

CHAPTER 8

LIFE AND WORK OF MARTIN LUTHER

A. *Before the Reformation began*

1. Parentage and childhood

Born in Eislaben, Nov. 10, 1483

Parents peasants (same as Calvin's parents); father, Hans Luther a woodcutter, later a miner; parents worked hard to help him get education; very strict

2. Secular education

As boy attended city school in Mansfeld, continued as boy in Magdeburg (came under influence of Brethren of Common Life there)

Preparatory school in Eisenach, where some of his relatives had been educated; sang for money (14 yrs. old); thus received good primary education

18 years old, entered university at Erfurt (school 100 years old, good reputation); training as a lawyer; good student; father a little better off now (into mining), could help put Martin through school; he bought a few books

Studied law, philosophy, classics; learned Latin fairly well (not Greek yet); good in music; sang and played lute, wrote songs, etc.; popular; good Catholic; received B.A. (1502) and M.A. (1505); continued studies in law

3. Augustinian monk

Growing sense of sinfulness and frivolity; close friend died; nearly struck by lightning; summer 1505, entered Augustinian monastery at Erfurt as novice; very penitent; sought out worst jobs, self-punishment; especially prayed to Mary (believed immaculate conception); rejected advice about forgiveness

Outwardly—highly respected and held up; but inward turmoil (“If ever a monk got to heaven by monkery, I would have gotten there.”); pictured God as angry, jealous judge

Had complete copy of Latin Bible to study; saw many passages not mentioned in church (e.g., Hannah and Samuel), still no light; 1507, ordained a priest after some theological study; nearly fainted at first mass

4. Johann von Staupitz, D.D.

Vicar-general of Augustinian order in Germany (over about a hundred monasteries); good scholar, pious monk, good administrator; good friends with Frederick, elector of Saxony

Tradition of Thomas a Kempis and John Tauler (d. 1361); wrote *On the Love of God* (1518), good devotional book—better to have Christ in heart than legalism

Took interest in Luther on visits to his monastery; Luther later studied under him, read Augustine, Tauler, Bible; Luther later called Staupitz his “reverend father in Christ,” signed “your son Martin Luther (letter of Sept. 17, 1518)

Staupitz made Luther associate vicar, over twelve monasteries; and substitute vicar, over sixty monasteries when Staupitz gone

Ca. 1522, Staupitz drew back from Luther; upheld faith and works; died in retirement in 1524; similar to Erasmus in a sense

5. Wittenberg

Elector Frederick opened new university at Wittenberg in 1502; small town—ca. 3,000 people; poor location except for castle-church and nearby Augustinian convent (cheaper faculty); powerful rivals in Erfurt, Leipzig

Staupitz on faculty; George Spalatin, old friend of Luther’s from Erfurt, was Frederick’s secretary and “chaplain”

1508, Staupitz called Luther to lecture at Wittenberg; received there his bachelor of Bible; returned to Erfurt to receive Th.D. (1512); given permanent chair at Wittenberg—lecturer in Bible (held until his death in 1546); lectured on the Bible and the *Sentences*; other assignment—preach in college church

Gradually picked up Greek and some Hebrew; translating later made him better; never really mastered these languages; his German the best—very forceful

Favorite books: Psalms, Romans, Galatians; began studying in Psalms; very allegorical; first published book on penitential Psalms (1517)

Best biblical books: preface to Romans (helped John Wesley), commentary on Galatians (helped John Bunyan)

By this time, Luther becoming famous in Saxony

6. Trip to Rome (1510-1511)

Recently began teaching at Wittenberg, working on doctorate at Erfurt

Staupitz had some troubles in his monasteries, wanted papal assistance; sent Luther and two others to Rome; only time Luther went to Rome, lasting impression (never left Germany again)

Had joyful expectations (soon dashed); entertained by luxurious monasteries; stayed one month in Rome; Julius II recently returned from bloody siege and destruction of a city; Luther dismayed by worldliness, but he

“Ran ‘like a crazy saint’ through all the churches and crypts and catacombs. . . . He wished that his parents were dead that he might help them out of Purgatory by reading mass in the most holy place.” (Schaff *HCC* 7:128-129)

Went up Scala Sancta on knees, but Rom 1:17 in his ears at every step; Roman priests mocked mass: chanted in Latin, “Bread thou art, and bread thou shalt remain” (worshippers did not realize their irreverence); these priests criticized Luther for “taking too long” when he said masses; remembered Rome as “once the holiest city, but now the worst”

But still great faith in Catholicism—Mary, saints, relics, purgatory, masses, papacy

7. Luther’s conversion

Date unknown, anywhere from 1514-1518, maybe earlier

*Staupitz led him to study Bible; most impressed with Rom 1:17, “The just shall live by faith”; principle of justification by faith alone gradually took root; understood “righteousness of God” in Rom 1:17 as being therefore imputed to

sinner by faith; even Augustine and Bernard had confused justification and sanctification

“Herein lies the difference between the Catholic and the Protestant conception. In the Catholic system justification (*dikaiosis*) is a gradual process conditioned by faith and good works; in the Protestant system it is a single act of God, followed by sanctification. It is based upon the merits of Christ, conditioned by faith, and manifested by good works.” (Schaff *HCC* 7:123)

Justification became central to his life and his theology; thus loved Paul and had trouble with James (yet he retained James in the NT); believed this faith to be compatible with Catholicism

8. Attempt at reformation

Sept. 4, 1517, sent out 97 theses; believed influence of Aristotle over theology was wrong; his arguments generally disregarded

B. Indulgence controversy

After crusades, indulgences increase; Sixtus IV applied to purgatory

1. Albert's indulgence

Leo X building St. Peter's church in Rome; big indulgence sale; Spain, England, France reject sellers of this indulgence (wanted to keep money home); Maximilian weaker, allowed it in his territories

