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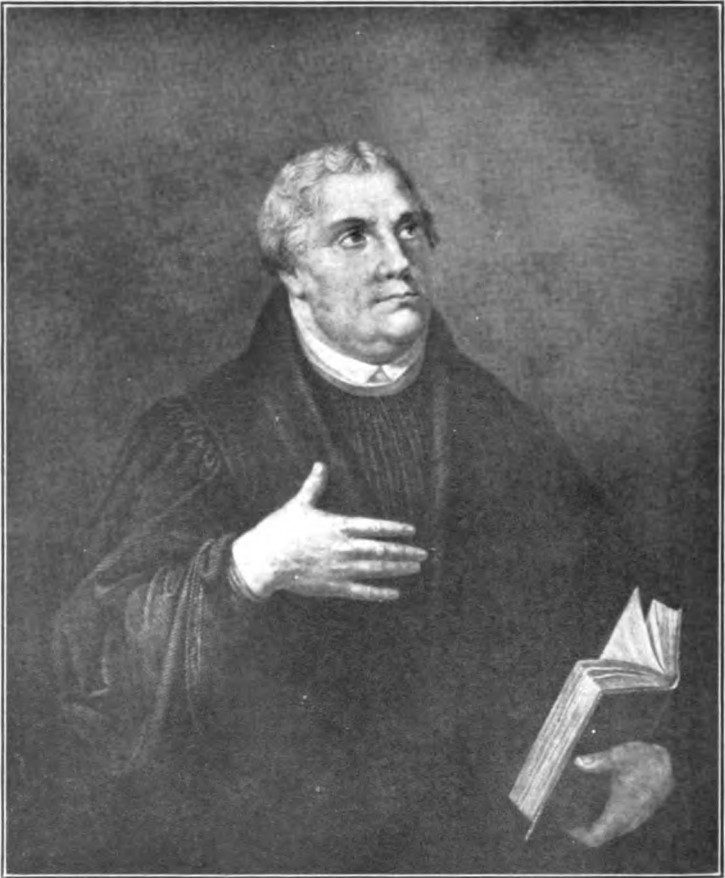
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**MARTIN LUTHER**

*Painting by Cranach*

# THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

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## THE LUTHER QUADRI-CENTENNIAL.

BY THE REVEREND PRESIDENT W. W. MOORE, D. D., LL. D.,

*Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va.*

For many years the Christian people of Continental Europe of the two communions, Lutheran and Reformed, with a view to preserving the heritage bequeathed to them by the Reformers of the sixteenth century, have observed one Sabbath in the year as Reformation Day. In 1904, at Liverpool, the General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System unanimously recommended to the churches of the Alliance—not only those in Europe but all the churches throughout the world—the observance of one Sabbath in the year “as a day of special thanksgiving for the blessings resulting to so many churches and countries from that great religious revival which we call the Reformation of the sixteenth century.” In 1910 the General Assembly of our own Church, expressing the belief that such commemorative exercises are fitted to render most important service in our own land at the present time, made provision for a similar annual observance by our pastors and people.

Few events in the history of the world are more worthy of such commemoration. For the Reformation was not only “a great insurrection of human intelligence,” as Guizot has called it—a mighty intellectual Renaissance; and it not only produced a tremendous political upheaval which inaugurated a new era of civil liberty; but it was a heroic vindication of freedom of

conscience, a radical purification of the Church, and the greatest of all revivals of religion. It opened afresh the choked fountains of truth and restored the pure teaching of Scripture.

In this recovery of the gospel God raised up and used a number of men of extraordinary intellectual and spiritual power. "If we except the apostles," says Froude, "no body of human beings ever printed so deep a mark into the organization of society." The Assembly, therefore, very properly suggested that in their observance of the day our pastors should speak to their people of the character and services of these illustrious men, and in compliance with this action a number of our reading ministers have, from year to year, delighted their congregations with instructive and inspiring addresses concerning the leaders of the Reformation in the various countries of Europe. The greatest of them all in many ways was Martin Luther. No individual since the Apostle Paul has made a deeper mark on mankind. The day on which he nailed his ninety-five theses to the doors of the castle church at Wittenberg, October 31, 1517; has ever since been regarded as the birthday of the Reformation. Hence the observance of the last Sunday in October as Reformation Day.

But, as the year 1917 marks the four hundredth anniversary of that epoch-making challenge, it is proposed by our Church, along with the other evangelical churches of Protestant Christendom, to celebrate it in a much fuller and more impressive way than usual, and the Assembly at its last meeting appointed a committee "to frame and submit to the churches a program of celebration befitting such a decisive event in the history of the Kingdom of God." A joint committee from denominations represented in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America has been appointed to seek the co-ordination of the various denominational celebrations and to arrange for a joint celebration at one or more great centers, to be held as near to October 31, 1917, as may be possible. Pending the action of this committee and the publication of the program ordered by our own General Assembly, the Union Seminary Review seeks

to further the general movement by bringing out this special Reformation number, providing an abundance of matter that will be of use to our ministers and people in their study of the subject.