

The Wittenberg Times

1526-1550



All the news that's fit to print with some editorializing by Martin Luther
Editor: Hank Bitten

1530 November 4 - Cardinal Wolsey Arrested for Treason (then dies)

It is a shocking report from London about the unexpected arrest of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey last evening in his home at Cawood Castle in York. Cardinal Wolsey was the highest ranking cleric in England and was also Lord Chancellor. He was highly educated and King Henry VIII has trusted his advice since he became king in 1509.

It is believed that his arrest on charges of treason were made directly by King Henry VIII. Sir Thomas More, the recently appointed Lord Chancellor, told us in an interview that the failure of Cardinal Wolsey to get an annulment from the pope to end Henry's marriage to Catherine had contributed to the tensions between the two men.

It was only one year ago that Cardinal Wolsey was pardoned by King Henry VIII on charges that he brought foreign influences into England and made poor decisions regarding France and the Holy Roman Empire. Cardinal Wolsey appeared depressed and his wife refused to answer any of our questions.

Our investigative reporters were able to get a copy of the arrest warrant which stated, that Wolsey had "intrigued against them, both in and out of his kingdom" and entered into "presumptuous sinister practices made to the court of Rome for reducing him to his former estates and dignity."

Cardinal Wolsey will die of a sudden illness on November 29, leaving two children and his "wife" as his survivors.

Martin Luther stated in Wittenberg that, "*Cardinal Wolsey opposed every effort to bring the Holy Gospel of the forgiveness of sins by Jesus Christ to the people of England. He banned my books and suppressed the publication of William Tyndale's Bible. Although, I extend my sympathy to his "wife" and children, as a priest, bishop, archbishop, and cardinal he seemed more interested in the purse than the curse of Satan. It is not my place to pass judgment on another, but Cardinal Wolsey used his power to keep the Word of God from the people in England.*"

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1530 July 4 - Francis I Marries Eleanor of Portugal, Sister of Charles V

After a four-year betrothal, Eleanor was married yesterday at age 32 to King Francis I of France in a brief ceremony in the Pyrenees on the southern border of France. This is the second marriage of Eleanor after her first husband, Manuel, died of the plague nine years ago. Eleanor's previous engagement to Charles III, Duke of Bourbon, did not result in a marriage. Her daughter, Princess Infanta Maria, was present.

Francis met Eleanor during his time as prisoner after being captured by the army of Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire. Many women in Portugal are concerned about her welfare and happiness as the new Queen of France because of the reputation of Francis I as a playboy. At the introduction of Eleanor to the nobility in Paris, Francis was seen in public through an open window engaged in inappropriate sexual behavior with his mistress, Anne de Pisseleu.

The marriage of Francis to a relative of Charles V is viewed as suspicious by many in Germany and the Holy Roman Empire. While a captive in Spain, Francis I gave two million gold crowns to Charles V for his ransom; only to attack the troops of Charles again and then lose in a negotiated peace. Francis I is responsible for the spike in debt for his government.

In an interview with the Rev. Martin Luther in Wittenberg on the marriage of Francis I, he refused to answer our questions. It is widely known from public statements that Martin Luther does not trust the King of France and sees him as a threat to Protestant beliefs about faith and the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament. Through a statement made by one of the pastors staying with Luther in his home, we were told that Martin Luther predicts one of the first laws passed by Francis upon his return to France as emperor will be the persecution of the Protestants and preventing them from worshipping in France.

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1530 June 25 - Augsburg Confession Signed

There is tremendous excitement as we approach the opening of this historic convention of German princes and religious scholars. Emperor Charles V has arrived in Augsburg to preside over this assembly. Having earned the respect of Pope Clement VII and the rulers of Europe on his defeat of the Turks just six months ago, Charles V appears prepared to address what has been called, "The Lutheran Problem."

Even though the Marburg Colloquy failed to unite Zwingli and Luther on the sacrament, the imperial chancellor, Balthasar Merklin, has been persuasive in leading Charles V to compromise with the Lutherans and perhaps give them their own representation on the council.

In the copy released this morning, there are 21 articles on the Lutheran teachings about God, Original Sin, Jesus, Justification by Faith, Ministry, Priesthood of Believers, Baptism, Lord's Supper, Confession, and Repentance. The second section addresses the teachings in the Roman Catholic Church and explains the Lutheran disagreement on withholding the cup from the laity, celibacy, and the Mass.