Albert of Brandenburg, brother of duke of Brandenburg; already archbishop of Magdeburg and archbishop of Halberstadt, now wanted to be also archbishop of Mainz (and elector); price, 10,000 ducats (ca. \$2,000,000); borrowed money from bankers; indulgence arranged to pay back the debt

Special indulgence, for all sins (see wording in Bettenson, pp. 184-185)

Many parts of Germany excluded, including Saxony (Frederick wanted money kept there)

2. Tetzel

Dominican monk and theologian (later earned Th.D. in 1518 defending indulgences against Luther); good salesman; went city to city (chests still on display); used drum to get attention

Forbidden to enter Saxony (Frederick had his own relics); worked the border; Luther found out, thought pope should know, thought pope was being misrepresented; theory was that penance applies only to punishments the church assigns (cf. statement of Clement VI in 1343, Bettenson, pp. 182-183)

3. Ninety-five Theses

Oct. 31, 1517; written in Latin; posted on door of castle church on eve of All-Saints Day

Very well written (see in Bettenson, pp. 185-191; also on BPC website: <http://bpc.org/resources/luther/95theses.html>)

*Key to the opening of the Reformation; soon printed in Latin; translated into German and printed; within three weeks, all over Germany; within three months, to Rome; within five months, even reached Jerusalem; immediate result, stopped flow of money; children threw rocks at Tetzl

C. Reformation from 1518-1520

1. Why Luther not quickly silenced

a. Widespread sympathy

Augustinians held regional meeting at Heidelberg; supported Luther

b. Popes slow to see danger

c. Luther changed gradually

Did not know his end logically; original stand did not alienate people; development brought them along

d. Support of his ruler

Elector Frederick the Wise (MacRae, “the Shrewd”); he ruled poorer part of Saxony and was an elector; his cousin George the Steadfast ruled richer part, including Dresden and Leipzig, but was not an elector; this division had been made by Frederick’s father

Frederick tried to build up Wittenberg, unwilling to have leading professor killed; saw Luther only once or twice, used Spalatin as a go-between; sometimes Frederick wrote Luther for advice

Frederick used different excuses to keep Luther in Germany; was made administrator of the empire when Maximilian died (Jan. 1519), before new emperor elected

e. Overshadowing importance of election of new emperor

Pope Leo X wanted a weak emperor, not Charles; Luther basically ignored during this time; printed several works

2. First attempts to silence Luther

With the first opposition to Luther, J. Reuchlin remarked, “Now the monks will be so busy with Luther that I can spend my old age in peace.”

a. Arguments of Prierias

Prierias a Dominican, assistant to pope Leo X, “Master of the Palace”; wrote in March 1518 against theses; Luther replied ably; Prierias rebuttal used bad logic; Luther advised him not to make himself any more ridiculous by writing books

b. John Eck’s *Obelisks*

Published in March 1518; Eck professor in Ingolstadt in southern Germany; excellent orator, great memory, most scholarly pro-Roman Catholic in Germany; Luther wrote an answer

c. Augustinian meeting in Heidelberg

April-May 1518; Augustinians favor Luther; young Dominican impressed by Luther—Martin Bucer (later with Calvin and in England), to be in the second rank of the Reformation

d. Mission of Cardinal Cajetan

October 1518; name was Thomas de Vio; Roman scholar; sent to Germany to straighten out Luther, get his retraction

Luther expected good discussion; Frederick got Maximilian to grant safe-conduct for Luther to travel to Augsburg; Luther and Staupitz went to Augsburg to meet Cajetan

Three days of talks; Cajetan condescending; demanded Luther recant or no discussion, had excommunication authority; Cajetan told Staupitz to convert Luther; Cajetan would “not dispute any further with that ‘deep-eyed German beast filled with strange speculations.’”

Luther thought it wise to flee; left at night through small gate in city wall; rode away all day until exhausted

Wrote “Appeal from the pope ill-informed to the pope better-informed”

Nov. 9, 1518, official bull approving indulgences; Nov. 28, 1518, Luther officially appealed from pope to a general council (expecting soon to be excommunicated)

d. Mission of Charles von Miltitz

German of noble birth, not much wealth; papal chamberlain; January 1519, sent to Germany to handle on personal basis; made papal representative (gave golden rose to Frederick from Leo X)

Saw Tetzel: You caused trouble, deceived people too much; saw Luther: Don’t hurt the church so much—you quiet down and Tetzel will

Luther agreed; both sides to be quiet and von Miltitz to arrange for Luther to be convinced; Luther to urge unity and ask pope’s pardon

Truce worked for a while; no public utterances for a few months

Luther’s thought continued to develop:

No papal authority at Council of Nicaea

Donation of Constantine and Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals forgeries

3. Leipzig debate

July 1519 (promise to Miltitz did not last)

Occasioned by John Bodenstein of Carlstadt, early professor at Wittenberg; went beyond Luther, 406 propositions

John Eck at Ingolstadt wanted to debate Luther; challenged Carlstadt—to meet at university of Leipzig in territory of George the Steadfast (this university founded by followers of Hus)

Luther and Melancthon went along; arrived in Leipzig; people hostile, thought Luther devilish

Long, formal debates; three weeks; immense attention; welcomed by Duke George, who listened; Eck smashed Carlstadt, attacked Luther; George gave permission for Luther to debate

Eck got Luther to make concessions:

Pope not always right (councils prove it)

Councils may err (Constance—Hus; this point considered by Eck to contradict the previous point)

Hussites not all bad

George shouted out (cf. Eck's account, Bettenson, pp. 191-192); debate transcripts sent to university of Paris for decision (Eck won); George against Luther; both sides claimed victory

Luther got the most benefits—many students left their schools to go to Wittenberg; people mad at Eck for supporting Tetzl; Luther developed

*Luther now definitely leader of reformers

4. Papal bull of June 15, 1520

[1520—important year; two lines of development]

Deliberations in Rome concerning next emperor; Leo did not want Charles, grandson of Maximilian (Hapsburg)

