

LUTHER'S WORKS

VOLUME 8

LECTURES ON GENESIS Chapters 45—50

JAROSLAV PELIKAN
Editor

WALTER A. HANSEN
Associate Editor

Copyright 1966 by
CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE
Saint Louis, Missouri

Contents

<i>General Introduction</i>	vii
<i>Introduction to Volume 8</i>	ix
CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE	3
CHAPTER FORTY-SIX	75
CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN	100
CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT	149
CHAPTER FORTY-NINE	199
CHAPTER FIFTY	320
<i>Indexes</i>	335

General Introduction

THE first editions of Luther's collected works appeared in the sixteenth century, and so did the first efforts to make him "speak English." In America serious attempts in these directions were made for the first time in the nineteenth century. The Saint Louis edition of Luther was the first endeavor on American soil to publish a collected edition of his works, and the Henkel Press in Newmarket, Virginia, was the first to publish some of Luther's writings in an English translation. During the first decade of the twentieth century, J. N. Lenker produced translations of Luther's sermons and commentaries in thirteen volumes. A few years later the first of the six volumes in the Philadelphia (or Holman) edition of the *Works of Martin Luther* appeared. Miscellaneous other works were published at one time or another. But a growing recognition of the need for more of Luther's works in English has resulted in this American edition of Luther's works.

The edition is intended primarily for the reader whose knowledge of late medieval Latin and sixteenth-century German is too small to permit him to work with Luther in the original languages. Those who can, will continue to read Luther in his original words as these have been assembled in the monumental Weimar edition (*D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*; Weimar, 1883 ff.). Its texts and helps have formed a basis for this edition, though in certain places we have felt constrained to depart from its readings and findings. We have tried throughout to translate Luther as he thought translating should be done. That is, we have striven for faithfulness on the basis of the best lexicographical materials available. But where literal accuracy and clarity have conflicted, it is clarity that we have preferred, so that sometimes paraphrase seemed more faithful than literal fidelity. We have proceeded in a similar way in the matter of Bible versions, translating Luther's translations. Where this could be done by the use of an existing English version — King James, Douay, or Revised Standard — we have done so. Where

it could not, we have supplied our own. To indicate this in each specific instance would have been pedantic; to adopt a uniform procedure would have been artificial — especially in view of Luther's own inconsistency in this regard. In each volume the translator will be responsible primarily for matters of text and language, while the responsibility of the editor will extend principally to the historical and theological matters reflected in the introductions and notes.

Although the edition as planned will include fifty-five volumes, Luther's writings are not being translated in their entirety. Nor should they be. As he was the first to insist, much of what he wrote and said was not that important. Thus the edition is a selection of works that have proved their importance for the faith, life, and history of the Christian Church. The first thirty volumes contain Luther's expositions of various Biblical books, while the remaining volumes include what are usually called his "Reformation writings" and other occasional pieces. The final volume of the set will be an index volume; in addition to an index of quotations, proper names, and topics, and a list of corrections and changes, it will contain a glossary of many of the technical terms that recur in Luther's works and that cannot be defined each time they appear. Obviously Luther cannot be forced into any neat set of rubrics. He can provide his reader with bits of autobiography or with political observations as he expounds a psalm, and he can speak tenderly about the meaning of the faith in the midst of polemics against his opponents. It is the hope of publishers, editors, and translators that through this edition the message of Luther's faith will speak more clearly to the modern church.

J. P.
H. L.

Introduction to Volume 8

WITH the materials in this volume we come to the final six chapters of the *Lectures on Genesis* (Weimar, XLIV, 581–825; St. Louis, II, 1654–2091). Luther had begun lecturing on the Book of Genesis in 1535, presumably on June 1 of that year (cf. *Luther's Works*, 1, p. ix). He had continued to work his way through the text – in spite of countless interruptions for plagues and illness, travels and other duties – for more than a decade. Many students began their studies after he had inaugurated the lectures and completed them before he had finished.

In the Introduction to Volume 7 (p. ix) we have already quoted the evidence of Luther's letter to Wenzeslaus Link, dated January 17, 1545, that he was at chapter 45 of Genesis at that time. The beginning of the lecture notes assembled in this volume, therefore, would seem to coincide quite closely with the beginning of 1545, the last full year of Luther's life.

The end of these lecture notes seems likewise to coincide with the end of that year. For, thanks to the industry of a number of modern scholars, we are fortunate to have several more or less contemporary sources of information about the last lecture of the series. On December 24, 1545, only a few months before his own death, Friedrich Myconius wrote to Justus Menius in Gotha: "From Wittenberg I have the report that Luther has completed his *Genesis* and has stated publicly that he was weary and could not go on any longer. He asked [his hearers] to pray for him, that God would grant him a gracious final hour." This report of Luther's closing words harmonizes closely with the final paragraph of this volume (p. 333).