At 3:00 p.m. today, the Confession was officially adopted establishing The Lutheran Church. Dr. Luther commented, *"I am tremendously pleased to have lived to this moment when Christ, by His staunch confessors, has publicly been proclaimed in such a great assembly by means of this really most beautiful confession. And so the Word is fulfilled, 'I will speak of Thy testimonies also before kings.' What follows will also be fulfilled: 'And will not be put to shame.' [Psalm 119:46]. For 'whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven.' [Matt. 10:32]*

I had an opportunity to read one of the confessional statements released to Emperor Charles V:

Article IV: *"Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight."* (Romans 3 and 4.)

I am an eyewitness to this historic moment in the Holy Roman Empire!

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1530 November 19 - Diet of Augsburg

The political outcome of the Reformation was expected to be decided at this historic meeting which opened on April 8 with Emperor Charles V. Martin Luther has maintained that all princes must obey the divinely appointed emperor and that violence was not an option, unless the emperor demanded they renounce their faith. It was Emperor Charles V who ordered Martin Luther arrested after his excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church in 1521 following his statements at the Diet of Worms.

The princes of Saxony had previously confiscated the property of the Roman Catholic Church and the recent coronation of Charles V at Bologna has likely shifted his alliance towards the pope. Furthermore, the Lutherans have lost the support of Elector Frederick the Wise who died in 1525. Martin Luther is expecting that John Frederick will represent Saxony at the Diet.

John Eck is representing the Roman Catholic interests at this meeting and his strategy is to present evidence that the Lutheran faith is extreme and radical in its theology and support for violence. The most radical Lutheran teachings were on the real presence of the Eucharist and the priesthood of all believers. These doctrines of the new religion were adopted in the Augsburg Confession in June. Emperor Charles V has been open in his criticism of the failure of the Lutherans and Roman Catholics to remain united and return the property seized back to the Roman Catholic bishops.

The decision was to postpone a resolution in the hope that a compromise between the different faiths might still be reached for the unity of the empire. Charles V is optimistic that the combined efforts of the Lutherans and Roman Catholics in preventing the spread of the Anabaptist teachings might lead to an agreement and preserve the unity of the Church. Emperor Charles V released the following proclamation:

"We called an Imperial Diet to convene in Ours and the Holy Empire's city of Augsburg on April 8, it being Our conviction, will, and opinion to deal with affairs of the Holy Empire, the whole of Christendom, and the German Nation. Specifically, We wished [to determine] how the dispute and errors concerning Our holy faith and the Christian religion might be fruitfully dealt with and settled, and how the differences over the faith might be overcome; [we wished] to suppress enmity; to overcome the current misconceptions concerning Christ, Our sole Savior; to listen to, understand, and deal with every opinion and view with love and favor, and to bring each to and align each with Christian truth; to suppress everything that is incorrectly interpreted or taught by either side; to accept and stand by a true religion on behalf of us all.

We now present out of Imperial good will and special grace the following favorable Recess to the aforementioned electors, princes, and six cities, requesting them to accept the same with good grace. Namely, that between now and April 15 of next year, they shall consider whether they wish to confess and make peace concerning the disputed articles with the Christian

Church, His Holiness, Us, and the other electors, princes, and estates of the Holy Roman Empire, and other Christian rulers and subjects of the common Christendom until a future Council shall meet. They shall apprise Us of their attitude under their seals before this date."

In a rare interview with the John Frederick, the new elector of Saxony, about the outcome of the Diet of Augsburg, he said that he did not share the optimism of the emperor because the Lutheran princes were already forming a military alliance, the League of Schmalkalden, to counter the decree given immediately after the Emperor's proclamation that all confiscated church property be returned to the Roman Catholic Church. It is my perspective that Charles V still sees the Lutherans as a heresy he must defeat. The outcome of this meeting was to condemn the Lutheran faith. The emperor's mind was made up after he read the Augsburg Confession on June 25 and this new Proclamation nullifies his public statement to continue seeking a compromise next year. We will have a divided Church between Lutherans and Protestants (the protesters) and the historic Roman Catholic Church for the future.

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1530 *New Criminal Code for the Holy Roman Empire*

The *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* was agreed to at the Diet of Augsburg today and is the first codified body of German criminal law. It is expected to be officially ratified at the Diet of Regensburg when it meets in 1532. Under the terms of the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*, murder, robbery, manslaughter, homosexuality, arson, and witchcraft were defined as capital crimes. The death penalty for witchcraft is execution by fire.

A noticeable change in the German legal system is the use of inquiry, or Inquisition to determine the facts. A person's good reputation is no longer adequate for the dismissal of charges. The new standard is based on the facts and evidence from the inquiry. The Inquisition allows the use of torture and is conducted in secret.

Martin Luther, educated in Roman law, said, "*the new code was necessary to maintain unity in the empire as there are about 300 autonomous provinces in the empire at this time. All of the offenses listed as crimes against the state are also sins against God as written in the Ten Commandments.*"