

*Martin Luther's Preaching an Indulgence
in January 1517*

by TIMOTHY J. WENGERT

Thesis 39 of Luther's *95 Theses* states: "It is extremely difficult, even for the most learned theologians, to lift up before the people the liberality of indulgences and the truth about contrition at one and the same time."¹ Why, in the middle of an attack on indulgence preachers, would Luther add a thesis like this one? Although not the most important of the ninety-five statements Luther penned in October 1517 questioning indulgences, this particular one, with its implication that even good theologians have trouble preaching indulgences, may not have been simply hypothetical. Among the early sermons of Luther, there is one that, when correctly dated, may well represent Luther's own preaching of an indulgence on the very eve of Johann Tetzel's much disputed preaching of the so-called Peter's indulgence, which involved selling plenary indulgences for the rebuilding of St. Peter's in Rome. Thus, Luther's sermon on the anniversary of a church dedication may help elucidate thesis 39 and shed new light on his struggles over indulgences, not just how poorly others preached them but also how impossible they were for him to preach as well.²

Church dedications played an important part in the church life of Luther's day. In the Middle Ages, specific and limited indulgences were almost always connected to celebrating the anniversary of a church's dedication.³ Thus, for the anniversary of the rededication of Wittenberg's Castle Church, held each 17 January since 1503, there are even papal documents defining such indulgences. Such a festival would have always included preaching on the appointed gospel: the story of Zacchaeus from Luke 19. Luther's sermon is no exception, indicating that it must have been preached on such a day or the evening before.⁴ This sermon was most likely preached at such an anniversary for the Castle Church in January 1517.

To be sure, the earliest direct indication of Luther preaching in the Castle Church comes in the introduction to a sermon from 2 July 1520,⁵ but there is no reason to think that Luther, as a rising star at

the University of Wittenberg and in the Augustinian Order, might not have been invited to preach there earlier. Moreover, in his 1541 tract *Against Hanswurst*, Luther himself recounts how, at the very time Tetzel began preaching the Peter's indulgence, he had begun to preach to his people not only [at St. Mary's] "gently" that there might be other things more certain than purchasing indulgences but also: "Even before this, here at the Castle [Church] I had delivered such a sermon [or: such sermons] against indulgences and thereby earned Duke Frederick's disfavor, for he was really fond of his Foundation."⁶ After that Luther began to hear about the wild claims in Tetzel's preaching, and obtained a copy of the *Summary Instruction*, a document regulating the preaching of this plenary indulgence composed by court theologians at the behest of Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz. In any case, we know from this 1541 recollection that Luther preached against indulgences at the Castle Church in 1516 or 1517. Thus, the most likely date for the sermon was the eve of anniversary celebrations of the Castle Church's dedication (16 January 1517) or the day itself, at which time special indulgences were given to those who participated in the festivities. (For more on the place and dating of this sermon, see the postscript below.)

Around this time, Johann Tetzel had indeed begun to sell indulgences in territories adjoining Saxony. He began some time in January 1517 in Eisleben (Luther's birthplace in the county of Mansfeld, about seventy miles southwest of Wittenberg), continued on 22 March to Halle (part of the archbishopric of Mainz about fifty miles away, also to the southwest), and Zerbst in the principality of Anhalt (just over twenty-five miles due west of Wittenberg), before setting up shop on Good Friday (10 April) in Jüterbog, a city under the direct control of the bishop of Magdeburg (at this time none other than Albrecht of Mainz) and only twenty-five miles north of Wittenberg. Luther's sermon, however, includes only some general warnings about indulgence sellers. He knows only that such sales were commencing. Moreover, Luther reflects more generally on the problems of preaching at dedications and preaching indulgences. This sermon reveals a Luther only beginning to question indulgences, often unsure of his own position, and showing no indication that he had yet heard what Tetzel was preaching or what was in the *Summary Instruction*. A reference to canon lawyers reveals that he also had not

yet started conversations with them, which finally happened in the summer of 1517. It seems to be his first public criticism of indulgences outside the classroom. Indeed, coupled with his criticisms of church dedications, it would seem most likely that this is the very sermon that riled the Elector and sparked Luther's own earnest research into the question that eventually led to the writing of the *95 Theses*.