Additional documentary evidence makes it possible to fix the date of Luther's final lecture on Genesis even more precisely. The first edition of the printed version of these *Lectures on Genesis* contains the following comment, immediately after Luther's concluding words: "Dr. Luther, the man of God, concluded his lectures on Genesis on November 17, 1545." Volume VI of the Latin section of the Witten-

berg edition of Luther's works elaborates on this comment: "Dr. Luther, the man of God, concluded his lectures on Genesis on November 17, 1545. He had begun them in the year 1535, when he said in his preface: 'I shall linger over the exposition of this book and shall die in the process of doing so [*immorabor et immoriar*].' In accordance with this prophecy concerning himself, he died piously, with earnest prayer to God, in his homeland, at Eisleben, on February 18, 1546." The word "preface" does not refer to any extant written preface but may well be a reference to an oral comment. From one or more of these sources the sermons on the life of Luther by Johann Mathesius of Joachimstal derived the same date.

Thus it seems certain that most or all of the lectures on which these transcripts were based were delivered during the calendar year 1545, and that Luther's lecture on the last verses of the last chapter of the Book of Genesis was delivered on Tuesday, November 17, 1545. It was to be not only the last lecture of his most massive work of Biblical exposition but the last lecture of his professorial career. Three months and one day later he died.

In translating and editing these chapters we have followed the principles and procedures already defined in the introductions to the earlier volumes of the *Lectures on Genesis*.
J. P.

LECTURES ON GENESIS

Chapters 45–50

Translated by
PAUL D. PAHL

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

1. *Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him; and he cried: Make everyone go out from me. So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.*
2. *And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it.*

I do not doubt that Joseph's heart trembled and melted at everything Judah related in the speech he delivered, for because of his great affection and love toward his brothers every word smote his heart. It was truly heartrending.¹ For he was not cruel or harsh but was most kindly and gently disposed; he was filled with the Holy Spirit and with wonderful affection for his brothers.

Judah related almost everything that served to stir up the feelings and the affection of Joseph. Consequently, it was more difficult for Joseph to wait for the end of the speech than it was to conclude his own speech to Judah himself and his brothers. Therefore he said to the Egyptians who were standing around: "Go out!" He can stand it no longer. His heart melted from the very pleasant fire and the very sweet moisture that overflowed through his tears and sighs. He orders all to depart and does not allow anyone else except these guests to be present, perhaps because he did not want his weeping and sighs to be seen by the Egyptians. For that pouring forth of his feelings and his affection toward his brothers and father was so great that he could not bear the presence and the sight of strangers. Now he begins with a brief word.

3. *And Joseph said to his brothers: I AM JOSEPH.*

Now he lets himself go. It would not have been strange if all had died from terror and joy at this word. But he cannot say more,

¹ At this point and at many others in these chapters the edited version of Luther's lectures breaks into German — an indication, perhaps, of Luther's *ipsissima verba*. In this volume we have followed our established practice of rendering into English both the German and the Latin even when they evidently reflect the same comment (cf. *Luther's Works*, 7, p. 61, note 8).

even when the others have been removed; he pours out his whole being in tears, sighs, and lamentation, in a loud voice, so that he is clearly heard by those who had gone out and by Pharaoh's whole household.

For this reason he controlled and restrained himself so far with great strength of heart while Judah was speaking and the Egyptians by whom he had been surrounded were leaving. Now it comes out like a cloudburst. Accordingly, the whole house is astonished at this lamentation and outcry. They ask what has happened to their ruler, why he is lamenting, what this weeping means. Can it be that those foreigners are laying violent hands on him?

This undoubtedly arouses sympathy, and the words as well as the tears show that there is great agitation of spirit. Indeed, I cannot express and explain this with words. Nor does reflection enable me to understand it.

But "I AM JOSEPH" is a very friendly word and is completely suited to this climax. It serves the purpose very well. Nor did Joseph employ the Egyptian language, as he had done previously through an interpreter; but he spoke in his native tongue, which his brothers did not believe he knew, since he had been using an interpreter. But now that the spectators have been removed, he addresses them in Hebrew. He does not say: "I am Abrech, Zaphenath-paneah" (cf. Gen. 41:43, 45), as his brothers undoubtedly called him previously, saying, "We shall go to Zaphenath-paneah because of his very great power and rank in Egypt," which the name given by the king indicated; but he says: "I AM JOSEPH."

