

MARTIN BOOS

The Gospel-Preaching Priest

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

By

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Martin Boos.

C O N T E N T S

	Page
I. HOW HE CAME TO KNOW CHRIST	5
II. AS CURATE IN WIGGENSBACH	11
III. PERSECUTIONS	17
IV. RELEASED AND THE NEW OUTBREAK	23
V. EXAMINED AND LEAVES FOR AUSTRIA	28
VI. PERSECUTED IN GALLNEUKIRCHEN	33
VII. ACCUSED OF BEING A PROTESTANT. NEW TROUBLES	44
VIII. TORMENTED ALMOST UNTO DEATH	50
IX. DEPOSED AND IN PRISON	56
X. LEAVING LINTZ. HIS FRIENDS	62
XI. CALLED TO DUSSELDORF	66
XII. HIS DELIVERANCE FROM ALL ROMISH ERRORS. HIS DEATH	71

Martin Boos, the Gospel-Preaching Priest

I.

HOW HE CAME TO KNOW CHRIST

Martin Boos was born on December 25, 1762, at Huttenried, on the borders of Bavaria and Suabia. His parentage resembled that of Latimer, the English martyr, Boos's father being a farmer, who kept twenty cows and four horses. His parents had sixteen children, of whom he was the thirteenth. Both parents died when Martin was very young and he was brought up by an uncle. When asked what he would like to be he said, "A clergyman." His wish was carried out, and Martin Boos became a Carthusian friar. His inner experience resembled that of Martin Luther and John Bradford. We let him speak:

"I gave myself an immense amount of trouble to lead a truly pious life; for instance, I lay for years, even in the winter season, upon the cold ground, though my bed stood near me; I scourged myself unto blood, and mortified my body with a shirt of hair; I suffered hunger and gave my bread to the poor; I spent every leisure hour in the church or in the cemetery; I confessed and communed almost every week. In short, I was so pious, that the ex-Jesuits and students of Augsburg unanimously elected me

to be the prefect of the congregation. I sought by force to live upon my good works. But what kind of a life was it? The prefect with all his sanctity, fell ever deeper into self-seeking, was always anxious, melancholy and desponding. Though regarded almost as a saint, yet I was continually crying in my heart, '*Infelix ego homo! Quis me liberabit?*' (*) But no one gave me the answer, 'The Grace of God through Christ.' No one administered to the sick man the potent medicine, '*Justus ex fide vivit*' (†) and when it was at last administered to me, and I felt better, the whole world with all its learning and spiritual authority, came and sought to make it appear, that I had swallowed poison,—that I vomited poison, and poisoned everything; that I ought to be hung, drowned, burnt, immured and banished. I know not a more timid, faint hearted creature than myself, and yet, fearful as I am, I am terrible and hateful to the world. I should be most glad to remain quiet, unknown and unrenowned, but it is of no avail; there are few, either in the East or in the West, that have caused a greater sensation than I. This is pretty nearly my history. When once I am dead salute the world from me, and tell her I have no other medicine to give her than this, that 'The Just shall live by Faith.' This has cured me and others; but I cannot help it if

*Wretched man I am, who shall deliver me?

†The just shall live by faith.

she has no confidence in me or in my medicine. The belief that a man can be just and holy of himself I tried as much as the world, but that I found subsequently in an old book that we are saved by grace for Christ's sake, without our meriting it, and that I died in that faith. But if she despises this bridge over the stream, let her wade through the ocean on her own feet, and take care that she is not drowned. This is what you must say to the world when I am dead."†

But how did he find out the great liberating truth of the Gospel? How was he saved and brought to the knowledge of the truth? We have before us his own account how the Lord Jesus Christ revealed Himself to the young priest of Rome.

"In the year 1788, on visiting a very humble and pious soul on her sick-bed, I said to her, 'You certainly may die very peacefully.' 'Why so?' she inquired. 'Because you have lived so piously and holily,' replied I. The sick woman smiled at what I said and rejoined, 'Were I do die confiding in my piety, I know to a certainty that I would be damned. But trusting in Jesus my Saviour, I can die comfortably.'

"These words from the lips of the dying female, who was eminent for the suffering she endured, and for her sanctity, first opened my eyes. I perceived Christ for us, rejoiced like

†The Life of Martin Boos, London, 1850, p. 3.

Abraham, on seeing his day; preached Christ, whom I had thus become acquainted with, to others and they rejoiced with me.”

Boos subsequently related this event more in detail, and added that the sick woman, after listening to his remarks, looked gravely at him, and said to him in a tone of astonishment, “What a pretty divine you are? What a miserable comforter? What would have become of me? How should I be able to stand before the judgment seat of God, where we must give an account of every idle word? I should certainly be lost if I built happiness and heaven on myself, my own merits or piety. Who is clean amongst the unclean? Who is guiltless in the sight of God? Who is righteous if He were to impute sin? If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, who shall be able to stand? Which of our actions and virtues would be found of full weight were He to lay them in the balances? No, if Christ had not died for me, if He had not atoned for me and paid my ransom, I should, with all my good works and pious life, have eternally perished. He is my hope, my salvation and my peace.”

Boos felt astonished and ashamed that after years of study he knew not these things and should receive the Gospel truth from the lips of a simple-hearted, sick and dying woman. But he was humble enough to use this humiliation for the benefit of his soul, and not gainsay

the truth from being blinded by learned pride. It made the deepest impression on him and was the starting point of his conversion, his faith and loyal conduct.

He therefore did not find the doctrine, for which for many years he was so terribly persecuted and charged with heresy, outside the Catholic Church but in the Roman Church. He did not invent it, but received it by the testimony of a believing soul, and afterwards found it himself, by prayer and investigation, in the Bible, in the lives and writings of all the saints and fathers, and even in the liturgies, symbols and ordinances of the Church.

Beginning to preach the true Gospel, he soon encountered the greatest difficulties, for, while he was *in* the Church of Rome, it was evident he was no longer *of* it. God kept him there, for he never separated from the Roman Catholic Church, so that he might be the gracious instrument of the conversion of thousands upon thousands of ignorant Romanists and lead them to Christ. At the outset of his ministry the enmity began which dogged him through life. In all the various activities through which he passed, whether in Bavaria, his homeland, or in Austria, it was always the same. The "offense of the Cross had not ceased" nor has it ceased in the twentieth century. At Gruenenbach in his youth in 1790, and at Sayn in 1823, in his old age, for years upon years persecution, im-

prisonments and hardships were his lot. At all times devoted and separated unto God, he preached nothing but "faith in a crucified Christ." His persecutors knew not what to charge him with; but he preached faith and therefore they branded him a dangerous mystic. This sufficed as an excuse for imprisoning, depriving, and disgracing him. In such constant struggles passed his whole public life of thirty-five years. Expelled from Gruenenbach, the Abbot of Kempten, who believed in him, appointed him curate of Wiggensbäch.

II.

AS CURATE IN WIGGENSBACH

It was here that Boos began first of all to establish himself thoroughly in the faith of Christ; here he was deeply rooted in Him. He prayed and studied the Scriptures day and night. After the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, he passed whole nights in prayer. Then he began to preach more fervently. His discourses and his devoted life made an unparalleled impression upon the people. Many were brought by him to the knowledge of themselves, to a real acquaintance with the Lord Jesus, and a firm belief in the Gospel of grace. The eyes of many who were blind were opened, and they were brought from darkness to light; many were roused from spiritual death and brought into spiritual life and became the partakers of divine grace. Throughout Bavaria and parts of Austria in the Roman Catholic Church thousands were led by this man of God to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Soon it was noised about beyond Wiggensbach that the priest Martin Boos was preaching the Gospel in such a way as to bring peace and joy to hundreds of hearts. So they came from everywhere to hear him preach and came personally to him with their sin-burdened hearts, which no confessional, holy water, penance, the observance of the mass, or any other Romish

practice, could relieve. Martin Boos, on account of the ever increasing number of inquirers, put down certain directions, which he gave to seeking souls, and these directions were the means of the salvation of multitudes. We give them herewith:

I. "When thou art once, in thine own eyes, utterly sinful, depraved, blind, lame, diseased, grieved and perplexed, it is then time, like the blind, the lepers, and the lame in the Gospel, to make faith thy sole concern. That is thou must go, like the thief on the cross and Mary Magdalene, just as thou art with all thy sins and shame, and at the same time with full confidence, to the Saviour, and heartily desire of Him the forgiveness of thy sins, together with the righteousness He has wrought for thee. Lay hold of it with tears and joyfully appropriate it to thyself as thine own property. For it was on this account that God's Spirit gave thee to know and feel thy corruption, that thou mightest come and receive forgiveness from the Saviour, so that thou mightest apprehend all the riches which Jesus obtained for thee by His suffering and death.

