

Political/
Religious
Events

Political/Religious Events in the Interim

A number of items of interest are turned up during the events of the Schmalkaldic wars.

The Muenster Trials (1533-1535)

The Muenster theocracy is a dark day in the anabaptist history which most would prefer to forget. (We discuss the movement later in the syllabus) In a nutshell it was the work of Jan Matthys who taught that he was Enoch, returned, and J. Derkelsen who proclaimed himself king of the New Jerusalem which was Muenster. They and their followers drove out the bishop and secured the city for themselves. They reinstated polygamy and a number of other innovations that made them as unpopular with the Lutherans as with the Romanists. Eventually overthrown, the popularity of their aim and intention was crushed and the movement moved elsewhere. It should be noted that these men were hardly typical of what we should expect in this group but it was a wide group that, like others, had a lunatic fringe that got much of the headlines. Radical anabaptists were common and the extremists are those who get the press!

Luther's Continuing Life

Luther spent a lot of this period at Coburg writing commentaries, messages, etc. He was plagued by failing health but continued active both in travel and in preaching. His family was an encouragement to him but the defection of some brethren troubled him as much as did the emperor. His death came in 1546, on the 18th of February.

The political foibles of Charles V

We have touched on some of these on the previous pages. Charles would seek to placate the evangelicals at conferences in Hagenau, Worms, Regensburg, etc. (1540-41) but would make no real concessions and so was turned to war. Philip's situation (the big-amy) in 1541 gave him a moral edge but when the Turks attacked in 1544 and when Francis I attacked in 1545, he was called away from the business. You can see, if you put these paragraphs together, what a frustrating experience Charles had in trying to deal with the Reformation.

The Spread of Lutheranism

Briefly speaking, Luther's ideas continued to march in northern and eastern Germany. By 1539