Luther returned from Leipzig a changed man. He matured rapidly as the reformer. He did not come to this role easily. He was quite medieval and Catholic in his outlook. He had a deep loyalty to the church in which he had been reared. Just as his moods moved between times of great elation and deep depression, he also moved between times of bitter attack on Rome and the pope and more conciliatory and hopeful times when he could appeal from the pope ill-informed to the pope better informed. Augsburg and Miltitz made it easy for him to question the sincerity of Rome and the pope. Often during his preparations for Leipzig what he found in history, canon law and the decreets made him wonder if the pope were the Antichrist. His experiences in the debate at Leipzig and the pamphlet war that followed made it clear to him. He was the Saxon Hus and the pope was the Antichrist. Though the universities delayed their verdict on the debate Luther had little doubt about the outcome. Rumors of Eck's reports to Rome made him sure of excommunication. The remainder of the summer and the fall of 1519 were busy times for Luther. The university was growing rapidly. His lectures demanded much time. He was working on Psalms and Galatians. There were his sermons to the congregation on the Gospels and Genesis. He was busy with monastic duties. The debate greatly increased his correspondence and many visitors came to Wittenberg. Luther wrote Spalatin in December 1519 that he was doing the work of four men and even more than four men. Yet he found time for the tract war.

THE NEW EMPEROR: Emperor Maximilian passed away suddenly on January 12, 1519. A fierce struggle between Charles of Spain, grandson of Maximilian, and Francis I of France, followed for the vacant throne. Maximilian had failed in his efforts to secure the throne for his grandson before his death. The pope had feared both rivals and had toyed with the idea of the election of Frederick of Saxony. Frederick refused to allow his name to be put up. Vast sums of money were spent to secure the throne by bribery. The pope finally backed Francis but Frederick backed Charles, and on the second day of the debate at Leipzig, June 28, 1519, at Frankfort-on-the-Main, Charles was elected. The Germans voted for him as having German blood, but he was said not to have known a single word of German. At nineteen he was sovereign of the Netherlands, Spain, Austria, Germany, Navarre, Naples, the two Sicilies, and vast regions of the Pacific, Mexico, the West Indies and South America. He was a loyal Catholic but from the first faced many problems. This gave Luther more time to work out his ideas of reform and to gain new followers.

NEW ALLIES OF LUTHER: Luther gained many new followers at Leipzig and in the pamphlet war that followed and lost only a few—mostly students whose patrons demanded that they withdraw from Wittenberg. Luther made great gains among the German knights who feared a Catholic emperor and who strongly resented the pope's exploitation of Germany and his shameless role of bribery in the election. They were more interested in Luther as the hero of liberty than in his religious reform. Francis von Sickingen, a leader among the knights, had used force for Reuchlin in the battle over Hebrew and he offered Luther refuge in his castle, The Ebernburg. Luther also gained the backing of Ulrich von Hutten, a worldly humanist who had been a monk, then a soldier, and then poet and satirist. Maximilian had made him poet-
laureate of Germany at Augsburg. In his satires Hütten most bitterly attacked Rome, the pope and the bishops. Luther had also attracted the attention and admiration of scholarly humanists led by Erasmus. Two jurists, Lawrence Spengler of Nuremberg and Justus Jonas, rector of Erfurt, became followers of Luther. Jonas became a theologian at Wittenberg.

When the knights suggested using force to protect Luther and to destroy the power of the pope in Germany, Luther declared that he would not have the Gospel maintained by violence and bloodshed. The Antichrist would fall without violence. However Luther was freed from intimidation and emboldened by the support and protection of the knights. He more boldly attacked the papacy as the Antichrist.

Luther published his Commentary on Galatians, September 3, 1519—he had been working on it since 1516. It was his declaration of freedom. On November 9, 1519 he completed his "Sermon on the Sacrament of Penance" and the "Sermon on the Holy Sacrament of Baptism." On December 19 he published his "Sermon on the Holy Eucharist" and "A Sermon on the Preparation for Death." He was carefully studying the seven sacraments. Also in December 1519 he prepared another "Sermon on the Ban," in anticipation of the pope's excommunication.

1520—ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT YEARS OF THE REFORMATION: It was the year Luther produced some of his most important works. During the first two months he worked on replies to attacks on his sermon on the Eucharist.

