improve. Do not take all this so to heart, for it may be for the good of many souls, who, through fear, may desist.

My gracious lord, the Elector, died between five and six on the day I left you, just as they were desolating Osterhausen. He passed quietly away, retaining his senses to the last,

having partaken of the sacrament in both forms, but without extreme unction. His funeral was a most imposing sight, although we performed no masses or vigils over him. Some stones were found in his lungs, and three elsewhere, which was strange So he really died of stone. He did not know much about the insurrection; but wrote to his brother, Prince John, that he must use every means to pacify the people before he resorted to arms.

His was a Christ-like and blessed death. The signs of his death were a rainbow which Philip and I saw one night last winter over the Lochau, and a child was born here in Wittenberg without a head.

I herewith commit you to God, and greet your vine (*Hansreben*) with her fruit (*Trauben*). Also comfort Christofel Meinhardt, and beg him to suffer the will of God, which can only promote our highest welfare, although we are not yet aware of it. Now is the time to keep quiet and let God act, and soon we shall see peace. Amen.

Martin Luther.  
Wittenberg.

To George Spalatin

Luther's marriage had really taken place on 13th June. He now invites Spalatin to the wedding feast.

June 16.

Grace and peace! Do not forget, dear Spalatin, that my marriage will be on Wednesday, and the great banquet at mid-day. Therefore, see that the game does not arrive too late, but let us have it in time, by to-morrow evening, if possible.

For I wish the whole entertainment to be over in one day. I write this to you, for L. Koppe did not gather from my letter that you were not in the same position.

Farewell.

Martin Luther.  
(Walch, V. 2 1.)

To Leonhardt Koppe of Torgau

It was Koppe who rescued the nine nuns from the cloister near Grimma, among whom was Katherine von Bora.

June 17, 1525.

Grace and peace in Christ! I wish you to read this very depressing letter, honoured sir, to see if you know of no one who could help in this matter, for it is too much to expect one in your high position to do so. If you know of none, then return the letter, so that I may seek help elsewhere, for I am quite unhappy about the two children.

Most worthy Father Prior, you know what has happened to me, viz. that the nun that with God's help you carried off from the nunnery two years ago is nevertheless returning to the cloister, not this time, however, to take the veil, but as the honoured wife of Dr. Luther, who, up till now, has lived alone in the old empty monastery of St. Augustine at Wittenberg.

So pray come to my home-coming, which is on the Tuesday after St. John's festival, but without any wedding present.

Martin Luther.

To Johann Von Doltzig, Electoral Chancellor.

Invitation to feast and request for game which the Elector sent through Spalatin.

June 21, 1525.

To the excellent Johann Doltzig. My gracious lord and good friend!

Doubtless the outcry has reached your ears that I have actually ventured to enter the married state. Although my change of condition seems very strange to myself, being as yet scarcely able to believe it, still the fact is attested by so many honoured witnesses that I must believe it to be true, and in order to put the seal of certainty upon it, I am giving a collation next Tuesday, and expect my father and mother and other good friends (Link of Altenburg, Amsdorf of Magdeburg, Ruhel from Thuringen, Muller from Mansfeld, Koppe from Torgau, Spalatin, etc. etc.). Therefore, I beg of you, in a friendly manner, if it be not burdensome to you, to see that we are supplied with game, and to be present yourself, to help to imprint with joy the seal upon the transaction, and all that appertaineth thereto. I herewith commit you to God. Amen.

Martin Luther.

To King Henry VIII of England

This letter was written by request of the fugitive King Christian of Denmark.

September 1, 1525.

