

LUTHER SPLITS CHRISTENDOM

In spite of its many shortcomings, the Catholic Church in the year 1517 was still the mightiest institution in Christendom, supereminent in its influence on both public and private life. The Christian faith-as interpreted by the Roman Popes-was the foundation of public and private behavior. The leadership of the clergy was still generally respected in most domains of thought and life, in philosophy science, the administration of justice, and charitable activity: Even the very life of the state seemed conceivable only on the basis of the Christian philosophy.

And yet within the short space of a few years this whole edifice came crashing down in one of the most awesome of historical cataclysms. As Lortz puts it "one day the great patrician families of Nuremberg were' calmly donating new, wonderful, costly altars and numerous splendid statues in honor of the saints; next day they were dragging out of the cloister the child whom they had dedicated to the life of perfection as a nun under the seal of the threefold vows of the Church-rescuing her from the net of godless human ordinances, from the sacrilege of papistical idolatry,"! The catalyst and to some extent the cause of it all was an Augustinian monk.

This monk, Martin Luther, was born in 1483 in Eisleben, Germany, the son of Hans and Margarete Ludher who were of Thuringian peasant stock. Brought up in an atmosphere of traditional religious practice, he was given

schooling of the kind customary at that time. He was intensively drilled in Latin-giving him a strong linguistic foundation on which he built his later acquaintance with Hebrew and Greek. Enrolling at Erfurt, the largest German university of the day where Aristotle still reigned supreme, he was awarded the master of arts degree in 1505.

His decision to enter a monastery a few months later was not inconsistent with his deeply introspective and melancholy disposition, but the circumstances suggest that it may have been less than wholehearted. It was a decision made in a moment of panic during a terrible thunderstorm after he was thrown to the ground by a bolt of lightning. The monastery he chose was the strictest religious house at Erfurt, and upon his entry in 1505 the young novice monk found himself bound to a severe daily regimen of prayer, meditation, study, frequent fasting, and silence. All this no doubt reinforced his innate tendency toward introspection and brooding. There is little doubt that he performed his duties with extreme seriousness, for he found favor with his superiors, and after only nineteen months he was ordained a priest, on April 4, 1507. He was then chosen to continue his theological studies.

Up to this point Luther seems to have enjoyed a good measure of spiritual peace-that sense of closeness to God that a religious novice often feels in the first years of his new way of life. But as he continued with his study of theology, he fell prey to moods of general depression; he suffered terrible trials and anguish of spirit, with sudden spasms of terror and despair gripping his heart, a torment

so shattering, he said, that had it lasted even the tenth part of an hour his bones would have crumbled into ashes. Deeply conscious of his sinfulness and guilt, he felt that at any moment he might be struck down by the living God and cast into hell. Craving certainty, he confessed frequently, even daily, fasted, and prayed; but he found little relief. And then in the extremes of his agony he even cried out his hatred of God, which in turn exacerbated his feelings of guilt. "For I hoped I might find peace of conscience with fasts, prayer, vigils, with which I miserably afflicted my body, but the more I sweated it out like this, the less peace and tranquillity I knew," he wrote.

His own later interpretation of his trials was that they were caused by the defective nominalist theology he was trained in. According to this theology he was supposed to merit salvation by his good works, whereas his own experience told him that he was completely impotent to do good. His so-called good works, he felt, were tainted by an all-pervading egotism.

Above all, he could not find it in his power to rise to the love of God. How could one love a God who punishes sinners who stood before him as an avenging God as the phrase "the justice of God" (Rm. 1: 17) often reminded him?

While suffering intermittently these agonies of the spirit Luther continued his theological career. He was assigned the lecture on Aristotle at the newly founded University of Wittenberg. Then in 1509 he began lectures in Erfurt on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. It was at this

point that Luther began to read Augustine, who together with the Bible henceforth exerted a predominant influence on the formation of his very personal theology.

