

first Protestant tunes might with confidence be put down as the composition of Luther, but in the absence of incontestable evidence it is perhaps best to leave the matter where it is. One thing is at least certain: the man who could write such a melody as that of "Ein feste Burg" was capable of composing, had he been so inclined, any number of tunes such as we find associated with the early Protestant hymns. Many of them are in every way inferior to this magnificent chorale; but most of them are sufficiently meritorious to make it worth while claiming them for Luther, if only we had evidence to support the claim. At any rate, let us not forget that to Luther, whether as composer, editor, or arranger, we owe all that is grand and solemn and dignified in our present style of Church music. The modern hymn-tune is fast becoming a light, pretty, sentimental thing, more fitted for the concert-room than for the Church; but we have still a rich heritage of the classics of sacred song, and this heritage we owe entirely to the genius of Martin Luther in his capacities of musician and poet.

We must not, however, leave our readers with the idea that the Reformer sought for his Church services nothing more from the musical art than the chorale or hymn-tune. We know that one of his earliest efforts was to replace the Latin Mass by one sung in the German tongue, and to music of a popular character. "I should to-day rejoice if we had a German Mass," he says, in his essay entitled *The Heavenly Prophets*. "I live with that hope constantly before me, and should much like that our Mass had a true German style and manner. The one we have now, with its Latin tone . . . is neither an agreeable nor honest mixture." During the year 1524 he spent a considerable portion of his time devising, arranging, and consulting as to the shape this German Mass should take, and the music to be set to it. Here again he had the assistance of Walther, who tells us that Luther kept him "three long weeks at Wittenberg to write choral notes to Gospels and Epistles, until the first German Mass should be sung in the parish church."

The date of this first performance was Christmas Day,