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The Hapsburg and the Heretics: An Examination of Charles V's

Failure to Act Militarily Against the Protestant

Threat (1519-1556)

Christian Raul Kemp

A selected project submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

The Hapsburg and the Heretics: An Examination of Charles V's
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Master of Arts

This thesis examines Charles V's inability to take decisive military action against the Protestant threat in Germany before 1546. It treats modern historiography on Charles V in Germany. The thesis offers a new theory concerning religious motivation for the delay. Charles was a man of deep and devoted faith in the Catholic Church and consequently, was unable to accept the possibility that any individual would doubt or abandon that persuasion without calculated intention or gross error.

Charles was influenced by the Humanistic cries for reform in his age. As a result, Charles, a strong advocate for reform, declined military action before a meaningful outlet to address reforms and air grievances could be convened. But Charles was influenced by tradition, particularly the universality of faith and political unity of Christendom that could save the Church from the heretic and the Turk. Charles also felt himself personally responsible to avoid all conflicts that might endanger unity by creating a schism within Christendom.

The evidence will be drawn both from the emperor's own words and deeds derived from primary source material and personal correspondence of Charles V between himself and those persons most likely have intimate knowledge of Charles's own thoughts. These include his personal advisors, Gattinara and Granvelle, and family members: Philip, his son, Mary, his sister, and Ferdinand, his brother. The unpublicized and private correspondence is less likely to be tainted by rhetoric and propaganda than are public declarations and correspondence. Instances not covered by these will be based on an interpretation of Charles's deeds. This thesis will therefore establish Charles's decisions regarding the Protestants in the context of his own convictions.

Keywords: Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, Reformation, Schmalkaldic League, Germany, religion, diet, prince, papal council, Protestant, faith, Worms, Augsburg, war, John Frederick of Saxony, Philip of Hessen, Maurice of Saxony, Albrecht Alciabiades, *cuius regio eius religio*

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CHAPTER I

“I have therefore resolved to stake upon this cause all my dominions, my friends, my body and my blood, my life and soul.”

-The Emperor’s Declaration of Policy at the Diet of Worms, 19 April 1521.

Thousands of volumes, articles, and other scholarly contributions in many languages and historical traditions have been composed about the life and times of Charles V. Given his domination of the early modern Western world, the existence of such a record is rather unremarkable.

This thesis will begin with an examination of general historiographical trends covering the major areas of Charles’s life. It will then turn to more specific trends related to the topic of this thesis. The treatment will focus on German and English language scholarship and draw from the insights of Alfred Kohler¹ and C. Scott Dixon’s² historiographical compendium of Charles V. This background should allow the reader to view this thesis in the context of the larger historical discussion.

General Historiography of Charles V

The historical record of Charles V begins with the works of his contemporaries nearly five hundred years ago, within the period 1550-1610. In his work, *Karl V. in der*

¹ Alfred Kohler, “Karl V. In der deutschsprachigen Historiographie,” in *The Histories of Emperor Charles V.*, ed. C. Scott Dixon and Martina Fuchs (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 2005), 17-29.

² C. Scott Dixon, “Ideas of Empire: Charles V and his Reign in British Historical Thought,” in *The Histories of Emperor Charles V.*, 159-190.

deutschsprachigen Historiographie, Alfred Kohler references specific works most important to an understanding of the development of the present conversation, starting with the *Memoirs of the Emperor Charles V*, known as his “Commentaries”, which he himself dictated in the year 1550 on his way from Cologne to Speyer.³ Peter Rassow states that Charles intended this work to make known, “to describe[,] and proclaim his deeds and motives in officially commissioned historiographies...”⁴ This work is primarily an attempt by Charles, according to Kohler, to equate his self and his deeds with the great Caesar of antiquity. The “Commentaries” have therefore been relegated to comparative irrelevance as a reliable source for the modern scholar, even after its translation from the Portuguese in 1862.⁵

Even after 1610 and until 1800, historiography of Charles can be categorized as largely political and religious propaganda reflecting the wishes and historical views of the dynastic patrons who commissioned them. These works often resemble either mythical hero worship or litanies of hatred. The former type of history is best illustrated by “Historica de la vida y hechos de emperador Carlos V,” written by Prudencio de Sandoval⁶ and commissioned by Philip II as a “Glorification of his Father.”⁷ This work was the definitive history, particularly in Spain, of Charles V, from its first completion in 1604 until the 19th century.⁸ It painted the picture of an epic hero representing the paradigm of all that was mighty, good, and strong in the 16th century, an image which has complicated efforts to uncover the historical Charles V.

³ Kohler, “Historiographie,” 17.

⁴ Peter Rassow, “Das Bild Karl V. im Wandel der Jahrhunderte,” in *Karl V. Der Kaiser under seine Zeit*, ed. Peter Rassow and Fritz Schalk (Köln: Graz 1960), 4. “seine Taten und deren Motive von amtlich bestellten Historiographen zu beschreiben und der Öffentlichkeit kundtun zu lassen.”

⁵ Kohler, “Historiographie,” 18.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁷ “Glorifizierung seines Vaters”

⁸ Kohler, “Historiographie,” 18.

Similar works on Charles made their appearance throughout Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries. The goals of the works varied from nation to nation according to the needs of the ruling class. For instance, histories from this period emanating from France, Hungary, the Low Countries, England, and even the Ottoman Empire emphasize an aristocratic view of the Hapsburg dynasty, particularly regarding ambitions. These perceptions could relate directly to Hapsburg actions in the time of Charles, or at the time of historical composition, but remain independent from more modern historical constructions in principle and methodology.

David Potter, in *The Emperor Charles V in the French Historical Tradition*, repeatedly points out that throughout the 17th and 18th centuries Charles was most commonly viewed by French historians as a pathetic and weak monarch. Powerful, but reckless, Charles was depicted as heartless, opportunistic, and even bloodthirsty and was ultimately marginalized to little more than a bitter enemy of France and its Valois interests.⁹ Meanwhile C. Scott Dixon, in *Ideas of Empire: Charles V and his reign in British historical thought*, informs us of the tendency that British historians had to see Charles in light of the aggressions toward England by his son Philip, in the name of the Papacy and the Catholic faith.¹⁰

Other histories of note from these centuries include a Hungarian attempt to portray Charles V as the battling savior of Christianity, because of Hungarian proximity to the Turks and the Ottoman Empire.¹¹ Scandinavian historiography investigates Charles's posthumous influence over the struggle between Protestants and Catholics in the 30 Years War.¹² In the Low Countries, historians spent the period from 1600-1800 either indulging the heroic depiction in

⁹ David Potter, "The Emperor Charles V in the French Historical Tradition," in *The Histories of Emperor Charles V*, 135-59.

¹⁰ Dixon, "Ideas of Empire," in *The Histories of Emperor Charles V.*, 159-90.

¹¹ Zoltan Korpas, "The History of Charles V in Hungary: The Unavailable Subject of Hope," in *The Histories of Emperor Charles V*, 203-37.

¹² Jason Lavery, "Charles V and Scandinavian Historiography," in *The Histories of Charles V*, 191-203.

Belgium, or portraying Charles as the home grown hero turned villain because of Holland's struggle for independence against the Hapsburg dynasty during the reign of Philip.¹³ Even Ottoman historians indulged in writing historical accounts in which Charles plays the un-exalted role of rival to Suleiman the Great.¹⁴

While each of these historical traditions provides a view of Charles, none imparts much historical analysis. Nothing is said of Charles's motives or actions, nor is any greater understanding of Charles's place in the historical context given. They are chronicles of deeds shaded by bias and composed for propaganda rather than for pure historical value.¹⁵

The historical production of the 19th century was dominated by nationalistic history and attempts to account for Charles V and his reign within the context of a destined popular sovereignty and self-determination. Most notably, in Spain, this remained the *raison d'être* of most Charles V histories well into the 20th century. In that nation, Charles was transformed from mythical hero to foreign despoiler of the Spanish People, responsible for subjecting the Spanish Nation to economic and political ruin as a result of his wars and vast expenditures.¹⁶ These works showed no more history and no less propaganda than those that had preceded them.

As Dixon described it, while certain advances were taking place, the history of this period, if not completely absorbed in national consciousness, was tainted by infusions of Romantic literature and in the case of Germany, confessional polemic. Alfred Kohler further condemns the Protestant historians in the 19th century German tradition for reducing historical

¹³ Raymond Fagel, "A Broken Portrait of the Emperor: Charles in Holland and Belgium," in *The Histories of Emperor Charles V*, 63-91.

¹⁴ Marlene Kurz, "Karl V. in der osmanischen Historiographie," in *The Histories of Emperor Charles V*, 275-93.

¹⁵ C. Scott Dixon puts it most succinctly with his description of what is arguably the period's most important work in English, Stirling's 1852 work, *The Cloister Life of The Emperor Charles the Fifth*. "[It] was a curious mix of prose and scholarly analysis." Dixon, "Ideas of Empire," in *The Histories of Emperor Charles V.*, 181.