Eck went to Rome, wrote bull against Luther—he to recant within sixty days or be excommunicated; Leo signed bull (Latin in Schaff *HCC* 7:233-247; English excerpts in *Martin Luther* film book, pp. 65-66)

Bull promulgated June 15, 1520; Eck to publish it in Germany; Eck returned to Germany; many (including Frederick) refused the bull

Luther's attitude—ready to suffer, stand by Scriptures; burned bull (and canon law) night of Dec. 10, 1520

Luther officially excommunicated and anathematized, Jan. 3, 1521

By this time Staupitz had withdrawn, resigned from Augustinian position; entered Benedictine monastery, became abbot

5. Luther's writings in 1520

[Three major controversial works; different approaches; these writings had great impact; many admirers in Germany, and students in England]

a. *On the Liberty of the Christian Man*

Short statement to pope; encouraged to do so by Miltitz; in introductory letter, pope is “sheep among wolves”

Principles: (1) Bible is the only guide of the Christian's conscience, and (2) individual priesthood of believers

b. *Appeal to the German Nobility*

Long treatise; fiery; showed how Rome was squeezing Germany; defends rights of national rulers (excerpts in Bettenson, pp. 192-197)

c. *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*

Attacked priesthood; attacked seven sacraments of Roman church—only three to be observed: baptism, the Lord's Supper, and penance (excerpts in Bettenson, pp. 197-199)

d. Other writings of 1520

Sermons; devotions for ill Frederick

D. Diet of Worms (April, 1521)

Diet met every year; first diet attended by new emperor Charles V (his last one until Augsburg in 1530); Worms in south-west Germany, a hundred miles north of Switzerland

1. Emperor Charles V

21 years old; king of Spain and the Netherlands (and New World), duke of Burgundy, duke of Austria, now emperor; more hostile to Luther than Maximilian was; had burned Luther's books in the Netherlands

2. Aleander

Papal legate; wanted strict action; had tried to get Luther to Rome; clever and persistent

3. Trip to Worms

Luther summoned to diet, given safe conduct; given wagon, escort, herald; friends warned him to go back; preached on way (side wall fell out of church)

4. Luther before the diet

Prayer on morning of April 17 (in d' Aubigne *History of the Reformation* 2:223-225)

First appearance, April 17

Overcome by number and importance of assembly; shocked by two questions; asked twenty-four hours

Second appearance, April 18

Courteous yet strong; speech in Latin and in German (for transcript, see Bettenson, pp. 199-201)

Three types of writings:

- 1) Devotional
- 2) Against papacy
- 3) Against individuals

Refused to recant without reason from Bible; famous speech

General great respect for Luther (many sent presents)

5. Results of the diet

Emperor's declaration: one empire and one church; I pledge life and honor to maintain church against all enemies

Aleander wanted Charles to violate safe conduct (good for 31 days after Luther left Worms)

April 26, Luther left diet without fanfare; elector Frederick "provided transportation to Wittenberg," later left too

May 8, Aleander drew up document for Charles V—Edict of Worms (see in d'Aubigne *HR* 2:261-262): Luther an outlaw, to be killed; followers to be killed and property taken; no freedom of press; May 26, Charles signed

But Luther disappeared, kidnapped in woods

E. The Wartburg

Big thirteenth-century castle in forest near Eisenach (where Luther's cousins lived, went to high school there); castle on hill; St. Elizabeth had lived there in thirteenth century; in Frederick's territory

1. Luther in hiding

Frederick had knights take Luther there, but not tell Frederick which castle, so he did not know where when asked

Knight took Luther to castle, introduced to his wife (Luther a celebrity); Luther stayed there ten months (May 1521 - March 1, 1522)

Dressed as knight, "Knight George"; wrote many letters to friends; from "Patmos," "the wilderness," "the region of the birds"

Often suffered ill health and depression (visions of the devil)

2. Writings from the Wartburg

Extensive correspondence

Strong letter to Archbishop Albert (December 1): priests took wives; Albert arrested them; also extravagant indulgences in Halle

Series of sermons for Easter

Theology

Began translation of NT (greatest accomplishment): finished most of NT; formed language at same time; from Greek and Vulgate (James included in all editions)

3. Developments in Wittenberg

Melanchthon wrote first edition of a good theology

Carlstadt used Luther's absence to assert his own more radical ideas:

Wrote on biblical canon, questioned authorship of many books

Untenable position on Lord's Supper ("This is my body"; "this" = his body, not the bread); later became a Zwinglian

Violently opposed relics of papacy—monks, nuns, celibacy, images, garments; caused riots

Became legalistically "Protestant"—no one ordained unless married; a sin to commune without the cup; vow of celibacy not binding; must eat meat on fast-days; no titles allowed except "brother" and "sister"

Went off deep end—contempt for learning and theology (Matt 11:25); told students to take up agriculture; dressed as peasant ("Brother Andrew"); opposed infant baptism; received mystic revelations

Melanchthon unable to answer arguments; three "prophets" came from Zwickau (Nicholaus Storch, Marcus Thoma Stubner, Thomas Munzer), joined with Carlstadt; had visions, dreams from God and from Gabriel; predicted overthrow of government and then millennium

Frederick decided not to interfere; Charles V tied up in war with France (wars for twenty years with France, Italy, Turks); Luther wrote against situation, but Frederick warned him not to go to Wittenberg

4. Return to Wittenberg

In December, had been there three days disguised; rejected advice of Frederick and traveled home; went disguised through territory of duke George (met in an inn by two Swiss students going to Wittenberg from Basel, conversation); arrived in Wittenberg disguised

F. Luther at Wittenberg, 1522-1523

1. Order restored

Critical moment: reformation or revolution?