Here are the crucial passages referring to the dedication of the church and indulgences, translated from WA 4. Texts in square brackets are alternative readings from the version in WA 1. (That there are two versions of the sermon is discussed below.) Texts in italics are only found in WA 4. Small variations between the two manuscripts are not noted. Longer passages from WA 1 that are not found in WA 4 are indicated by indentation.

*A Sermon [about Indulgences]
on the Day [the Eve] of the Dedication
of the Church*

by MARTIN LUTHER

...⁸ So, dedications of *shrines*⁹ [WA 1: churches] in ceremonies and external rites are signs of a heart dedicated to God. For what does God care for the temple of a sign when he does not have the temple of the thing signified? For what would a person do to another person, if every year in business the one offered securities and IOU's to the other and wrote down what was owed and was to be done but still never did it? Would the first person not finally get disgusted with signs and words and annul all such commitments? For it is certain that the one person would never expect nor would be able to put up with this from the other. And yet we fools think God *can* [WA 1: ought to] put up with this continuously. For that reason it happened that most *temples of the gods* [WA 1: churches] were struck with lightning—indeed, more than secular buildings—because here God is simply and more truly angered rather than worshiped by vain signs. *And if he does not spare this temple, which we think most sacred, how will he spare the true*

*temple, unless it comes to its right mind? For the money¹⁰ is the sign for this, as if it says, provide a living temple for yourself. Indeed, this money conspires for your destruction, unless you also consecrate yourself.*¹¹

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And, unless cleansed by grace, every mortal has this vice [WA 1: of self love],¹² and it endures from the beginning of the world to the end in that each and every person seeks in all things—even in Christ—those things that are their own,¹³ and especially [WA 1: it reigns] in these times *about which Paul reminds Timothy (2 Timothy 3:13 & 4:4)*, where the people *are seduced*¹⁴ through seducers and confabulators *and preachers of indulgences and are driven toward security, laziness and listlessness and to forgetfulness of God and his cross, although our life is still a perpetual battle in which there must never be snoring.*

[WA 1: Of such a kind are those who preach indulgences, concerning which I will say a few things as an example and because many have requested it. Elsewhere I have said many things about this (especially since this display [*pompa*] of indulgences is drawing near),¹⁵ so that I may be free from blame and you may be torn away from the danger of a false understanding.]¹⁶

A Few Things concerning Indulgences

First, I bear witness that the opinion [WA 1: intention] of the Pope [is] true and correct, at least that which he utters in letters and syllables.¹⁷ Second, perhaps the words of the trumpeters are true in some sense, *but still the power is lacking, so that some things are said or understood less correctly.*¹⁸ Therefore, it must be understood [WA 1: that there are three parts to Penance according to the usual manner (of speaking) but it is better to understand] that penance is twofold: sign and reality.¹⁹ To the reality belongs the interior and only true penance of the heart, concerning which Christ says (in Matthew 4:17) “Do penance” and Peter in Acts 3:19 “Repent and be converted.” To the sign belongs the external penance, which is frequently *fictive* [performed]²⁰ (although that interior penance is often fictive), and it

has two parts, confession and satisfaction [WA 1: concerning which John the Baptist says in Luke 3:8 “Bear fruit worthy of repentance”]. Confession likewise is twofold: public, concerning which James (5:16) says “Confess your sins to one another.” I do not know where Scripture speaks about private confession. [WA 1: For this reason I commend this to the noble Jurists, so that they may prove where satisfaction and confession, as they are now in use, are approved by divine right.] *I also do not know where Scripture talks about confession and satisfaction as it is now in use.* That satisfaction, concerning which [WA 1: John the Baptist in] Luke 3:8f. *speaks* [WA 1: prescribes], is the duty of the entire Christian life and is generally public and imposed upon everyone. [WA 1: But I confess that I do not know where private confession and satisfaction are taught or commanded.] *Moreover* [WA 1: Conclusion:], genuineness of contrition is a prerequisite for indulgences. [WA 1: They ought to be and are of great benefit!] However, they can only be useful for the satisfaction [WA 1: imposed] in private confession. And it must be feared that [WA 1: frequently] indulgences work against *grace* [WA 1: interior penance].