Grace and peace in Christ our Lord! Most Serene King. Although I might well fear to write your Majesty, having deeply offended you through my little book hurriedly written at the instigation of people unfriendly to your Royal Highness, still I am impelled to do so by your natural goodness of heart, which I hear daily praised, and also knowing that your Majesty, being aware he is mortal, will not keep an undying enmity, and over and above, I am informed by trustworthy people that the little book against me, so far beneath the dignity of the King of England, issued under your Majesty's name, was not really written by you, as those crafty sophists dare affirm. They surely do not know the danger of thus dishonouring your royal name, and bringing into notice that monstrosity, hated of both God and man, the Cardinal of Eborack, the destroyer of your Majesty's kingdom. And through shame I can scarcely raise my eyes towards you for having been swayed by such wicked people against so mighty a potentate, compared to whom I am a very worm.

Further, contemptible as I am, still I am prompted to write, because your Majesty was well disposed to the gospel to begin with, which news was a very evangelium to my heart, that is, tidings of great joy. Therefore, I throw myself at your Majesty's feet with my writings, entreating forgiveness for the sake of Christ's sufferings, and to be told how I have offended you, even as Christ commanded us to forgive one another. And in the next place, if your Majesty be agreeable, I shall issue another book to the honour of your name in contradiction of the last.

For, although I am a mere nobody compared to your Majesty, still I feel it would be no injury to the gospel, nor to the glory of God, were I to write on gospel subjects to His Royal Grace of England. God grant that He may perfect in you the good work He has begun, so that you may obey the gospel with all your heart, and shut your ears to those poisonous tongues and soft-spoken hypocrites who decry Luther as a heretic. But rather say, "What ill can Luther teach when he only maintains that we attain to everlasting blessedness through faith in the Son of God, who suffered, died, and rose again for us, as the Gospels and apostles' writings testify?"

For this is the cornerstone of my doctrine, after which I teach brotherly love and obedience to the powers that be, and crucifixion of the flesh, as Christ taught. So, what is wrong in such doctrines? One must wait and listen and then judge. Why should I be condemned without being refuted? I would also punish the tyranny of the bishops, who twist the articles of our Christian faith, meantime striving after dividends, pomp, sensuality — nay, even kingdoms, principalities, etc., — so that no one can wonder that

even the common man sees and condemns it. Let them repent, that they may not be hated and punished.

Your Majesty must see for yourself how many Princes in Germany, as well as town councils, and highly intellectual people, are unwilling, God be praised, to permit the gospel doctrines which I have brought to light to be condemned. Would to God that Christ may class you among this number. Is it any wonder that the Emperor and some Princes rage against me? (Ps. ii. 2).

Is it not almost a miracle when a king or prince loves the gospel? Oh, how I long to be able to rejoice over such a miracle in your Majesty! Would that God, before whom I write this, would endue my words with power, so that the King of England may, ere long, become a devoted disciple of the Lord Christ and a confessor of the gospel, and also Luther's most gracious lord. Amen.

If it please your Majesty, I await a favourable answer.

Your Majesty's obedient,

Martin Luther.  
Wittenberg.

To the Elector John of Saxony

Luther begs the Elector to espouse the cause of the University.

September 15, 1525.

To my most gracious lord, etc. Grace and peace in Christ! Although I with others have entire confidence in your Electoral Grace's gracious promise regarding our University, yet we cannot but see how its fulfilment is being hindered through many needful things, especially the Diet, therefore I would humbly beg you to send either Doltzig or someone else, or give directions in writing that matters here should be inquired into — for many classes have gone down, while others are unpaid — the teachers having gone away, so that it will soon be impossible to keep those going that remain. For the treasury is empty, hence longer delay will be fatal, I felt I could not keep your Grace in ignorance of all this. I believe the University intends writing your Grace itself.

I commit you to God. Your Grace's obedient,

Martin Luther.

## An Admonition to the Printers in Nurnberg

September 26, 1525.

Grace and peace! What is all this, dear sirs, that one should openly rob and steal what belongs to the other, thus ruining one another? Have you now become street robbers and thieves? Or do you really imagine that God will bless and cause you to prosper through such knavery? I have gone on with the postils up till Easter, when they were secretly abstracted from the printing-press by the compositor, who maintains himself by the sweat of our brow, and who himself conveyed my writings to your most estimable town, where they were hurriedly printed and sold before the whole was finished, to the great detriment of all concerned.

