Luther’s Relation to the Peasants’ War
And Its Modern Interpreters

Shin Hyung Lee*

** Abstract **

This paper deals with the question of Luther’s relation to Peasant’s war. The issue is not to answer the question why Luther was angry about Peasant, but to answer why Luther proclaimed that the rulers might go to the heaven, if they were died in the battlefield, regardless of their faith. Many Luther scholars have failed to penetrate into to Luther’s mind, even if they presented their postulations very persuasively. My argument lies in Luther’s way of looking at the notion of God. What I am saying is that Luther’s notion of God and the theological looking at the world made him understand the rulers went into the holy war against the devil in the garment of peasant. Therefore Luther believed that if the rulers were killed by peasants, they were not hing but martyrs. They were died for God. In this paper, I will show how Luther’s mind had flowed in being faced with the threat of Peasant.

key words : Luther, Peasants’ War, Modern Interpreters

I.

In his article, “The Identity and Meaning of Jesus Christ,” Braaten summarizes Pelikan’s research of how many faces Jesus Christ has throughout the centuries.** According to Braaten’s

* Professor in Jeonju University
summary, Jesus was seen as an eschatological prophet, who struggled with the revolutionary poor and powerless in setting of first-century Judaism. Jesus was Logos to the philosophical-mind of Hellenism. In Byzantine culture Jesus was the perfect Icon of God and the inspiration of its art and architecture. In medieval times, Jesus was a monk who rules the world through monastic discipline and self-denial. In mystical spiritualism he was the Bridegroom of the soul. In the reformation he was the Word of God. In liberal Protestantism he was the perfect Example for human morality. In liberation theology he was the Liberator.

Just as we are encountered by many faces of Jesus Christ depicted by different interpretation throughout centuries, we are confronted by many faces of Martin Luther depicted by different interpretation. If we look at the titles on the card catalogues for approaching the man Luther, we will be met with the different faces of the man Martin Luther depicted by modern scholars. Luther was the "Liberator" for Luilliam Dallman. Luther was seen as the "Prophet of the Reformation" to Adolf von Harnack. Luther was the "Hero of the Reformation" to Henry Eyster Jobobs. Luther "Saint and Sinner" for Theolore J. Kleinhans. On the contrary. Luther was "Germany’s angry man" for Abram Lipsky. He was "Die deutlich tragodie" for Karl August Meissinger. He was also "God’s man of destiny" for Basil William Miller. He was a "Spiritual advisor" for August Nebe. Luther was "Fool for Christ" for Jarslav Pelikan. He was the "Founder of Protestant civilization" for Otto Pfeider. He also was seen as "Seelsorger" to Herman Steinleirr. He was a "Man