"Come then as poor and sinful and receive grace upon grace. But after thou art become a believer, thou must then apply thyself wholly to sanctification, piety, obedience, and the following of Christ. Not as if thou couldst justify thyself by good works, or as if thou wert able

and obliged by this means to merit the forgiveness of sins and heaven. No! thou must do this from love and gratitude; because God, for Christ's sake, has already forgiven thy sins, and has granted thee gratuitously the Spirit and mind of Jesus, and with Him eternal life, together with the power to live piously."

II. "Therefore after justification do all thou art able; but never build thy rest and peace upon it. For even our best works are very imperfect and impure, and the sight of this causes thy inward peace to depart from thee. Therefore build and trust upon the already finished work and travail of thy Redeemer. Then thou buildest thy peace upon a rock, and it will continue immovable as a rock. Yet, urged by love and gratitude, thou oughtest to be extremely diligent in every good work; but when thou hast done all, thou must never esteem thyself just and holy on account of thy good works, but a useless and unprofitable servant. For it is of the Saviour's grace that thou art able to do good works. Before He had forgiven thee thy sins, and given thee His righteousness, together with the Spirit and His mind, thou wast unable to perform any good work."

III. "How long, and how painfully must thou still be compelled to bear thy wretchedness and the distress of thy soul? Only until all sinfulness and vanity become hateful to thee; until thou despondest and despairst of all human aid,

and of being able in any manner to help thyself; and until it drives thee to the feet of Jesus and the laying hold of Him as thy only salvation.”

Such were his words to awaken souls. These simple instructions are evangelical and many a professing churchgoer of today would receive much help by reading them and acting upon them. Thousands to-day who profess themselves Christians, think that as long as they have some religious affiliation and live a moral life, and are charitable, all is well. They are practically in the same class with the professing Romanist, who also thinks that religiousness and good works are sufficient. How plain this priest made it that works cannot save, Christ saves and good works must follow faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The year 1795 was a year of jubilee. This year, according to Romish custom, promised to those who made a general confession of sins of their whole life, a general and complete absolution. Many strangers came to Wiggensbach to see Martin Boos to confess to him. Boos used this great opportunity and directed them to the Lord Jesus Christ as their sin-bearer and that faith in Him which justifies and saves. Hence great blessing followed, so that their hearts leaped within them for joy and inward peace, which with all their prayers to the Virgin and saints, the penances and the mass, they had never tasted before.

Among those who were led out into the full Gospel light were other priests and nuns, the latter having sought convents in order to have peace. When they accepted Christ they left the nunneries behind, while priests of other parishes, having been saved also preached the Gospel.

On New Year's day 1796, Boos preached a simple sermon before hundreds of people which produced wonderful effects. The two main thoughts of the sermon were—I. Believe in Christ *for* you and *in* you. II. You shall then receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

He preached with a wonderful unction upon him. The whole audience was swept by the power of God. The multitude was divided; the one-half of the hearers were ready to shower upon him love and gratitude for what they heard, the others were filled with wrath and satanic hatred. It was just the same as with Tauler's sermon preached in the XIV century on the Bride of Christ. About forty persons were overcome by their emotions as they listened to the plain Gospel preached by Martin Boos. Some cried aloud "Hosannah" others "Away with him! Crucify him!" While some were praising and thanking God for having visited his people, and given such grace to so many, others cursed and glowered with hatred, rage and wrath against the preacher and his sermon. The latter, the enraged party, could

no longer endure it; they ran to the vicar, assailed him on all sides, and asked him, in a violent and impetuous manner, to dismiss his curate.

Boos continued like a lamb, in humility and patience, and waited with resignation for the result of the matter.

III.

PERSECUTIONS

After that New Year's sermon, Satan arose like a roaring lion, and the old Jezebel, Rome, began to persecute this true witness to the grace of God, as she has always done and always will do. He was driven from Wiggensbach and had to flee by night. Then a general persecution followed against those who had been saved under the preaching of the man of God. It broke out on that day, as with one stroke, in all the adjacent places where believers dwelt, at one and the same time. They were dragged before the magistrates, examined and unmercifully treated and cruelly beaten. But as the civil authorities discovered they were accused of nothing but faith in Christ, they were again set at liberty as pious fools but without any protection. So much the more furiously, however, were they set upon by the blind and raging mob. The other priests, the enemies of Martin Boos, instigated the mob to all kinds of deeds of violence. Some were obliged to conceal themselves and continue immured in dark and narrow quarters for three and more months, without daring to let themselves be seen by anyone. Others were haunted from place to place. Many were violently expelled from their homes, or tormented and tortured in such a manner that they could no longer

remain, and were obliged to leave their native land and their loved ones. Many were arrested again and guarded with loaded guns. A believing young woman was enticed into a certain house of a zealot, who offered his home to her for a refuge; and when there, he was on the point of shooting her, but his more worthy son disarmed him, took away the gun, and the persecuted woman escaped. The available records show that these severely persecuted believers stood like sheep amidst ravening wolves.

What was the reason that the persecution burst out simultaneously? Those who had been saved under the preaching of this priest, praised and commended him everywhere, which greatly enraged the clergy. Boos lived quietly and retired, and always forbade their speaking of him. This was what caused so much offense. The clergy became alarmed over the remarkable blessing attending his labors. They said, "This man draws the people to him—they all run after him—he is a deceiver of the people." Hundreds of Romish priests denounced him as a heretic and would have burned him at the stake in the beginning of the Nineteenth Century if they could have done so. Whoever spoke a good word for the Gospel-preaching priest was cruelly beaten with rods and clubs. A native of Wertsach, who took his part, and who declared that he preached the truth, was so severely beaten that he died in a few days. He suffered pa-

tiently and forgave his murderers in a truly Christian way.

Boos fled to Seeg, where a beloved friend was vicar, who also had been saved and was preaching the same Gospel. The two rejoiced together, thanking and praising God for His goodness in their mutual affection, and were happy in the preaching of the Gospel to the poor benighted people. But he was there less than a month when an ecclesiastical counsellor suddenly appeared at the vicarage and cited Boos to appear before the inquisition at Augsburg. He broke open every desk and confiscated all papers and documents. Boos who was in poor health promised to go to Augsburg as soon as he was able. A few days later he stood before his judges in Augsburg. He was imprisoned for eight months and whenever he left the prison to appear before the inquisition he was treated like a common criminal and accompanied by a guard.

We let the persecuted, 'Gospel-preaching priest speak for himself in a letter written on September 22, 1797.

"I am glad that you have not taken offense at my condemnation. But still there is something strange in being thus condemned. A couple of months ago, 'my old Adam' protested terribly in me against this cup. But I laid him ten times a day upon the altar and gave myself completely up to the Lord, that He might do

with me as seemed good to him. This produced a good effect. I became tranquil, looked forward to my condemnation with joy, and thought it would continue to be thus. But when the jailor, a fortnight before sentence was passed, announced that it would be a year's imprisonment, the 'old Adam' thought no longer of the sacrifice: he squabbled and struggled against it. I bound him again, all fours, and laid him upon the altar; so that he was obliged to submit. But on the afternoon of the tenth of September, my sister came to me in prison, and told me I should be condemned the next day, to the house of correction for one year. Oh! how I felt the blow.

"I went therefore on September the 11th, at four in the morning, from Bethany to Jerusalem, in the consciousness that I should be that day solemnly condemned in the presence of fathers and brethren. I prayed, rejoiced, wept, walked on in this manner, and waited beneath the trees till the city gates were opened. At nine, I took my place before the judgment seat, and then came the other brethren who were also accused. There sat the seven men (the ecclesiastical council); here stood the four malefactors. In the midst was a crucifix, a desk covered with red cloth; the ritual lay open at another place. The Vicar-General now drew forth a sheet of paper, told me to step forward, and then read with a loud voice and wrathful mien my sentence of a

year's imprisonment in the house of correction. I felt extremely happy and easy while he was reading it, as if it did not concern me at all."

We might add that Martin Boos gave a wonderful testimony to the Gospel of Jesus Christ before this inquisition. In reading it we are reminded of Dr. Martin Luther's testimony and scriptural as well as vigorous language. It is too lengthy to quote.

It is interesting that the jailor of the house of correction, to whose charge Boos was committed for punishment and correction, was saved by the testimony of his prisoner, together with all the servants in the house. The jailor, priest Hoffman, received Boos, when he was delivered unto him, as a criminal. He treated him as a vile malefactor, and as a heretic, but soon perceived in him a man of entirely different character! The humility, patience, meekness, modesty and piety of the prisoner impressed him forcibly. When Boos had witnessed to him about salvation, the jailor cried out "Oh that I were thus! that I could attain it!" Said Boos, "And so you can and I wish it were the case with all the world, as well as it is with me, except these bonds."—"If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, He is able and willing to deliver you from the prison of sin and unbelief and to bestow upon you the grace and liberty from the dominion of sin."

The jailor believed with his whole house, and

all were blessedly saved. Then they had wonderful fellowship together and Martin Boos preached the blessed truth to them daily. This greatly alleviated the imprisonment of the dear man and strengthened his faith, and gave him fresh courage.