But I would even have put up with all this injury, had they not treated my books as they did — printing them so hurriedly and falsely — that when they reach my hands I scarcely know them to be mine. Some bits are left out, here they are displaced, there falsified, and other parts not corrected. And they have learned the art of writing Wittenberg on the top of some which have never seen Wittenberg. This is downright knavery. So, let everyone beware of the postils for the six Sabbaths, and let them sink into oblivion, for I do not acknowledge them as mine. Therefore, take warning, my dear printers, who thus steal and rob. Other towns on the Rhine — Strassburg, etc., do not do this; and even if they did, it would not harm us so; for their publications do not reach us in the same way as yours do, being so much nearer. For you know what St. Paul says to the Thessalonians: "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such." One day you will experience this. Should not a Christian out of brotherly love wait for a month or two before he copies his work? We have put up with this till it has become unbearable, and has prevented us going on with the printing of the prophets, as we do not wish to see them spoiled, so greed and envy are delaying the spread of the Divine Word, and the fault lies at your door. Indulge your greed as much as you will, till we Germans are called brutes, but pray do not do so in the name of God. The judgment will most surely descend. May better times soon come. Amen.

Martin Luther.

To Leonhardt Beier

Luther asks Beier's intercession for a daughter.

October 8, 1525.

Grace and peace in Christ! Among the other maidens who lately escaped from the cloister, and who are staying with me, is a certain Gertrude von Mylen, whose mother or grandmother lives beside you in Goben, to whom she writes by this messenger. Now it is your duty to admonish her to receive her daughter or granddaughter, or if she refuse to do so, I shall see to her trousseau, which might perhaps afterwards offend her. Farewell, and pray for me.

Martin Luther.  
(Schatze.)

To George Spalatin

Four young noblemen, who blamed Luther for their sister's escape from their convent, were lying in wait to murder him.

November 2, 1525.

Dear Spalatin,

Gladly would I be present at your wedding to rejoice with you, but a hindrance has come in the way, which I cannot overcome, viz. the tears of my wife, who believes you would be deeply grieved were my life imperilled. She has a presentiment that my life is in danger, having dreamed last night that murderers were looking out for me on the way, I think this not unlikely, since I hear that the rescue of the Freiberg nuns has roused the wrath of the nobles in Herzog George's lands.

Although well aware that, wherever I may be, I am under the Almighty's protection, without whom not a hair of my head can be injured, still I am full of pity for my dear Kathie, who would be half-dead with anxiety before I returned. So do not grieve that I cannot be with you on the occasion of your wedding. May God's grace and blessing rest on you.

Martin Luther.  
Wittenberg.

To the Elector John

Luther, at the Elector's request, gives his opinion as to how the Church livings should be visited and maintained.

November 10, 1525.

God's grace and peace in Christ! Most Serene Highborn Prince. Your Electoral Grace has replied to my letter as to a general visitation of the Church livings. Now, I never meant that all the funds for their support should come out of your Grace's treasury; but being asked for my opinion, I humbly venture to suggest that you should order all the churches in your dominions to be visited; and where the people desire Evangelical preachers, and the funds are unable to maintain them, let them receive so much yearly, either from the town council or elsewhere. For when the people desire pastors, it is your Grace's duty to see they reward them; for "the workman is worthy of his hire," as the Gospels say. This visitation might be arranged by your Grace dividing your domains into five parts, and sending two visitors either from the nobility or the officials to each part, to examine those livings, and find out what is necessary for the pastors; and then arrange that so much of the yearly taxation be set aside to augment their incomes. But if this were too much trouble and expense to your Grace, then you could summon the citizens of certain towns and discuss the matter. Only do what seems best in your eyes.