¹⁶ Jose Martinez Millan, "Historiographie Karls V. in Spanien," in *The Histories of Emperor Charles V*, 91-115.

investigations of Charles and his relationship with the German states to simply the German Reformation as a proto-nationalist movement; Kohler claims historians of the period falsely co-opted Protestantism as a homogeneous campaign for popular self-determination and vilified Charles without reasonable historical grounds.¹⁷ According to Kohler, Ranke, for all his achievements, remained, like his contemporaries Alphons Dopsch, Max Weber, and Friedrich Meinecke, tied to the historically debilitating “confessional polemic.”¹⁸

The turning point in historiography dealing with the reign of Charles V began in the 1930s with the work of Karl Brandi and continued in the 1950s with Peter Rassow. According to Kohler’s article “Karl V. in der deutschsprachigen Historiographie,” these were the first to break away from the confessional polemic of the 19th century and write a truly modern history of Charles V. “The merit in the extensive investigations of Karl Brandi and Peter Rassow lies, above all, in overcoming the Confessional Polemic of the 18th century.”¹⁹

Brandi receives praise from Kohler for the quality of his work. Not only did Karl Brandi take it upon himself to conduct an in-depth analysis of the extant primary source material, but also took the time to explore the motives of Charles’s actions and their ramifications.²⁰ This quality is evident both in the detail and the construction of arguments. Furthermore, a great number of Brandi’s postulations as to the motives of Charles V, including those dealing with finances, foreign hostility, and diplomatic relations across vast territory, have become integral to every work on Charles written in English or German since 1937. Brandi concludes that Charles failed because he was a medieval ruler trapped in the complexities of the modern era. The work

¹⁷ Kohler, “Historiographie,” 19.

¹⁸ Ibid., 20.

¹⁹ Ibid., 20. “Das Verdienst der umfangreichen Forschungen von Karl Brandi and Peter Rassow liegt vor allem in der Überwindung der konfessionellen Polemik des 19. Jahrhunderts.”

²⁰ Ibid., 19.

of Karl Brandi is commonly referred to as one of the seminal works on Charles V within the modern historiography.

Brandi's work was, however, influenced by the time in which he wrote. One can clearly recognize the 19th century Protestant polemic affecting the tenor of his work as well, most apparently in his criticism of Charles for his failure to recognize the benefit of relenting to Protestantism. Brandi implies that Charles rejected this in favor of his dynastic and traditional ideals as a man of the medieval era, ill-equipped to pursue or cope with the challenges and complexities of Early Modern European politics. According to Brandi's research, this contributed to Charles's ultimate failure. These assertions have since been challenged by works of modern historians who dismiss them.

Stressing imperial organization over dynastic tradition, Peter Rassow was able to compose a more modern and analytical treatment of Charles in 1957.²¹ *Karl V. Der letzte Kaiser des Mittelalters*, despite continuing the traditional, Romantic view of Charles as the last of the medieval kings, examines Charles's reign through his struggles with France after the outcome of the heavily disputed Imperial Election of 1519.²² This view is very German-centered with regard to the Hapsburg-Valois Rivalry, but is an original view with some merit. Heinrich Lutz soon followed it with a contribution of his own in 1968 entitled, *Kaiser Karl V., Frankreich und das Reich*. Both Rassow and Lutz argue that the French sought hegemony of their own in accordance with Imperial ideals.²³ Rassow further states that Charles sought to unify his empire by applying these ideals across his vast European domains.²⁴

²¹ Kohler, "Historiographie," 19-20.

²² Ibid., 19-20.

²³ Ibid., 20-21.

²⁴ Peter Rassow, *Karl V. der letzte Kaiser des Mittelalters* (Goettingen: Hans Hansen-Schmidt Musterkarten GmbH,

The German-centric view was groundbreaking in modern German historical scholarship and has been followed by a number of other important contributions, including especially what Kohler has designated the Central European Approach. This approach, for the purposes of this thesis the German and English traditions, deals with the aspects of Charles's reign associated with the internal development of Germany, rather than the Hapsburg-Valois Conflict.²⁵

Among the significant works of the later 20th century are those of Alfred Kohler and Harold Kleinschmidt. They and many others have investigated at length the dynastic ambitions and political motivations within the Holy Roman Empire,²⁶ particularly in the Hapsburg administration of complex and widely distributed realms and local agendas.²⁷ Franz Bosbach, Franz Roemer, Hans-Joachim Koenig and many others, discuss such themes as Charles's self-propagandizing, his special political and psychological relationship with the Holy Roman Empire, and his Imperial policy with regard to finances and communication within his realms.²⁸

From the 1930s to the present, English and American historians, despite Kohler's assertion that the analysis of Charles must be the province of (continental) European historians,²⁹ have also influenced the historiography of the Emperor. The first of these is Sir Geoffrey Elton, whose 1963 work, *Reformation Europe 1517-1559*, is crucial for English-speaking historians, on par with Karl Brandi. Elton's work owes a great deal to Brandi's, which by virtue of a translation by C.V. Wedgwood in 1939 has also become available in English.³⁰ Elton also embraces

1957).

²⁵ Dixon, ed., *Histories of Emperor Charles V*, 11.

²⁶ Harald Kleinschmidt, *Charles V: The World Emperor* (Sparkford: J. H. Haynes & Co., 2004).

²⁷ Alfred Kohler, *Karl V. 1500-1558: Eine Biographie* (München: C. H. Beck, 1999).

²⁸ Kohler, "Historiographie," 23.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁰ Dixon, "Ideas of Empire," 187.

Brandi's notion of Charles as the last of the medieval emperors, to be expected given Elton's closer proximity to Brandi than to more recent scholarship, which challenges the claim.³¹

Elton's work differentiated itself from Brandi's and other German Scholarship by refusing to see Charles's motivations and failures as over-ambition or the results of historical trends. Unlike Brandi, who sees Charles as a medieval king overwhelmed by modern politics, Elton depicts Charles as an intelligent, resourceful, and effective monarch.³² This assertion has been demonstrated many times as modern researchers have found Charles to be a very talented and capable politician.

Dixon highlights Elton's assertion that while Charles was effective, he lacked the passion or vision of a truly great king.³³ While rejecting religious motivations for Charles's actions, Elton concludes that Charles, unlike his contemporaries, was a man of principle and not as given to the raw opportunistic pursuit of power and ambition as many of his contemporaries.³⁴

After, as Dixon says, "meticulous"³⁵ investigation, Elton concludes that Charles failed in his bid for a universal empire because of overextension and lack of resources.³⁶ The methodology and conclusion mark a more thorough analysis of Charles's financial and territorial concerns than Brandi provides and is reminiscent of James Tracy's *Impresario of War*.

James Tracy develops an analysis of the interdependence of "finance, statecraft, and parliamentary politics" to provide an explanation for Charles's reign, its motives, and its

³¹ Dixon, "Ideas of Empire," 189.

³² G.R. Elton, *Reformation Europe, 1517-1559* (Oxford: HarperCollins, 1963), 17.

³³ Dixon, "Ideas of Empire," 188.

³⁴ Elton, *Reformation Europe*, 174.

³⁵ Dixon, "Ideas of Empire," 188.

³⁶ Elton, *Reformation Europe*, 193.

results.³⁷ Tracy's work demonstrates that Elton has exercised great influence over subsequent efforts to explain the reign of Charles V and its outcomes, and that successful and meaningful analysis of the Emperor Charles V can be made outside of Europe.

Regarding British and American scholarship, Dixon writes that these "works tend toward synthesis rather than original interpretation."³⁸ Many borrow liberally from the works of Brandi, Elton, and Tracy. In Dixon's opinion, the most useful examples are those composed by Martin Rady in 1988³⁹ and William Maltby in 2002.⁴⁰ These works are useful guides to the complexities inherent to the study of Charles V, but they lack meaningful independent contribution.

Historiography of Charles and the Protestant Threat in Germany

Charles's greatest failure has generally been seen as his inability to take decisive military action in time to cripple or at least impede the Protestant Reformation before the outbreak of the Schmalkaldic War in 1546.⁴¹ That is the topic to which we now turn and which this thesis wishes to treat. The general historiography declares that the Protestant schism was established, in part, as a result of Charles's early inaction. However, there is no complete explanation as to why Charles took until 1546 to act.

This thesis will argue that religious motives,⁴² conspicuously absent from most histories,

³⁷ Dixon, "Ideas of Empire," 188.

³⁸ Ibid., 159-90.

³⁹ Martin Rady, *The Emperor Charles V* (New York: Longman, 1988).

⁴⁰ William Maltby, *The Reign of Charles V* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

⁴¹ Maltby, *Reign*, 20.

⁴² In the context of this thesis, religious or faith-based motives are those related to words and deeds that may be interpreted to exceed what would have been required of a 16th century ruler to maintain the fabric of social order.

played a crucial role in Charles's delay. Let us first review, however, those interpretations that have been offered.

Charles V, with all of his many lands, dominions, and wealth, did not make good on his promise at the Diet of Worms (1521) to promote decisive military action against the Protestant heretics. Historians have presented three types of explanation to explain this inaction: financial, geographic/dynastic, and strategic/military.

