

Karlstadt

Armin Siedlecki

The Kessler Collection's holdings of Karlstadt's writings jumped sharply this fall with the purchase of six items at auction. After Luther, Melancthon, and Erasmus, Andreas Rudolff Bodenstein (ca. 1480–1541)—better known as Karlstadt, after his birthplace, Karlstadt am Main—is the most prominent author in the Kessler Collection. Of his ninety publications, issued in 213 editions, the Kessler Collection now holds forty-two.

Among the more interesting characters of the German Reformation, Karlstadt was educated in Erfurt, Cologne, Wittenberg and, later, Rome, eventually becoming a teacher of scholastic theology at the University of Wittenberg when Luther was a student there. He first opposed Luther and attempted to refute the young Augustinian on the basis of Augustine's writings, but he soon came to accept the reformer's ideas and became one of his defenders. In 1519 he debated Johann Eck—one of Luther's vigorous opponents—at a public disputation in Leipzig and from there quickly became a leading reformer at Wittenberg. However, when Luther returned to the city in 1522, the two reformers clashed over issues of leadership as well as theology, especially Karlstadt's opposition to religious images. Karlstadt eventually left Wittenberg and

traveled through Germany and Switzerland, holding various academic, religious, and lay positions and establishing contacts with both Zwingli in Zürich and some early Anabaptists in southwestern Germany. His theology also moved further from Luther, who attacked him in print as a radical.

Of the six works by Karlstadt acquired this year, two deal with the subject of the Lord's Supper. One, published in 1521 before his split with Luther, is the first edition of an early call for liturgical reforms (*Von Anbetung vnd Ererbietung der Tzeychen des Newen Testaments*), seeking to establish a biblical basis for the practice of the Lord's Supper and for the rejection of the doctrine of real presence. The other work (*Dialogus oder ein Gesprächbüchlin*) is a more comprehensive tract on Karlstadt's sacramental theology, presented in the form of a fictitious dialogue. Karlstadt eventually rejected Luther's view of the Eucharist in favor of a completely symbolic interpretation of the sacrament.

Two other works are polemical in nature and attack Catholic theologians. The earlier of the two (*Verba die quanto candore*, 1520) is the only printing of a pamphlet attacking Johann Eck on issues that emerged during the 1519 Leipzig Disputation, in particular the interpretation of Scripture and the question of free will. Karlstadt maintains that human nature is incapable of willing the good and that the grace of God is entirely unilateral and undeserved by

humanity. The second pamphlet (*Bit vnd Vermanung an Doctor Ochssenfurt*, 1522) is an attack on Hieronymus Dungersheim (Hans Ochssenfurt), who had been an outspoken critic of Karlstadt and Luther. Dungersheim had been invited to participate in the Leipzig Disputation but had chosen to attend only as a silent observer.

The last two tracts include a sermon (*Ayn schöner Sermonn, vonn Spaltung der gütten unnd bössen Engelischen Gaystern jm Himel*, 1524) discussing the division of good and evil spirits in heaven—in particular the existence of the devil and his power over humans—and the only edition of a pamphlet exploring the content of the Christian life (*Auszlegung vnnnd Lewterung etzlicher heyligenn Geschriften*, 1519).

Karlstadt's life and work—with their connecting points to philosophical scholasticism, Augustinian theology, and the Anabaptist movement—are a testimony to the dynamic complexity of the theological landscape of sixteenth-century Germany. The six works discussed here represent an interesting cross-section of Karlstadt's contributions to the German Reformation, including his polemical engagement of Catholic theologians, his call for liturgical reform, and his views regarding practical theology.

Armin Siedlecki is Catalog Librarian for the Kessler Reformation Collection.



REFORMATION NOTES

News for Partners of the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection
Winter 2004, Number 24

Kessler Collection Update

The Kessler Reformation Collection grew by forty-one since September 1, primarily through auction purchases, and so now stands at 2,806. Fourteen of these pieces are not held by any other North American library, and nine are possessed by only one other library. Among the more impressive of the recent acquisitions is a 1550 folio edition of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into German, published in Nuremberg and richly illustrated with twenty-six full-page woodcuts. Listed below is a summary by author of some of the other acquisitions, noting how many books or pamphlets by a specific author were acquired and the total Kessler Collection holdings by that author.