Also, one must consider the old pastors, and where these are pious men, and not disinclined to the gospel, they may be allowed to read the Gospels, along with the postils, themselves to the people (when they are not qualified to preach), thus ministering instruction to their flocks, so that they may be obliged to maintain them; for it would be wrong to eject those who have been long in office, who are friendly to the gospel, without compensation. I have taken the liberty of pointing out those things at your Electoral Grace's request. I commit you to God. Amen.

Your Electoral Grace's humble servant,

Martin Luther.  
Wittenberg.

## 1526

At the Diet of Speyer the Evangelical Princes ranged themselves for the first time as adherents of the new doctrines, and it was agreed that "in religious matters each State shall live, govern, and behave itself as it shall answer to God and His Imperial Majesty." Spalatin and Agricola preached regularly before the Elector in his own house at Speyer.

To Leonhardt Beier

Concerning Gertrude von Mylen.

January 9, 1526.

Grace and peace in Christ! I am delighted and approve highly of your intention to marry Gertrude von Mylen, if God gives her to you. You have my best wishes for your success. I prefer her in many ways to her companions. Therefore, I comply with your request to write her mother. May the Lord give His blessing. Amen.

Martin Luther.  
(Schutze.)

To the Elector John of Saxony

About Melanchthon's salary.

February 9, 1526.

Grace and peace in Christ! Serene High-born Prince,

Most Gracious Lord. In the reorganisation of the University your Grace ordered that Melanchthon should have 200 gulden a year as salary. Now the man {NLenscJi} objects to accept so much when he cannot undertake with a clear conscience to expound the Scriptures daily. It is useless my speaking to him, for he declares your Grace expects him to lecture regularly. Therefore, I humbly beg you to let him know that you will be satisfied if he help with the theological lectures and disputations as before, even should it be only once a week. For even should your Grace present him with this salary for a year or two, he is well worthy of it. For he expounded the Scriptures with great success for about two years without any salary, and perhaps to his injury. I am most anxious to have the Bible spread abroad here, for it is being eagerly inquired after from all directions. I herewith commend you to God.

Martin Luther.

To Johann Agricola

Teacher in Eisleben, died as Court preacher in Berlin 1556.

Oecolampadius and Zwingli refuted. Queen of Denmark's death.

February 18, 1526.

Grace and peace! Although I have really nothing to write about, still I wish to greet you and your wife, dear Agricola; for you must now know what you asked about in your letter, viz, fresh heresies. May God convert them!

For the most learned men in Swabia have written against Oecolampadius and Zwingli, and the book has been printed here. I fear they will not be pleased now with what they were so proud of before. The one heresy has given rise to five different sects, all of whom believe the same thing; but for different reasons, they will soon disappear.

Queen Elisabeth (Isabella of Austria, 1501-1526, sister of Emperor Charles V) the consort of the King of Denmark (*married 1515*), has passed away, as King Christian (*Christian II, 1481-1559, reigned 1513-1523*) himself has written. But she departed joyful in the faith, after receiving the Holy Communion in a truly Christian fashion, in spite of the efforts to make her return to the Papal faith. But Christ evidently wished to have a queen in heaven for once. Pray remember the royal children's tutor (Hofmeister) in your prayers and greet your Elsie and all belonging to you. My Kathie also respectfully greets you all and always holds you in esteem. Wishing you the best of health.

Martin Luther.  
(Walch.)

To Frederick Myconius of Gotha

In June of this year an Evangelical alliance was signed in Torgau, the Elector John and his heir being present.

March or April 1526.

Grace and peace! As Oswald your vice-burghermaster is always travelling back and forward to you, dear Frederick, I wished to send you my love. For I am full of joy when I hear of your well-being, and that the Word of God is taking effect among you. Thank God we are well, but I commend myself to your prayers that Christ may not suffer us to be overcome of temptation. You will perceive how Satan is at present raging among the Catholic priests, and we hear the godless bishops are conspiring together, and Philip writes that in Jena they are threatening me with war.