On January 9, 1520, the Roman consistory officially reopened the case against Luther under the legal title, "suspicion of heresy." Cardinal Bibiena pictured Luther as the instigator of revolt in Germany and Frederick the Wise as the enemy of the true faith. Leo X appointed a commission to examine the problem. The leaders were Cajetan, the expert in Thomist theology, and Accolti, a distinguished expert in canon law. Cajetan had learned much in Germany. He told the Dominicans that Luther had attacked none of the fundamental doctrines of salvation—he might be guilty of error but hardly of heresy. Eck went to Rome in February to push the case against Luther.

In March the general of the Augustinians wrote Staupitz urging him to order Luther to cease writing and bringing shame on his order. Staupitz resigned as vicar. Cardinal Riario wrote Frederick the Wise to bring Luther to reject his error of bringing contempt on the pope and curia. Frederick replied that he had referred the case to the Archbishop of Trier, an elector of the Holy Roman Empire, Richard of Greiffenklau.

In May of 1520 Luther published "The Sermon on Good Works" which has been praised as the most important of his works for bringing in the Modern World. Religion is something entirely spiritual, a personal relationship with God. The supreme good work is faith, which is an acceptance of the Gospel that Christ died for the individual sinner and that there is no further need for human effort to effect reconciliation with God. The good works of the Catholic system, such as pilgrimages, fasting and special masses, are superfluous and positively sinful. Man cannot be reconciled to God through human efforts such as the steps of Penance. The Gospel converts the life of the reborn Christian into a life of constant good works. All that a Christian does, eating, sleeping, working, performing his daily tasks in all fulfill- ness, all these are accepted by God as good works flowing from a life of faith. Only those with this faith are capable of good works acceptable to God. The farmer at his plow in the field, the merchant at his counter are as holy to God as a monk muttering prayers in the chapel. The mother rocking the cradle and the wife kneading bread in the kitchen are serving God as truly as a nun counting beads. The Christian's
highest task is his daily duty. The greatest sin is to doubt the Gospel of Christ's supreme sacrifice on the Cross and to rely on human effort. This doctrine of the holiness of the ordinary callings of life removed the distinction between sacred and secular and declared an end to the old forms of satisfaction expressed through monasticism, ritualism, pilgrimages and other outward symbols of worship. The Christian rendering his daily faithful service was the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Living in close companionship with Christ transformed the daily service of the lowliest Christian into good works pleasing to God.

The consistory held four meetings in Rome on May 1, 23, 26 and June 1. Present were cardinals, canonists, and theologians--some forty in all. Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians were represented. All were Italians save Eck, friars and Cajetan were there. Some felt it would not be expedient to issue a bull with the disturbed state of affairs in Germany. The theologians wanted Luther condemned. The canonists felt he should be given a hearing and an opportunity to defend himself. The consistory finally drew up a list of forty-one articles from Luther's writings to be condemned as "heretical, or scandalous, or false, or offensive to pious ears, or seductive of simple minds, or repugnant to Catholic truth, respectively." These were presented to the pope on his return from a hunting trip for him to add a preface and conclusion. The bull became known as "Exsurge Domine" and was dated June 15, 1520. It began "Arise, O Lord, and judge thy cause. A wild boar has invaded thy vineyard. Arise, O Peter, and consider the case of the Holy Roman Church, the mother of all churches, consecrated by thy blood. Arise, O Paul, who by thy teaching and death hast and dost illumine the Church. Arise, all ye saints, and the whole universal Church, whose interpretation of Scripture has been assailed. We can scarcely express our grief over the ancient heresies which have been revived in Germany. We are the more downcast because she was always in the forefront of the war on heresy. Our pastoral office can no longer tolerate the pestiferous virus of the following forty-one errors. We can no longer suffer the serpent to creep through the field of the Lord. The books of Martin Luther which contain these errors are to be examined and burned. As for Martin himself, good God, what office of paternal love have we omitted in order to recall him from his errors?"

Luther was given sixty days from the time of his receiving the bull to submit and anyone who presumed to infringe on this excommunication and anathema would stand under the wrath of God and of the apostles Peter and Paul.

On July 8, 1520, under the seal of the Fisherman's ring, the pope wrote Frederick the Wise praising him for not showing any favor to this son of iniquity who favored Bohemians and Turks. Luther was accused of being a scabby sheep infecting the flock, perverting the faith, seducing the simple, and relaxing the bonds of obedience. Frederick was to bring him to sanity or take him captive.