IV.

RELEASED AND THE NEW OUTBREAK

In January, 1798, the prisoner, having suffered a year for Christ's sake, was released and allowed to recommence his pastoral labors as assistant to the vicar of Langeneifnach, whose name was Koch. He had been specially commissioned to watch the heretic. We quote now a few paragraphs from letters which Boos wrote at that time to believing friends. On February 19 he wrote:

“Through His mercy I am well, and preached again for the first time in public on the 18th of February. The Lord prospered His Word from my lips; myself and hearers were affected, even unto tears. There seem to be some souls here concerned about their salvation. Oh, if only some might receive Him by faith into their hearts, and thereby become children of God, and new creatures! We shall soon come back to Jerusalem [by which he meant Augsburg, where the supreme Romish Inquisition Court was, like the court in Jerusalem which condemned Christ] to pay for the wine which we drink here * * *. The reason why I speak of this is because, like a burnt child, I dread the fire; and because my superior, received orders to keep a watchful eye on me, upon all my words and my steps. But this shall not deter me from preaching the doctrine of the

Cross. The crucified Jesus is still a King. He will help through every difficulty. We rather rejoice in being permitted to be nothing in the world, and such as have no right to it like others (John xv:18, 19). Only pray that we may become fond of the reproach of Christ.”

Then a few days afterwards he wrote another letter to a friend.

“The Lord Jesus went with me into the pulpit, and descended from thence upon the people. Their hearts were affected, their eyes were moistened with tears. Our Saviour takes me now into His protection. We are once for all outcasts in the world, who have no power like other men, and must creep through life as it were; but this is the proper path, and the very proof that we are His. He and His people have always been treated thus * * *. The Brethren from S— would have written you long ago, but were afraid of those by whom they are surrounded. Encourage them not to be so fearful; their timidity arises from weakness of faith. We must eventually go up to Jerusalem; there is no exception for true disciples of Jesus; an untried faith is no faith * * *. You ask how I am situated outwardly. Care not about that; for I am rich; have now again board and lodging free, and some little income besides, although I do not even earn my bread; for what is done to any purpose is done by the

Lord Himself. I am, therefore, ashamed as often as I take my seat at the table.”

But his labors in Langeneifenach were not to last long. The outcry began afresh.

“What! the heretic preaching again?” The abbot of Kempten and other prelates who had been previously his accusers, felt greatly offended that he had been permitted to preach again. Hence they made new complaints to the elector and Bishop Clemens Wencelaus and urgently demanded his arrest and imprisonment for the rest of his life. The occasion for it was a letter Boos had written. According to the persecuting prelates, he should never have written again to the brethren, who through him had believed, and had also be persecuted for it. However, these beloved brethren were much upon his heart, and were the objects of his affectionate solicitude. He therefore wrote them again—obeying God rather than man—rejoiced in their faith; and encouraged them to be patient in their persecutions, which still continued.

This consolatory letter was intercepted. It was taken forcibly from the bearer’s pocket and sent to Augsburg. They summoned him to Augsburg again. But he disobeyed and sought his safety in flight. Yet he knew not whither to go. He therefore determined to go to Munich, to his friend Winkelhoefer, to ask him what to do. He advised him not to go to Augsburg. He hid him in his home for a few

days and then recommended him to other friends.

Then he had to flee from one city to another, from friend to friend, for no one ventured to retain him very long. But they that received him, if only for a short time, confessed that they had found a treasure in him. Wherever he fled this remarkable man brought blessing. He carried the Gospel through the whole country, from city to city, from village to village, and everywhere people were saved by his faithful witness. He was homeless and often hungry.

A believer had recommended him to a certain clergyman, a priest, from whom he expected kind treatment. But the clergyman was terrified at the sight of him and would not give him even a night's lodging in his wealthy vicarage, but mercilessly told the homeless wanderer to leave his house.

Unmoved and resigned, and grieved at the man's hardheartedness, rather than at his own fate, he looked for some other place, but found none. At this period he was obliged to spend his nights in woods, without shelter, wash his handkerchiefs in the brook by the way, and dry them on fences. If he had a little money, which was occasionally given to him, and he went to an inn, in order to pass the night there, they treated him as a dangerous and suspicious character. Once he was desirous of hiring himself to a farmer as a herdsman in some

part of Bavaria, where he was not known. But his plan was frustrated. On entering the farmer's parlor, the latter immediately recognized and saluted him as a clergyman, hastily the farmer took off his cap, in order to kiss his hand. Courage almost forsook him as he thought he had already been betrayed. A very different conversation ensued, and instead of becoming the herdsman of his flock, he was made the deliverer of his soul; thus more was won than lost.

V.

EXAMINED AND LEAVES FOR AUSTRIA

At length after having wandered about for many months, and being tired of such a life, the Lord led him to a quiet and secure resting place. But even there he was soon discovered by his tormentors. At last, weary of concealment and grieved at his inactivity, Boos resolved to surrender himself, and abide the consequences. On the 9th of December, 1798, he arrived at Augsburg, and presented himself before his judges.

His examination soon began and he had to appear before an inquisition four times in one month. Particular inquiry was made respecting his friends, who had given him shelter. He refused to divulge their names.

Then they asked him why he had fled. He answered the inquisitor in the same manner as the blind man, whom the Lord healed, answered the Jews (John ix), "I have told you already, and did you not hear?" The questioner became angry and finally so confused that he could not ask another question.

The Lord was evidently working in his behalf and the examinations were abandoned. He was confined within the city wall for four months, unable to give any witness for the Gospel. Then the Vicar-General, an influential person,

befriended him, and advised him to leave that part of the country. He and other influential men who had sympathy for Boos procured for him admission to the diocese of Lintz in Upper Austria. The Bishop, Joseph Anthony Gall, welcomed him heartily; it was a joyful reception. Boos said he felt as though born again, in being left at peace and undisturbed after such prolonged and painful persecutions.

Later he received as a field the large and important parish of Peuerbach, where he remained for five years, much beloved on account of his zeal and his simple and powerful Gospel sermons. There were again gracious results. We quote a paragraph to show his boldness in witnessing against Rome's perversions.

“There are those amongst us who, when they fall into any temporal or spiritual distress undertake a pilgrimage to some place where the Virgin Mary or some other saints are particularly venerated. To such I am compelled to say, My dear people, what think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He? Your hastening hither and thither betrays that you are still ignorant of Him, and that you place more confidence in His mother and in the saints than in Him. But when did His mother ever say, ‘Come unto Me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest’? Did she not say herself, ‘Whatsoever He saith unto you, do’?”

In Austria, the prejudices and animosity

shown towards him in his native land seem at first to have been little felt. The Bishop had discernment enough to recognize and to value the deep piety, the fervent zeal and the great simplicity of Martin Boos, and finally made him vicar of Gallneukirchen, one of the largest parishes of Austria. The beginning of his ministry in this place was unmarked by awakenings and conversions. He was not satisfied with this and wanted to see more fruit. He therefore began to agonize in prayer and earnest perseverance, for the gracious manifestation of the Holy Spirit. As a result he was enabled to preach with still greater unction and earnestness.

On the 8th of September, a great revival fire broke out during the morning sermon and spread on all sides like a forest in flames. The Word preached proved a saviour of life unto life to many.

One awakened sinner cried out, "All is over with me! I am lost! God cannot pardon me!" He attempted his life and finally became melancholy. We quote from Martin Boos's own record.

"This affair caused me and my curate to preach Christ and the Gospel more energetically than ever. We were also incited to this by many anxious and disturbed consciences. These individuals were amongst the most upright characters in the parish, and had applied them-

selves with all assiduity to live pious and holy lives, but were never happy in the Lord. They knew nothing of the peace of God—nothing of joy in the Holy Ghost. With all their praying and confessing, they continued in their previous anxious state, and never attained to real peace and joy. Hence, with all their piety, they were always afraid of death, judgment to come and of hell, for they felt their deficiency in perfect obedience towards God. They continued timid, desponding moaners, who did not seek to have their consciences healed by a crucified Christ, but to appease and patch them up with a variety of good works. The more worthless part of the parish continued quietly and securely in their sins.

“Such was the *status morbi* of my congregation. Some were Jewish Christians (trying to be saved by the law); others heathenish Christians; and very few, I could almost say none, were Christian Christians.”

Hence he and his assistant decided to preach more vigorously a living faith in a crucified Saviour, and that faith alone can give righteousness and save.

In order to lay the foundation and the cornerstone for the true peace of a sinner, they emphasized the following in their sermons:

1. That all men are sinners, and that there is none righteous, no not one (Rom. iii:10-18).
2. No man can make himself righteous, free from sin, or capable of receiving new life.

No man can make himself righteous by praying, fasting, confessing, alms-giving and by other deeds and good works. Pious works do not make men righteous, but righteous men perform righteous works.