The financial explanation refers to the idea that Charles's hesitation in dealing with the Protestants was the natural outcome of difficulties encountered in his attempts to obtain resources. The geographic/dynastic explanation asserts that Charles's failure to act against the Protestants was the result of priorities being divided between a large number of disparate territories and dynastic interests; according to this explanation, Germany took a back seat to Spain and the Low Countries. Finally, the strategic/military explanation presents Charles's indecision as the result of hostile foreign or domestic enemies, such as the Turks, French, Dutch, or even the Schmalkaldic League itself. Although each historian might favor one theory over another, all use some combination of the three to form their conclusion.

Financial Explanations

The greatest proponent of financial explanations for Charles's delay is James Tracy. Tracy provides the most developed financial explanations, in *Impresario of War*. Other historians including Maltby, Rady, Kohler, Kleinschmidt, Brandi, and more minor authors like Seibt, Kidd, Bradford and Schulin, have presented similar financial explanations, but not with Tracy's detail. According to Tracy, Charles, though wealthy in lands and gold, had too many financial

obligations for the funds available. Charles simply did not have enough money to deal with the simultaneous security of his realms.⁴³ During his reign over the largest realm of a Western monarch since Charlemagne,⁴⁴ Charles dealt with threats from a number of enemies, both foreign and domestic, including the Turks, the French, and the Schmalkladic League.

While Charles had a need to prioritize his expenditures, historians place Germany too low on that list of priorities, despite substantial evidence to the contrary. Tracy and others note that Charles gave first financial priority to those lands most valuable as a tax base. It is Tracy's contention that Charles failed to use force to settle the German problem because the raids of Muslim corsairs threatened the shipping of his higher paying tax districts, primarily those in Italy and Spain.⁴⁵ Germany, as a low-yielding district,⁴⁶ was neglected in order to fund three expeditions against the Turk, including a defensive navy under the command of Andrea Doria,⁴⁷ and Charles's own campaigns against Tunis in 1534-5⁴⁸ and Algiers in 1541.⁴⁹

The ruinous costs of Charles's Italian campaigns, prior to the Peace of Cambrai (1529),⁵⁰ are cited as preventing Charles from taking military action against the Protestants during a relatively peaceful period (1530-32).⁵¹ However, during this same period, Germany received a fair share of imperial monies, while other, more vital tax bases were allowed to fend for themselves. Charles is known to have expended more on campaigns occurring within Germany

⁴³ James Tracy, *Emperor Charles V: Impresario of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 305-306.

⁴⁴ Harald Kleinschmidt, *Charles V: The World Emperor* (Sparkford: J. H. Haynes & Co., 2004), 54-57.

⁴⁵ Tracy, *Impresario*, 134-35.

⁴⁶ Karl Brandi, *The Emperor Charles V* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), 461.

⁴⁷ Tracy, *Impresario*, 151.

⁴⁸ Maltby, *Reign*, 46.

⁴⁹ Tracy, *Impresario*, 180.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 297.

between the years 1543 and 1552 (9,420,181 Spanish ducats) than on campaigns outside of Germany between 1529 and 1541 (5,671,294 Spanish ducats).⁵² Charles spent more on the First Schmalkaldic War, (3,124,316 Spanish Ducats),⁵³ than any other war during his reign except, perhaps, the Second Schmalkaldic War.⁵⁴ Charles provided funding for the Schmalkaldic Wars, though he often allowed his realms to provide for their own defense, even in the face of a French invasion of the Low Countries in 1537.⁵⁵

While many historians contend that Charles lacked the funds to deal with the Protestants before 1546, it can be demonstrated that Charles had just as many if not more financial obligations in that year as any other. The year 1544 brought the end of a dangerous and costly confrontation with the King of France and the Duke of Cleves. This confrontation was no less detrimental, in a financial sense, to Charles's ability to take on Germany and its rebels than the Italian campaigns had been nearly 20 years earlier.⁵⁶

In addition to the cost of defense, the maintenance of royal households and lands, employment of an army of diplomats and advisors, money for political bribes, embassies, and the purchase of allies, as well as dowries, were a strain on funds. The extant historiography offers literally thousands of pages full of such examples demanding the expenditure of Hapsburg monies and the access to Hapsburg lines of credit. It is the calculation of James Tracy that, from 1519-1553, Charles drew from his territorial holdings in the Low Countries, Italy, and Spain,

⁵² Tracy, *Impressario*, 247, table 2.2, 182, table 8.1.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 225

⁵⁵ Brandi, *Emperor*, 384

⁵⁶ Tracy, *Impresario*, 187.

25,491,325 Spanish Ducats, and spent the majority,⁵⁷ about 15,000,000 ducats, exclusively on his various campaigns to provide security for his empire between 1529-1552.⁵⁸ Additionally, consideration of Charles's other expenses over the course of his nearly 40 year reign (1519-1556) leaves ample evidence for their staggering cost, particularly when it is observed that Charles left his son Philip with nearly 29,000,000 ducats in unpaid debts in 1556.⁵⁹

Historians contend that windfalls or boons (unexpected alternative sources of income), as opposed to revenue alone, allowed Charles the financial freedom in the mid 1540s to take military action against his enemies in Germany. The first windfall was a grant from the Pope, in 1545 for 100,000 ducats cash and a 1,000,000 in promised revenues from church lands,⁶⁰ the second a levy from Naples and Sicily of 1,359,810 ducats in 1544,⁶¹ and the third a loan from the Fugger banking family of Augsburg for 500,000 ducats in advance of an unpaid and seemingly exhausted credit line.⁶² Initially these claims of financial opportunity are appealing. However, if these boons and windfalls are common, as these same historians suggest, why did Charles take so long to use them in Germany?

A number of additional monetary infusions from alternative sources supplemented the income of Charles at almost every point in his reign. This allowed him to take desired actions, even when normal revenues from taxation ran low. These alternate sources include fund raisers, forced loans,⁶³ the sale of offices of state,⁶⁴ excise taxes,⁶⁵ dowries,⁶⁶ unpaid loans as “fictive

⁵⁷ Tracy, *Impresario*, 250, table 3.1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 182, table 8.1.

⁵⁹ Rady, *Charles V*, 69.

⁶⁰ Brandi, *Emperor*, 528.

⁶¹ Tracy, *Impresario*, 201.

⁶² Rady, *Charles V*, 71. Such boons were common throughout his reign in all his territories and especially in Spain.

⁶³ Tracy, *Impresario*, 286.

advances in a new contract,⁶⁷ repudiation of debts,⁶⁸ suspension of short term debt,⁶⁹ parliamentary subsidies,⁷⁰ the mortgage of property (Moluccas in 1529),⁷¹ the sale of rights to collect funds from ecclesiastical property,⁷² gold and silver shipments from the New World,⁷³ and royal sequesters of that same treasure.⁷⁴ Other unsought funds came to Charles, including coronation subsidies from the Castilian Cortes in 1529-1530,⁷⁵ the dowry collected on his wife,⁷⁶ the formal recognition of his son Phillip's birth, which paid over 500,000 ducats,⁷⁷ the 1,200,000 ducats he gained from the Treaty of Cambrai (1529)⁷⁸ and the 1,260,000 ducats of Peruvian gold delivered to Charles from 1533-4⁷⁹ as well as the 2,000,000 ducats seized from the defeat of the Protestant rebels in 1550.⁸⁰ In all, between the years 1529 and 1541, Charles covered 28.4 % of

⁶⁴ Tracy, *Impresario*, 262.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 265.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 308-9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 308.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 296.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 210.

⁷³ Brandi, *Emperor*, 169.

⁷⁴ Tracy, *Impresario*, 200.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 271.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 202-3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 292.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 155-6.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 242.

his campaign expenses from non-tax revenue.⁸¹ From 1543-1552, Charles covered 15.2% of his campaign expenses from additional revenue.⁸² This does not include the various offers of military and financial aid made by the popes between 1521 and 1545, which Charles declined.⁸³

With so many rich lands and sources of income, Charles had an inexhaustible supply of wealth. For example, Charles was able to prepare for the First Schmalkaldic War (his most expensive conflict) soon after a war in 1544 had bankrupted his opponent, the French king.⁸⁴ The evidence suggests that Charles got exactly what he needed, when he needed it, no matter what his financial standing. It is the consensus of historians that he did so with little regard for the future economic stability of his empire.⁸⁵ Money was no issue.

Martin Rady declared that Charles had continuous access to “substantial resources.”⁸⁶ Charles’s staggering wealth and vast empire allowed his heir Philip to raise 8,000,000 ducats, primarily from his Spanish possessions, in just over 6 years from 1589-1595,⁸⁷ despite the 29,000,000 ducats of debt and 1,521 unpaid loans.⁸⁸ These facts illustrate the deficiencies of a purely financial argument to explain Charles’s military inaction in Germany. If finances had been the only deterrent of military action, it would not have taken Charles 20 years to act.

⁸¹ Tracy, *Impresario*, 182.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 247.

⁸³ Brandi, *Emperor*, 565.

⁸⁴ Tracy, *Impresario*, 207.

⁸⁵ Brandi, *Emperor*, 463-4; Tracy, *Impresario*, 287.

⁸⁶ Rady, *Charles V*, 11.

⁸⁷ Tracy, *Impresario*, 101.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 302-3.