Therefore, exhort the people to be steadfast in the faith, and pray earnestly to God to overcome the Wicked One, so that peace may be maintained. From what I hear I see plainly that it is necessary to be constantly in prayer, for Satan is up to some mischief. Therefore, pray call the people's attention to this very weighty matter to convince them that they are in the greatest danger; being suspended between unsheathed swords and the fury of Satan.

May you be sustained through the grace and power of God. Amen.

Martin Luther.  
Altenburg.  
(Walch, V. 21.)

To Johann Agricola

May 11, 1526.

To my brother in the Lord, John Grickel, in Eisleben.

Grace and peace! I send you this crystal goblet mounted with tin before it gets another owner, for my Kathie has a great fancy for it. I am pleased with your estimate of Erasmus, and still more with that of the head of your educational establishment. Thus, even in those trying times one hears something cheering.

Your Wenall, the schoolmaster, will soon start from Halle to you. I have written him enclosing your letter. Invite him to your house, for you know he merits this.

Tell your Elizabeth, if she does not already know it, that Dr. Drache is now married, and that Syrus has come here with similar intentions. May you keep well, and pray for me.

Martin Luther.  
(Schutze.)

To Herzog John Frederick of Saxony

Petition for retired pastor.

May 14, 1526.

Grace and peace! Serene High-born Prince, Most Gracious Lord. The bearer of this letter, Herr Bigand, gave up the living of Waltershausen to the Council, as the result of an arrangement with your Grace that he should receive thirty florins yearly from the church funds. Now, it seems he does not get this money; probably because the Council cannot get it out of the living. But your Grace will learn the true reason. Meantime, the poor old man must run to and fro for his maintenance. So, as he is my schoolmaster, it is my duty to render him all honour, therefore I humbly plead that you will not permit him to be out of the money, but will graciously help him to get it, to prevent him going abegging in his old age.

I herewith commit you to God. Amen. Your Grace's obedient servant,

Martin Luther.

To Nicolas Hausmann

About a teacher. Luther busy with Habbakuk.

June 2, 1526.

Grace and peace in the Lord! The maiden, Hanna, who was here has returned to her people, so the school is vacant. Perhaps she did not feel equal to the duties, so left. But at present we know of no one so well educated and fit for the post.

Philip would have brought the Prophet Habbakuk with him, but it will not be ready for eight days. There is nothing new at present except that our town is being fortified, although we know of no enemy. My wife, Jonas, and the rector (Cruciger) greet you, as well as the others. My Kathie is devoted to your memory on account of the handsome glass you sent her. Farewell, dearest Nicolas.

Martin Luther.  
(Walch, V. 21.)

To Johann Ruhel

Luther announces the birth of his son.

June 8, 1526.

Grace and peace! I herewith send you the Psalter, dear Herr Doctor and Brother-in-law, and shall proceed with the Psalms with all my might. Will you say to M. Eisleben (Agricola) from me that my dear Kathie presented me with a Hans Luther yesterday at two o'clock, and then he will not marvel that I send this message, for at this time of day he will know what it is to have sons. Greet your dear wife from me, and Eisleben's Elsie. I herewith commit you to God. Amen. I must stop, for the sick Kathie is calling for me.

Martin Luther.

To Johann Agricola

The Diet of Speyer closed 27th August, where the foundations of the German Evangelical Church were laid.

September 20, 1526.

Grace and peace! I write you, my excellent Johannes, merely to say I have nothing special to write about, as Philip, a living epistle, is with you. I was glad he went to let the people see of how much importance such things are, and that we are looking after these in earnest. God grant that your olive branches may thrive.

Greet Elsie and your superiors, as well as inferiors, also your Anna and Philip.

Do let us have some more of those berries, for my Kathie likes them greatly, also Frau Eber. Give my respects to Count Albrecht if you have the opportunity.

Greet Dr. Johann Ruhel and his wife, Conrad the scribe, and Johann Durer.

I now thank the last for the fur coat! I have just received it. It is far too expensive. I shall write him.

Farewell to all in the Lord. Amen.