3. We are justified and saved, not by our works, but by faith in the Son of God. His death alone is the procuring cause of our pardon. God alone is righteous, and he whom He constitutes righteous. (Rom. iii:26, 28; i:16; Gal. ii:16; Titus iii:5.)

4. Although good works do not justify and save us, yet they must not be omitted. First, God requires and enjoins them. Secondly, we prove by them that we are justified before God and man. Thirdly, they are necessary fruits of the living faith, a faith that works by love.

5. What is faith? Faith is a vital confidence and a firm trust in the grace of God promised in Christ, concerning the forgiveness of sins and eternal life enkindled by the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

6. Jesus Christ, by His sufferings and death, hath merited heaven for us; we cannot merit it by our good works.

7. Even as by one man's sin condemnation came upon all men, so by the righteousness of one, even Christ, the justification of life comes upon all, since He died for all. But the reason why not all partake of it is, because they believe not.

VI.

PERSECUTED IN GALLNEUKIRCHEN

One can easily imagine the result of such preaching, evangelical throughout, in a Roman Catholic parish. In the sermon mentioned above he spoke of salvation by grace, because Christ died for our sins. This sermon, in the course of which he asserted that the number of true believers in his great parish was so small that the vestry was large enough to contain them, caused the first great sensation among the people. To use his own words, it pleased and pained them to the heart. It gave pleasure to them that believed. After the sermon was ended, while Boos was still in the pulpit, hundreds gave him an ovation and cried out, "May God reward you!" But it pained the unbelieving. They went at once to the consistory in Lintz and accused the preacher of having rejected confession, prayer, fasting and good works. Then the dry bones began to be moved and everywhere anxious and inquiring souls turned to the Lord. Special and most interesting cases have been put on record, and he dealt with each case as but few evangelists and Gospel preachers of our times could do.

But the offense of the Cross had not ceased. From the moment of Boos's earnest preaching in Gallneukirchen, followed by hundreds of real conversions, Satan stirred up an enmity against

him, which did not stop till the enemy succeeded in having him cast out of the parish and diocese. The people were offended at nothing so much as being told that they did not believe, or that they did not possess a living, saving faith, and so they accused him to the Bishop and the consistory.

An investigation was ordered and on January 28, in the year 1811, the faithful priest-evangelist appeared before the government councillor Bertgen. This individual treated Boos in a harsh manner, but after the accused had answered him in a quiet and patient way he calmed down. We give a part of the conversation.

The councillor Bertgen.—"Why do you, anyway, preach so much about living faith?"

Boos.—"Because we have a superabundance of a lifeless, loveless, and inactive faith, which is merely in the head and on the tongue, but everywhere there is a deficiency of real living, heart faith. And also, because living faith contains the forgiveness of sins, peace of conscience and the gift of the Holy Spirit * * *. Without faith it is not possible to please God, to live holily and die happily. Faith saves us, why then ought I not to speak of faith?"

Bertgen.—"But why always?"

Boos.—"That I do not always preach concerning faith I will prove by my sermons; but

the following reasons have induced me to preach often on it.

“1. A peasant in my parish hung himself for mere unbelief and out of despair.

“2. I meet with many very anxious souls.

“3. Living faith is lacking everywhere.

“4. I cannot comfort anxious sinners with anything better than living faith, that God for Christ’s sake, is willing to forgive their sins on believing. This I know from my own experience and that of others.

“5. Inward religion must certainly precede that which is outward, even as a good tree, good fruit; and it is in faith, love and hope, that inward religion consists. For all that does not proceed from faith and love is of no value. Hence it is said faith, hope and love and not love, hope and faith. Outward religion must proceed from within.”

Bertgen.—“Do not always say living faith. Otherwise the people will think they must believe with the body.”

Boos.—“Oh, by no means. It is only used to distinguish it from dead faith. ‘With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; with the mouth, the knees and the works, man confesses the faith of his heart, which therefore saves him.’ ”

Boos returned home, reflecting upon what had passed between him and Bertgen. He wrestled, during the interval previous to the

examination, day and night, with tears, before God in prayer for Bertgen—not from fear, but from compassion and affection, and from fervent desire that the Lord would also bestow upon him the light of faith. His prayer was answered. Bertgen wanted to know of the priest-evangelist how he understood the doctrine of justification. Boos answered him “in the same way as the council of Trent explains it:

“1. The objects and purposes of justification are: The honor of God and of Christ, and the eternal salvation of man.

“2. The procuring cause is the grace of God, who cleanses us freely from our sins, seals us with His spirit and sanctifies us.

“3. The Lord Jesus Christ purchased it for us and atoned for us.”

Then Bertgen asked, “What kind of a disposition do you require, on the part of the individual, in order to justification?” “I replied, the same which was manifested by Cornelius; by Peter in the vessel on the Galilean sea, by the sinful woman at Jesus’ feet, and by the thief on the cross. We must be poor in spirit, perceive, feel and confess our sinfulness, and believe that God for Christ’s sake forgives us and bestows upon us His righteousness.”

Bertgen then asked, “And this is the doctrine you preach?” Boos answered: “Yes; my sermons, which I here present to you, will prove it.”

Bertgen now sprang up from the sofa, lifted

up his hands, and said with deep emotion: "What fools they are! This is the most comforting doctrine, and they wish to call it heresy. Instead of that, all ought to be thankful for it."

Bertgen now took up the propositions in his hand. None of them were any more offensive to the enlightened government councillor, because he beheld the light, in the divine light. He became like a child. He suffered Boos to explain everything to him; he comprehended everything, received everything eagerly and joyfully, and said at the close: "Be at ease, I will defend your living faith against your enemies in the presence of the consistory. I see that the case is very different to what your accusers and the consistory suppose." We quote Boos's own account:

"The interview lasted from eight in the morning till noon. Dinner then was served. As long as I have known Bertgen, I never saw him more cheerful and childlike, than on that day. We were forced to weep from mere joy and delight because he, who was previously so hasty and irritable, had all at once become of our way of thinking and belief, and during dinner spoke in our language. At four o'clock, Bertgen took his departure for Lintz with our sermons and the books, against which such an outcry had been made. He sent word by my coachman, that 'I might sleep in peace'."

At the next meeting of the consistory he gave

a verbal report of the whole transaction, put the best construction upon everything, praised his sermons and principles, and pacified the consistory in such a manner, that it was thought all was at an end.

But the accusers would not confess that they were in the wrong; they accused Bertgen of partiality, of agreeing with Boos, and of being heretical; even as the Jews did Paul. Bertgen defended himself for a long time in a masterly manner, and brought over the magistracy to his and Boos's side; and explained to the latter Boos's doctrines on several occasions. But the matter being protracted for three years, Bertgen did not see the end of it, for he died in 1812 in his fifty-first year.

But the adversaries and accusers, however, did not rest, but continued to assail the consistory more and more violently; in consequence of which Boos was invited to appear before the Vicar-General on the twelfth of March, 1811, to defend himself against all accusations and complains of his opponents.

It would fill many pages to record the harassing experiences of this believing and Gospel preaching priest. The Vicar-General had him up for many examinations, and Boos suffered in body and in spirit. He became weakened in his body and had many attacks of illness, while he also suffered from depressions. Yet he continued in bearing a faithful Gospel-witness.

It was at that time he preached a sermon which produced wonderful results. Many were awakened and believed; many of his adversaries were converted and completely changed. Whole villages that were previously opposed to him and his sermons were won over by this one discourse. The most respectable inhabitant of Gallneukirchen, who had often accused him to the Bishop, both by letter and orally, came to him immediately after the sermon, confessed his sins, entreated forgiveness, kissed him, and wept. Boos saluted him also, and wept with him. This caused the greatest sensation and joy. The sermon this priest preached has been preserved. We quote it now.

1. *What is the Gospel, which Christ has enjoined us to preach?*

“The Gospel is the most joyful and consolatory message possible; for it announces to a sinful world the glad tidings, that God so loved the world, that He gave her, not silver and gold, nor a kingdom, but something far greater, even His Only Begotten Son with all His wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, and all His merits (1 Cor. i:30). And the world, which without Him is nothing, and can do nothing, has nothing to do, but to receive the mighty, unspeakable gift. It is received by faith. I do not say this, but Christ Himself (John iii:16).

“The Gospel is the most joyful news possible, for it announces to the world, suffering under

the deadly bite of the serpent, that she need only come confidentially to Christ with her deadly wound and be healed (John iii:14-16).

“There is a great difference between the law and the Gospel. The law urges, threatens, commands and terrifies the poor, lost son of Adam; but the Gospel gives, rejoices and comforts him. The law says, thou must do this, or thou art cursed and condemned. He that keeps not everything written in the law is under the curse (Gal. iii:10). In short, it drives and threatens, but gives no power, love or life, and it cannot pay our debts.