He was transferred to Wittenberg again in 1511, after a stop to Rome, which at the time seemed to have little influence on the development of his anti-Roman views. He took his doctorate in theology at Wittenberg, and then in

1513 he took over the chair of biblical theology as professor of exegesis-a post he was to hold for the rest of his life. And it was on the podium at Wittenberg before an audience of students that he delivered the remarkable commentaries on Psalms, Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews that contained the substance of his theology.

It was at the beginning of these lectures in 1513 that his spiritual crisis was resolved by an interior revolution that brought him to a new religious outlook. In essence his spiritual crisis was caused by an intense craving for certitude about his salvation. He tried to achieve this certitude by living so devoutly he could imagine himself appearing before God and saying: "Here you have holiness." But he found that the harder he tried the farther away he seemed from his goal.

The crisis was resolved when a kind of mystical illumination occurred which, as he said, opened the "saving Gospel" to him: the true meaning of Paul's phrase "the justice of God." Under the spell of his Nominalist mentors he had construed this to mean the justice by which God rightly punishes sinners. But now he realized

that it meant the very opposite: It is the justice of God by which he justifies us through faith-a sense that became obvious to Luther when he juxtaposed the phrase "justice of God" with the phrase that follows in the same verse (Rm. 1:17), "the just man shall live by faith." In other words, it is not through our merits that we are saved but through the unfathomable mercy and boundless generosity of God, who justifies us in spite of our sins. Our part in the whole process is not active but passive.

With this doctrine of justification by faith, the young Augustinian now found a blessed confidence in place of despair, since he saw that the basis of his justification was not his own holiness but the mercy of God. Now he could have complete assurance of his salvation; true faith henceforth included the unshakable certainty of his own salvation. And it was only when he became convinced during the indulgence controversy that the Roman Catholic Church held a diametrically opposed theology-basing justification on the work of man on self-sanctification, and therefore leaving the individual in a state of doubt and despair-that he felt obliged to oppose the Church. For Luther, true faith is present only when an individual is absolutely and personally certain about his salvation.

Luther arrived at this "new" understanding of the Gospel as early as 1514 while working on his commentary on the Psalms perhaps on Psalm 70 or 71. It was the starting point and remained the key to his

distinctive theology and as such the basis of all subsequent Reformation theology. It is clear that in essentials this theology was completed before the beginning of his great struggle in 1517, and, as we have said, it was developed mainly in his early lectures-the commentaries of the years 1514 to 1517. One of the most significant achievements of Luther scholarship in the past forty years has been the discovery and publication of the original manuscripts of these lectures, which have revolutionized our understanding of Luther's spiritual development.

How compatible Luther's theology was with Catholic tradition is a question that has been debated ever since. There is no doubt that there was something new and original in Luther's theology; it was highly personal and charged with emotion-in sharp contrast with the cold, dry, Scholastic treatises of the day. Unlike too many presentations at that time, it was also profoundly biblical. It was also a practical and relevant theology, which focused on the actual issues of the day, and this contributed to its cachet of novelty. But none of these characteristics tell against it being accepted as basically Catholic, and, in fact, a recent Catholic scholar has affirmed that the real paradox of the Reformation is that until the Council of Trent, Martin Luther was one of the few theologians in Germany who uncompromisingly defended the biblical and Catholic teaching of man's bondage to sin.⁸ And another Catholic has recently written a book indicating that Luther and

Aquinas were in basic agreement on the question of the believer possessing certitude of salvation.

Luther begins with the idea of God's justice-meaning God's saving righteousness, by which he extends to us in Christ the gracious gift of salvation. Human merit plays no role at this stage. Man, in fact, is totally corrupt, as is evident from concupiscence-the fermenting, restless egotism that vitiates our decisions at every level. Thus there is no free will; the human will is in itself totally enslaved to sin and totally rebellious to God. It is only through faith that we appropriate the salvation that God has effected for us in Christ, for God does not impute this sinfulness once we confess it by faith and hate it and seek to be healed of it.