Preached a week of sermons, eight sermons in eight days, perhaps his finest effort

“The ruling ideas of these eight discourses are: Christian freedom and Christian charity; freedom from the tyranny of radicalism which would force the conscience against forms, as the tyranny of popery forces the conscience in the opposite direction; charity towards the weak, who must be trained like children, and tenderly dealt with, lest they stumble and fall. Faith is worthless without charity. No man has a right to compel his brother in matters that are left free; and among these are marriage, living in convents, private confession, fasting and eating, images in churches. Abuses which contradict the word of God, as private masses, should be abolished, but in an orderly manner and by proper authority. The Word of God and moral suasion must be allowed to do the work. Paul preached against the idols in Athens, without touching one of them; and yet they fell in consequence of his preaching.” (Schaff *HCC* 7:388-389; cf. Luther’s own example on p. 389)

People settled down; restored Latin for two years; “prophets” run out of town; Carlstadt permanently discredited (career ended in relative obscurity; died in a plague in Basel)

2. Progress in Wittenberg

Luther spoke in various cities; ban had no effect in much of Germany; Archbishop Albert's secretary came to Wittenberg, left Roman Catholic church, became minister

Luther resumed teaching; interested in training young and teaching them (later, in 1528-29, wrote Greater and Small Catechisms; see Bettenson, pp. 201-209)

Wrote against forced celibacy; many nuns gave it up (many in George's territory, two arrested); others went to Wittenberg for safety; Luther tried to settle them

3. Adrian VI, the new pope (1522-1523)

December 1521, Leo X died suddenly; new pope selected; non-Italian (last one until John XXIII); head of church in Spain, had been chaplain to Charles V; wanted reform in practice, not in doctrine; strict and upright (contrast to Leo X)

4. Diets of Nurnberg, 1523 and 1524

Diets held annually; Charles V busy, did not attend

Diet of 1523; Duke George's complaint—corruption in church, and Luther still on the loose

Pope Adrian's letter, confessed church's corruption (remarkable; see Schaff *HCC* 7:393-394); pope said, "from head to limb, from pope to prelates, there is none that doeth good, no not one"; pope said he would correct abuses if Germans dealt with Luther; diet said, first you reform the church (listed 100 suggestions), then we will deal with Luther; much better for Luther than diet of Worms had been

Soon pope Adrian VI died (wreaths on doctor's doorstep); new pope Clement VII (de Medici, 1523-1534; cousin of Leo X); reverted to behavior of Leo X; more shrewd than Adrian VI

Diet of Nurnberg in 1524; said it would enforce edict of Worms "as far as possible"; southern princes formed informal alliance to oppose Reformation; two years later, Protestant counter-league formed (Saxony and Hesse)

5. Spread of Luther's teachings

a. Popular defenders

Books, pamphlets, articles, cartoons; many converts; many important, some bishops

b. Philip of Hesse

Ruler of Hesse (cf. Hessian soldiers), just west of Saxony; saw Luther at Worms; ordered Luther's teachings presented in churches

c. Imperial cities

Self-government; e.g., Magdeburg, about fifty miles west of Wittenberg; weaver sang a hymn of Luther in front of statue; mayor opposed him; mayor thrown out

6. Controversies with magistrates

a. George the Steadfast

Cousin of Frederick, duke of much of Saxony; Frederick died in 1525, but George lived until 1539

Leipzig booksellers petitioned George to allow Luther's books; George said no; Luther wrote letter, "not tactful"; Luther's influence came over the border

b. Henry VIII of England

1509, became king of England; 1521, had Luther's books burned; wrote *Assertion of Seven Sacraments*, which attacked Luther and his *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*; dedicated book to pope Leo X; Leo gave him title "Defender of the Faith"; 1523, pope Clement VII confirmed title to Henry (still used by English monarch, even though Protestant)

Luther wrote scathing reply to "King Henry, of God's disgrace, king of England"; called him "fool . . . crowned donkey . . . liar . . . no gentleman," etc.; Henry incensed, wrote three dukes of Saxony, did not avail much

1525, Luther wrote apology to Henry, thinking to win him over, but Henry in 1527 scorned the apology; said Luther was now a coward as well as a heretic; therefore Luther resumed hostilities

1535, Melancthon made up with Henry, when Henry favored the Reformation; dedicated a new edition of his theology to him

c. Knights' revolt

Knights revolted, claimed Luther; Luther against revolution; this event compromised his cause

G. Peasants' War (1524-1525)

Luther struck out in three phases, was consistent but extreme in his statements; many misunderstood his position

1. Conditions of peasants

Low production; jealous of those who lived "luxuriously"; had rather small taxes, but resented them greatly; had particular grievances (use of forest, etc.)

Historically, there had been regular revolts (at least one every hundred years; recently, six revolts in last fifty years); these revolts usually suppressed quickly

2. New revolt

This one took root more deeply; now printing spread news

Thomas Muntzer preached revolt, as other "prophets"; quoted Luther, made twelve demands (see Schaff *HCC* 7:443-444); fiery harangues:

"He signed himself 'Munzer with the hammer,' and 'with the sword of Gideon.' He advised the killing of all the ungodly. They had no right to live. Christ brought the sword, not peace upon earth. 'Look not,' he said, 'on the sorrow of the ungodly; let not your sword grow cold from blood; strike hard upon the anvil of Nimrod (the princes); cast his tower to the ground, because the day is yours.'" (p. 443)

Rioting, murder, pillaging widespread in Germany; at first lords not as quick to suppress (Luther's influence?); rioting worst in southern Germany

Philip of Hesse:

Young, just over twenty years old; met with revolutionists; talked; remedied some grievances; no more revolution in Hesse

Frederick of Saxony

Now elderly; had been beneficent; not much trouble in his area; died in 1525; never had declared for Luther, but did receive bread and wine in last communion from Spalatin (note both kinds); Luther and Melanchthon preached at his funeral

Succeeded by his brother John the Constant (1525-1532); John had declared for Luther

3. Luther's attitude toward the uprising

Saw list of demands; some OK, some not in line; urged against violence

Three writings about the revolt:

- 1) For reform and compromise (not heeded)
- 2) Against peasants; vituperative (Schaff *HCC* 7:446)
- 3) Against lords for cruelty in suppressing revolt

4. End of the revolt

Lords united and ruthlessly destroyed peasants; ca. 150,000 killed; Muntzer captured, tortured, executed; south Germany devastated; captured peasants were beheaded or mutilated; thousands of widows and orphans left behind; did harm to cause of Reformation

H. Luther's marriage

1. Luther's attitude

Enforced celibacy bad; normally people should marry; Luther had not married because of constant danger to his life

2. Katherine von Bora

Fifteen years younger than Luther; orphan; early became a nun; moderate education; loved a man, engaged, but he left and married someone else

Luther tried to set her up with a husband; but she liked Luther

3. Sudden marriage

Spring, 1525; Luther 42 years old, Katherine 27 years old); decided to marry her “to spite the devil, to vex the pope, and to please my father”

Lived happily together for twenty years; had six children, three girls (two died early) and three boys; beautiful letters; Katherine a good wife and homemaker

Story when Katherine wore black

Luther wrote “Away in a Manger” for children; Christmas tree legend

I. Political events, 1525-1529

1. The new pope, Clement VII (1523-1534)

Cousin of Leo X (Medici); average man, interested in pleasure and advancing his family (nepotism)

Luther not a major problem to him; his happiest moment: second son of king of France married his niece, Katherine de Medici

Reformation kept growing

2. Emperor’s troubles

Charles V forces in Italy had many of Luther’s followers; for some time Charles did not pay army; army raided Rome; Clement fled to fortress in city, while troops sacked Rome (1527)

1529, pope received the request of Henry VIII to divorce his wife Catherine of Aragon (second daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, aunt of Charles V)

3. Two diets of Spires

[Ca. twenty miles south of Worms, in the Palatinate]

First diet (1526)

George the Steadfast wanted to wipe out Reformation; others disagreed; stalemate

“Recess of Spires”: left up to individual lords, their “right before God and the empire”

*Second diet (1529)

Catholics in majority; emperor’s brother Ferdinand wanted action; edict of Worms still in force throughout empire; diet voted to enforce edict of Worms everywhere; minority said one diet could not contradict another diet

*Minority wrote a protest (thus called “Protestants”); minority stood together, crystallized rulers into two groups

Luther opposed overt resistance; said to obey the emperor, don’t oppose him, but one can defend his own power and authority; Philip tried to get agreement among Protestant princes

J. Luther and Erasmus

1. Erasmus’s early attitude

Influenced by John Colet; critical of Roman Catholic leaders (*Julius Excluded from Heaven* and *In Praise of Folly*); worked on Greek NT; “Luther has attacked the crown of the pope and the bellies of the monks”

2. Opposition to Luther

September 1524, wrote against Luther, *Diatribes on the Freedom of the Will* (“diatribe” = pleasant conversation); Luther wrote strong attack, *The Bondage of the Will*; later rebuttals

Erasmus gradually withdrew, wrote on the fathers, tried to stay out of controversy; Erasmus refused a cardinalship

K. The Marburg colloquy

[Marburg in Hesse, headquarters of Philip of Hesse]

1. Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)

Swiss reformer (German section); middle class farming family; in college, familiar with humanists, especially Erasmus

Chaplain for Swiss mercenaries in Italy (caused him to oppose mercenary system); 1519-1525, became priest in Zurich, gradually reformed church there; reform based on Erasmus, Augustine, Bible, not on Luther

Involved in wars against Catholic cantons in Switzerland

2. Attempt at cooperation

Philip of Hesse tried to form Protestant alliance in view of second diet of Spires, wanted German-Swiss alliance; Luther had reservations, had seen Zwingli's book (communion just symbols)

Philip sponsored meeting in Marburg castle, Oct., 1529; fifteen-day discussion; statement, fifteen points, agreed on 14½; ½ point of disagreement, consubstantiation (Jesus' body "in, with, under" the elements)

Philip and Zwingli wanted unity; Luther refused to shake hands: "You are of another spirit"

Two years later, Zwingli killed in battle in Switzerland; Luther said it was God's judgment

L. Diet of Augsburg (1530)

1. Emperor's purpose

First diet Charles V attended since Worms; Ottoman Turks attacking to north-west, close to Austria, Vienna

Charles not entirely for pope, but wanted united church; Charles wanted agreement, thus discussion

2. Luther at the fortress of Coburg

Coburg at south end of Saxony, territory of Duke John the Constant; larger than Marburg or Wartburg castles

John invited to diet, took Luther and others to Coburg; John requested safe conducts, got them for everybody except Luther; Luther stayed at Coburg, often wrote to delegates

3. Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560)

Luther considered him the greatest scholar, theologian, and character

Original name Scharzeder; granduncle Reuchlin gave him name Melanchthon (“black earth”) because of his fertile mind and language scholarship; most popular teacher at Wittenberg; appealed to higher circles

Tried to get agreement with Catholics at Augsburg; failed; wrote the Augsburg Confession, as statement of faith of Protestant lords; still remains as part of Lutheran official creed (Bettenson, pp. 210-212)

4. Augsburg Confession

Read at diet in front of emperor and the rest; differences not in sharp relief, well rounded

John Eck and other Catholics still “refuted” it; diet voted to crush Reformation (see *Martin Luther* film book, pp. 92-94, for dramatic scene)

But Turks invading; Protestants told to recant by April 15, 1531, or be invaded

5. Results of the diet of Augsburg

[Results for years 1530-1532]

a. Schmalkaldic League

Protestants (Lutherans) formed Schmalkaldic League to defend themselves; Zwingli killed in battle, 1531

b. April 15, 1531

Deadline came and went; nothing happened; Charles V busy with French, pope, Turks

Luther not pacifistic concerning Turks, urged Philip to help emperor fight them

c. Nurnberg truce (July 23, 1532)