“But then comes the Gospel, and says to the despairing sinner, Fear not, but turn, like the thief on the cross, to the crucified Christ; cast thyself, like the sinful woman, at His feet; thou mayest then enter into paradise like the thief on the cross, and like the sinful woman, obtain grace and salvation. For He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; and because thou art a part of the world, He will also take away thy sins, and justify and save thee on the spot. Stretch out thy hands, therefore, and take; He willeth not the death of the sinner.

II. *But why does the world reject this Gospel?*

“1. Because it knows neither the Father nor the Son, as Christ said (John xvi:3). The apostles preached the Gospel to the world, and

it cast them out, slew them, and thought it was doing God service.

“2. Because it knows not itself. The world knows not, that without Christ it is nothing but sin, and is under condemnation and lost; nor that redemption is in Christ.

“3. It knows not the Scriptures. It does not take time to read them. The farmer goes to his field; the tradesman to his business; no one reads the Scriptures, and almost everyone puts a veil over his face, so that though they have eyes, yet see they not. All the injury the world sustains is from not knowing the truth of the Scriptures.

“4. The world refuses to be a sinner, to be nothing, and the Gospel makes sinners of all the world, and regards them as having nothing, and unable to do anything. Hence the world says, ‘We will not have this man reign over us.’

“The Gospel overthrows all self-righteousness; for it says, ‘Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.’ ‘Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ But the world seeks to make itself righteous.

“6. The Gospel rejects all pride and self-exaltation, and says, ‘Unless ye become as little children.’ It does not suit the world to become thus insignificant.

“7. The Gospel rejects all sinful, worldly

joys; for it says, 'Love not the world nor the things of the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.' But the world loves these things.

"Hence arises its enmity against the Gospel. But I beseech you in Christ's stead, do not reject this Gospel, this message of grace and peace; for what else can give you peace in life and in death?"

This is only a brief outline of the sermon. His adversary, who was converted, became his staunchest friend. Boos records his words.

"He said himself, 'How wonderful are the ways of God! I opposed this Gospel doctrine like another Saul, in order that I might afterwards make the greater impression on the people, on its being known, that I, who was such an enemy of yours and your sermons, am now fully with you and defend you.'"

He related his conversion to everybody, saying "I am called Paul, but only deserve to be called so since last Sunday, for before I was a blaspheming Saul, and like him, a persecutor of the Church of God. It is only since then that I can justly and truly be called Paul. But, like Paul, I will now propagate and defend the Gospel; will seek to repair the offence I have caused among you, and endeavor to bring others to Christ."

He testified on every occasion, as much as he was able, to the truth of the Gospel, and effected

very much. Thousands of townspeople and peasants came to themselves, their eyes were opened, so that they understood and believed. They began to study their Bibles. Paul came every Sunday with a New Testament in his hand. He read passage after passage and asked for explanations, and all the time he expressed his great joy, the happiness he felt since he believed. He thanked God more with his tears than with well chosen words. And all this in a great Roman Catholic parish! It shows the power of the Spirit of God, who can save sinners everywhere.

This man went to Lintz and related his experience to the Bishop and to the civil authorities. But they did not believe so easily. There it was said to him, "Paul, thou art beside thyself! Thou art an enthusiast!"

We give this interesting account of this Gospel preaching priest, for it may bring blessing to others, especially in case of Romanists reading this brief biography of this chosen instrument.

But the struggle continued. Satan gave this man no rest, and before this man passed away to be with the Lord, still greater tests and persecutions came upon him.

VII.

ACCUSED OF BEING A PROTESTANT. NEW TROUBLES

Bishop Sigmund von Hohenwart now took a hand in calling the Gospel preacher to account. He wrote him a long letter in which he repeatedly cautioned Boos against preaching Protestant doctrines. "I therefore," he wrote, "repeat my request: Beware in your sermons and private instructions of such expressions which sound like Protestantism, or which may be easily explained in a Protestant manner. Even the Protestants make use of the Holy Scriptures in support of their views, but they do not expound them according to the sense of the Church, but according to their own private sentiments." Boos wrote: "However gentle, polite, profound and friendly this letter was, yet it caused me no pleasure." He wrote a lengthy answer in which he took up the charge that while in other parishes the same Christ was preached, no such disturbances resulted as under his ministry. He showed the great difference between the living faith he preached, and the preaching of other priests who possessed not the true light of salvation. Among other things he made this statement of the Gospel he preached: "The Gospel I preach is something of the most hostile nature in the world, for it overturns all the mimicry of egotism, pharisaic

self-righteousness, self-seeking, affectation of piety, and hypocrisy; it makes man nothing and God in Christ all; hence and there is, and always has been, disturbance.” Of the other preachers in the Roman Catholic Church, he said: “Knowing nothing of this life (true salvation) themselves, how can they recommend it or preach it? The greater part of them seek in the Gospel, not *the* Gospel, but only moral duties. With these they alarm, threaten, and urge the conscience, and still have the name as Gospel preachers. But he that has eyes to see understands, that they do not preach Christ at all, but Moses and the law, and therefore only terrify the people.” In spite of all these ecclesiastical interferences the Gospel gained ground and cases upon cases of true conversions followed. Of these ever-increasing conversions, the Gospel preaching priest gave the following interesting account.

I. All were previously weary and heavy laden, poor in spirit, sinful, and bore about in their consciences condemnation, and the wrath and the judgment of God before they attained this blessed faith and the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit. They sought for mercy and peace everywhere, but found none, till they came to Christ.

II. They then found peace with God in believing the Gospel.

III. God rewarded this faith with the gift

of the Holy Spirit, and with peace and consolation, which is indescribable. In some it was easily and rapidly accomplished; in others dolely and painfully.

IV. With some the peace came suddenly; with others, after several days, after much darkness and conflict.

V. Some continued steadfast, others fell away, but were restored. He that quickly and boldly believes, that does no longer confer with flesh and blood, nor pays attention to what the people say, that listens to, and sees nothing but Christ, his Saviour and Redeemer, and sits like Mary at His feet, will be healed as quickly as the sick of the palsy (Matt. ix:2)."

Most painful persecutions followed this new awakening. He wrote, "I have now been scourged, that is examined for the fourth time, and tormented by many hundreds of insidious questions." At last the consistory issued the following mandate: "The Rev. Martin Boos is hereby seriously enjoined, on the part of the consistory, to be entirely silent in his discourses respecting faith, justification and other points, which were the subjects of the last investigation; but if it be indispensably necessary to speak of them, he must use no other expressions, either in preaching, or Christian instruction, or in the confessional, or conversation, but such as are used by every other Catholic priest, according to the articles of faith." Here we see the iron

hand of Rome in all its vicious domineering power.

This prohibition reminded the preacher of the Gospel of that written in Acts iv:17, 18 “to speak henceforth to no man in the name of Jesus.” And Boos said that his sentiment was the same as that of the apostles—“whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have heard and seen.”

When a preacher, thought he, is not permitted to speak any more concerning faith and justification, of the first article of the creed, of the first and principal thing, and of the chief commandment—of faith, without which it is impossible to please God, to live as a Christian, and to die in Christ—of faith, for which Christ always first inquired, and of the want of which he everywhere and especially complained;—if a preacher is no longer permitted to speak upon these things, he must be entirely silent. But if he is to speak of faith and justification in such expressions as are used by others, by the priests generally, he will not preach anything about saving faith at all. Ought not Paul, therefore, to be a better pattern for a preacher, than the generality of preachers? Ought we not rather make use of his expressions in preaching? Ought not the Bible, the discourses and epistles of the apostles, to be regarded as the principal standard of our religion, which a preacher ought to regard

above all the rest, and according to which he ought especially to act? Boos therefore inferred that in his expressions Paul was the most offensive preacher of all.

The case was carried to the supreme court of Vienna, which gave the following decision.

“His Imperial Majesty has been pleased to decide with respect to Martin Boos, vicar of Gallneukirchen, as follows:

“According to the findings of the Bishop’s court, he must be considered, in some of his principles and expressions, as imprudent and enthusiastically devoted to mysticism, but cannot be regarded as a teacher of erroneous doctrines. According to the documents, there are only a couple of priests, and at most but thirty out of his four thousand parishioners to whom some of the principles promulgated are offensive. However, his imprudent and partial view of the doctrine of justification, cannot be approved of. In consequence of the apparently uncommonly strong attachment of the greatest part of his flock to his person, and his otherwise blameless deportment; nothing can be decided with respect to his sudden removal from his parish, unless other charges are brought against him.”

On the whole the report was favorable to Martin Boos.

Some time after, when the Emperor of Austria was traveling from Vienna to Bohemia through Lintz, some of the men of Gallneukirchen went

to meet him, and asked the Emperor what kind of a sentence had been pronounced upon their pastor, and whether he were a heretic or not. "My children," said the Emperor, "the decision has been lying a long time in Lintz. Your pastor, Boos, is no heretic."

The pleasure which his congregation experienced at this verbal declaration of the Emperor was indescribable. But the accusers paid no attention to it; and after all, succeeded in their accusations. He was finally condemned and deposed.