Geographic and Dynastic Explanations

Charles presided over a vast empire with disparate customs, laws, demands, and concerns.⁸⁹ Brandi, Elton and Kleinschmidt have each conjectured that Germany, as an area of lesser import, simply had to wait its turn. However, Brandi and Elton's ultimate conclusion attributes Charles's failure to the complexity of these circumstances and the limitations of the medieval mind.

According to Brandi, "[T]he very extent of Charles's power was a cause of his weakness."⁹⁰ This idea is now questioned, given evidence of Charles's sophistication as a ruler and statesman.⁹¹ One of the most prolific arguments is found within the concluding chapters of *The Emperor Charles V*; Brandi asserts that, "Charles was...all but overwhelmed with the perennial care of his immense dominions"⁹² and declares this a primary reason for Charles's failure. Brandi argues that Charles was too busy to find the time or energy to address the problems within Germany before 1546. However, Charles's unpublicized Testament to his son Philip, written in 1548, reveals Charles's advice to Philip, to build knowledge and concern for all of his lands and peoples, even the distant ones, as a top priority. "Do not cease to keep yourself well-informed of the state of these distant lands for the honour of God and the care of justice."⁹³

In practice, Charles is known to have disliked being absent from any part of his realms too long; he left Spain soon after the death of his beloved wife to attend to pressing matters in the

⁸⁹ Kleinschmidt, *World Emperor*, 37.

⁹⁰ Brandi, *Emperor*, 172.

⁹¹ Tracy, *Impresario*, 254.

⁹² Brandi, *Emperor*, 597.

⁹³ Charles V, "Political Testament of Charles V, August 1548," in *The Emperor Charles V*, by Karl Brandi (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), 585.

Low Countries.⁹⁴ Charles also took great pains to keep himself well informed, personally attending or sending his best diplomats to meetings of the Estates General in the Low Countries, the Cortes of Castile and Aragon, the Estates of Sicily and Naples in Italy, and all sessions of the German Diet, including assemblies comprised not solely of Electors, but also Princes and all of the other estates.⁹⁵ Charles took special care to attend of nearly every session of the German Diet, missing only a few from 1521-1556; no similar record of personal attendance was ever compiled regarding other national assemblies.

Charles was ashamed to relate the mistakes he had made early in his reign including ill knowledge of the language and the customs of Spain,⁹⁶ but committed to rectify this ignorance, and after a determined effort, the Spanish people looked upon him as their own.⁹⁷ As a result, he encouraged his son to “learn languages.”⁹⁸ Charles exhibited this same diligence in forging personal bonds with all of his realms. He stated, upon his return from North Africa in 1535-6 that “He had now set foot in each one of his lands, discovered its needs, and fulfilled his duty. He had made personal contact with each of the states over which he ruled.”⁹⁹

If Charles had attempted to administer to all of these lands without the aid of extremely skilled servants, the prevalent assertions of the historiography would make sense, but this was not the case. “[Charles] was a good judge of men...”¹⁰⁰ and took care to select the most skilled advisors, administrators, diplomats, and officers of the 16th century. He gave similar counsel to

⁹⁴ Brandi, *Emperor*, 421.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 371.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 206-7.

⁹⁷ Tracy, *Impresario*, 301.

⁹⁸ Charles V, “Political Testament of Charles V, May 1543 (Letter I),” in Brandi, *Emperor*, 487.

⁹⁹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 371.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 394.

his son years later, saying: “You cannot be everywhere, you must find good viceroys.”¹⁰¹ These were Charles’s most powerful allies in overcoming any deficiencies he possessed. Foremost among these was Charles’s own brother Ferdinand. Loyal and capable both as an advisor and administrator, Ferdinand took up residence in Bohemia and presided over Charles’s Austrian holdings from the 1520’s until well after Charles’s death in 1558.¹⁰² Charles and Ferdinand exchanged a massive correspondence concerning the state of affairs in Germany, a region Ferdinand became more intimately acquainted with than Charles, and their strategies for dealing with its difficulties. It was Ferdinand to whom Charles entrusted the defense of the Hapsburgs’ eastern border against the frequent hostilities of the Turk.¹⁰³ Charles often used Ferdinand in matters within the Empire that did not require his personal presence; he ordered that Ferdinand should monitor and safeguard his military position during the off-season of the First Schmalkaldic campaign.¹⁰⁴ Ferdinand was one of Charles’s most valued servants, and was so capable that Charles seldom expressed any disapproval or disappointment with his brother’s performance.

Second only to Ferdinand in influence within the empire was Charles’s sister, Mary of Hungary. Charles sought Mary’s personal confirmation concerning the war in Germany.¹⁰⁵ As an administrator, her reputation had been built in her early 20’s as the Queen consort Louis II of Hungary and Bohemia. “The Hungarians and Bohemians had always realized that she was far more intelligent than her husband, and...gave proof to the political insight common in her

¹⁰¹ Charles V, “Political Testament of Charles V, August 1548,” in Brandi, *Emperor*, 585.

¹⁰² Maltby, *Reign*, 19.

¹⁰³ Brandi, *Emperor*, 186, 238.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 562.

¹⁰⁵ Charles V, “Letter from Charles to Mary, June 1546,” in Brandi, *Emperor*, 547-48.

family.”¹⁰⁶ After Mary was widowed at age 26, Charles, confident in her abilities, installed her as the semi-autonomous regent of the Low Countries, one of his richest and most important possessions. She replaced their late, but equally capable Aunt Margaret in 1531.¹⁰⁷ From this position, Mary was a key advisor to Charles, and in many letters, kept him well apprised of developments in both the Low Countries and neighboring Germany. She proved instrumental in advocating caution and was often vital to the order, taxation, and defense of the Low Countries. Mary successfully mustered a defense of the Low Countries against French invasion in 1537, allowing Charles to focus on other matters.

Another great advisor was Charles’s son and heir Philip. While Charles had a great number of administrators skilled with money, none was so able to find revenue for his king than Philip. In one famous instance, Philip, faced with his father’s needs during the Second Schmalkaldic War, “did heroic service in raising the sums Charles needed... even though this was the worst possible time to enter the financial markets.”¹⁰⁸ Charles’s many letters to Phillip indicate complete confidence in his son to carry out requests for financial and administrative aid during his frequent absences from Spain. When Charles fought Cleves in 1543, he charged Phillip with his second regency of Spain, “To enable you the better to fulfill your part, I have left you here in Spain all the members of my royal council, and given special instructions to them, which I sent to you by Cobos. I beseech you to act in accordance with what I tell you.”¹⁰⁹ Additionally, he requested that Philip secure financial aid: “We have no money... The Cortes must be called if money cannot be raised otherwise... yet there is no better means than the Sisa

¹⁰⁶ Brandi, *Emperor*, 248.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 321.

¹⁰⁸ Tracy, *Impresario*, 237.

¹⁰⁹ Charles V, “Political Testament of Charles V, May 1543 (Letter I),” in Brandi, *Emperor*, 486.

to raise money both for you and me, and thus to get us out of our trouble in peace and war.”¹¹⁰

Beyond those skilled members of his own family, Charles was supported by advisors chosen from amongst his other subjects. The infamous Duke of Alba was an outstanding advisor. His military skills were unparalleled and his loyalty as unwavering as Ferdinand’s.¹¹¹ In a confidential letter to his son Phillip, Charles instructs him to “Take heed of [Alba]...trust him implicitly in all military matters.”¹¹²

Within Germany, Charles employed Vice-Chancellor Matthias Held who possessed an extensive internal knowledge of Germany, including the politics of the burgeoning Reformation. Though hesitant to act immediately on Held’s advice, Charles received worthwhile intelligence as well as warnings concerning the Protestants, such as the 1536-7 recommendation to counter the Schmalkaldic League. Had this advice had been heeded it may have led to a more desirable outcome in Germany.¹¹³ No lack of knowledge of German politics caused Charles’s inaction.

Mercurino Arborio marchese di Gattinara was perhaps Charles’s best advisor and administrator not related to him by blood. The strategies of Charles’s agenda throughout his reign connect directly to this humanist’s ideas concerning universal monarchy and the defense of Christendom. According to Karl Brandi, Gattinara’s strategies were behind the Italian “expansive theories” that occupied the early part of Charles’s reign.¹¹⁴ Many historians place part of the blame for Charles’s other (non-Protestant) failures upon his inability to continue these strategies after Gattinara’s death in 1530.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Charles V, “Political Testament of Charles V, May 1543 (Letter II),” in Brandi, *Emperor*, 490.

¹¹¹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 237.

¹¹² Charles V, “Political Testament of Charles, May 1543 (Letter II),” in Brandi, *Emperor*, 491.

¹¹³ Brandi, *Emperor*, 403.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 158.

All these and other equally capable councilors, including Chievre, Granvelle, and Giovio, demonstrate that Charles was not without support, but complemented in his efforts by some of Europe's finest minds.

Brandi declares that, although Ferdinand and Charles were "Germans born"¹¹⁶ "the internal problems of Germany seemed less important to Charles"¹¹⁷ and Charles had "been long mentally estranged from any true understanding of German affairs."¹¹⁸ Following this example, many historians maintain that German politics were foreign to Charles.¹¹⁹ But, the evidence suggests no particular or exceptional ignorance on Charles's part with regard to Germany, its lands, its people, and its customs.