Woodcuts and metal engravings from the Kessler Collection continue to be added to the library's Digital Image Archive (accessible via www.pitts.emory.edu). There are now more than 8,000 images on the website, and we hope to hit the 10,000 mark within the next year or two. Use



"PORTRAIT OF MARTIN LUTHER" FROM LUTHER'S *VON DER BABYLONISCHEN GEFENGNUSS DER KIRCHEN* (STRASBOURG, 1520)

of this resource continues to grow—the site logged almost 600,000 hits during the last year—and now averages more than 500 visitors per day, many from Europe, Australia, and Asia.

These acquisitions and the use of information technology to make parts of them available to the international community were the subject of a recent feature story by Bill Liss on the Atlanta NBC television affiliate, Channel 11. The story was occasioned by a recent exhibit of eight important Bibles from the Kessler Collection and served to call

the Atlanta viewing audience's attention to this important educational resource.

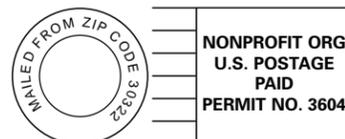
M. Patrick Graham is Librarian and Margaret A. Pitts Professor of Theological Bibliography.

The Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection is a repository of rare and valuable documents produced in connection with the Protestant Reformation. The collection now contains more than 2,800 pieces written by Martin Luther, his colleagues, and opponents, and printed during their lifetimes.

Supported by the vision and resources of Lutheran laypeople Richard and Martha Kessler and partners throughout the Southeast, the collection is housed in the Pitts Theology Library of Candler School of Theology. It provides a rich resource for scholars of the Reformation and for clergy and laity who seek to understand the history of the Christian faith.

For more information about the collection, contact:
Dr. M. Patrick Graham
Pitts Theology Library
Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia 30322
404.727.4165
libmpg@emory.edu

AUTHOR	ITEMS ACQUIRED	TOTAL HOLDINGS
Bugenhagen	3	26
Cochlaeus	1	37
Eck	7	43
Erasmus	1	61
Flacius Illyricus	2	34
Karlstadt	6	42
Luther	4	849
Melancthon	7	160



Translating the Bible

Henry R. Stern

As the Augsburg Confession was being presented to the Holy Roman Emperor in 1530, Martin Luther found protection at Coburg Castle, where he composed an open letter and sent it to his friend Wenceslas Link, a leading reformer in Nürnberg. Link added a brief introduction and saw to the letter's publication later that year. Bearing the title *Ein Sendbrief von Dolmetschen und Fürbitte der Heiligen* (usually referred to in English as *An Open Letter on Translating*), the letter treats two unrelated topics: translating and the intercession of the saints.¹ It is unclear what prompted Luther to compose the letter, nor do we know the identity of the "dear friend" he greets in the introduction. It is safe to say that the fame of the letter rests on what Luther tells us about his approach to translating.

In the letter Luther sets forth the principles he applied to his Bible translation and uses several biblical passages to illustrate his approach. In brief, what guided Luther was fidelity to the idiom of the target language. As he emphatically states, he was writing German and not Hebrew or Greek or Latin. Don't look to the Latin (of the Vulgate), he warns, to see how one should speak German, but rather to the mother in the home, the child playing on

the street, or the common man in the marketplace. Luther, of course, overstates the case, but no one reading his Bible translation fails to note how he captures with uncanny skill the natural flow of German. The adage that it is an art to conceal one's art is never more apparent than in the natural, fluid German of Luther's Bible translation. Two and a half centuries later the august Goethe would commend Luther for his gift of the Bible and the German language to his people.