VIII.

TORMENTED ALMOST UNTO DEATH

The fourth persecution now began, and ended with the victory of his enemies, his condemnation, imprisonment and the loss of his position. A new examination was started. All seemed to be favorable for Boos, though his enemies continued their plottings. In this examination the Lutheran and the Catholic Bibles were compared, but hardly any differences were found. Boos wrote, "It was also inquired what was the peculiar thing about my sermons. I replied, that I knew of nothing, which could be called peculiar, unless it is, that I do not lay the foundation, which is faith in Christ, last, but first, and then build upon it. This peculiarity of mine may also be seen in Paul's Epistles. My living will be offered up! If Austria will no longer endure faith in Christ, I will no longer be endured, and would rather beg my bread from door to door, than never preach Christ, or to be not permitted to believe on Him. Begging thus, I shall probably come to the door of the reader of this letter, as an old, sickly, exiled man, who has been already inquisitorially examined five hundred times, and as a messenger who offered the peace of God to the world, and by so doing caused nothing but hostility, both in the east and in the west. The Lord, whom I

serve, must show me whither I ought to go; yet if He please, He can still make me remain where I am; if not, all the sea and all the world is His and mine. I have now again learned how much it cost Jesus to redeem us. All the world sets itself against His Gospel, with the exception of the poor and the blind. Brethren, rejoice! The name of God and Christ is hallowed by our sufferings. His kingdom comes and that is enough. Hallelujah!”

Then came new and tormenting examinations which gradually undermined the health of this God-fearing, Christ-adoring preacher. We quote from his letters:

“On the 28th of July, 1813, I was again obliged to appear before a full consistory, and put my signature to five propositions, which were laid before me, and which, after a short explanation, I acknowledged as correct. I scarcely think I shall live to the end of this contest. The religious world still insists upon laying her piety as the basis of her salvation, and not Christ on the cross; she continues to maintain that we are not justified by grace through faith, but by our works.”

“On the 20th of August I had an attack of paralysis, and was so disabled by it, that I could not write one letter more, for the whole of the right side, from head to foot paralyzed. But, through divine mercy and medical aid I am so far restored, that I am able to scrawl a few

letters. I had rest externally, when the Lord smote me in my own person, that I might never be without a cross.”

But all along the good work continued; souls were saved as he continued to preach salvation by grace. He wrote joyfully “Christ is gaining ground, power and dominion, everywhere in my parish. Affliction was the occasion of it, and taught us to attend to His Word and appreciate the value of it. We glory in tribulation! Although they vilify us, we suffer still. But stand back Satan! We suffer for the Gospel’s sake, and because they beat down the Gospel, they beat us down along with it, but we rise again, and are always victorious.”

“Through divine mercy we increase daily. I am greatly astonished at the zeal and growth of my lambs. (New converts.) All are desirous of preaching the Gospel, and I am obliged to prevent them from being too hasty. I cannot sufficiently thank God that the members of my household have also received an eye, ear and perception of Christ.”

He was summoned again to appear before court in Lintz, but nothing was accomplished. During the first half of 1814 he enjoyed some peace. Later in August he wrote, “That the truce still exists and I continue to preach Christ, though, “if I perish, I perish!” But on September the 20th a severe decree arrived from Vienna, condemning his preaching of Justification by

Faith and advising to turn elsewhere for a situation. He wrote immediately after, "Pray for me, for the scaffold stands always erected before mine eyes, because I am commanded only to preach morality and not Christ; and I can as little do that as the thief can cease stealing; for I believe that he who forbids or omits preaching Christ, is no Christian at all."

All along his enemies had accused him of rejecting good works, though he had explained over and over again that good works follow the new birth, the acceptance of eternal life by faith in Jesus Christ, and that good works cannot save anybody. Often he preached on the text, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." But at the same time he made it clear that those saved by grace once and for all should be careful to maintain good works.

We quote from his correspondence: "On the 7th of November some men came from Lintz, sent by the chief magistrate, requesting me to say something in my sermon about the wounded soldiers and ask for contributions. I did so, and the people brought their offerings from nine o'clock till noon. The gentlemen then came and thanked me heartily. Observe! my enemies returned thanks for the good works, respecting which they have accused me, for three years together, saying, that I reject good works

altogether. I paid them the money and said to them, 'do you still say that I reject good works?' They said, 'No,' and laughed. I perceived that they wished to notice me and this affair in the newspapers, which, however, I solemnly forbade. But if they still do it, you must by no means imagine that I no longer believe in Justification by Faith, but have turned to the work of the law, and to newspaper applause. Only yesterday I very boldly confessed my faith, and every eye wept. My people become therefore more and more related to Abraham; even opposition contributes to it."

The contest had now lasted four years, but its issue was never doubtful. The preaching of this Gospel-believing priest, Martin Boos, and the system of the Roman Catholic Church could never be reconciled. His honest zeal, his transparent sincerity, his entire purity of character, won the hearts of the Bishop and Bertgen, the eminent official. But they both passed away and with their death their protection ceased. The accusers felt from the very beginning that they must succeed in the end, and they were not disappointed.

The twenty-fourth of July, 1815, was the last day which Boos spent in Gallneukirchen; for on that day he was summoned again to appear before the consistory. They did not suffer him to return to his parish, but kept him in Lintz

and made the broken old man a prisoner in a convent.

He had continued to the last to teach as he believed, and preached the same Gospel till his sudden departure. Such a laborer, by whom thousands upon thousands were brought to the saving knowledge of Christ, the forces and powers of darkness could not tolerate any longer. So the cry, "Away with him!" succeeded. We shall hear from his own words how it all came about.

IX.

DEPOSED AND IN PRISON

We listen then to his own account of what happened during the summer of 1815. "On the twenty-third of July, 1815, a special messenger was sent to me at Gallneukirchen with the following order: "The ordinary finds it necessary to inform the Reverend Martin Boos that he must appear tomorrow, at nine o'clock before the consistory."

"On the twenty-fourth therefore, I stood before the sanhedrim. The Bishop and all belonging to the council were assembled—nine huntsmen and one hare. Your letters, and those of all the brethren (which each individual member of the council had studied for over a week, and had extracted all the poison possible) were openly read, misconstrued, ridiculed and vilified in such a manner, as to make my heart bleed. This lasted for six hours. I defended myself as well as I was able. But this only made matters worse. At length I was told to return, and afterwards called in again. On which the Bishop pronounced the following sentence:

"I hereby divest you of all spiritual power. I will no longer suffer you to remain in your living, nor in my diocese, nor in the country. This is the decision of all the councillors here assembled. You will, therefore, stay here today, and then

betake yourself to imprisonment in the convent of the Carmelites, and there await the Emperor's final decision. You are, as it appears from these letters, a principal member of a secret pietistic society, and the Emperor does not permit such in his dominion.

“In consequence of this sentence, I have been in confinement for the last five weeks. There the prophet has now his cell, his wooden stool, his candlestick, and his bed (2 Kings iv:10). And here I await the Emperor's final decision and sentence. None but God is with me, who richly comforts me. Let us rejoice and be glad in the Lord, and believe!

“When my servant returned home on the twenty-fourth of July without his master, groans and tears commenced on the part of all believers, and mockery from the side of the unbelievers. A deputation was immediately sent off to the Bishop to inquire why their pastor had been imprisoned and kept from them. The answer was: ‘He is a member of a secret society. Another pastor will be sent to you.’” The parishioners not satisfied with this answer, accused the Bishop before the magistracy. The latter decided that the good people should wait with patience until the final decision of the court. They then took Boos to the court with a highly commendatory letter, and requested that he might be restored to them.

As matters were delayed, the four thousand

parishioners, all true believers, appealed to the Emperor of Austria. The document is so beautifully worded that we must quote at least a portion of it.

“May it please your Majesty: The parish of Gallneukirchen, and its nine sections, have been plunged into profound and heartfelt sorrow, in consequence of their universally honored pastor, Boos, with whom they have been well content for so many years, and who for such a long space of time has been their instructor and comforter, having been taken away from them, imprisoned, and deprived of his legal rights without any known or sufficient cause.

“For weeks he has been confined in the convent of the Carmelites, and although a deputation reverentially and mournfully entreated the Bishop and the magistracy, both verbally and in writing, to inform them of the reasons for this harsh procedure by stating the position of the case, yet, notwithstanding all their endeavors, they are unable to learn anything.

“That our pastor should have committed anything against your Majesty’s supreme will and command, or that his manner of life, which has been based upon an inward consciousness and a loving confidence in the doctrines of God and His Holy Son the Lord Jesus, should have been displeasing to your Majesty, his parishioners, whose numbers amount at least to four thousand, cannot possibly believe . . .