This, then, is the climax and the exceedingly sharp epitasis of this account, when Joseph suddenly reveals himself to his brothers — Joseph, whom they had previously regarded as a harsh and cruel tyrant because he conducted himself as a complete stranger and in a most frightening manner. And although he gave many evidences that under that hostile manner there was sure hope of friendliness and clemency, yet they were not able to understand this. But here, without employing any circumlocution or an interpreter, he bursts into this word: "I am Joseph."

Accordingly, this is a very beautiful example of how God deals with us. For when He afflicts the godly and conceals the fact that He is our God and Father and rather conducts Himself as a tyrant and judge who wants to torture and destroy us, He says at last in His own time and at a suitable hour: "I am the Lord your God.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

1. *So Joseph went in and told Pharaoh: My father and my brothers, with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; they are now in the land of Goshen.*

NOTE Joseph's perseverance in the respect and honor he pays to the king. For he honors him so reverently that he thinks he must hazard nothing on his own responsibility but must refer everything to the king and do nothing at all without his nod. But this is a very extraordinary and rare virtue in all officials and revenue collectors who do not imitate the example of Joseph today but rashly and impudently overleap the bounds of their office and instructions. If anyone has a handbreadth of authority from the prince, he takes a whole yard. This is the source of so many disorders in states. As a result, their overthrow must follow. For officials should show faithfulness and diligence in carrying out the instructions of the princes and should not undertake anything without the princes' orders. If they did this, there would be fewer disasters and troubles in the realms.

Thus Egypt was undoubtedly a very flourishing kingdom, not only in wealth, which was least important, but in order and justice. And Joseph was a most extraordinary man. He regulated this kingdom most beautifully and by means of the most illustrious examples of virtues and obedience carried a light before the other nobles and subjects, since he did nothing without the command and will of the king.

Today at nearly all courts there are more complaints about the rapacity and the injustices of the revenue collectors than about troubles of this nature which citizens and peasants have among themselves. Nevertheless, not all quarrels among officials and their inferiors can be referred to the princes. For these it is a great enough burden to give commands. In addition to this, however, they are compelled to listen to complaints about the faithlessness of those whom they place in charge of others. There are no such Josephs in our states.

CHAPTER FIFTY

1. *Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed him.*
2. *And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel;*
3. *forty days were required for it, for so many are required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days.*

THE final chapter deals with the funeral solemnities. Joseph's reverence for his father proceeds from faith and hope in the resurrection. For he is convinced that his father is alive. Otherwise he would not anoint and kiss him. Forty days are devoted to the embalming, and they mourn for 30 days. This makes a total of 70 days. It was an exceedingly beautiful religious ceremony, and the solemnities were truly magnificent. God buried Jacob with greater honors than He bestowed on His Son Christ Jesus. Nor was it futile for Moses to count the days of the embalming and the mourning so carefully; he wanted to solemnize those most honorable exequies of Jacob with special zeal.

It was certainly a matter of great importance for that foreigner to enjoy such honor and favor before King Pharaoh and the rulers of Egypt that they mourned for him such a long time and discharged the last offices of piety to the deceased with the greatest willingness and reverence.

Furthermore, it is apparent from that anointing that the Egyptians had excellent spices — myrrh, balsam, and cassia — which could preserve a body for 70 days. For to myrrh they attribute the power to prevent putridity and stench. When Augustus had come to Egypt, they showed him the bodies of Alexander the Great and Ptolemy, who had been buried for many years. He was greatly surprised by the fact that the bodies could be preserved in such a way that the skin and all the members were still in existence. They say the same thing

[W, XLIV, 815]

about the corpse of the emperor Titus.¹ Accordingly, these were very precious spices with which they made cadavers incorruptible for so many years; for the region was very hot, and this heat destroys bodies very quickly.

In winter we keep meat from putrefaction with cold instead of with myrrh, especially in the northern areas, in Denmark and elsewhere. This is our German myrrh. But it is truly wonderful that there, under such a burning sun, they were able to keep putridity and stench from corpses. God wanted to point out that the dead in Christ have been anointed with myrrh. Christ is our myrrh, just as myrrh is also offered to Him by the Magi, as Matt. 2:11 tells. For if we believe in Him, we are anointed with myrrh, so that we do not decay but are preserved for the future resurrection.