Martin Luther.  
Wittenberg.  
(Schutze.)

To Nicolas Hausmann

About his literary work.

October 14, 1526.

Grace and peace! I have nothing new, dear Nicolas, to send you, for the little book about war is not through the press yet. I intend beginning Zechariah after Habbakuk and Jonah are finished. Ecclesiastes gives us an immense deal of trouble, just as if he did not wish to be read and yet was compelled to submit. It has been much too long in obscurity. You are right in saying the world is going to ruin. But I hope the day of the coming of the Great God is approaching, for we hear only of fires, murders, and fury over all. May all go well with you, and pray for me.

Martin Luther.  
(Walch, V. 21.)

To Maria, Queen of Hungary

Sister of Charles V. Her husband fell fighting against the Turks in August. Luther dedicated Psalms 37, 62, 94, and 109 to her.

November 1, 1526.

To Her Serene Highness Frau Maria, born Queen of Spain, Queen of Hungary and Bohemia. My most gracious lady! Grace and comfort from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! Most gracious queen. I determined, at the instigation of some pious people, to dedicate those four Psalms to your Majesty as an exhortation, joyfully, to maintain and further God's Holy Word in Hungary; for I received the good news that your Royal Highness was inclined towards the gospel, but that godless bishops, who have all the power in Hungary, tried to hinder it spreading and turn you away from it.

Also, that they have shed innocent blood, (*A bookseller, Johann, in Budapest was burned with his books in 1524*), and set themselves in array against the truth of God. But seeing, alas, that the matter has taken another turn through the providence of God, and the Turk has caused so much misery by slaying that noble young monarch King Ludwig, your Majesty's beloved husband, I now regard things otherwise. Had the bishops allowed the gospel to spread, all the world would have declared that these evils came upon Hungary because of the Lutheran heresy, and what a scandal that would have been! We shall see whom they will now blame, for God has mercifully prevented such an accusation being made. St. Paul writes that the Holy Scriptures were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Spirit, might have hope, so I have published these Psalms to comfort your Royal Highness (with such comfort as God pleases to give) in this great and sudden affliction with which the Almighty God has seen fit to visit you, not in anger, as we have every right to hope, but as a chastisement so that your Royal Highness may learn to trust only in the true Father which is in heaven, and to be comforted by the one Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, who is also our Brother, nay, our very flesh and blood, and to find your delights with your true companions the dear angels who ever surround and care for us. For although it was a bitter trial for your Royal Highness to be left so early a widow, and robbed of your dear husband, still there is much consolation to be found in the Scriptures, particularly in the Psalms; and the Father and the Son will show you abundantly where everlasting life lies hidden. And truly, to whomsoever it is given to see and feel the Father's love towards us in the Scriptures can easily endure all the misery which may be in the world, while whoever does not really feel this can never be truly joyful, although he may be revelling in all its pleasures and delights.

No such affliction can overtake any one so great as what God endured in seeing His beloved Son rewarded for all the miracles and good deeds He did to sinful man by being maligned, scorned, and at last subjected to the most shameful death on the cross.

Each thinks his own cross the heaviest, and takes it more to heart than the cross of Christ, even although He had endured ten crosses. This may be because we are not so patient as God is, therefore a much smaller cross is infinitely more painful to us than Christ's cross.

But the Father of all mercies and the God of all consolation will comfort your Royal Highness in His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost, so that you may soon forget your present misery or be able to bear it bravely. Amen.

At Wittenberg at the first winter moon. Your Majesty's obedient servant,

Martin Luther.  
(De Wette.)

To the Elector John of Saxony

The church visitation. Luther makes a kind request on behalf of Carlstadt.

November 22, 1526.