Catholic dukes saw dismal prospects; agreed to continue 1526 Spires policy, until a general council

M. Early spread of Luther's teachings outside Germany

Many of his works he wrote in Latin (same with works by his followers); these not as "strong" as his German writings; Latin writings had more intellectual appeal

1. England

a. Henry VIII (king 1509-1547)

Second son of Henry VI, who united England under the Tudor family; because second son, educated; had rare charm and ability

People wanted stability; Henry VII settled things somewhat; Henry VIII universally recognized

1509, eighteen years old, became king; married Catherine of Aragon, widow of elder brother Arthur, with papal dispensation

b. Luther's writings

Writings came to England early; by 1519 Henry saw some; pro-Luther students met at tavern, they called "the Germans"

c. Defender of the Faith"

1520, Henry had Luther's books burned at St. Paul's; 1521, Henry wrote *Defense of the Seven Sacraments* against Luther, especially against his *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*

Title given to Henry VIII by Leo X in 1521, confirmed in 1523 by Clement VII; used ever since by British monarchs (cf. title page of KJV)

d. William Tyndale (1494-1536)

Educated at Oxford and Cambridge; saw church corruption; studied reformers; convinced that "it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth, except the Scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue"

Soon left England for Continent, never to return; first to translate (most of) Bible from original languages into English and get it published

One time, published six thousand copies; bishop of London bought them up; this stimulated printers to make more editions

Many obstacles: not in own country; pirate versions stole profits; betrayed by workers and partners; price on his head, often had to flee; a shipwreck destroyed all his manuscripts

Yet thousands of Bibles were smuggled into England

Finally English agents found him in the Netherlands; he arrested, strangled, body burned

KJV about 9/10 from Tyndale

e. Henry's divorce

Catherine of Aragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, aunt of Charles V, widow of Henry's older brother

Her marriage to Henry VIII against canon law, but Pope Julius II gave dispensation—they were "only children"

Four or five stillbirths, many miscarriages; one child lived then died; one daughter survived, Mary Tudor

Henry VIII blamed Catherine for no son, wanted another wife (liked Anne Bolyn); used Bible passage to justify divorce

“And if a man shall take his brother’s wife, it is impurity; he hath uncovered his brother’s nakedness; they shall be childless.” (Lev 20:19)

1529, sent two requests to pope Clement VII: (1) annul marriage to Catherine, (2) permission to marry Anne Bolyn (not his concubine Mary Bolyn); pope granted request #2, but not request #1, since emperor’s troops were controlling Rome

Henry then moved away from Rome

2. Scotland

Patrick Hamilton (1503-1528)

Aristocrat; studied on Continent; returned to Scotland, preached and taught; favored Luther

February 1528, invited to debate at St. Andrews; arrested, tried, burned at stake (proto-martyr of Scotland)

Martyrdom had great effect: “The reek (smoke) of Mr. Patrick Hamilton has infected as many as it did blow upon” (bystander)

3. The Netherlands

Holland and Belgium; people loved Charles V because native son; ca. 1520, Luther’s books burned; 1523, first Protestant martyrs burned in Brussels; but trade made it hard to keep control of Reformation

4. Sweden

a. Union of Kalmar

1397, Denmark ruled over Sweden, Norway, and Denmark; tried to control for a century; then Norway controlled the area; then archbishop Trolle of Sweden fought local (pro-Norway) ruler, supported the Danes

b. Stockholm bloodbath, 1520

Archbishop Trolle of Upsalla went to Rome, got pope Leo X to excommunicate Swedish ruler

Meanwhile, Danish king Christian II conquered Sweden, promised amnesty; three-day banquet with all the nobles

Archbishop Trolle said they against church; Christian II arrested them, “tried” them; more than eighty nobles, including bishops, executed

c. Gustavus Vasa (1496-1560; king 1523-1560)

Out of country in 1520; father, uncle, brother killed in bloodbath; returned to Sweden; roused peasants, defeated garrisons

Archbishop Trolle very unpopular, “Swedish Judas Iscariot”; Gustavus needed resources, but Roman Catholic church refused to cooperate (owned ca. 2/3 of Sweden); 1523, crowned king of Sweden; much popular opposition to Roman Catholic Church

d. Petri

Lars Petersson, professor of theology at Uppsala; studied at Wittenberg; preached in favor of Reformation; king Gustavus protected him; 1526, translated NT into Swedish

e. Diet of 1527

Swedish nobles; Swedish church leaders against Reformation, against innovations; Gustavus threatened to resign, left meeting; diet reversed action—men on skis to get him back

Diet confiscated most church property, ordered gospel teaching in schools, instituted royal approval for church appointments

f. Gradual change

Gustavus gradually consolidated monasteries; replaced retiring officials with Lutherans; died in 1560 after long reign

5. Denmark

a. Background

Near Germany; nineteen Danish students at Wittenberg by 1520; corrupt clergy, worse than average (as in Scotland)

b. Hans Tausen (1494-1561)

Leading reformer in Denmark; student at Wittenberg, graduated in 1523; popular and effective preacher in Denmark

c. Peterson's NT

Translated into Danish; fueled the Reformation there

d. New king

Christian II (of Stockholm Bloodbath) opposed Reformation, but asked Luther for men for churches; struggle among Danish nobles

1523, Christian II driven out, his uncle Frederick I elected (1523-1532); Frederick I against corruption; his son (to be Christian III) saw Luther at Worms, liked him; Frederick I allowed the Reformation, protected Tausen

e. 1530 debates

Local clergy vs. Luther's men from Wittenberg; Luther's men won

f. Lutheran victory

1532, Christian III became king, requested Luther for aid; Luther sent man to reorganize Danish church

Christian II (cousin) came back, was captured and imprisoned

Note: Church of England recognizes Swedish church as having apostolic succession; but Danish church does not have it

Denmark later controlled Norway, and caused it to be Lutheran

6. Poland

Tremendous reformation there; some of them helped in England; Jesuits almost entirely eliminated it