For example, Maltby points out that Charles spoke no German when he sought election as Holy Roman Emperor in 1519.¹²⁰ However, Charles spoke no Spanish either when he ascended to that throne in 1517. Charles was no more ignorant of his German lands than Francis was of his, or Henry of England was of his French lands, yet these rulers have seldom if ever had their administrative failures in these provinces attributed to a lack of understanding. Additionally, Charles, despite not being the most German candidate, was elected to his position of foreign ascendancy.

In addition to these observations, there is evidence that Charles was not as ignorant of Germany as some have supposed. Investigation reveals that Charles was not accustomed to the complexities of German political organization that he first began to encounter in 1519. There

¹¹⁵ Tracy, *Impresario*, 307.

¹¹⁶ Brandi, *Emperor*, 364.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 397.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 331.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 333.

¹²⁰ Maltby, *Reign*, 19.

were minor differences, but the constitutional conventions of Germany present in the 16th century closely resembled those existing within Spain and the Low Countries.¹²¹ For example, upon ascending the throne in Spain in 1517 Charles was obligated to present himself for affirmation before the Cortes and take an oath to the lands and peoples of Spain to uphold their traditions and defend their customs.¹²² The election to Holy Roman Emperor, and the taking of the oath, would not have been unfamiliar to Charles. In that oath, Charles promised to respect his election as Holy Roman Emperor to “preserve imperial institutions.”¹²³ Furthermore, the oaths associated with the German election were not dissimilar to the court of Burgundy, over which he exercised his first monarchy from January 5, 1515.¹²⁴ At the time, Germany, like most of Europe, was little more than loosely confederated states vying for power. The lone exceptions were perhaps France, which was moving toward a centralized monarchy, and England, which was emerging from the Wars of the Roses, in which a similar state of disorganization existed.

Charles was also well acquainted with the intricacies of electoral procedure. Whether of his own volition or expert counsel, he was both aware of the need for bribes to secure the throne and was prepared to spend 1,000,000 Gulden to that end.¹²⁵ Furthermore, Charles had knowledge of complex German constitutional principles, which no ruler ignorant of Germany’s laws and customs would have possessed. In 1521 at the Diet of Worms, it did not escape Charles’s notice that as a German citizen, Martin Luther had the right to a secular trial on German soil, rather than the Spanish approach of allowing an ecclesiastical inquisition or court

¹²¹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 62, 197.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 72.

¹²³ Maltby, *Reign*, 20.

¹²⁴ Brandi, *Emperor*, 54-55.

¹²⁵ Heiko Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 26; Maltby, *Reign*, 19.

to determine his fate.¹²⁶ In addition, Charles understood the principles for the formation and function of leagues as pseudo parties within German politics. He used this principle to form a Holy League in 1523 with the pope, Henry of England, Ferdinand, Venice, and others¹²⁷ and he repeatedly sought the formation of a Catholic league in Germany throughout the 1530s and 1540s.

The historical record reveals Charles's political maneuverings within the context of the German constitution. Attempts to secure his brother's ascension as king of the Romans by deliberating skirting a provision for a princely vote in the early 1530s¹²⁸ and his considered reorganization of the Reichskammergericht in 1547,¹²⁹ a fundamental body of the constitutional system, showcase his knowledge of the German political system. Charles demonstrated his knowledge of the right as emperor to replace the rebellious John Frederick as an elector, with Maurice after John Frederick's defeat in 1547. Charles's attempts to secure succession to the Holy Roman throne, first for his brother Ferdinand and then for his son Phillip,¹³⁰ suggest that Charles knew the provisions of the German constitution intimately. In the year 1524, when Charles's brother Ferdinand urged him to recognize the convening of the council of the German nation, so that Ferdinand might receive election as King of the Romans, Charles exhibited a superior knowledge of his position in Germany by refusing. Ferdinand "did not grasp that Charles's position [as emperor] was not yet so firmly established in the empire as to allow...so

¹²⁶ B.J. Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative of the Continental Reformation* (1911; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 82.

¹²⁷ Brandi, *Emperor*, 208.

¹²⁸ Otto Winkelmann, *Der Schmalkaldische Bund 1530-1532* (Strassburg: Heiz and Mündel, 1892), 17.

¹²⁹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 562.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 592-93, 595-97.

important a renunciation of his own title to power in Germany.”¹³¹

Finally, Kleinschmidt expresses that Charles, in the interest of Hapsburg dynastic priority, simply ignored Germany, viewing it as an area of secondary dynastic importance. According to Kleinschmidt, Charles failed to deal effectively with the Protestants because of conflicting obligations in a wide empire.¹³² Others have held this same opinion. Ascan Westermann declares that Charles was preoccupied with his Spanish possessions to the detriment of his German ones.¹³³ Tracy makes it clear that between 1522 and 1530, the dynastic priority of the Hapsburg Charles V was his conflict with the French king over Italy.¹³⁴ Brandi divides Charles’s priorities between the conquest of Italy¹³⁵ and the “lifeblood” of the empire, Spain and the Low Countries.¹³⁶

If Germany held secondary dynastic importance, why did the Hapsburgs, from Maximilian to Charles to Ferdinand, spend so much effort to secure their hegemony over the Holy Roman Empire? Brandi himself calls Charles’s plan to place his own son Phillip on the throne and secure the hereditary succession to the throne of Germany after his death, the climax of his dynastic endeavors.¹³⁷ Charles’s grandfather, Maximilian, in his last years, took great care to draw on his power, influence, friendships, and knowledge of the country to engineer Charles’s nomination in the election of 1519.¹³⁸ Charles himself exacted threats of force and personally

¹³¹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 186.

¹³² Kleinschmidt, *World Emperor*, 125.

¹³³ Ascan Westermann, *Die Türkenhilfe und die politisch kirchlichen Parteien auf dem Reichstag zu Regensburg 1532* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter’s Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1910), 8.

¹³⁴ Tracy, *Impresario*, 128, 314.

¹³⁵ Brandi, *Emperor*, 439, 350.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 347.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 593.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 595.

spent 332,000 Spanish ducats in open bribes,¹³⁹ much more covertly, to secure a prestigious election as Holy Roman Emperor.¹⁴⁰ As Heiko Oberman observes, “Charles’s election would mean a new and powerful empire with a hitherto unknown compass of power.”¹⁴¹ Furthermore Charles’s efforts to secure the throne extended to campaigns for Ferdinand and Phillip throughout his reign.

Many historians attempt to dismiss these efforts with the assertion that hereditary right was “sacred and eternal” and that no claim (no matter how small) was allowed to lapse.¹⁴² However, the Hapsburgs allowed a number of claims to lapse in the interest of dynastic priority throughout the reign of Charles V, including the Duchy of Burgundy that Charles allowed to be conquered by the French without any retaliation in 1529 at the Peace of Cambrai.¹⁴³ The Holy Roman Empire, far from being just another claim, could be considered a crown jewel among thrones of dynastic importance. Even the French king, and for a brief time, the English king entered their candidacies in 1519 to dispute the Hapsburg claim and win the throne for themselves. Many considered Germany vital to the defense of Christendom,¹⁴⁴ and the stability of the region that included a great number of Hapsburg lands administered by Ferdinand¹⁴⁵ would have been a paramount concern not only to the Hapsburgs, but to all Christian monarchs. Charles spent more of his time, wealth, and effort in dealing with Germany than any other

¹³⁹ Maltby, *Reign*, 19.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁴¹ Oberman, *Luther*, 26.

¹⁴² Maltby, *Reign*, 12.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁴⁴ Brandi, *Emperor*, 186, 238.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 186.

endeavor.¹⁴⁶ It is the opinion of many historians that the efforts exercised in Germany ultimately wearied Charles and precipitated his resignation in 1556.¹⁴⁷

The two Schmalkaldic Wars of the late 1540s and the late 1550s were the most expensive campaigns Charles conducted as emperor. Together, they cost over 6,000,000 Spanish ducats;¹⁴⁸ individually, each cost more than Charles's Italian campaigns from 1522-1530, and the second Schmalkaldic War cost 2,000,000 ducats more than Charles's 1543-4 conflict with the king of France.¹⁴⁹ Charles even cancelled a planned invasion of France in 1544 to prepare for the first Schmalkaldic War¹⁵⁰ and ignored French threats against Spain, Italy and the Netherlands near the conclusion of it.¹⁵¹ The Hapsburg-Valois rivalry took a back seat to Germany when it came to military priorities. Germany also held priority over England. In 1547, "the Emperor refused to listen to the suggested plot against England. Germany was more important to him..."¹⁵² With regard to Spain, Charles placed his priority for Germany above the interests of Castile and Aragon. The Spanish people were jealous of the time and money Charles spent on Germany. Charles's son Philip was charged with continually raising money in Castile for battle against the Turk, or failing direct invasion, against the German Protestants.¹⁵³ In 1552, Phillip took out contracts for 3,669,449 Spanish ducats in loans from Castile for the second Schmalkaldic War

¹⁴⁶ Brandi, *Emperor*, 590.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 586.