“The parishioners are ready to pledge themselves and to stake their lives, that neither the church nor the state have anything to fear from this man. For nine years we have been eye and ear-witnesses that he is full of good and patriotic sentiments; bears every public and private burden with unexampled patience and cheerfulness. His manner of life is blameless and his doctrine purely scriptural.” Then they called attention to the envy of nearby priests and continued: “We wish no other pastor and humbly beg that he be restored to us. Every impartial clergyman and ecclesiastic, as well as the whole mass of the people, can find no reason why this valuable, pious, spiritually-minded, and intelligent man, should be robbed of his honor and authority, his spiritual power and benefice, and even of his health, or be perhaps reduced to beggary in his old age, and compelled, sick and helpless, to leave the country.”

On the twenty-first day of December, 1815, the answer came from the Emperor. We quote again his own words:

“At seven o’clock this evening, being St. Thomas’s Day, whilst the bells were tolling, the youngest Carmelite brought me, in prison, the intelligence that my sentence had been pronounced by the Emperor to the following effect:

I. That I continue vicar of Gallneukirchen, and receive all the parochial revenues, deducting

all that is necessary for the maintenance of two or three ecclesiastics.

II. That the living will be provisionally occupied by another.

III. That when the storm is laid, and I dismissed my overstrained religious ideas, I am at liberty to apply for another benefice.

“I kiss the imperial rod, and receive it as from God, who does all things well.” A few days later he wrote: “My enemies are dissatisfied with the proviso contained in the sentence. My friends congratulate me. My flight, therefore, does not necessarily take place in the winter; for all here tell me to stay and not to resign or to emigrate. Whither they will send me is still a secret; their wrath will still make my life bitter enough. They also speak of confining me elsewhere; but I doubt whether it is permitted them to do so. It is exactly five months this day, and I am still in my old damp prison, for I have not yet been officially notified. Oh, how can I reward all my friends for having comforted me in my afflictions and endured with me to the end! I am unable to do it. God alone can repay the mighty debt.”

Weeks and months passed by and Boos was still in prison. One of his friends wrote February the twenty-sixth, 1816, as follows:

“Myself and all the four thousand greet you and yours, and entreat your prayers day and night before the Lord. This is the only act

of fidelity and affection which you can display towards the dear prisoner of the Lord; for he is now really shut up in his cell; a heavy lock hangs outside of his door. He cannot take a single step outside of it, and must languish there day and night, without seeing or speaking to a single soul, except a domestic who brings him his food.

“A week ago a servant of the Bishop entered the convent quite unexpectedly, accompanied by the police, and they were going to shut up Boos in a large and icy cold room; but he entreated them to leave him in his cell, and to allow him a fire, otherwise the cold, damp prison would cost him his life. ‘But this lies in your own power,’ he said, ‘I only present my request, and am still ready to yield up and to sacrifice my life to the cold as you may command.’ On this they showed some humanity to permit him to remain in his cell, where at least he enjoys warmth, but no fresh air, no comfort, nor sees a kind and loving face. Pray, brethren, that the Lord would strengthen him, that he may keep his courage and confidence to the end.”

X.

LEAVING LINTZ. HIS FRIENDS

One of the main elements in the charges brought against this remarkable witness for the Gospel was that he had a "secret pietistic society" which he maintained by personal correspondence. In a very frank manner Boos gave the names of his friends with whom he corresponded in spiritual things. He mentioned some thirteen or fourteen of them. Among these he mentioned Johannes Gossner, formerly of Munich. He, too, had been a faithful witness to the Gospel in the night of Romanism, and had had similar experiences. Others were Baron Gumpenberg, Baron Rufini, who had both been brought to a real and vital knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of Baron Rufini, Boos wrote: "And because I saw that he was under the influence of the grace of God, like his cousin (Baron Gumpenberg), and that, like him, he did not err nor waver in the ground of faith and salvation, I replied to him with the joy that all angels and good men experience over one sinner that repenteth. To this hour I have neither seen nor known him personally. He is ready under oath to testify that he is not connected with me in a secret society." He also mentioned Stephen Grellet. He took an interest in the persecuted priest and was on his way to visit him, but as he heard that Boos could not

converse in English or French, Grellet abandoned the trip.

It had now been decided that Austria should rid herself of this "heretic," and, as they had branded him, "member of a secret pietistic society;" towards the end of May, 1816, Boos left Lintz. We give his own words:

"The magistracy gave me a thousand florins for my traveling expenses, a passport, and my dismissal, which only reached me the day after my departure. Some of my forlorn flock stood weeping in the streets, and saw me step into the carriage, for it was not advisable to approach nearer on account of the police, who were on the watch. Six horses then dragged me along out of the land of affliction, and as this continued day and night, I was on the first day of June in the arms of beloved Johannes Gossner. I was, therefore, able to keep Whitsunday in Munich, and hither—to feel very comfortable in the circle of many dear, believing people."

Johannes Gossner gives the following account of his arrival:

"It was on Whitsunday eve, just as a few friends had met together, and were preparing themselves for the celebration of that festival, when our dear Boos knocked at the door. They opened it, but did not recognize him, so much was he altered by the indescribable sufferings of the inquisition, his imprisonment, and other afflictions connected with it. But no sooner did

did he open his mouth, and utter the words, 'Do not you know me any longer?' than he was recognized, and they rushed into each other's arms. How did they rejoice on again beholding the much-tried and ardently beloved man! How did they also rejoice who saw him for the first time! It was to them like the appearing of an angel, and still more; for he came out of great tribulation, as a faithful witness of the truth of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. 'Highly esteem such,' it is written. He still stands in a lively manner before the eyes of all who saw him, as the representation of a tormented and tried servant for Christ's sake. His humility, cordiality, love, and power filled all, the more they knew him, with esteem and affection. He continued hidden in Munich for nine days, because love and friendship could not immediately part with him again, but considered itself happy in receiving, entertaining, and enjoying the company of one who had just been liberated from imprisonment for Christ's sake. How much had he to relate! How did his lips overflow with love, thankfulness and gratitude to our Lord, for the blessings and sufferings he had experienced in Austria!"

He found a refuge not far from Munich with Baron Rufini, who employed him as tutor of his sons. While he had a comfortable home he suffered much that winter from rheumatism.

His illness increased and he thought his end was near. He had alarming fainting spells.

He wrote to a friend: "But after the lapse of two hours I recovered, through divine mercy, both in body and in soul, so far that I began to rejoice aloud. I sang praises unto God for all that I had preached and suffered, and was ready with all joyfulness to enter into eternity. I also prayed and wept for joy, day and night, and, in spite of all the world, should have expired in the same faith for which it had persecuted me. However, I did not die; but three days after I fell into the same deadly fainting fit as before, and was regarded by all the bystanders as on the point of death. Yet even then I did not die, but after two hours had elapsed was restored to the same joy in the spirit and happiness in the inner man, and to this moment am living in the same joy and blessedness. Hallelujah!"

XI.

CALLED TO DUSSELDORF

With this experience, he received a great and ardent desire to be more employed for his Lord, as he expressed it, "to cast the net." Then there came suddenly a call to a professorship in Dusseldorf. He left for this new appointment and after his arrival wrote: "Hitherto I feel very comfortable. The people here are polite, obliging and friendly, and the town itself is also agreeable. My occupation is to give religious instruction to all the six classes, and at the same time to teach the principles of Latin. In a fortnight I shall again be permitted to cast the net, after having been installed."

Later, in answer to an inquiry from a friend, he wrote: "In reply to your kind inquiry how it fares with me here, I have to inform you that it goes well and ill—well, because I am at liberty to cast the net" (by which he meant preaching the Gospel) "and preach to the students; ill, because I know not that I have caught a single fish for my Lord, or at most only one. Then again, the atmosphere of this place does not suit me; I am mostly ill, and fainted away yesterday in the presence of the physician. Lastly, I find that the students here are uncommonly wicked, bold, impudent, and unsusceptible of anything good. They seem never to have heard of faith in Christ all their lives.

But how can they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how can they hear, if no one preaches to them (Rom. x:16)? The Lord graciously enables me to address them as John the Baptist spake, in the language of severity, and as a generation of vipers. But I cannot hitherto see that my words find entrance and produce fruit.”

He remained in Dusseldorf all through 1818, and, appalled at the wickedness and hardness of the students, seems to have had recourse to the best means that remained—a faithful distribution of the Word of God.

We are coming now to the last scenes of the life of this remarkable man. After the good work done among the students in Dusseldorf another parish was offered him. The village of Sayn, near the Rhine, needed a pastor and they asked Boos whether he would accept it. He answered joyfully and accepted the position. It was the last post he was to fill on earth. For a few years he attended to his duties, still “casting the net,” and then the Lord called him for his labors were ended. He wrote in the beginning of his pastorate as follows:

“I thank God and you, for having again visited and comforted me in my gloomy vale. You have been told the truth, when you were informed that I have entered into a new school of affliction. But, the Lord be thanked, I begin to live more agreeably, believingly and blissfully,

than at the commencement. I am now once more in possession of a regular habitation. My seven hundred parishioners are still far behind, however, they are attentive, and when once the Holy Spirit opens their hearts (for which you will help me to pray), it may be that I will still have spiritual children before my death, and then depart in peace. For, weakened by sufferings, I feel ripe for the grave, but unripe for heaven, which, with the wedding garment, I must accept as a gift, because such a poor vagrant and mendicant as I, am unable to bring anything but a multitude of sins * * * The believing Austrians rejoice exceedingly that I am again a pastor. But the unbelievers there give out that I am dead.”