Luther's books were burned in the Piazza Navona in Rome. John Eck and Jerome Aleander, distinguished Humanist who had mastered Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and former rector of the University of Paris, were appointed papal nuncios and special inquisitors to publish the bull in the North. Aleander was first to deliver the bull to the Emperor and then to the Low Countries and those on the Rhine. He was to go to high magnates, lay and clerical. Eck was to take the East, Franconia and Bavaria, going especially to bishops and the universities. Both men were risking their lives. The bull was leaked to Germany before their arrival. They found a few places eager to burn Luther's books but they found more places eagerly spreading
them. In the Rhine valley Alexander met rumors that Sickingen would defend Luther by force of arms. Eck's task was even more difficult. He had been given permission at his own discretion to add other names to the bull. He added the names of Carlstadt and others at Wittenberg and the names of Spengler and Pirkheimer. The University of Vienna refused to act. The Duke of Bavaria refused on the grounds that it would cause further disorder. At Leipzig Eck had to flee and hide in a cloister. At Erfurt the students called the bull a balloon and threw it into the river to see if it would float. Ingolstadt published the bull and held a special celebration for Eck putting up a votive tablet in his honor. The University of Wittenberg protested the appointment of Eck declaring "The goat should not be permitted to be a gardener, nor the wolf a shepherd, nor John Eck a papal nuncio."

At Cologne the archbishop had to issue a special order before the books were burned. At Mainz the executioner declared that the books had not been legally condemned. The archbishop had to issue a special order and even then it was the gravedigger rather than the public executioner who lighted the fire.

THE ADDRESS TO THE GERMAN NOBILITY: In August 1520, Luther published the first of the three great tracts of 1520. It was a carefully researched and thought out work. It swept through Europe like a hurricane, shaking the very foundations of the Roman hierarchy. With the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers Luther offered an escape from the tyranny and wickedness of Rome. He charged that the papacy was hiding behind three false walls. The first wall was the pope's claim that the spiritual power was over the temporal power. Against this Luther set the "priesthood of all believers." The church is Christ's divine institution consisting of all the souls he has gathered to himself from the world. All Christians by virtue of baptism are priests. The state is the divinely appointed power to curb evil so that God's elect may work unhindered at the tasks of Christ's kingdom. This removed the distinction between clergy and laity. The German rulers as baptized Christians were priests. Dress and ritual did not make priests or clergy. Fellow priests put men into the office of clergy for special service. They remained clergy only as long as they served in this office. When they ceased to function they became laymen again. Only God knows the the true priests who are entirely spiritual.

The second wall was the pope's claim to be the sole interpreter of Scripture. Since all Christians are priests they have the right to interpret Scripture. All Christians with the Holy Spirit at work in their hearts could discern the immoral conditions of Roman "Sodom." The pope claimed to speak "ex cathedra." The chair should be thrown into hell. All Christians were competent to interpret the Bible but ministerial students should learn Greek and Hebrew.

The third false wall was the pope's claim that only he could call a reforming council. The greatest of the councils, Nicaea, was called by the Emperor Constantine. The German princes as priests of God could and ought to call councils when needed. When the pope uses his powers to prevent reform he becomes the instrument of the devil and the Antichrist.

In the second part of the Address Luther severely attacked the corruption of Rome, calling it the modern Sodom and Gomorrah and Babylon. Church offices were bought and sold. Crime was legalized for a fee. Dishonor and shame were made respectable for money. Marriage within forbidden degrees could be bought. In Rome the devil had become a saint and god.

In the third part of the tract Luther set forth a program of reform. The power of the pope should be severely limited and papal
taxes reduced. Unnecessary offices in the curia should be abolished. The triple crown, all pomp and luxury should go. The episcopal system of the early days of the church should be restored. Abuses such as pilgrimages, monasticism, and celibacy should be reformed. Clerical marriages should be permitted. Giggery, including the mendicant orders, should be forbidden. Church owned brothels should be closed. The number of holy days should be reduced in the interest of industry and sobriety. German ecclesiastical interests should be placed under a "Primate of Germany." Theological education should be reformed to promote scholarship and holiness.

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY OF THE CHURCH: In September, 1520, Luther published the second of the famous tracts. It was a critical examination of the sacramental system of the Roman church. Luther charged Rome with corrupting the Means of Grace. His fight with Rome had started with an attack on the abuses of indulgences and the papacy. Both indulgences and the papacy should be abolished. Rome held the church in captivity by its perversion and use of the sacraments. Luther denied there were seven sacraments. The only sacraments were baptism and the Lord's Supper. Penance had a certain sacramental value but was not properly a sacrament. It was a return to baptism. The sacraments had their origin in promises of Christ. The promises call for faith, not works of merit. The receiving of a promise is not a good work; it cannot be transferred to another. The Mass is a strengthening of faith, not a work that can be communicated to another. Rome has abused the Lord's Supper in three ways. It has withdrawn the cup from the laity, it has abused it by the false doctrine of transubstantiation, and by the teaching that the Supper is a sacrifice.