Grace and peace! Most Serene High-born Prince. For long I have asked nothing of your Grace, so the requests have accumulated, therefore your Grace must have patience with those I proffer. The complaints of the clergy everywhere have reached a climax. The farmer will give nothing, and there is so much ingratitude among the people for the Word of God that there is no doubt He will send a plague (*The plague came the next year*) among us. And if I could reconcile it with my conscience, I would prevent them getting a pastor at all, and let them live like swine, as they are doing. There is neither fear of God nor discipline because of the Papal ban, and everyone does as he likes. But as we are commanded, especially those in authority, to look after the poor children, and train them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, it is necessary to have teachers and preachers. If old people do not wish these they can always go to the devil. But when the youth are neglected it is the fault of the authorities, and the land will be filled with lawless people, who not only disobey God's commands, but bring us all into dire distress.

But now that the Papal rule is at an end in your Serene Highness's land, and all the cloisters have reverted to you as the head, then these bring obligations with them — the setting of them in order — duties which devolve on you, and which no one else should take up.

Having discussed all this with your Grace's Chancellor and Herr Nicolas, we think it will be necessary that you, being appointed of God for such a purpose, arrange for four persons to visit all the country — two who understand business matters, land and

interest (*Zinzen*), and two who understand teaching and preaching — so that they, by your Serene Highness's command, may establish and see to the maintenance of schools and Church livings. Where any town or village is able, then your Grace can compel them to maintain churches, manses, and schools.

If they are not willing to do so for the sake of their future well-being, then your Electoral Highness, as guardian of the youth and all who require it, is quite justified in compelling them to do it, even as the law obliges people to make bridges, roads, etc., for the public benefit.

Now, the most necessary of all is to educate those who come after us and are to bear rule. Should this press too heavily on the people, then there are the cloister possessions, which were founded mainly for this purpose, and still can be appropriated for the common weal. For, your Electoral Highness can well imagine the outcry which would through time arise were the schools and benefices to be permitted to run waste while the nobility were appropriating the riches of the cloisters, which, it is said, some are already doing.

So, as your Electoral Grace is deriving no advantage from such goods, and as they were instituted to maintain the public service of God, they should, first of all, be applied to this purpose. Then with what remains your Grace could supply the needs of the land and the poor.

And another point. Dr. Carlstadt has begged me to write to your Highness to ask if he might be allowed to live in Kemberg; for, he cannot exist any longer in the villages, on account of the wickedness of the peasants, as you can read in his pamphlets, and also learn from Hans von Grafendorf, and yet he shrinks from writing to you himself. Although almost one of ourselves, he has not complained openly as yet. I beg, if it seem good to your Electoral Highness, to ask the provost of Kemberg to look after him. Although I know your Grace has already done enough to create much talk on the subject, yet I would earnestly entreat you to permit this also. God will requite it all the more richly. He will see to his soul and body, and we should do good to His people.

The grace of God be with us. Amen.

Martin Luther.  
(De Wette.)

To Conrad Cordatus, Pastor in Austria

Cordatus now entered into the circle of Luther's most intimate friends.

November 28, 1526.

Grace and peace! You write me truly wondrous things of your Liegnitz friends — of the power of the spirit and of the flesh in that place, where the one part of the people seem to love intellectual pursuits, while the others live after the flesh.

The greatest evil here is lukewarmness, indifference, against which we must constantly strive. Who knows if God has not turned it upside down with you, so that when the gospel has been warmly received at first it cools down through time, while here, on the contrary, and at variance with all precedent, it is embraced coldly to begin with, and then slowly gathers strength, till at last it bursts forth in flame.

God grant this people may resemble that son who at the beginning refused to go into the vineyard, and afterwards repented and went. He will be preferred to him who at first promised to go and afterwards did not. So go on your way unweariedly, and the Lord will be with you, and do not be afraid of those highly enlightened spirits (in their own eyes). Nothing is more foolish in God's sight than such self-deception.

May the Lord Christ ever be with you. Write as often as you can. Your letters will always be welcome, partly because they testify to the uprightness of your heart, which is so much needed by your people as well as ours, and partly because they contain so much information calculated to satisfy our curiosity. I herewith commit you to God.

Martin Luther.  
Wittenberg.