[WA 1: For interior penance is true contrition, true confession, true satisfaction in the spirit, when the [ones] who are truly most purely penitent are displeased with [themselves] in everything [they] do, and when they are efficaciously converted to God and purely recognize their guilt and trust God in the heart. Then, through detesting [themselves] inwardly, [they] impose pain and punishment on [themselves]. Therefore this very thing satisfies God.]²¹

*For the one who is truly penitent desires to be despised by all and hated on account of his or her sin.*²² Such a one does not seek indulgences and remission of punishments but rather exaction and imposition of punishments. *Consequently, indulgences with the teaching of contrary things (namely, the fleeing from punishment and satisfaction) are cut short.*²³ *The end.*

[WA 1: Hence, contrition or interior penance is twofold. One is fictive which is commonly called *Galgenreue* [gallows remorse], because it is easily seen in those who immediately relapse and so are more frequently ruined. Thus, these people are sorry for sin but are much sorer for the punishment of sin. And nothing else displeases [this contrition more] than God’s displeasure at sin. For it prefers that sin pleases God, and so it wants God to be unjust. This completely

perverse thing is, however, most rampant, because by fear of punishment and love of self it hates the righteousness of God and love its own iniquity, for it hates punishment. The other kind is true [contrition], concerning which I have spoken, because by love of righteousness and punishments it hates sin, because it desires the avenging of violated righteousness. Therefore, it does not ask for indulgences but for crosses, as we read in many stories [of the saints]. As in the case of St. Paula, whom St. Jerome restrained so that she would not lament and would chastise herself more mildly. He also did not wish for her the loss of bodily health.^{24]}

[WA 1: You see, therefore, how dangerous a thing the preaching of indulgences is, which teaches a mutilated grace, namely, to flee satisfaction and punishment, so that an “operation of error” must be feared, as the Apostle predicted [2 Thessalonians 2:11]. For how easily can true contrition and so lax and bountiful an indulgence be preached at one and the same time, when true contrition desires a rigid exaction [of punishment] and such an indulgence relaxes it too much? And will we make the excuse that the former must be understood concerning the contrition of the perfect ones, and so it is not necessary to lead people to what is perfect?²⁵ And why, therefore, do the prostitutes and tax collectors begin with this contrition?²⁶ On the contrary, all must be exhorted to this kind of contrition.]

Commentary

Compared to Luther's later statements in 1517, we find here both similarities and differences. In the *95 Theses*, Luther does not tie indulgences to church dedications directly. In his *Explanations of the 95 Theses* in 1518, however, he does at least mention indulgences given for the dedication of churches in his defense of thesis 40.²⁷ This indicates that he could connect indulgences to church dedications. Moreover, Luther here uses parallel arguments regarding the dedication of church buildings and penance, realizing that both had an inner and outer side and were subject to hypocrisy if inner cleansing of the person did not match the gifts given for the building or, in the case of penance, if inner, true contrition were lacking or false.

When it comes to questions of dating, dealt with more fully below, there are also important internal indications that the sermon

was very early. By January 1517, Luther would only have known the bull of Leo X and the fact that an important indulgence campaign was beginning, thus explaining his remark about the pope. The fact that he is critical of indulgence preaching may relate to the fact that he had experienced indulgence preaching earlier in his life, not only at the celebration of dedications but also given that when he was a student at the University of Erfurt in 1502 Raymond Peraudi preached a plenary indulgence there.²⁸ Speaking to an audience in the Castle Church comprised not only of the Saxon court but also of some professors and students, he could expect that some in the audience knew about his critical remarks concerning indulgences in his lectures, which explains his reference to having spoken about these things elsewhere at length. Whether other, lost sermons preached at St. Mary's prior to this one also contained the "gentle criticisms" that Luther mentioned in 1541 cannot be determined. Nevertheless, his clearly dated sermon for the feast of St. Matthias (24 February 1517), delivered a little over a month later, shows a much more passionate response, indicating that perhaps by this time some of the excesses of the preachers were better known to him.²⁹