4. *And when the days of weeping for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying: If now I have found favor in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying:*
5. *My father made me swear, saying: I am about to die; in my tomb which I hewed out for myself in the land of Canaan, there shall you bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray you, and bury my father; then I will return.*
6. *And Pharaoh answered: Go up, and bury your father, as he made you swear.*

Joseph asks for permission to bury his father, not only in order to demonstrate his respect for the royal majesty, as God's command requires when it says in 1 Peter 2:17: "Honor the king," but also because of the duties that are customary and necessary in the administration of a kingdom — duties he could not honorably give up without Pharaoh's consent. Furthermore, he was afraid the Egyptians might suspect that he was thinking of flight and departure, or that they were despised because he thought that his father should be buried in the land of Canaan rather than in their highly flourishing kingdom. Indeed, they could have thought as follows: "In nobility, power, and wealth we are superior to all other nations in the whole world. Why, then, does he seek another burial place for his father than the land of Egypt?" For this reason he adduces the oath he had sworn to his father and promises that he will return. Indeed, he does not want to

¹ Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, II, 18, 1 (Augustus).

INDEX TO SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Genesis

1:28 — 95
 2:17 — 190, 331
 3:7 — 66
 3:15 — 76, 242, 243,
 331
 3:16 — 24
 3:18 — 302
 4:1 — 242, 243
 4:4 — 63
 4:7 — 325
 4:30 — 169
 6:3 — 283
 10:9 — 65
 11:26 — 90
 12:5 — 84
 14:19 — 112
 15:6 — 139
 15:13-14 — 110
 15:16 — 111
 16:5 — 169
 16:13 — 30
 21:10 — 169
 21:29-30 — 197
 22:18 — 60, 183
 24:2 — 139
 25:17 — 315
 25:23 — 175
 25:28 — 169
 27:4, 25 — 65
 27:28 — 302
 28:13 — 151
 29:23 — 87
 30:7-8 — 291
 30:20 — 273
 30:37 — 143
 32:10 — 143
 32:24 — 163
 32:25 — 139
 32:30 — 163
 33:13-14 — 64
 34:2 — 198
 34:13 — 197
 34:26 ff. — 152
 34:26-27 — 197
 34:30 — 152, 197
 35:1 — 151
 35:2 — 76
 35:10 — 162
 35:11 — 152, 153, 154
 35:11-12 — 31

35:18 — 206
 37 — 49
 37:2 — 222
 37:9 — 138
 37:20 — 223
 39 — 57
 41:42 — 146
 41:42-43 — 64
 41:43, 45 — 4
 41:51 — 21, 55
 41:52 — 154
 42:21 — 223
 42:22 — 223
 43:32 — 16
 44:18 ff. — 91
 45:2 — 23
 45:5 — 23
 45:6 — 38
 45:7 — 52
 45:8 — 64
 45:9 — 57
 45:14 — 54
 45:16 — 56
 45:18 — 63
 45:20 — 65
 45:27 — 208
 46:1 — 76
 46:10 — 85
 46:15 — 86
 46:23 — 84
 46:27 — 62, 90
 46:34 — 16, 48, 57, 61
 47:2 — 102
 47:6 — 102
 47:9 — 147
 47:16-17 — 108
 47:23-25 — 127
 47:31 — 144, 147
 48:3-4 — 295
 48:5 — 207
 48:6 — 155
 48:7 — 157
 48:15-16 — 164
 48:22 — 198
 49:3 — 207
 49:4 — 295
 49:5 — 65
 49:5 ff. — 50
 49:6 — 222
 49:7, 6 — 307
 49:8 — 272

49:8-12 — 91
 49:10-11 — 200
 49:11-12 — 247
 49:14 — 106
 49:15 — 280
 49:16 — 272, 282
 49:17 — 281
 49:19 — 272
 49:22 — 225
 49:23 — 63
 49:26 — 304
 50:15-17 — 51
 50:19-20 — 34
 50:20 — 39

Exodus

1:8 — 33, 111
 1:11 — 95, 109
 4:22 — 84
 10:26 — 90
 12:37 — 116
 20:7 — 209
 20:22 — 61
 25:40 — 153
 33:23 — 30, 31, 32
 33:23, 20 — 74

Numbers

6:1-21 — 305
 6:2 ff. — 305
 12 — 222
 16 — 222, 228
 19:4, 6 — 153

Deuteronomy

3:23-26 — 73
 4 — 73
 4:7 — 301
 4:46 — 198
 5:21 — 304
 6:13 — 139
 8:3 — 204
 8:3-4 — 201
 8:20 — 177
 10:9 — 228
 10:22 — 88
 18:15 — 153
 18:18-19 — 310
 21:15-17 — 160
 21:17 — 206, 207