

*SALADIN'S BIOGRAPHY OF MARTIN LUTHER,  
THE DISTURBER OF EUROPE.*

MARTIN LUTHER

(Born 1483. Died 1546. Age 63.)

*AN IMPEACHMENT. By SALADIN*

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This Protestant England of the "Open Bible" has just recently passed through a fulsome apotheosis of Martin Luther, the German Monk. I have found, from conversation with numerous freethinkers that our party as a rule, have an entirely false impression of the man that grew out of the peasant child, who was born at Eisleven, just four hundred years ago. This misconception as to the real character of "the Monk who shook the world" is less to be wondered at when we remember that the very heavy majority of our party has been recruited from the different Protestant sects who have their sacredly traditional Martin Luther, a very different man from the Martin Luther of verifiable fact. Protestantism blindly regards him as though his laurels as a hero were irradiated by his aureole as a saint. In reality, he has little of the heroic garland and less of the saintly halo. He was a gross-feeding, beer-swilling, ill-educated, coarse-minded grossly-lecherous apostate Monk, only redeemed from dissipated mediocrity by a certain amount of stubborn characterfulness, and rebellious audacity which had not distinguished nobler Heresiarchs like Arius, Nestorius, and Eutyches. He had a large share of humanity's worst failings, and I should feel disposed to allow these to rest lightly on his memory if there was no attempt to make him a demi-god. The best that can be said for him is—he was a man, not, like Calvin, a devil.

The radical doctrine of the Reformation was salvation by faith, not works. In a letter of Martin Luther to Melanethon in 1521, he thus in Latin, which I render in English gives expression to this pestilence and unspeakably demoralizing doctrine:—"Be a sinner and sin boldly; but more boldly believe and hope in Christ, who is the Conqueror of sin and death and the world. It is enough that we acknowledge, through the riches of the glory of God, the Lamb, who taketh away the sins of the world; from Him no sin will tear us asunder—no, not