Luther's conception of this process of salvation is a dynamic one: The righteousness of Christ becomes our righteousness. To avoid traditional Catholic caricatures of Luther's thought we must realize that the righteousness of Christ in Luther's mind was not something merely legal or forensically external but the personal presence and work of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the believer through faith. Hence there is no basis for the charge that his theory encouraged people to sin while cloaked under the external merits of Christ. His conception of the Christian life was anything but static; there was progress and the constant struggle against the passions. But while Luther's theology encompasses growth into righteousness, we must remember that for Luther this righteousness in no way could be called one's

own. It was but a constant entering more deeply into Christ's righteousness. All of this was conceived from an eschatological point of view: One's righteousness was only the anticipation of God's final verdict, which he has already given in the saving intervention of Jesus Christ.

What then about good works? Does Luther make these superfluous if faith in Christ and his righteousness has already justified us? Luther himself answers: "The faith of none is so great that it cannot be, nor ought to be increased. Thus for its increase good works are to be done, and bad ones avoided. But Luther stresses the divine initiative and action in our works; we are the instruments of God, the craftsman. "For grace and faith are infused apart from our work, and when they are infused, then the works follow."⁶ As Luther taught, we do not obtain righteousness, but we stretch out toward it and always seek and ask that we may be justified so that the saints are at the same time sinners, sinners in fact, saints in hope."

Luther's theology stirred up controversy; his opinions, such as those on the enslaved will and the utter gratuitousness of grace, boldly challenged the prevailing nominalism of the German universities and involved him in numerous disputes with his colleagues at Wittenberg and Erfurt. But such academic skirmishes had little interest for the public at large. It was only when he attacked the Church's system of indulgences-which touched the life of almost everyone-that the whole world began to listen in.

Like all enlightened men of the age, Luther was fully aware of the terrible state of affairs in the Church; his sermons before 1517 are sufficient indication of this. Like others he complained of the avarice, simony, and ecclesiastical jobbery connected with appointment to high and low office in the Church. But there is no indication that he felt these abuses warranted revolutionary action—until he became convinced that the Gospel itself was at stake, that the Church was betraying the Gospel of Jesus Christ by teaching people that heaven could be purchased by good works.

For a theologian who held that the heart of religion was personal response, a man whose own religious experience and spiritual evolution was so bound up with the idea of the Gospel as offering. God's free gift of salvation, Church practice of day must indeed have been a sore trial; for in a thousand different ways the Church seemed to teach just the opposite or at least put excessive emphasis on the role of man in the work of salvation there was, in fact, as Lortz says, an externalism run riot; pilgrimages of all kinds, a superstitious cult of relics of the saints, a semi-magical and materialistic view of the efficacy of the mass—all giving the impression that heaven was something you could buy, like anything else.

The most blatant example, however was undoubtedly the cult of indulgences. In 1343 Pope Clement VI officially sanctioned the view that Christ and the saints had left a treasury of merits that other members of the Church could draw on for the remission of the temporal punishment

due to their sins. One obtained a share in these merits by means of a Church indulgence-usually granted by the Pope in exchange for some good work, often a donation of money, performed by the recipients. Official doctrine always insisted on the need for an accompanying interior repentance on the part of the recipient too.

Eventually it became official doctrine that indulgences could be applied to the souls in purgatory on the supposition that as equal members of the Mystical Body of Christ they too could participate in the merits of their saintly fellow members. However justifiable such a teaching might have been in theory, in practice it was a dangerous development since it involved considerable ambiguity. Its actual efficacy was described in technical Latin as *per modum suffragii* meaning "insofar as God hears the prayers of the Church," It also minimized, of course, the aspect of personal repentance that up to this time was always an important part of receiving an indulgence. A door was thus opened to the unscrupulous to present an indulgence as a quasi-automatic and easy means of salvation. And we know that this is what happened in the case of the particular indulgence that aroused the wrath of Luther and triggered his revolt against the Church.

It was a scandalous indulgence in several respects. First, it was ostensibly preached in order to rebuild St. Peter's, but it was actually concocted as a deal among the Fugger banking firm, the Roman Curia, and the twenty-three-year-old archbishop of Mainz, who agreed to split the

proceeds. Albert, the archbishop, thus hoped to pay the immense tax of ten thousand ducats levied on him by the Curia for the dispensation he needed in order to hold three dioceses-Mainz, and Magdeburg (both archbishoprics), in addition to Halberstadt. Second, it was preached by Johann Tetzel, a Dominican whose sermons were sub-Christian: Drop a few coins in the box, he shouted to the gaping crowds, you can rescue the souls of your friends or relatives from the flames of purgatory!