The differences between the two versions (WA 1 and WA 4) cannot be fully explained. When they are in agreement, the texts are so close as to be directly dependent on one another. Indeed, if these sermon notes go back to Luther's own work, they may represent two versions made in preparation for this auspicious occasion of preaching at the anniversary of the Castle Church's dedication in the presence of both the nobility and his own colleagues. Perhaps the scribe for the manuscript found in WA 4 simply excerpted comments for his own use, although the reworking of certain phrases seems to indicate that Luther had a direct hand in both versions. In any case, there is no real reason to doubt the authenticity of either text, and the fuller text from WA 1 actually does explain some of the abbreviated comments in WA 4.

There are also indications of the tentative nature of these early comments. Luther is quick to clarify that he is not attacking the pope who is correct "in letters and syllables." He even allows that the preachers of indulgences also may be speaking the truth but that their hearers may not understand them correctly, an indication that

he has not yet heard reports of Tetzels excesses. He simply states that he does not know where the present practice of private confession and satisfaction are found in Scripture, and so he asks for help from the professors of canon law, something that he would indeed do in the summer of 1517. His attempt to use the standard definition of Penance as threefold (contrition, confession and satisfaction) alternates with his preference to speak of the outer “sign” and the inner “reality.” Distinguishing public and private confession or public and private satisfaction disappears from later comments.

At the same time, there are also some important parallels to the 95 *Theses*. Luther derives life-long contrition and penitence from Matthew 4:17, the very text quoted in thesis 1 and explained in theses 2-4. Here, he is dependent upon Erasmus’s newly published annotations on the Greek New Testament of 1516, in which Erasmus criticizes (fully in comments on Matt. 3:2) the standard translation of *metanoiete* as “Do penance,” when it really meant a change of heart and thus had been twisted for use as a proof text for the Sacrament of Penance. In addition, Luther’s basic concern that indulgences represented “cheap grace” (to use an anachronistic phrase) and thus could not be reconciled to true contrition, which hated sin and welcomed punishment, can be found throughout the 95 *Theses*, for example in thesis 15. The comment about the cross reflects, among other things, thesis 93, where Luther blesses prophets who preach the cross instead of a false sense of peace. The other constant here is his worry that people will misunderstand indulgences and thus be led away from true penitence. Indeed, such comments prove his consistent pastoral concern for the people, a concern that runs throughout the 95 *Theses* as well.

But Luther’s final comments from WA 1 reveal his own struggles with indulgences. Preaching at the anniversary of the Castle Church’s dedication (where attending Mass that day in that church and viewing its burgeoning collection of relics promised rich indulgences) and preaching on the story of Zacchaeus gave added impetus for him to discuss indulgences and dedications and their intimate connection in late-medieval piety.

You see, therefore, how dangerous a thing the preaching of indulgences is, which teaches a mutilated grace, namely, to flee satisfaction and punishment, so that an

“operation of error” must be feared, as the Apostle predicted [2 Thessalonians 2:11]. For how easily can true contrition and so lax and bountiful an indulgence be preached at one and the same time, when true contrition desires a strict exaction [of punishment] and such an indulgence relaxes it too much?

In such a statement Luther’s own fears come to expression. How could he preach such a dedication indulgence when it, too, undermines true contrition? Who would emulate Zacchaeus and other contrite sinners, if indulgences prevented the righteous punishment for sin? Luther himself is among the theologians he referred to in thesis 39 of the *95 Theses*, wrestling (unsuccessfully, as it turned out) to combine the strict truth about contrition with the lax practice of indulgences. This sermon thus demonstrates his earliest struggles in trying to harmonize contrition and indulgences that would finally coalesce in that far more famous document from October 1517.

