

1526-1550



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

1550 *Thomas Cranmer Explains Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament*

Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, has published his *Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ*. This is his first full length book and he has been writing it for seven years.

However, the editorial staff of *The Wittenberg Times* has found more arguments against the Roman Catholic and Lutheran teachings on the Sacrament in his book than the title suggests. The archbishop disagrees with Catholics and Lutherans that Jesus Christ is physically present in every celebration of the sacrament because Jesus ascended into heaven and promised to return at the end of time. Cranmer argued that it is not possible for Christ to be present in every church at the time the sacrament is consecrated.

Although he disagrees with Luther's teaching on the real presence, or consubstantiation, he does support the spiritual and sacramental presence of Jesus Christ in the sacrament and that believers receive the forgiveness of sins. He will also agree with Luther and the Roman Catholics that upon receiving the sacrament, Christ is truly present in a Christian.

Cranmer also rejects the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation because the words, "This is my body" cannot be taken literally and it is against reason that the elements of bread and wine physically change to the body and blood when they still appear as bread and wine. He further explains that the Roman Catholic emphasis on the Mass detracts from worshipping God. Cranmer's position is that people need to focus on the Word. His attack on Pope Innocent II is strong because he claims the intent is deceptive and one of idolatry because it focuses people on a devotion to material rather than spiritual things.

Although Cranmer recognizes the role of a priest as a called minister of God, he is in agreement with Luther's teaching of the priesthood of all believers. He states that the ordinary people in the church with faith and an obedient heart is what God expects of all of us.

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1550 Sealing Wax Used

The refined process of seals for written documents of the state and for personal correspondence will protect the privacy and authenticity of deeds, wills, patents, and letters. Before the hot wax is set, an object is used to make an impression on the wax seal. These imprints can be personalized with images and letters.

These wax imprints protected the security of correspondence from unintended readers since it was difficult to make an exact duplicate copy.



The Seal of God (British Museum)

Oh, yes, identity theft was a problem 500 years ago too!

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1550 *Persecution of Jews in Bavaria*

The expulsion of the Jews in Bavaria is evidence of the extreme religious hatred that has appeared in Italy, Naples, Genoa, and Prague during the past decade. The legislation passed by the rulers in Bavaria and issued by the Elector Albrecht V marks the first expulsion of a significant Jewish population living exclusively in cities. An earlier attempt in 1543 to have the Jews removed from Brandenburg was not enacted.

Josel of Rosheim representing the Jews in the province of Bavaria had to guarantee that Jews would never again set foot upon the spoil of Upper or Lower Bavaria, including the Palatinate region. The status of free cities throughout Germany is now being questioned.

There are several prominent Jewish families in Bavaria who have made significant contributions to libraries, universities, banking, and printing. Our reporters were able to interview members of the Wertheimer and Oppenheimer families on the steps of the synagogue they were closing.

They told us that they have been living here for 300 years with peace and prosperity. We all speak German and enjoy the German people. We just want to live in peace and worship God. We are deeply religious, although we do not accept Jesus Christ with the passion of Martin Luther and the new ideas of the religious reformers. We do not know what the future holds for us or our children as all of Europe suddenly hates the Jews.

Luther's publication in 1543 *On the Jews and Their Lies* was a deviation from his earlier publication in 1523 *That Jesus Was Born a Jew*. In this publication Luther urged Christians to treat Jews kindly and with respect encouraging us to accept the teachings of Jesus Christ. However, in his book *On the Jews and Their Lies* and the sermons he preached just before his death have changed the way many in Europe see the Jews and understand their faith. Most political leaders have been reserved in their actions until the actions by Elector Albrecht V in Bavaria.