The diocese of Mainz was neighbor to Luther's own, and the young professor, who was also parish priest of the village church, soon got wind of the sensational Tetzel through penitents in the confessional who had heard Tetzel preach the indulgence and thought they had some kind of license to sin. It was too much. The picturesque episode of Luther posting his ninety-five theses in Latin on the door of the castle church at Wittenberg is probably only a legend; what we do know for certain is that on October 31, 1517, he sent the theses to his bishop and to the bishop who had licensed Tetzel; and only when they failed to respond did he make his theses public-challenging his academic colleagues to a debate on the subject of indulgences. His aim was to challenge such interpretations as Tetzel put on indulgences-not to condemn them altogether. Luther wanted to put them in proper perspective and to voice his pastoral concern about the spiritual dangers they involved. As the parish priest of the town he found them an obstacle to the preaching of true repentance and interior conversion. After all, he

insisted, they were merely remission of canonical penalties having to do with the terrestrial discipline of the Church. He denied that the Pope had any power over the souls in purgatory or that the Pope could control the merits of Christ and the saints. Finally, Luther denounced the indulgence preachers for their huckstering methods and for giving people a false sense of security by leading them to believe that a payment of money could appease the wrath of God.

Luther at first spoke out as a loyal Catholic, and when the controversy about his ideas erupted he was ready at first to submit them to the ultimate judgment of the Church. He did not see his theses as a revolutionary manifesto or as a call to the German nation. But he did strike a strong anti-Roman note, and there was a certain demagogic appeal in some of his caustic statements. Thesis 50, for instance, reads: "Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the indulgence preachers, he would rather that the basilica of St. Peter's were burned to ashes rather than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep." Or No. 82: "Why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love and the dire need of souls that are there if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church?"!

Although no one showed up for the debate, within a few weeks the theses were translated into German and circulated widely. They became the talk of Germany. Sides formed quickly, and-almost against his will-Luther

was pushed into the public arena as the champion of all those who for a multitude of reasons were itching to strike a blow at the ecclesiastical establishment.

One of the tragedies of the affair was that from the beginning Luther's opponents refused to meet him on theological and scriptural grounds. The archbishop of Mainz, who first reported him to Rome, showed concern only about the loss of income from the indulgence. Tetzel scorned Luther's invitation to debate, while Tetzel's brother Dominicans narrowed down the whole issue immediately to one of authority and in effect told Luther to accept the whole system of indulgences without cavil or be burned as a heretic. The only occasion for calm debate was furnished by Luther's fellow Augustinians at their chapter in Heidelberg, on April 26, 1518, where Luther won over the majority to his views.

Worst of all, Pope Leo X, who was preoccupied with Italian affairs and had no interest in theology anyway, regarded the situation at first as just another monks' squabble and showed little inclination to real dialogue. When he finally was made aware of the seriousness of the affair he turned a deaf ear to Luther's humble appeal of May 30, 1518, and on the basis in part of spurious information summoned Luther to appear in Rome within sixty days to answer to the charge of heresy. The official document accompanying the summons was written by Prierias, his private theologian. It contained not even the barest recognition of the undeniable abuses connected with

the indulgence system but instead indulged in an incredible tirade: Luther was "a leper and loathsome fellow• • • a dog and the son of a bitch, born to bite and snap at the sky with his doggish mouth," having "a brain of brass and a nose of iron."

However, a switch occurred thanks to a political factor, and Rome took a more conciliatory stand. Luther enjoyed the protection and support of his own ruler, Frederick, the elector of Saxony, who seems to have been impressed by the logic of Luther's position. The Curia, on the other hand, needed the assistance of Frederick in order to keep the Habsburg claimant, Charles, from the Empire's throne. So Cardinal Cajetan was instructed to meet with the monk at Augsburg to secure his recantation.