Postscript: Dating the Dedication Sermon

Scholars have for a long time realized that Luther’s pulpit criticism of indulgences predated by some time the writing of the *95 Theses*. From a set of Luther’s earliest sermons, first published (with many errors in transcription) by Valentin Löscher in 1703, we find at least two that criticize indulgence preaching.³⁰ More recently, Martin Brecht has pointed to several places in Luther’s 1517 Lenten sermons on the Lord’s Prayer where he also criticizes indulgences.³¹ Dating Luther’s early sermons is particularly difficult, however, especially since only very few contained references to the year. Thus, in Löscher’s collection the earliest sermon comes from Christmas 1514 (dated 1515 because of the practice of dating the new year with Christmas rather than January 1). The last sermon in the group is clearly dated St. Matthias’ Day 1517 [=February 24]. Löscher published these sermons in two sets from now-lost manuscripts. Whereas the first group seems to run in order from 1514 to 1516, the second set may come from several different sources. For example, one dated by Löscher and the WA to 27 July 1516 has now been shown not to be a sermon at all but a small tract on indulgences that,

along with the 95 *Theses*, Luther included with his 31 October 1517 letter to Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz.³²

But the current sermon, which immediately follows the “tract on indulgences” in Löscher’s publication, bears the title, “Sermo de indulgentiis pridie Dedicationis” [Sermon on Indulgences on the Eve of the Dedication].³³ In Löscher’s original publication, it is followed immediately by the “Sermo Die S. Matthiae A. 1517” [Sermon on St. Matthias’ Day, (24 February) 1517].³⁴ While the other sermons that follow in Löscher’s collection seem to be dated from 1516, the specifics of this sermon suggest a dating close to the February 1517 sermon that follows it.

As to the history of the dating of this sermon, through the publication of WA 1 and beyond, scholars had argued that the “dedication” (anniversary) mentioned in the title must have referred to the Castle Church’s dedication, which they assumed was 1 November. Because it seemed highly unlikely that Luther would have preached this sermon on the very day he posted the *Theses*, the editor of WA 1, Johann Knaake, following Löscher, dated this piece to 31 October 1516. Then, another manuscript of earlier sermons was discovered and published in WA 4, including another version of this same sermon, labeled simply “In die dedicationis templi sermo” [A Sermon on the Day of the Dedication of the Church].³⁵ The editor of the sermon in WA 4 simply assumed that the earlier dating from WA 1 was correct.

In 1971, however, Norbert Flörken questioned this dating by investigating more carefully the dates of church dedications in Wittenberg.³⁶ Flörken discovered that the original dedication of the renovated Castle Church occurred not on 1 November but clearly on 17 January 1503, in the presence of the indulgence preacher and papal legate, Raymond Peraudi (d. 1505), who was touring Germany in 1502–03 and preaching a plenary indulgence. Already decades before Flörken’s work, Paul Kalkoff had also pointed out that the dedication festival was not co-terminus with All Saints’ Day.³⁷ From other sources, too, Flörken discovered that the anniversary of the Castle Church’s Dedication was indeed celebrated every 17 January. However, he assumed that Luther, who was not called to preach at the Castle Church and who did not mention this duty in a letter

complaining about being overworked, would *never* have preached at the Castle Church at this juncture but only in the Augustinian Friary or in the City Church, the dedication of which was celebrated on 31 May.³⁸ On this basis, Flörken argued that this sermon was delivered at St. Mary's on the occasion of its dedication, namely, 31 May 1517. In the first volume of his biography of Luther, Martin Brecht calls this dating into question on the basis of a comment in Luther's sermons on the Lord's Prayer, delivered in Lent 1517 (somewhere between 25 February [Ash Wednesday] and 5 April [Palm Sunday]) and edited by John Agricola for publication in early 1518. Luther, who also makes reference to indulgences in these sermons, mentions his recent sermon on Zacchaeus, the appointed text for all church dedications. If this refers to the sermon in WA 1, it could not have been held in May but earlier, indeed before Lent.³⁹ Brecht speculates that perhaps Luther preached at the dedication of another Wittenberg church in February or March.