¹⁴⁸ Tracy, *Impresario*, 244, 223.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁵¹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 565.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 575.

¹⁵³ Tracy, *Impresario*, 205.

alone.¹⁵⁴ The Cortes of Spain made constant demands throughout Charles's reign for his return to Spain, usually from Germany. So frequent were these requests, that Charles felt it necessary to provide justification to his son Philip, the future king of Spain, for being away from Spain so long.¹⁵⁵

Charles spent so much time in Germany that letters (like one written in 1530 to Ferdinand) outlined plans to return immediately to Germany after dealing with necessary tasks elsewhere. In 1532 Charles significantly delayed joining his army bound for Algiers to attend the diet at Regensburg.¹⁵⁶ In 1548, Charles lingered at Augsburg long after Ferdinand had gone home to deal with "outstanding problems" arising after the conclusion of the first Schmalkaldic War.¹⁵⁷ By the late 1540s, Charles had made nine significant visits to the Holy Roman Empire, eight to the Low Countries and far fewer to either Spain or Italy.¹⁵⁸ Germany and its problems were perhaps of more importance to the emperor than the concerns of any other region within his empire. These geographic/dynastic theories fail to fully explain Charles's military inaction in Germany before 1546.¹⁵⁹

Strategic and Military Explanations

William Maltby and Martin Rady, among others, attribute Charles's apparent lethargy of

¹⁵⁴ Tracy, *Impresario*, 244.

¹⁵⁵ Charles V, "Excerpt from the Memoirs of Charles V, 1552" in Brandi, *Emperor*, 422.

¹⁵⁶ Tracy, *Impresario*, 138.

¹⁵⁷ Brandi, *Emperor*, 590.

¹⁵⁸ Charles V, "Excerpt from the Memoirs of Charles V, 1552," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 590.

¹⁵⁹ And perhaps a prime example among others following their lead is Tracy's argument that Charles simply had too many interests and not enough money. Tracy, *Impresario*, 255, 305.

action with regard to the Protestants in Germany to more pressing military threats of foreign enemies. According to this line of reasoning, Charles was hindered in decisive action against the Schmalkaldic League because of his need to act decisively against other enemies, primarily the Turks and Franks. The consensus is that there weren't enough troops and monies to go around. As a result, urgency created a need for Charles to avoid simultaneous conflict and wait for a cessation of hostilities to act. In the opinion of many historians, this need corresponds to a lack of military action in Germany until 1546.

Examples of this explanation can be found with in every major work on the reign of Charles V. Tracy declares that, "As a precondition for action in Germany, Charles had to have assurances of peace on the Ottoman front."¹⁶⁰ Brandi asserts that Charles sought a peace with France under which to have the unencumbered freedom to deal with Germany.¹⁶¹ These and similar arguments have only one end: to establish the military priority of Turkey and France over Germany and the impossibility of simultaneous conflicts.

However, the threat from the Turks was nothing new. The Turks had been a serious threat to Christendom, the Hapsburgs, and each of Charles's immediate predecessors since Mehmet II had taken Constantinople from the Byzantines in 1453 and begun the Ottoman expansion into Greece and the Balkans. The Turk continued to threaten Eastern Europe directly from 1453 until 1526.

The threat remained throughout the reign of Charles V and beyond, primarily under the impetus of Mehmet's grandson, Suleiman the Magnificent. Under Suleiman, the Ottomans began a war with Hungary in 1522 that culminated in the defeat of Charles's brother-in-law, Louis II, at the Battle of Mohacs in 1526, affecting a collapse of Hungarian resistance and solidifying

¹⁶⁰ Tracy, *Impresario*, 206.

¹⁶¹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 389.

Ottoman hegemony in Eastern Europe.¹⁶² Additionally, Suleiman fought Ferdinand for control of Buda and Vienna in 1529,¹⁶³ once again for Vienna in 1532,¹⁶⁴ and yet again for Buda, Esztergom, and several Hapsburg fortresses between 1541 and 1543.¹⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Charles, battling with the Turks in the Mediterranean region and the difficulties created by the 1536 (renewed 1542) Ottoman-Valois Alliance,¹⁶⁶ encountered the resistance of Suleiman's forces at Tunis in 1535¹⁶⁷ and at Algiers in 1541.¹⁶⁸

The threat did not end with Charles's death in 1558. In 1565 the forces of Suleiman assaulted the island of Malta, and the 1571 Battle of Lepanto, which marked the collapse of Ottoman sea power in the Mediterranean, was one of the largest armed conflicts between the forces of the Cross and the Crescent. The Ottomans attempted repeated sieges of Vienna for the next 100 years, until the last attempt in 1683 was finally thwarted by a combination of cold weather, a shortage of supplies, and a spirited defense.¹⁶⁹

The conflict between the Hapsburgs and the Turks was an ever present one.¹⁷⁰ But, according to the strategic explanations, Charles could not act against the Protestants in Germany until the threat of Turkish invasion had been eliminated. If this were truly the case, Charles could never have dealt with them. Yet since we know that Charles did eventually deal with Germany,

¹⁶² Patrick Kinross, *The Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire* (New York: Morrow, 1979), 187.

¹⁶³ Stephen Turnbull, *The Ottoman Empire, 1326-1699* (New York: Osprey Publishing, 2003), 50.

¹⁶⁴ Subhi Labib, "The Era of Suleyman the Magnificent: Crisis of Orientation," *The International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10, no 4: 435-451, 444.

¹⁶⁵ Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 53.

¹⁶⁶ Imber, *Ottoman Empire*, 51.

¹⁶⁷ Tracy, *Impresario*, 157.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹⁶⁹ John Stoye, *The Siege of Vienna 1683* (Edinburg: Birlinn, 2000).

¹⁷⁰ Tracy, *Impresario*, 133.

something other than waiting out Turkish aggressions contributed to his delay.

It is just as unreasonable to assume Charles was waiting for a lasting peace with the French to attack the Protestants. Charles had been at war with France and King Francis almost constantly as well, battling him from the beginning of his reign. Charles struggled with Francis first for control of Italy in an on-and-off-again war taking place between 1522-1530, finally concluding with the Peace of Cambrai,¹⁷¹ and then battling repeatedly over possessions in Italy and the Low Countries through the 1550's.¹⁷² The greatest encounter in the latter struggle came to a head with the Treaty of Crepy in 1544, after Francis threatened Charles's hegemony of the Low Countries by allying himself with the Duke of Cleves for an invasion of Luxembourg.¹⁷³ Hostilities between the Hapsburg and the Valois also turned to war in 1545¹⁷⁴ and 1548-1552.¹⁷⁵

Charles also repeatedly failed to take advantage of significant periods of peace with both the Turk and the French between 1523 and 1541, the longest and most notable being the two year hiatus between 1530-32, during which Charles found himself at peace with all of Europe and both of his presumed arch nemeses.¹⁷⁶ Charles was not only in a position of strategic advantage over the Turks by virtue of a secure Italian base,¹⁷⁷ but also by possession of money generated by two extraordinary grants¹⁷⁸ and an army, battle tested and constituting 15,800 men idling at a

¹⁷¹ Tracy, *Impresario*, 124.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 232.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 193-94.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 232.

¹⁷⁶ Brandi, *Emperor*, 333-34; Maltby, *Reign*, 52; Tracy, *Impresario*, 133.

¹⁷⁷ Brandi, *Emperor*, 206.

¹⁷⁸ Tracy, *Impresario*, 271.

personal loss to Charles of up to 50,480 scudi per day.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, this had been preceded and succeeded by other lesser opportunities, one such provided by an armistice in 1523¹⁸⁰ so advantageous for action against the Protestants that Charles's chief advisor, Gattinara, wrote with more than a little enthusiasm, "The hand of God is upon His Majesty, to whom he hath given both lands and victories... [and] will give [him] peace and honor beyond all other peoples in Christendom."¹⁸¹ From 1538-9, Charles was again at peace with both the Frank and the Turk but chose not to act against the Protestants, but rather to prepare for a planned conquest of Algiers that he would attempt in 1540-41 while still at peace with France.¹⁸²

Both the peaceful period from 1530-32 and the Papal Armistice of 1523 took place before the organization of armed Protestant resistance, the Schmalkaldic League in 1531.¹⁸³ If Charles was intent on destroying the Protestants as soon as he was free of his obligation to resist the Turks and Franks, as many historians claim, he continually passed on his best opportunities to do so.

Not only did he fail to act when unopposed, Charles's key actions against the Germans took place only after simultaneous conflict with the French was all but ensured by the political circumstances in 1544. James Tracy declares in *Impresario of War* that the year 1544 saw the freedom Charles needed to deal effectively with the Protestants.¹⁸⁴ However, while it is true that a five-year peace had been negotiated with the Turk that year,¹⁸⁵ the French, in violation of the

¹⁷⁹ Tracy, *Impresario*, 124.

¹⁸⁰ Brandi, *Emperor*, 204.

¹⁸¹ Mercurino Gattinara, "Excerpt from a Letter from Gattinara to Charles, 1523," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 207.

¹⁸² Brandi, *Emperor*, 413.