It was a fateful meeting. The two got entangled in the subtle problem of the relation of faith to sacrament, Cajetan upholding the primacy of the sacrament and Luther the primacy of faith. It ended in a deadlock, and Luther slipped away in the night of October 20, 1518, but not before dropping an ominous remark questioning papal authority. A few months later he issued an appeal for a general council.

Rome was still preoccupied with political matters, however, and the whole process against Luther was allowed to rest. An interim of slightly more than two years followed years during which Luther threw himself into a great public debate, riding the crest of a deep wave of public interest and support, hammering out in sermons, pamphlets, and debates with incredible energy a powerful

alternative to the Roman ecclesiastical and sacramental system-an alternative that made an enormous appeal to the German populace.

It involved a radically new conception of the visible Church which-against fifteen hundred years of Christian tradition-was declared to be not a divinely founded institution but simply a number of communities whose origin was human and historical. In this perspective the divine authority of the papacy and hierarchy simply collapsed, and with it the distinction between the laity and the priesthood. All of this was made clear in Luther's sensational debate at Leipzig in July 1519 with the leading German Catholic theologian John Eck, who cleverly got Luther to admit publicly that he no longer believed in the divine origin of papal primacy or the infallibility of general councils. For Luther "Scripture alone" was the supreme authority in religion-and henceforth this phrase became the rallying cry of all Protestants.

Rome now at last took full cognizance of the crisis, and the Pope nominated a commission to study Luther's writings. After the report of several commissions the Pope finally issued the bull, *Exsurge Domine* on June 15, 1520. While stopping short of excommunication, this bull condemned forty-one propositions drawn from Luther's writings as "heretical, scandalous, or offensive to pious ears," but without saying which were which. Incredibly, this fatefully imprecise document was to remain the only papal statement about Luther's teaching until the Council of Trent a

quarter of a century later. Eck brought the bull to Germany and found the populace ready to revolt if any attempt was made to squelch Luther.

In the meantime, Luther discovered that the Pope was anti-Christ—a charge that struck the popular imagination and his attacks on the Pope became increasingly coarse and frenetic. Showing his almost demonic talent as a propagandist, Luther exploited to the full the potential of the newly invented printing press, through which his voice could be heard in even the smallest German hamlet, and he now addressed himself to the whole German nation in three revolutionary manifestos. *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, and *On the Freedom of the Christian Man* represent his most important utterances as a reformer and were of the greatest importance in setting Germany ablaze.

To the Nobility called for a total reorganization of the Church after rehearsing many long-standing German grievances against the Curia. It called for an end to celibacy, masses for the dead, and other traditional practices. A reform, Luther insisted, could only be carried through if the Pope's powers were severely limited; his temporal power must therefore be abolished and his function reduced to a kind of spiritual overseer of Christendom. Each local Christian community should take charge of its own affairs and elect its own ministers and bishops.

The *Babylonian Captivity* definitively abandoned traditional Catholicism and outlined a new theory about the nature of the Church and its sacramental system. Rejecting the Catholic idea of apostolic succession, it proposed as a first principle the common priesthood of all believers, which they share in virtue of their baptism. No sacrament has efficacy apart from the faith of the recipient, and Luther recognized only two sacraments: baptism and the Eucharist. Ordination, for example, was merely a means of providing order for the assembly.

In this way the Lutheran proclamation gradually took shape. Its potent popular appeal lay in its simplicity, which appeared so obvious when compared with the sophisticated and complex Catholic system. The Gospel, the Lutherans said, was simple; it had nothing to do with pomp and ritual; it spoke of no difference between clergy and laity.

The new Lutheran liturgy reflected this belief in simplicity. It stripped the Catholic Mass down to its bare essentials, made it understandable by translating it into the language of the people, and emphasized participation by the whole congregation, who were taught to sing stirring new hymns, many of them composed by Luther himself. The sermon was now made the central feature of the service, as enthusiastic preachers ascended the pulpit and thrilled the hushed congregations, who felt they were hearing the word of God for the first time in their lives.

They were now invited to receive the wine as well as the bread of the Eucharist and to take them into their own hands.

