

Stubner brothers, Nicholas Storch, Nicholas von Amsdorf, etc., all competent enough at making mayhem although both Carlstadt and Amsdorf had a better grip on theology and the real issues. Frederick was beside himself and Melancthon, the rising scholar, did not know what to do. The feeling was that public plunder with abuse of persons, etc., was the best way to overthrow the papal yoke, but Frederick feared it more likely would bring the armies of the Empire! Luther, hearing of the state of affairs, felt compelled to leave the Wartburg and in March of 1522 he was preaching in Wittenberg...not with the approval of Frederick, but at the insistence of Luther. His preaching did, indeed, bring order and consolidated the city but it alienated him from Carlstadt and filled Luther with a particular distrust for those who would defy the "law" as constituted. Radical revolutionaries would become one of his great objections and the fact that some of these were of various anabaptist persuasions would make him even more suspicious of that element.

The separation of Luther and Carlstadt is another of those personal tragedies common in church history. When Luther did not return to Wittenberg following the Diet of Worms, Carlstadt assumed himself to be in charge. An intemperate person by nature, he allowed himself to be dominated by radicals. On Luther's return he was irritated at his teacher's prominence and resented his presence. Luther, in turn, did not mince words and used little tack in rebuffing Carlstadt. The result was a permanent cleavage and a good many many bitter accusations and arguments. In Carlstadt's case it is a clear example of preferring personal attainment to the cause. With Luther it is a classic case of apathetic sympathy that resulted in resentment and self-righteousness.

Luther was a moderate reformer...but a reformer. His ideas evolved during this time but he was always a "law and order" man. He was wise enough to know that radicalism produces an eventual adverse reaction that worsens a situation. But moderate men in their expressions are suspected by the more radical elements of not having real courage. It is a strange thing that successful reformation cannot be fostered by compromisers but will not be healthfully achieved by radicals. A strong conviction balanced with good sense and historical reality seems to be the lasting combination for reform. Luther, and some others, possessed these things effectively.