Flörken's reasons for excluding Luther from having preached at the Castle Church during this time are based upon two mistaken assumptions. First, given that Karlstadt was the archdeacon of the All Saints' Foundation of the Castle Church [not, as Flörken writes, of the Augustinian Friary], he, not Luther, would have been the preacher there at that time. Second, Luther's letter complaining about his workload to Johannes Lang (dated 26 October 1516) did not mention preaching at the Castle Church among his duties.⁴⁰ In point of fact, however, Luther was *never* called as preacher at the Castle Church but only preached there once in a while at the invitation of the court. Thus, he could have preached there on occasion in this period and still would hardly have listed such an occasional duty in his 1516 letter to Lang, which describes his standing responsibilities. Moreover, his 1541 reference to preaching to the elector *before* writing the 95 *Theses*, described above, proves that he had indeed preached at the Castle Church at this time. With these two objections to linking this sermon to the festivities surrounding the Castle Church's dedication anniversary removed, it seems that the most likely date for the sermon is 16 or 17 January 1517. As we saw above, internal indications bear this out. Thus, this sermon represents one of Luther's very earliest forays into the

problem of indulgences, preached by him on the occasion of the Castle Church's own dedication indulgence.

NOTES

1. Martin Luther, *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Schriften]*, 72 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–2007) [henceforth: WA] 1:235.14–15; *Luther's Works* (Amer. Ed.), ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, et al. 55+ vols. (St. Louis: Concordia & Philadelphia: Fortress, 1955–) [henceforth: LW] 31:29.

2. In the *Proceedings at Augsburg* (1518), Luther describes his earlier instruction to his people before he realized the problems described in this sermon from 1517. LW 31:290 (WA 2:26.5–10): “For I once believed that the merits of Christ were actually given me through indulgences, and, proceeding in this foolish notion, I taught and preached to the people that, since indulgences were such valuable things, they should not fail to treasure them and not consider them cheap or contemptible.” He makes a similar statement in our sermon as well.

3. Martin Königsdorfer, *Der Ablass der katholischen Kirche, insbesondere der Jubiläums-Ablass dem gläubigen Volke erklärt* (Augsburg: Lampart, 1847), 21, traces the practice back to the eleventh century.

4. Variations are: “on the eve of” (WA 1) and “on the day of” (WA 4). The standard medieval lectionary appointed that the story of Zacchaeus be used for church dedications, a practice also followed in Luther's *Postil*. See WA 17/2:496–507.

5. WA 59:227.1. See also WA 4:715.19, marginal note, for a sermon probably from 1520.

6. WA 51:539.8–10: “Solche predigt hatte ich auch zuvor gethan hie auffm Schlosse, wider das Ablass, Und bey Hertzog Friderich damit schlechte gnade verdienet, Denn er sein Stiff auch seer lieb hatte.” See LW 41:232, where the translation is ambiguous, so that it could sound like Luther was attacking indulgences given for the elector's collection of relics. Luther specifically mentions the “Stift,” or foundation, which was connected not simply to the relics but to the rededication of the church and the founding of the University of Wittenberg. Because Norbert Flörken, “Ein Beitrag zur Datierung von Luthers Sermo de indulgentiis pridie Dedicacionis,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 82 (1971):344–50, here 347, does not think Luther preached at the Castle Church during this time, he completely misconstrues this text, assuming that Luther attacked indulgences granted to the elector's collection of relics in a sermon delivered at St. Mary's, even though the passage does not say this. See below.

7. Literally, temple, a common designation in sixteenth-century Latin for a church building. WA 4:670.1 & WA 1:94.5–6.

8. This paragraph is from WA 4:672.19–31 & WA 1:96.27–35.

9. An apt descriptor for the Castle Church with its relics.

10. Given to build and beautify the Castle Church. Perhaps Luther is contrasting this to Zacchaeus's gifts.

11. At this point, both versions have Luther announcing: “Let me [WA 1: us] return to the gospel.” After some further exposition of the Lucan text, the remainder of sermon translated here is from WA 4:674.3–31 & WA 1:98.12–99, 28.

12. Luther at this point was interpreting the last line of the gospel, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.” He pointedly remarks that Jesus did not come to glorify those already righteous and saved. “Therefore, he wants them to be offended

not so that they fall but so that they know themselves, since they were full of glory and love of self.”

