

About this point Maximillian died (28 June 1519) and the electors met to select his successor. Henry VIII wanted the title but Europeans from the continent were not in his favor. The German electors looked for someone who would be disposed towards Germany but none of them was strong enough (had enough votes) and when the die was cast it fell to Charles V in spite of the opposition of the papacy, the doubt of the Germans, and the self-will ideas of the English. Charles did not immediately come to the position but secured the inside track. His education was in the Netherlands, he was loyal to the church, but expressive of interest in reform and while young, aroused the suspicion of the papacy. Much of his life was spent avoiding the endless intrigues of the popes, the King of France and a host of less worthy persons!

The Leipzig Debate, June-July 1519

The Leipzig Debate

Debates usually do not solve issues and this one was no exception. It did serve to clear the air and made certain points apparent to Luther that he might otherwise have missed. In some ways it is the turning point in his action and certainly pointed up to the institution the need for some decisive bidding.

Following the publication of the Theses (1517) there had been no severe repression but there had been opposition both ecclesiastically and academically...as well as a lot of support. Leader of the academic/theologic opposition was Johan Maier of Eck...and hence he is popularly called "Eck" after the town of his residence. Eck was a debater, a learned humanist of the Roman persuasion, a disputant of some authority and a man not totally committed to the purgatorial indulgence policy himself...but committed to the church and its order. As his field of service was in Ducal Saxony...where Luther was forbidden to go, he had no opportunity to attack Luther personally but did call for debate on the issue. The debate was answered by Carlstadt, Luther's ambitious disciple, and he agreed to meet Eck and debate the character, merit and force of the Theses. Luther gained permission to come with Carlstadt so long as he did not speak and thus he could not be a combatant. But in the mind of Eck, Luther, not Carlstadt, was the real opponent. Eck, I think, had perceived that Luther himself had moved farther from the institution than he realized and that his