The Ninety-Five Theses

Martin Luther was born in Germany in 1483. He decided to become a monk in his early 20's and tried to live as the Catholic Church instructed. However, some ten years later, Luther became disillusioned with the Church. In 1517, Luther is said to have posted his Ninety-Five Theses on a church door in the town of Wittenberg. This document listed all of the disputes that Luther had with the Church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Martin Luther</th>
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<td>When Martin Luther was still a university student, he went on a trip to Rome. He saw the great wealth of the churches there. He saw priests and other clergy members living lives of luxury. He met Church officials whom he thought were corrupt. This made an impression on him.</td>
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<td>Several years later, Luther became upset over Church corruption in his own region. A wealthy noble wanted to be appointed to a vacant post of archbishop. The pope told him that he could have the post if he raised money to help build St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. The noble agreed, planning to raise the money by selling indulgences. Luther, like many other people, was against the sale of indulgences. When the prince in Luther’s city, Wittenburg, let it be known that he planned to buy an indulgence, Luther took action. He preached against the sale of indulgences (which he referred to as letters of pardon) and composed his Ninety-Five Theses. Many of these debating points refer to and condemn the sale of indulgences. Luther either nailed the Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the castle’s church or he sent them to the noble who was sponsoring the sale of the indulgences. In either case, the controversy soon became a matter of heated public debate.</td>
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1. What did Martin Luther observe while he was a university student? 

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2. What did the pope promise a noble to gain his support? 

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3. How did Luther respond to the corruption? 

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4. According to Luther, what does every Christian have a right to have without letters of pardon? 

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5. How does love grow, and change people? 

________________________________________________________________________________

6. Why are Christians urged to follow Jesus? What type of confidence will they have? 

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From the Ninety-Five Theses

32. They will be condemned eternally, together with their teachers, who believe themselves sure of their salvation because they have letters of pardon. . . .

36. Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of [forgiveness for] penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon.

37. Every true Christian, whether living or dead, has part in all the blessings of Christ and the Church; and this is granted him by God, even without letters of pardon. . . .

44. . . .Love grows by works of love, and man becomes better; but by pardons man does not grow better, only more free from penalty. . . .

94. Christians are to be exhorted [urged] that they be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, deaths, and hell;

95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven rather through many tribulations [troubles], than through the assurance [promise] of peace.