7. France

Reformation peaked out at ca. 10% of population Calvinists (Huguenots)

a. King Francis I (1515-1547)

Against Charles V (wanted to be emperor, disputes over territory); supported Catholic Church, but protected reformers for a time; not much time to crush reformers

His sister Margaret a Protestant; protected reformers when possible

b. Jaques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1455-1536)

Early French reformer; scholar and priest; professor in Paris (pupils Guillaume Farel, G. Briconnet); published "Protestant" commentaries as early as 1512; 1521, condemned by Sorbonne

1524, produced French NT; 1528, French OT

1525, had to flee to Strasbourg, but returned to Navarre under protection of Margaret in 1531 until death in 1536

8. Switzerland

Zwingli killed in 1531; mountain people in south were Roman Catholic; flatlanders in north were mainly Protestant; not much interference or change after Zwingli killed

9. Italy

Reformation had good start in southern Italy; at one point, 40,000 books on atonement; blotted out later

10. Spain

Mainly Roman Catholic; some Spanish soldiers and leaders were Protestant

N. Political developments, 1532-1544

1. Emperor's attitude

Charles V did not want supreme pope; wanted united church (Medieval church); wanted council to settle problems

2. New pope Paul III (1534-1549)

Clement VII died in 1534, after eleven-year pontificate, without doing much about church or Reformation

Paul III had been immoral before (four illegitimate children); continued nepotism; but desired other church reforms; wanted church to regain control of northern Europe; *founded Jesuits (1540); *convened council of Trent (1545)

3. Conferences on religion

Roman Catholics and Protestants contested before the emperor; conciliatory statements attempted; crystallized understanding; Melancthon there; Calvin there once—they became friends

4. Change in ducal Saxony

Not electoral Saxony—that still ruled by John the Constant

George the Steadfast always against Luther's books, wanted successor to continue his policies; his brother Henry the Pious favored Luther; George's oldest son an alcoholic, but opposed Luther; George appointed him successor; but he died early, in 1538; younger son a semi-idiot—he died early too

George then said his own brother Henry could succeed him, if he would come out against Luther; Henry refused

George decided to leave dukedom to Ferdinand, brother of the emperor; 1539, papers were drawn up and brought to George to sign, but he died before he could sign them

Therefore Henry became duke (ruled 1539-1546); Henry brought Luther to his dukedom of north Saxony immediately; university of Leipzig became Lutheran stronghold; Melanchthon taught there 1541-1546

5. Peace of Crepy, 1544

Charles V and French king Francis I signed peace treaty; promise to wipe out Reformation; paved way for peaceful Council of Trent

6. Maurice

Son of Henry the Pious of Saxony; brought up a Lutheran; proud, traitor twice (once to Saxony and the Protestants, once to Charles V and Roman Catholics)

Took over duchy of Saxony when Henry died; became subservient to Charles V; thus the emperor controlled the area, but the people loved the Bible; provided an opportunity for Charles V to try to stamp out the Reformation in Germany

O. Luther's other church-building activity

1. Bible translation

Constant work; weekly "Bible club"; many editions, especially revisions of OT; formed classic German language; put Reformation on solid base

2. Hymns

Hymn books in 1523 and 1528; wrote "A Mighty Fortress," "Away in a Manger"; had people participate in the service

3. Catechisms

1528—Greater Catechism; 1529—Small Catechism; began new emphasis on teaching children by catechal instruction

4. Visitation

Examined priests in churches

5. Luther's health

Troubles started while in Wartburg (1521-1522); got worse in 1523; continued through rest of life

6. Personal influence

a. Personal witnessing

E.g., Nov., 1535, bishop from north Italy represented pope, came to discuss with Luther; was converted, therefore "apostate"; fled to Switzerland

b. Table Talk, and the book of James

Copied by students; not official, often unbalanced; e.g., book of James: "cast James into the Tiber . . . an epistle of straw"

Luther's negative opinions about James are stated in preface to James in his German translation (1522), and in his preface to the NT (1524); however, this statement was withdrawn when he reissued his Bible in 1545. His real position is shown by (1) Worms testimony, (2) his translation itself, and (3) his many positive writings about various passages in James. [See the balanced discussion in Excursus II in Revere F. Weidner's commentary on James in *The Lutheran Commentary*, 88-91.]

7. Attitude on church government

Favored order and freedom; opposed extremes of tyranny and anarchy; not much interested in church government structure; generally orderly, favored good bishops

Net result: no government system for church; rather, state control of church

E.g., Luther appointed bishops for king, especially in Denmark

E.g., case of Philip of Hesse

Fifteen years old, in charge of Hesse; seventeen years old, saw Luther at Worms; Peasant War, negotiated; worked for Protestant League; sponsored Marburg Colloquy

Worked out church government system (spread out power); suggested to Hesse churches; sent it to Luther (Luther rejected it); thus Hesse churches state controlled for three hundred years

P. Bigamy of Philip of Hesse

Earlier problem with Henry VIII—Luther suggested another wife for Henry, rather than divorce; Carlstadt came out for general bigamy; Henry got divorce instead

Philip's wife was Christian daughter of duke George the Steadfast; they married very young; he later found her repugnant; Philip had strong passions, often unfaithful; result, conscience bothered him (he took communion only once in fifteen years, from 1525-1540; he confessed this to Luther in a letter in 1540)

Philip asked Reformers if he could have another wife, divorce being out of the question; this allowed by Luther, Melancthon, Bucer; 1540, married also Margaret (who had refused to be just a mistress)

Philip (and Reformers) were universally condemned; 1547, Philip imprisoned by Charles V; his case a great drawback to success of Schmalkaldic League

Q. Luther's last years

1. Activities and disappointments

Terrible health; worked hard; many shady followers (e.g., clergy); Wittenberg not sanctified

2. Renewed Sacramentarian controversy

Luther insisted that Christ's body present in elements—one chews Christ with the teeth; unity had failed at Marburg in 1529; controversy died down for fifteen years; 1544, blasted Reformed position again: "heretics, hypocrites, liars, blasphemers, soul-murderers, sinners unto death"; he would "rather drink blood alone with the papists than wine alone with the Zwinglians" (on this issue he seems to have developed an attitude problem)

A few days before he died, wrote letter to pastor: “Blessed in the man that walketh not in the counsel of the *Sacramentarians*, nor standeth in the way of the *Zwinglians*, nor sitteth in the seat of the *Zurichers*.”