Some time later he wrote to the same friend:

“I must disclose to you the secret, that God, during the last year, has again given me grace to preach the Gospel of His Son and faith in it, with the same power and liberty as formerly, between the years of 1790 and 1797 in Swabia and from 1810 to 1815 in Austria. The inhabitants of the Rhenish provinces hear indeed gladly; but they do not take it to heart as they ought to. I only whisper this in your ear, that, when once the Word finds entrance, and works as formerly, a third persecution may not come unexpectedly upon me. The spies watch me very closely, since I am unceasingly denounced by them in the journals as an arch-

heretic, in company with other suspicious characters.”

He knew well, that as soon as Satan's kingdom was shaken, the “prince of the power of the air” would soon bestir himself. And so it proved. Before the end of that year he writes, “On the 12th of October, my Vicar-General sent a letter to me, in which he expressed his regret, that in the pastoral letter of Bishop A and in different other publications, I was still mentioned as the head of the spurious mystics, although I lived so quietly among them, and that old grievances be thus stirred up anew. That I ought therefore, loudly and openly renounce all participation in, and tendency towards, this spurious mysticism, and testify that I adhere to the true principles of the Catholic Church, and engage to live and to teach according to them. This was the first cannon-shot, not at my catholic and apostolic faith, but solely at a spurious mysticism, which alas! always shoots up along with the sacred plant of living faith, like the tares among the wheat.”

He continued in his faithful testimony in spite of increasing annoyances and he also saw some fruits of his labors.

But now the bodily frame began to give way. Though not yet an old man, his constitution had been undermined, and for almost three years he lingered between life and death.

To his friend Johannes Gossner, whom he urged to visit him, he wrote on August 24, 1824:

“I still ascend the pulpit every Sunday, but it is with trembling, and I would willingly remain below, because I see no abiding fruit; the children only occasion me joy. Those that are grown up are also becoming more quiet and better behaved. I, therefore, wish your assistance to aid me in breaking through, for the wall is too strong for me. But I think the Lord will soon either displace me, or call me home; for I am weak and ill. Twice has His hand touched and paralyzed me, and if He comes a third time there is an end to me, and I fall into His arms. At present I am sowing upon the highway; they hear the Word, but afterwards the devil comes and takes it out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. And yet I am persecuted without a cause.”

XII.

HIS DELIVERANCE FROM ALL ROMISH ERRORS. HIS DEATH

On January 15th it was thought that his end had come. He suffered dreadfully from dropsy and a combination of diseases. He wrote "prayers were offered for me in every house, and in the church, and it appeared that my parishioners possessed much more affection for me and had confidence in me than I had imagined. Every day they stand before my bed and weep." But his time had not yet come. He had a slight recovery. It did not last very long.

During June, 1825, one of his intimate friends wrote:

"During the last two months he suffered dreadfully; partly physically and partly in his mind. The clear and believing view of his Saviour and Lord, which he otherwise so peculiarly possessed became obscured; he was tried in the flame of the hottest sufferings, like all the Lord's choicest saints, that the trial of his faith might be found more precious than gold. But soon his heart overflowed with fervent thankfulness and superabounding grace. I visited him, and found him weak, and suffering grievously from the dropsy, but his mind cheerful and happy in the believing confidence that he had found grace and the forgiveness of sins, not through his own merits, but solely through

the blood and merits of Jesus Christ, and that he should shortly part in Peace.”

He was especially tormented with the anticipations of the horrors of purgatory, the Romish belief he had not yet fully shaken off. Spiritually enlightened and eminently conscientious, he saw clearly the depths of his own corruption, and the imperfection and pollution which clung to his best devotions and services, and he imagined that he needed a process of purification after death.

But through the mercy of God, Boos was delivered from this Romish delusion before he breathed his last. How a devoted German Lutheran missionary was used in a wonderful way to enlighten him, and how he passed away in perfect peace, we shall follow in our concluding article.

Johan Stockfeld was an excellent, devoted missionary among the Jews. He had called on Boos in 1823 and the heart of the suffering priest was drawn out toward him immediately, inasmuch that, in a very few minutes, their communication became confidential. Before Stockfeld took leave of him, he requested Boos to write something in his note-book to which Boos replied in German, “I will write for you my birthday.” So he took the pencil and wrote laboriously with his partly paralyzed hand: “Faith in Christ, for us and in us, made a heretic of Pastor Boos.” Nearly two years

afterward, when Stockfeld was travelling again through the same part of the country, he was informed of the great illness of Boos and about his fears of purgatory.

The faithful missionary called upon Boos at eight in the morning. When he entered his room the old man did not recognize him, and was silent and distrustful, till reminded of his former visit. Then he expressed his joy in seeing him again. He began to speak at once and as tears rolled down his cheeks, he said: "I have suffered very much during all my life; but my severest sufferings are yet to come, for I am about to pass through purgatory before I enter heaven."

His young friend replied, "The beggar Lazarus was carried immediately by the angels into Abraham's bosom; and one of the malefactors heard from the Saviour's lips these words—'Verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise'."

Boos answered, with tears in his eyes, "Such a wolf as I am cannot possibly enter into heaven but must be first purified and refined in purgatory."

The missionary replied: "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanseth us from all sin'; and the Lord in His Word teaches us nothing about any other place after death besides heaven and hell."

He answered that he did not expect to be

purified in purgatory by any other means than through the blood of Christ; but even many Protestants believed that there was a third place between heaven and hell, which they called by other names, such as Sheol and Hades.

Stockfeld then showed him from the Hebrew and the Greek the true meaning of these words. And then he proved that the blood of Christ exercises its purifying influence only during our lifetime on earth.

The old man said that this had never appeared clear to him; and even when the Lord had graciously saved such multitudes under his ministry, he had been silent on this subject. Once a woman, who had found the truth under his preaching and had been saved, came to him the next day and said, "But pastor, what shall then become of purgatory?"

Stockfeld conversed with him for many hours on other important topics, such as the primacy of the Pope of Rome, traditions, etc. Boos, though very ill, maintained his fullest mental capacity. His Protestant friends for hours set forth to him the glorious Gospel in such a way that nothing was left of the figments of Popery. A wonderful deliverance came to Martin Boos, and the last vestige of Romanism dropped off. As never before he rejoiced in the perfect peace with God through the blood of Him, whom he had preached and for whose sake he had suffered so long.

Before taking leave of him, whom he would never meet again on earth, the missionary requested Boos once more to write something in his little book as a memorial.

He wrote these words in German "*Lutherisch ist gut sterben*"—"It is good to die Lutheran-like." These few words were sufficient to explain and confirm his blessed deliverance from Romish error and Romish bondage.

A few weeks later his end came, and it was an end of peace.

A young friend, of like precious faith, attended him during his last days. We let him speak:

"On the 29th of August, 1825, at ten minutes before five in the evening, our dear pastor, Martin Boos, fell asleep gently and blissfully in the Lord. I was with him day and night. He was so grateful for my presence, and the services I rendered him, that he regarded me as an angel, whom the Lord had sent. He suffered from both consumption and dropsy, which rendered him so weak that we were always obliged to support him when he wanted to rise. But the Lord gave me grace and strength to do everything for him. At noon on the day of his departure I gave him some refreshments after which the forerunners of death began to manifest themselves. I therefore began to pray with him from my inmost soul, and after prayer he enjoined us to accompany him in spirit to the last moment. Then he said, 'The hour is come

in which my Saviour takes me to Himself.' After half an hour the perspiration of death burst forth. I laid him backwards on the pillow, for he was sitting up in bed. Then he commended his spirit into the hands of the Lord and immediately after he fell asleep in peace."

Thus died this distinguished man, whom God had chosen to spread abroad the true knowledge of His Son and that faith which justifies and saves. Thousands upon thousands were led by him to Christ and, believing on Him, were saved, even in the night of Romanism. The full fruit of this Gospel preaching priest, as well as his toil and suffering, will not be known till the day of Christ. His reward will be great.

The friend in whose arms he died caused a simple wooden cross to be placed over his grave with this inscription:

Here Rests
THE REVEREND MARTIN BOOS
Aged sixty-three
He died in the Lord (Rev. xiv:13)
1825 A.D.

The mountain dell which furnished him a tomb, and the grave-diggers who interred his body in the earth, knew little what manner of

man it was that they entombed. But when he shall rise, when it will appear "what we shall be," it shall be manifest to all, that—"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. xii:3).

The End.