On December 10, 1520, Luther, accompanied by his students and well-wishers, burned the Pope's bull *Exsurge* as well as a copy of the Canon Law. No action could have symbolized more appropriately Luther's irrevocable break with the papacy and the end of medieval Christendom.

It was now the Emperor's turn to act. One of the most stirring moments in the history of the Church and the world occurred when Luther, called before the estates of the realm at the Diet of Worms, April 18, 1521, before the Emperor and all the dignitaries of Germany, refused to recant because "his conscience was held captive to the Word of God."

This could have meant the burning of Luther as a heretic, like his forerunner Hus a century before at Constance. The recently elected Emperor, Charles V, had vowed to stake his life for the extirpation of the heresy. But Charles found the estates reluctant to concur and had to temporize. When he was finally able to take action in May, Luther was safely hidden away in a castle at Wartburg-where he devoted his time to one of his most lasting achievements, the translation of the entire Bible into German.

In spite of Charles's ban, Luther's movement continued to spread like wildfire. The free cities of Germany were the first to officially declare for the new

religion; they were followed by the electors. Obviously the motives of the individuals who chose one side or the other were mixed, and no historian can hope to determine the relative importance of the purely religious factor involved as against the nonreligious ones: greed for the wealth of the Church and desire to control all affairs in a given commonwealth without interference by the Pope. But it is interesting to note that at first the most active agents in the spread of Lutheranism were ex-priests and exmonks,

It is well to remember too that for a long time the lines were not drawn as sharply as we sometimes imagine. There was much confusion over the exact issues, and the multitude of alternatives was bewildering. Some felt that all could be settled if only certain ecclesiastical abuses were straightened out. Others pointed to the theological disagreements as crucial but could not agree on their relative importance. The papal bull *Exsurge* seemed to assert that Luther's main errors concerned penance and indulgences, but Erasmus considered free will the main issue. The humanist scholar Melancthon was persuaded at Augsburg in 1520 that unity could be restored if only priests were allowed to marry and the chalice given back to the laity. Luther himself maintained that it was all about the proper understanding of Christ. And where did justification by faith alone fit in? Many who accepted Luther's understanding of the Gospel didn't feel it necessary to reject the old Church. Papal primacy, for instance, was still highly controversial within the Roman

Church itself. Moreover, though Luther translated the Mass into German, he was conservative about introducing other changes. The prince bishops of Germany could give little leadership toward clarifying matters. Only a general council could have done this, and the Curia was still radically opposed to this.

As late as 1530 there was still general optimism about the possibility of reconciliation. Charles scheduled a diet for Augsburg for that year, and Melancthon, Luther's closest associate, who still considered himself a Catholic, drew up a confession, still the official basis of Lutheranism, which indicated only accidental differences with traditional Catholicism. But the exigencies of practical life soon proved decisive-whatever individual reformers may have thought about the exact relation of the movement to the old faith.

Lutheranizing priests began to marry. Decisions had to be made about ecclesiastical practices and structures, ministers had to be trained and new congregations organized, since many felt that the ethical and religious principles of Luther could be preserved and put into practice only by creating new ecclesiastical structures. And so slowly, haphazardly, new Protestant congregations were set up that stood in opposition to the old parishes.

Inevitably the leadership devolved on the ministers, who in spite of Luther's theory of the priesthood of all believers, acted as a distinct clergy and soon clericalized his Church along the same lines as the old.

Of great importance for the success of Protestant consolidation was the absence of Charles V during these years-1521 to 1530-for Charles was heavily involved in Spanish political affairs. So Germany was left like a pilotless ship at one of the most critical points of her history-until the religious schism developed to a stage beyond repair.

The fatal step was taken when both sides began to organize militarily. Chief among the factors was the Peasants' Revolt (1524-26). Many of the princes saw this revolt as an expression of Lutheran principles, and hence their suppression of the peasants could be interpreted as aimed at the suppression of Lutheranism as well. Recourse to arms to settle the issue was thus introduced into the struggle. The Protestant princes organized into the military Schmalkald League in 1531, and political and military factors began to dominate the great debate.