13. This is a standard criticism by Luther, found in the early lectures on Psalms and in 1520 in the *Freedom of a Christian*, where he defines true justification using Cicero’s definition of justice as giving to God God’s own (rather than looking for one’s own gain), that is, admitting the justice of God’s judgment against the sinner.

14. For “are seduced” WA 1:98.15–16 reads: “are led toward this vice rather than away from it.” The “preachers of indulgences” are first mentioned in the next sentence.

15. Latin: *prae foribus*, literally, before the doors. Flörken interprets this spatially, when in fact it is far more often used temporally, that is, that indulgence sales were about to happen, another indication of a January date for this sermon.

16. WA 1:98.16–19. For a particularly trenchant criticism of indulgences in line with the arguments here, see Luther’s lectures on Romans 10:6 from 1516 (WA 56:417.20–32; LW 25:409).

17. Pope Leo X issued his bull announcing the Peter’s indulgence on 31 March 1515.

18. For these words, WA 1:98.21–22 reads: “but still some things are not said truly or understood correctly.”

19. Latin: *signi et rei*. Sign and reality go back to Augustine’s *De doctrina Christiana* and constituted a distinction used throughout the Middle Ages. The “three parts” being contrition, confession and satisfaction.

20. The reading in WA 1:98.27 reads more accurately and may point out an incorrect transcription in WA 4.

21. This paragraph mixes singular and plural for the penitent, and has been changed to the plural as indicated by the words in brackets.

22. For this sentence, WA 1:99.5–7 reads: “Indeed the truly penitent person wants, if it were possible, for every creature to see and hate that sin, and such a person is prepared to be despised by everyone.”

23. For a similar phrase in WA 1, see below.

24. See Jerome, *Letter XXXIX* (to Paula at the death of her daughter, Blaesilla), MPL 22: 465–73; *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ser. 2, vol. 6: *The Principle Works of Jerome* [Reprint: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956]: 49–54. In this sentence reading “ill(a)e” for “illa.”

25. Those under a vow (monks, nuns and bishops) were considered in a state of perfection and thus capable of works of supererogation.

26. A reference to the story of Zacchaeus.

27. WA 1:597.28–31 (LW 31:198).

28. For Peraudi, the papal legate to the Holy Roman Empire at the turn of the sixteenth century, see below.

29. WA 1:138–41, especially 141.22–38 (LW 51:26–31).

30. Valentin Löscher, *Vollständige REFORMATIONEN- ACTA und DOCUMENTA* (Leipzig, 1720–1729). A second source for the same sermon from a manuscript of the Zwickau Rathschulbibliothek was published in WA 4:670–74.

31. Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation 1483–1521*, trans. James Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 188, n. 13. See WA 9:144.5–8; 152.30–32; 159.2–7.

32. See WA 1:65–69 with WA Br 12:2–9; and Friedrich Herrmann, “Luthers Tractatus de indulgentiis,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 28 (1907): 370–73.

33. WA 1:94–99.

34. WA 1:38–41. The Feast of St. Matthias is celebrated on 24 February.

35. WA 4:670–74.

36. Norbert Flörken, "Ein Beitrag," 344-50.

37. Paul Kalkoff, *Ablaß und Reliquienverehrung an der Schloßkirche zu Wittenberg unter Friedrich dem Weisen* (Gotha: Perthes, 1907), 7-9. Kalkoff also noted the feasts to which special indulgences were attached for the Castle Church, including the All Saints (1 November), St. John the Baptist (24 June), St. Vitus (15 June) and St. Kilian (8 July) and the Day of the Church Dedication.

38. See Flörken, "Ein Beitrag," 349.

39. WA 9:133.7-9: "Wy aber goth will alleyn die ere haben, habe ich in dem Sermon von Zacheo genugsam gesaget." See WA 1:96.37-38, which describes how God is not a respecter of persons, and WA 4:673.11-14, which describes Christ giving honor to God by justifying sinners.

40. Martin Luther, *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Briefwechsel*, 18 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1930-1985); WA Br 1:72-73 (LW 48:27-32).