

Christian world. These were the two great weaknesses of Luther, particularly the arbitrariness that he got into for which I think his bad health and the tensions he'd been under had a great deal to do with it. At one time Calvin who became one of his best friends of Luther's right hand man Melancthanon, wrote Melancthanon and said, Why should we be separated over this division on the understanding of the Lord's Supper. He said, here is a little different statement of it; maybe Luther would be satisfied if I'd put it this way. Won't you present it to him? And Melancthanon wrote back and said, Luther was so upset and furious today that I just didn't dare show him your letter. And Calvin got the letter and some of Calvin's friends said, This man is becoming a new pope of Wittenburg, why don't you speak out against it." Calvin said, I don't care if he calls me a devil, I will still insist that he is one of the greatest ornaments God ever gave his church, and has accomplished as much as any man since the apostles in the advance of God's word." Oh I like Calvin's spirit there. Luther showed the same spirit many times in his life but at this particular time and at this particular point Luther, I think fell into sin, and God allowed him to in order that we should be kept from idolizing any man. May the Lord enable us to see our faults and our weaknesses and not to make a stress on minor points, as Luther did, but to make the great stress on the Bible that Luther did, the great stress on God's free grace that Luther did. May God enable us during this year ahead as Luther did to make our lives count for Him no matter what happens, to put God's perfect purposes first, to say as Luther did, If they burn me, I'm ready to stand for God's Word. Oh yes, I've known people who would say, I'll give my life for the Lord, and they risk getting a pension or getting a little lower salary and they surrender. God wants us to stand on the little things as well as on the big things for His truth. May God enable us to see the example of that great Christian leader, M. Luther.