To demonstrate specific instances of how he approaches a text, Luther cites several biblical passages. By far the most important example, noteworthy for both its stylistic and doctrinal implications, is his discussion of Romans 3:28. "Das der Mensch gerecht werde, on des Gesetzes Werck, allein durch den Glauben" ("that a person is justified by faith alone, without the works prescribed by the law").² Here Luther responds to his critics, who roundly attacked him for his use of the word "allein" (alone) where the Vulgate clearly lacks the equivalent "sola." Why then did Luther add a word that carried enormous doctrinal significance? The reason, he argues, lies in German idiomatic usage. If one juxtaposes a negative with a positive—i.e., not this but that—German inserts the word *only* to emphasize the contrast. Thus, the

farmer brings only grain and no money. Thus, although the Vulgate's Latin may not contain a word for *only* in that passage, German idiom—and, as Luther contends—St. Paul's meaning require it.

Other examples that Luther cites deal with stylistic matters and give the reader clear insight into how dramatically the reformer departs from previous translation practice. Note, for example, how he handles Matthew 12:34. The Vulgate reads "ex abundantia cordis os loquitur" ("the mouth speaks from the excess of the heart"). Luther asks how can one say the equivalent in German, since German imagery and idiom do not speak of overflowing hearts. Or again, what would the angel have said to Mary in Luke 1:28, had he been speaking German?

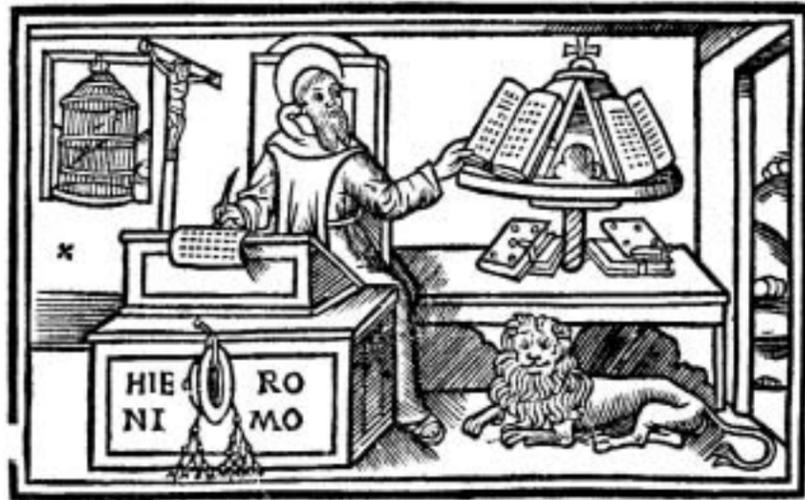
In these passages, as in countless others, Luther's natural and idiomatic German contrasts markedly with what had gone before. One need only look at the 23rd Psalm in Luther's version and compare it with the highly Latinate German of the German Bible of the Middle Ages—the so-called Mentelin Bible of 1466—to be struck by this contrast. With Luther, the German language was embarking on a path of its own, and his Bible would provide both reference and inspiration to generations of writers, scholars, and grammarians.

The task of the translator is not an easy one, Luther tells us, and not least for the critics who snipe, carp, and are eager to find fault. A translator needs a large vocabulary and the ability to remain true to the text while searching for natural expression. Luther recalls how he and his collaborators, Melancthon and Aurogallus, would sometimes spend days on a difficult passage in Job and progress scarcely a line.

Henry R. Stern is Professor of German at the University of North Carolina–Asheville.

¹Two printings of this work are held in the Kessler Collection (1530 Luth U and 1530 Luth JJ), and an English version of Luther's open letter can be found online at www.bible-researcher.com/luther01.html.

²As found in *Das Neue Testament* (Leipzig: Nicolaus Wolrab, 1541) (1541 BIBL A:3).



"ST. JEROME" FROM *DJUI HIERONYMI IN VITAS PATRUM PERCELEBRE OPUS OCULOS MORALIBUS CELUMQ[UE] APERIENS* (LYON, 1512)

Luther's Catechisms, 1529

2004 REFORMATION DAY AT EMORY

M. Patrick Graham

Plans are well under way for the 2004 Reformation Day at Emory on October 26. It will mark the 475th anniversary of the publication of Martin Luther's catechisms. Luther had visited the churches in Saxony in 1528–1529 and returned to Wittenberg disappointed at the ignorance and apathy among clergy and laity alike. So in April 1529 he issued the Large Catechism and in May the Small Catechism, offering them especially for pastors and urging that they be consulted—in the case of the Large Catechism, daily—as faithful summaries of Scripture.

