

**THE CONSERVATIVE  
CHARACTER OF  
MARTIN LUTHER**

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The Conservative Character of Martin Luther by George M. Stephenson

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**GEORGE M. STEPHENSON**

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# The Conservative Character of Martin Luther

By  
GEORGE M. STEPHENSON, Ph.D.

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TO  
MY WIFE

## PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to set forth within the compass of a few pages the more permanent elements in the work of Martin Luther. An effort has been made to single out in a life crowded with great events and minor incidents the conservative thread running through it all. If the attempt has been in a measure successful, the reader will find here portrayed a man, who at every critical moment, fixed his mind on the one purpose of restoring the true faith without an abrupt break with the past. The reader may form his own conclusions as to the principles for which the reformer contended; relative to their conservative nature he must be bound by the testimony of history.

It would be superfluous to list the many works of research which have been consulted by the author: they may be found in the excellent bibliographies published separately or in the standard biographies and histories. The author desires to record his gratitude to

his former teacher, Professor Ephraim Emerton, whose well-balanced, scholarly lectures have stimulated a deep interest in the history of the Church and her great leaders. He also acknowledges his indebtedness to the late Doctor T. E. Schmauk and Doctor W. L. Hunton for helpful suggestions and kindly criticism.

GEORGE M. STEPHENSON.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA.



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# The Conservative Character of Martin Luther

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## CHAPTER I

### FORMATIVE YEARS

MARTIN LUTHER was born into an age which yearned for a reformation. The Church of Christ, from an organization which had lifted Europe out of pagan darkness, had become a monstrous theocracy, a great salvation machine which befogged the minds of men and obscured the way of salvation. Great puritanical movements, such as the Albigenses and the Waldenses, had been crushed out with ruthless thoroughness; and the prophets of a new age, John Wiclif in England, John Huss in Bohemia, and Jerome Savonarola in Italy, had thundered in vain against corruption in high places.

The man who was destined to revolution-