In his *Interim of Nuremberg* (1532) Charles V officially recognized the Schmalkald League. This Emperor, whose life spanned the whole period of the German Reformation, was the most devoted of all the servants of the Roman Church and-once awakened to the full gravity of the crisis-the most determined to save it. Beyond all Catholics of the time, including the Popes, he spent himself without measure in the effort to restore the medieval, universal, and unified Christendom.

For twenty years after the *Interim of Nuremberg* he alternated between the use of force and the use of theological conferences to this end. The high-water mark of

dialogue was reached at Regensburg in 1541, when Protestants and Catholics came very close to agreement. The Protestants would have been satisfied with four main concessions: marriage of the clergy, communion in both forms, freedom to teach the Real Presence without defining its manner as transubstantiation, and freedom from papal jurisdiction as distinct from recognition of papal primacy. But Rome would not yield. Political reasons also played their part in Regensburg's failure. French interests opposed an agreement; so did the two Bavarian dukes, and the Pope himself was in part motivated by fear of any increase of imperial power. The complete failure of Charles's policy was registered in the Peace of Augsburg (1555), which sealed the schism and legally recognized in Germany both the Lutheran confession and the Catholic faith.

Luther's ideas winged their way to the four corners of Europe and found a receptive audience everywhere. They were soon taken up by enthusiasts who added their own innovations and then became the agents of ecclesiastical revolution in their own backyard. The success or failure of their effort depended very much on the attitude taken by their government. In fact, nowhere in Europe did a settlement in favor of Protestantism occur where the monarch was hostile to the new Gospel.

The outstanding example of this decisive influence of the monarch on the course of the Reformation was in England.

Henry VIII (d. 1547) was himself a staunch advocate of Catholicism, and in spite of his schism with the Pope over his divorce, he wanted England to remain Catholic. But under his son Edward VI (d. 1553), Protestantism enjoyed a definite triumph, with Parliament's imposition of the *Book of Common Prayer* and *The Forty-two Articles*-later reduced to *The Thirty-nine Articles*-that form the basis of the faith of the Church of England. Mary Tudor's rule (1553-58) was too short for her to succeed in her aim of restoring Catholicism. Her stepsister Elizabeth (d. 1603), who followed her, was motivated more by political than religious considerations and devised a settlement that re-established a moderate Protestantism; it was couched in terminology of studied ambiguity that retained much from the Catholic past, including episcopal organization of the Church, for example.

The first important division in the ranks of the Protestants occurred over the interpretation of Holy Communion. Zwingli (d. 1531), the priest who brought the Reformation to Switzerland, found himself at odds with Luther over the words of Scripture, "This is my body." In spite of his rejection of transubstantiation, Luther still retained the traditional interpretation, which said that Jesus was really present in the bread and wine by a bodily and objective presence not dependent upon subjective feelings and considerations. Zwingli, on the other hand, asserted a mere memorial presence of Jesus in the sharing of the bread and wine. A colloquy between the two leaders at Marburg in October 1529 failed to bring

agreement and confirmed the disquieting fact that the principle-Scripture alone-might not be sufficient to maintain a consensus. Theologically Protestantism had to admit that it was a house divided, and so it was to remain during the succeeding centuries.

The divisions, however, have often been exaggerated. Actually, only three or four main types emerged: the Lutheran; the sectarians or radicals, which would include the Anabaptists, Quakers, and Baptists; the anti-Trinitarian and rational pietists who emphasized critical inquiry as well as mystical faith; and finally the Calvinists.

It was Calvinism that was to become the dominant international form of Protestantism; only Germany and Scandinavia preferred Lutheranism. Most of the other countries that turned Protestant accepted Calvinism or something close to it. Its founder, John Calvin, ranks with Luther as one of the other giants of the Reformation. Calvin's life work, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, provided Protestants with a systematic theological exposition of their faith. Its clarity, logical cogency, and comprehensiveness secured for it incomparable authority among Protestants and contributed greatly to the extraordinary dynamism that enabled Calvinism to conquer a large portion of Christendom.