

is sanctioned by Scripture, but that it is sufficient if prevalent practices are not *distinctly forbidden* by Scripture. His Roman Catholic opponents were not slow to see Luther's inconsistencies, and they made vigorous use of them in their polemics.

Again, Luther apprehended the great Biblical doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers, and the consequent right of every Christian to interpret the Scriptures according to his own judgment, enlightened by the Spirit. Yet, practically, he made his own interpretation the only admissible one, and did not hesitate to revile and persecute those that arrived at results different from his own.

Again, Luther apprehended that most important Biblical doctrine, justification by faith. He saw in the failure to recognize this doctrine, the ground of all papal corruptions. Instead of tempering this doctrine by the complementary teachings of the Scriptures he really made it the supreme criterion of truth. Whatever Scripture could not be made to teach justification by faith alone was for Luther no Scripture at all.

So, also, while professing to give the first place to Scripture, he practically put Augustine in the first place, interpreting Scripture by Augustinian dogma rather than Augustinian dogma by Scripture. It is evident, therefore, that Luther did not hold to the Biblical principle purely and consistently.

How fared it with the Mystical? There is no doubt that the writings of the German Mystics had an important place in Luther's own individual development. I shall not call in question the fact that he remained persistently a man of profound spiritual life, that his personal religion was and remained of an inward character. But I am still more fully convinced of the fact that the Mystical element was almost entirely lost to his followers. The general effect of his preaching, so far as I can judge from his own statements and those of his most intimate friends, compared with those of his opponents, was not in the direction of personal religious experience, but rather of a dead faith and a blind assurance. The preaching and writings of Luther were destructive, not constructive. He could, by his denunciations, undermine papal authority, and bring the doctrine of salvation by works into utmost contempt; but, if I mistake not, he failed signally to develop an apostolical in the place of a monkish piety in his followers. I think, then, we may say that the Mystical element among the reformatory forces was not made the most of by Luther and his followers—certainly little of it appeared among his followers. It was almost supplanted by the doctrine of justification by faith alone, generally apprehended in a semi-antinomian way.