¹⁸³ Sigrid Jahns, *Frankfurt, Reformation und Schmalkaldischer Bund* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Waldemar Kramer, 1976), 177.

¹⁸⁴ Tracy, *Impresario*, 195.

generous Treaty of Crepy signed by the victor Charles in order to ensure the peace, were back in action again by September 1545, having used the brief respite to renew some of their former strength after the disastrous expenses of the 1543-44 war.¹⁸⁶ Charles, still in the planning stages with the Papal Legate at Worms, made the decision to act against the Protestants while facing a direct threat from the French.¹⁸⁷ Charles remained committed to his plans for war against the Protestants during the next seven years and two wars, in which French troops constantly harassed and threatened nearly all of his possessions, including his hard won territories in Italy. French troops took the heavily fortified city of Siena during the Italian conflict that raged sporadically, yet simultaneously, with the Schmalkaldic Wars from 1545-1552.¹⁸⁸

Charles did not avoid action because of simultaneous engagement, as can be seen in a number of additional instances, most famously, the simultaneous campaigns Charles undertook against Tunis (1535) and the Franco-Danish alliance from 1534 to 1537.¹⁸⁹ Other notable examples include a conflict in Naples in 1544¹⁹⁰ and Hapsburg monies funneled to Louis II and Ferdinand throughout 1520 for the defense of Hungary and Austria while Charles spent copious amounts on the ongoing wars with the French and their allies in Italy. Charles was constantly fighting simultaneous wars.

Finally, there is evidence to suggest that a response to the Turkish threat, at least as applied to the advance of Ottoman forces in Eastern Europe, was far from a top military priority for Charles V. Ferdinand was far more concerned with the threat of land-borne Turkish invasion

¹⁸⁵ Imber, *Ottoman Empire*, 54.

¹⁸⁶ Tracy, *Impresario*, 207; 194.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 205; Brandi, *Emperor*, 528.

¹⁸⁸ Tracy, *Impresario*, 207, 232.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 244.

than Charles because he stood to lose more.¹⁹¹ For Charles, the Turks represented a regional concern for Eastern Europe and Hungary¹⁹² and there is evidence that Charles was a strict realist concerning those territories.¹⁹³

Charles, like others of his time, realized the importance of Christian unity in withstanding any Turkish threat. However, the constant repetition of this message to the Diets during the period from 1526 until 1545 suggests the possibility that Charles was using the Turkish threat merely as a reason to force renewed obedience and domestic strength on his subjects in the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁹⁴ The best evidence for Charles's priorities concerning Germany and Turkey is the five year truce he signed with the Ottoman sultan Suleiman, to clear the way for undisturbed action against the Protestants.¹⁹⁵ Charles's son and sister assured him that he had made the correct decision in putting Germany ahead of Turkey. Charles's son Philip argued successfully in 1544 that Turkey was far too distant for Charles's focus. Mary, in a letter to Charles in 1538, reminds him that his first duty is to his subjects and not to the Turkish threat.¹⁹⁶ Both remind Charles that he was right to place his priority on Germany before Turkey.

Germany was undoubtedly a higher priority than France as well. In 1544, with the end of the Hapsburg-Valois struggle in sight and Charles having resoundingly defeated the French king and his ally the Duke of Cleves, Charles had an army within striking distance of Paris and full knowledge of the fact that the king of France had expended all available resources during the last

¹⁹¹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 187.

¹⁹² Westermann, *Türkenhilfe*, 14.

¹⁹³ Tracy, *Impresario*, 134, 170.

¹⁹⁴ Fritz Hartung, *Karl V. und die deutschen Reichsstände von 1546-1555* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), 45.

¹⁹⁵ Imber, *Ottoman Empire*, 54.

¹⁹⁶ Brandi, *Emperor*, 415.

year's conflict.¹⁹⁷ However, rather than invade Paris and crush the Valois dynasty, Charles agreed to the disadvantageous Treaty of Crepy in 1544, in which peace was concluded with the French king.¹⁹⁸ When asked by contemporaries why he had let the French king off so easily, "Charles said he had done so because he needed a free hand to deal with affairs in Germany."¹⁹⁹

Charles was among the best military planners of his time,²⁰⁰ "contributing significantly to what historians have called the 'military revolution' of this era."²⁰¹ No military mind of this caliber would neglect to secure the rear of his forces before engaging a powerful enemy. Charles personally demonstrated this in refusing to neglect an outlying fortress near Tunis²⁰² or using the fleet intended for an assault on Istanbul to attack the Turkish corsair Barbarossa.²⁰³ Furthermore, Charles spent the better part of the 1520s campaigning in Italy and no doubt observed that he was a personal beneficiary of Italy's disunity, brought about by rivalries between its leading families. Someone as experienced and capable in military matters as Charles would not overlook the importance of solidifying his domestic base in Germany before taking on foreign enemies as powerful as the Ottomans and Franks.

Charles personally witnessed the dangers of having enemies in Germany after departing Regensburg in 1540 en route to Italy, ultimately to engage the Turks at Algiers. On that occasion, he was forced to use the Brenner Pass because he could not use the westerly passes

¹⁹⁷ Tracy, *Impressario*, 194, 229.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 194.

¹⁹⁹ Bernabe Busto, "Excerpt of Bernabe Busto," in Tracy, *Impressario*, 194.

²⁰⁰ Tracy, *Impressario*, 314-15.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 314.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 147.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 146.

held by Swiss Protestants.²⁰⁴ Additionally, Charles was aware of the machinations of Protestant princes, such as their negotiations for an alliance with France²⁰⁵ and England.²⁰⁶

According to some, Charles was the victim of serious financial and military deficiencies as a result of his obligations, and delayed action because he feared the power of the League and its members. This assertion is explained most thoroughly by Karl Brandi and James Tracy,²⁰⁷ though Oberman, Maltby, and Rady among others reference it. While the Protestants had founded a league of defense in 1531 to oppose any attempt by the Emperor to eradicate their faith or punish their disobedience to his decrees,²⁰⁸ it is not true that Charles avoided confrontation with the League out of fear.

Charles had already taken care to establish a position of dominance over the princes as early as his election in 1519. Yet some theories claim the princes held sway over Charles from the beginning, forcing him to act with deference to Martin Luther at the Trial of Worms (1521), in order to placate Frederick the Wise for his support during the election two years previous. According to Heiko Oberman, Frederick had, by means of a loan, arranged a marriage alliance between his son John Frederick and Charles's daughter.²⁰⁹ But Charles had little need for Frederick's support or vote as the record shows he was elected emperor by unanimous acclaim on 28 June 1519, and possessed a strong military presence within the empire should his election

²⁰⁴ Tracy, *Impresario*, 174.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 185.

²⁰⁶ Rory McEntegart, *Henry VIII: The League of Schmalkalden and the English Reformation* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2002).

²⁰⁷ Brandi, *Emperor*, 296, 402; Tracy, *Impresario*, 138.

²⁰⁸ Jahns, *Frankfurt*, 177.

²⁰⁹ Oberman, *Luther*, 34.

be disputed, particularly by the French.²¹⁰ Frederick the Wise was also not a serious contender for the throne, having personally declined to enter the race.²¹¹ The loan itself was a small portion of the amount Charles spent on the election and it is known that Charles freely angered some electors, namely the Elector Palatine, by deliberately defaulting on large portions of promised sums.²¹² A man so willing to amass and default on debt would not find it necessary to bend his will for a loan worth less than 400,000 ducats.²¹³

Oberman admits that the marriage contract itself had never been an offer exclusive to Frederick the Wise,²¹⁴ was never made official until after Luther's Trial in 1521, and was promptly cancelled within a few years of the election.²¹⁵ Such an easily transferable political tool would not establish Frederick's or any other prince's dominance over Charles.

As for the Schmalkaldic Wars, Charles had no cause for concern. Even in Charles's worst times, he was able to maintain his superior number in the field for much longer than the League.²¹⁶ The wealth of the League combined would not have kept Charles in his accustomed banqueting and luxurious dress for a year, let alone out-dueled his wealth in a conflict. When war came, the princes and the League soon became financially exhausted. The Landgrave of Hesse used the last of his funds by November 21, 1546 covering the marching wages of his troops, while Charles received a fresh infusion of 300-400,000 ducats from Philip, and was able to

²¹⁰ Maltby, *Reign*, 138, 20.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20; Oberman, *Luther*, 33-34.

²¹² Brandi, *Emperor*, 187.

²¹³ Oberman, *Luther*, 34.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

²¹⁵ Oberman, *Luther*, 34-5; Brandi, *Emperor*, 189.