Luther declared that it was not the act of baptism that justifies but faith in the word of the promise attending baptism. He declared that baptism was a sign and that we should trust the word rather than the sign. He declared that faith in the promise is so necessary that even without the sacrament faith can save. The sacrament of baptism is a sign that lasts until death and even to the resurrection of the last day. The pope cannot abrogate the liberty in Christ which is accomplished in the believers in baptism. Bay a multitude of rites and works the church has made men forget what was given in baptism.

Confirmation, marriage, ordination and extreme unction have no claim to be regarded as sacraments. They have no standing in Scripture. Monastic vows, pilgrimages, works of merit are a man made substitute for the forgiveness of sins freely promised to faith in baptism.

It was the genius of Luther that he saw that papal power was upheld by two false pillars. One pillar was the doctrine of transubstantiation and the other was the doctrine of ordination. The church kept people in bondage by teaching that only the ordained priest could change bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord and that cut off from these one would be damned. By attacking these false pillars Luther freed men from medieval bondage.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE PAPAL BULL: On October 10, 1520, the papal bull arrived in Wittenberg. It had taken it three months to reach Luther. Luther questioned the genuineness of the bull, declaring that he would not believe in its authenticity until he could see the original lead and wax, string, signature and seal with his own eyes. But he dealt with the possibility that it might be either true or false. He replied in a work entitled "Against the Execrable Bull of the Anti-christ." It was either the work of Eck or of the pope. "It was the sum of all impiety, blasphemy, ignorance, imprudence, hypocrisy, lying—in a word, it is Satan and the Antichrist." He ridiculed the failure to decide whether his articles were heretical, erroneous,
scandalous, or displeasing. They excommunicated him for sacrilege, he excommunicated them in the name of the sacred truth of God.

Frederick the Wise noted that the instructions of Alexander differed from those of Eck and that the pope had never recalled Milititz. Eck had no business publishing the bull while friendly negotiations were in progress.

THE FREEDOM OF THE CHRISTIAN MAN: Luther published the third of the great tracts in November. He began with a deferential address to Leo X. The pope's admirers had driven Luther to appeal to a council. Christ had called his adversaries vipers, blind guides and hypocrites and Paul had called his opponents dogs and sons of the devil. There were three or four learned and excellent cardinals but the Roman curia deserved Satan and not Leo. He urged him not to listen to those who said no one could be a Christian without his authority and who made him lord of purgatory, hell and heaven. They erred who put him above a council and who made him the sole interpreter of Scripture. He should be the servant of servants.

Luther declared that the Christian man is the most free lord of all and subject to none. At the same time he is the dutiful servant of all and subject to everyone. He is free because he is justified by faith and is no longer under works of law. He stands in a new personal relationship with Christ in which he is a servant because of love for Christ and is bound to bring his life into conformity to the will of God and to be helpful to his neighbor.

The pope's bull demanded recantation. On November 29 Luther published his "Assertion of All the Articles Wrongly Condemned in the Roman Bull." He declared that indulgences were the most impious frauds of rascally pontiffs to deceive souls and destroy the goods of the faithful. The condemnation of John Huss was the work of the Antichrist and his apostles in the synagogue of Satan. The pope in condemning the articles of Hus which were evangelical and Christian was downright impious and diabolical.

THE BURNING OF THE POPE'S BULL: The sixty days of grace had expired. On the tenth of December, 1520, Melanchthon on Luther's behalf issued an invitation to the faculty and students of the University of Wittenberg to assemble at ten o'clock at the Elster Gate. In reprisal for burning Luther's pious and evangelical books, the impious bull, papal constitutions, canon law and works of scholastic theology would be burned. Luther threw the papal bull into the fire, declaring "Since they have burned my books, I burn theirs." The canon law was included because it made the pope a god on earth. A picture of the pope was thrown into the flames. The students sang the "Te Deum" and then paraded through the town in a wagon with another copy of the bull on a pole and an indulgence on the point of a sword. They kept the fire burning with works of Eck and other opponents of Luther.

Frederick the Wise excused Luther's course to the emperor on the grounds that Luther had been condemned unheard. Luther's books had been illegally burned. He hoped the emperor would overlook Luther's response to the injustice. For this miscarriage of justice he should be excused for burning the legal code that had been the basis of the civilization of the Middle Ages.