Melanchthon and Calvin were friends; Luther liked Calvin when he saw his *Institutes* (1536) and his *Letter to Sadolet* (1539), in spite of their differences

Luther later grew colder; Luther and Calvin never met—Melanchthon was their go-between; they wrote a few letters through Melanchthon; when Luther blasted the sacramentarians, Calvin refused to speak against the “pope of Wittenberg” (Schaff *HCC* 7:661-662)

3. Last work against papacy

The Papacy of Rome, the Creation of the Devil

4. Luther’s death, 1546

Heard of two brothers (both counts) near Eisleben fighting; he went to reconcile them; February 1, letter to Melanchthon about sickness; February 10, letter to Katherine, not to worry; February 14, last letter, to Katherine; February 15, treaty between two brothers made; Luther ill at night, called friends; February 18, 2 a.m., was asked, “Do you stand by the doctrine you have preached?” Last audible word, “Yes!”

Thus born and died in Eisleben

R. Emperor’s success and failure

1. Emperor’s desire

Charles V desired one church, one empire; 1545, Peace of Crepy; now hands free to deal with Protestants

2. Schmalkaldic War, 1545-1547

Tried to destroy Schmalkaldic League, first by diplomacy; France and the pope not to interfere; tried to separate Protestants (at last was successful, because of Maurice); tried to get agreement with Philip of Hesse or with John the Constant of Saxony, failed

Found weak spot—Maurice, duke of northern Saxony; nephew of George the Steadfast, son of Henry the Pious; Charles V appealed to his pride—Maurice should have more territory and should be an elector instead of John the Constant, and should cut down power of his father-in-law Philip of Hesse

War broke out, Protestants on both sides; John the Constant was captured and imprisoned; 40% of his territory given to Maurice; electorship taken from him and given to Maurice

Maurice convinced Philip of Hesse to surrender; he imprisoned cruelly for six years

During the war, a new general council (19th general council) of church held:

Pope Paul III agreed to it, near end of his rule; held in Trent, southern part of Italian Alps, but German speaking section; Protestants boycotted the council because of the war

3. Augsburg Interim of 1548

Charles V by 1547 had all Germany (too late to get Luther, who died in 1546); Charles demanded unified religion until council of Trent decided officially; his interim enforced in Protestant areas by Spanish troops, not in Catholic areas. It allowed clergy marriages and the cup, but imposed old fasts, feasts, and ceremonies on the German church until Trent could issue its reforms.

Maurice refused to cooperate; Melanchthon advised a special Saxon interim; Charles granted a special interim of Maurice's territory; many anonymous attacks published against the interim; Magdeburg (imperial city) revolted; Maurice was sent to besiege the city

4. Maurice's reversal

Maurice betrayed Charles V, entered into a secret agreement with Magdeburg; Charles was forced to flee into Italy; Germany was free again (1552)

A year later (1553) Maurice was killed in battle, but the electorship of Saxony remained in his family (strict Lutherans)

5. Peace of Passau, 1552

Charles realized that he could not defeat Protestants quickly again; local rulers to decide, permanently; Philip of Hesse and John the Constant were released from prison

6. Emperor's resignation

Charles V had failed to crush Reformation, was weary of responsibilities

1555, resigned from Burgundy; 1556, from the Netherlands, Spain, Italian possessions—all these areas given to his son Philip II

1556, resigned emperorship to his brother Ferdinand; resided in monastery in Spain, worked on clocks; always regretted he did not seize Luther at Worms

1558, died in retirement

S. Religious Peace of Augsburg, 1555

Charles V still emperor; nobles to decide for either the Roman Catholic church or for the “Evangelical” church; all must sign either the Roman Catholic confessions or the Augsburg Confession (Reformed churches and Anabaptists excluded)

Migration was allowed; but all imperial cities had to allow Roman Catholics liberty

All church territories controlled by the Protestants before 1552 remained Protestant; the rest returned to the Roman Catholics

“Ecclesiastical Reservation”—church officials who became Protestant after 1552 lost all dignity and rights in the church

Result—permanently divided Germany religiously and politically; still persecution of Reformed (“Sacramentarians”) and Anabaptists (“Sectarians”)

Remained in force until Peace of Westphalia in 1648, after the Thirty Years' War, which allowed also Calvinist churches

*The “Evangelical” churches in Germany were not officially called “Lutheran” until after 1580

T. *Evaluation of Luther's work*

1. Supreme importance

Protestant Reformation inextricably tied to his life, his experiences and accomplishments; he permanently put his stamp on half of Protestantism

Strong movement which even the popes and emperors could not suppress; first time a major division succeeded in church history (except for earlier geographical divisions); saved the visible church for centuries

2. Reasons for Luther's great effectiveness

- a. Genuinely a religious man
- b. Pointed people to the heart of the gospel
- c. Not extreme on most issues
- d. Man of the people
- e. Rare ability of expression and presentation
- f. Tremendous energy
- g. Courageous, self-denying attitude

3. Luther's emphases

Three great principles of the Reformation:

- a. Scriptures the only revelation for spiritual things
- b. Justification through faith alone
- c. Universal priesthood of all believers

"Sola fide, sola gratia, sola Scriptura"

4. Luther's points of weakness

- a. Failure to think through church's future
- b. Failure to organize church government

c. Extremely strong language

d. Failure to make clear broad areas of possible unity, with sharp borders around areas