Both works—especially the Small Catechism—were enormously popular and spurred the writing of additional catechisms by pastors. Within a half century, though, political and religious authorities would affirm the prevailing importance of the Small Catechism,

From the Preface of Luther's Small Catechism*

"The deplorable, wretched deprivation that I recently encountered while I was a visitor has constrained and compelled me to prepare this catechism, or Christian instruction, in such a brief, plain, and simple version. Dear God, what misery I beheld! The ordinary person, especially in the villages, knows absolutely nothing about the Christian faith, and unfortunately many pastors are completely unskilled and incompetent teachers. Yet supposedly they all bear the name Christian, are baptized, and receive the holy sacrament, even though they do not know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments! As a result they live like simple cattle or irrational pigs and, despite the fact that the gospel has returned, have mastered the fine art of misusing all their freedom."

**The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Ed. R. Kolb and T. J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000) 347–48.



"CAIN MURDERS ABEL" FROM MARTIN LUTHER'S *ENCHIRIDION: DER KLEINE CATECHISMUS FÜR DIE GEMEINE PEARHERR UND PREDIGER* (LEIPZIG, 1545)

urging that it be used in place of all others and that it be read aloud each Sunday.

The catechisms are among the confessional documents of the Lutheran Church that appear in *The Book of Concord* (1580). In addition, they find a secure place in the memories of the faithful, especially those who learned the central truths of the Christian faith from the catechisms as a child and continue to cherish the copy received from a pastor, parent, or Sunday school teacher.

M. Patrick Graham is Librarian and Margaret A. Pitts Professor of Theological Bibliography.

THESE WOODCUTS AND MORE THAN 8,000 OTHERS ARE ACCESSIBLE BY CLICKING ON THE LUTHER ROSE AT WWW.PITTS.EMORY.EDU.



STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE KESSLER REFORMATION COLLECTION

Policy direction for the Reformation Collection is provided by a standing committee composed of representatives of Emory University and the local and national Lutheran community.

Mr. Richard C. Kessler, Chair
Mr. Roy T. Wise, Secretary
Dr. Timothy Albrecht
Ms. Mary Lou Greenwood Boice
Dr. M. Patrick Graham
Dean Russell E. Richey
Bishop Ronald B. Warren

Emeriti Members

Dr. James R. Crumley
Dr. Channing R. Jeschke
The Reverend R. Kevin LaGree
Bishop Harold C. Skillrud
Dr. James L. Waits

SCHOLARS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. Kurt K. Hendel
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
Dr. Robin A. Leaver
Westminster Choir College, Rider University
Dr. Martin Treu
Director of the Lutherhalle-Wittenberg
Dr. Timothy J. Wengert
Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia

PATRONS OF THE KESSLER REFORMATION COLLECTION

Emory University
Mr. and Mrs. Richard C. Kessler
The Lutheran Brotherhood

PARTNERS OF THE KESSLER REFORMATION COLLECTION

Mr. and Mrs. Neil M. Anderson
Mr. and Mrs. Erwin G. Baumer
Judge Dorothy T. Beasley
Ms. Ida G. Boers
Mr. and Mrs. Russell W. Crick
Dr. and Mrs. Raymond E. Davis Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. William H. Gaik
Dr. and Mrs. Channing R. Jeschke
Mr. and Mrs. Callie W. Kessler
Mr. and Mrs. Carl F. Lettow Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. John C. McCune
Dr. and Mrs. Steve Morgan
Mr. and Mrs. Jean A. Mori
Munich American Reassurance
Dr. and Mrs. Frank L. Perry Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Larry W. Raudebaugh
Mrs. Velda Handrich Skagen
Dr. Reiner Smolinski
The Memorial Fund of St. Johns Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bloomington, Illinois, and Bishop and Mrs. Harold C. Skillrud
Mr. Clair E. Strommen
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Easterlin Wise
Mr. and Mrs. John Calhoun Wise Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Roy Thomas Wise
Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph L. Yobs