²¹⁶ Tracy, *Impresario*, 315.

maintain his force throughout the non-campaigning season.²¹⁷

Prior to 1547, the League did not command the loyalty or even the sympathies of all Protestant princes and represented a minority within the empire.²¹⁸ Charles, at times, commanded more loyalty and sympathy among the Protestant party, as a result of his deep pockets and efforts to secure church reform, than the League. A few of the more influential temporary allies of Charles V included the founder of the League, Phillip Landgrave of Hesse, Joachim of Brandenburg, Albrecht Alcibiades of Brandenburg-Culmbach, and the famous traitor Maurice of Saxony, who sold out his own uncle and father-in-law for an imperial electorship and all the land he could grab.²¹⁹ Such opportunistic behavior did little to inspire fear of the League. Charles knew he could dispose of the League at will and a few of his own statements, and those of his counselors, allude to that notion well before 1547.²²⁰

Charles was neither afraid of the League, nor was he afraid of losing an ally in his defense against the Turks.²²¹ It is unclear how much aid the Protestant princes actually provided. For example, in 1532 the estates of Germany voted in a “Turk tax,” however they would not increase customary contributions.²²² At the siege of Coron in 1532 and that of Tunis in 1535 little help came from the German estates,²²³ most of the aid was provided by Castile and Naples and not the Protestant princes of Germany.²²⁴ The eastern campaigns that did occur were mostly

²¹⁷ Tracy, *Impresario*, 214.

²¹⁸ Brandi, *Emperor*, 298.

²¹⁹ Maltby, *Reign*, 58, 60.

²²⁰ Brandi, *Emperor*, 403.

²²¹ Tracy, *Impresario*, 138.

²²² *Ibid.*, 139.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 157.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 141.

Hungarian affairs, not touching German lands directly (with the exception of the two sieges of Vienna). Furthermore, Charles and Ferdinand funded the wars against the Turks out of their own pockets, with the notable exception of Maurice who, in the mid 1540's, contributed a modest force to seal his alliance with the emperor before the outbreak of hostilities in Germany.²²⁵ By that time it was obvious that Charles had already decided on a course of war with the League.²²⁶ The Hapsburgs neither received nor required Protestant aid.

According to many, including Brandi, Charles was overcautious with the Protestant threat and squandered his best opportunities for victory because of his indecisive nature.²²⁷ While Charles was cautious in a way uncommon in his opportunistic contemporaries,²²⁸ Charles was not always slow to act against domestic treason. The best examples of Charles's more decisive actions are manifest in his repression of the rebellion of Ghent,²²⁹ which Giovio believed to be a "calculated act of severity, meant to cow Charles's other dominions,"²³⁰ the sack of Rome by his troops in May 1527, which served his purposes by teaching the Pope obedience,²³¹ his swift action against heresy in Naples (1547),²³² the Low Countries²³³ and Metz,²³⁴ and the decisive punishment of the Comuneros after their revolt in Castile in 1522.²³⁵

²²⁵ Tracy, *Impresario*, 235.

²²⁶ Brandi, *Emperor*, 528.

²²⁷ Brandi, *Emperor*, 219; Maltby, *Reign*, 32, 64.

²²⁸ Tracy, *Impresario*, 213; Elton, *Reformation Europe*, 17.

²²⁹ Tracy, *Impresario*, 167-8, 264.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 168.

²³¹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 258-59.

²³² Tracy, *Impresario*, 283.

²³³ Brandi, *Emperor*, 354-56.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 505-6.

²³⁵ Joseph Perez, *Los Comuneros* (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, S.L., 2001), 131; Brandi, *Emperor*, 149.

There are no complete explanations for Charles's inaction toward the Protestants from 1530 to 1547. Within Brandi's biography of Charles V, he makes the declaration that the exact reasons for Charles's inaction continue to elude him and other historians.²³⁶ In response, a number of Brandi's successors have attempted to offer additional explanations, or x-factors, that are largely speculative. These x-factors include a quest for personal honor and dynastic reputation put forward by Tracy,²³⁷ clinical depression inherited from Charles's mother offered by Maltby,²³⁸ and the odious accusation of mental retardation by Martin Rady, in a manner reminiscent of phrenology, primarily reliant on Charles's facial features for its evidence.²³⁹

A Religious Explanation

Historians, including Elton and Seibt, reject the consideration of Charles's religious motive.²⁴⁰ The possibility of religious motives in Charles's delayed action in Germany is avoided entirely.²⁴¹ The historical investigation of religion as a motive was dismissed in an effort to break the bonds of the confessional history of the 19th century. Recently, historians, including Christopher Tyermann, Brad S. Gregory, and Mack Holt expressed the opinion that historians should again consider the role of personal convictions in shaping the motives of individuals,

²³⁶ Brandi, *Emperor*, 252. Specifically, Brandi speaks of "some invisible impulse."

²³⁷ Tracy, *Impresario*, 316.

²³⁸ Maltby, *Reign*, 8.

²³⁹ Rady, *Charles V*, 1-2.

²⁴⁰ "We are not dealing in causes and consequences (religion), but with the development of human fortunes within the conditions of the time and under the impact of particular personalities." Elton, *Reformation Europe*, 15; Ferdinand Seibt, *Karl V. Der Kaiser und die Reformation* (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1990), 9.

²⁴¹ At this point, one must remind the reader that the authors have theories. Yet sometimes it seems that the authors take these theories for granted and treat them as fact, when in reality, no one knows exactly why Charles did not act against the Protestants.

especially in the medieval and early modern era.²⁴²

This thesis will demonstrate that Charles was a poor defender of the Catholic faith, with regard to the Protestant threat, because of personal convictions of faith, reform, and the unity of Christendom. While these qualities would normally produce a good defender of the faith, in the time of Charles, they were a detriment. All of Charles's actions with regard to the Protestant princes in the period from 1521 to 1556 can be ascribed to his personal convictions as described in three points.

1. Charles was a man of deep and devoted faith in the Catholic Church and consequently, was unable to accept the possibility that any individual would doubt or abandon that persuasion without calculated intention or gross error.
2. Charles was influenced by the Humanistic cries for reform in his age. As a result, Charles, a strong advocate for reform, declined military action before a meaningful outlet to address reforms and air grievances could be convened.
3. Charles was influenced by tradition, particularly the universality of faith and political unity of Christendom that could save the Church from the heretic and the Turk. Charles also felt himself personally responsible to avoid all conflicts that might endanger unity by creating a schism within Christendom.

The evidence will be drawn both from the emperor's own words and deeds derived from primary source material and personal correspondence of Charles V between himself and those persons most likely have intimate knowledge of Charles's own thoughts. These include his personal advisors, Gattinara and Granvelle, and family members: Philip, his son, Mary, his sister, and Ferdinand, his brother. The unpublicized and private correspondence are less likely to be

²⁴² Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2006); Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999); Mack P. Holt, "Putting Religion Back into the French Wars of Religion" *French Historical Studies*, 18, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 524-51; Mack Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

tainted by rhetoric and propaganda than are public declarations and correspondence. Instances not covered by these will be based on an interpretation of Charles's deeds. This thesis will therefore establish Charles's decisions regarding the Protestants in the context of his own convictions.

CHAPTER II

“Charles viewed himself, as most rulers of his time did, not only as the head of state, but also as the head of church.”

- Maltby, *The Reign of Charles V*, 29

Traditional Expectations

Charles was born at Prinsenhof in Ghent in the year 1500. From his grandfather Maximilian and grandmother Mary, Charles inherited ancient noble traditions and possessed characteristics of rulers from many previous generations. He was taught that a good Christian ruler was required to be pious, dedicated to God, the doctrines and rituals of his predecessors, and the Roman Catholic Church.¹ A Christian king was to defend the Church and its traditions by crusading against infidel and heretic,² to seek the establishment of a universal empire and Church, for the defense of Christ’s people and to spread the faith.³

“Charles had been brought up in all the strict forms of his religion;”⁴ his tutors ensured that Charles became the model of a pious prince, dedicated to the doctrines and rituals of the Church. The guidance of conservative churchman Adrian of Utrecht and of royal theologians helped Charles become one of Europe’s most religiously devoted kings.⁵ Consequently, Charles

¹ R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (London: Penguin, 1990), 58.

² *Ibid.*, 73.

³ Southern, *Western Society and the Church*, 60-61. Ferdinand Seibt, *Karl V*, 9. Margaret Aston, *The Fifteenth Century: The Prospect of Europe* (New York: Norton, 1979), 10.

⁴ William Bradford, *Correspondence of The Emperor Charles V* (London: Richard Bentley, Publisher in Ordinary to her Majesty, 1850), 112.

⁵ Brandi, *Emperor*, 47, 16.

took his beliefs seriously.⁶ Attending chapel daily, Charles was dedicated to the belief that he had a “profound moral, almost a religious duty”⁷ as a prince.

Several have commented on Charles’s strict adherence to Catholicism.⁸ Karl Brandi notes that “Catholicism both of thought, action and belief, was so highly developed in Charles that there is scarcely another figure in history whose career so well illustrates the piety and religious convictions of the lay man in the period preceding the Reformation.”⁹ Charles’s contemporaries agree that he was “a model of religious devotion.”¹⁰ Navagiero, the Venetian Ambassador at the court of Charles V said (1546): “He appears to be very studious of religion, and wishes by his example to excite the fervor of Divine worship in his Court.”¹¹ Charles’s advisors often came from the clergy. One example is his confessor, Garcia de Loaysa, who was Cardinal and Bishop of Osma and later Siguenza and then became Grand Inquisitor. Another was Adrian of Utrecht, who later became pope. Navagiero continues, “from all I have seen in my time and from what others who frequent his Court are obliged to confess, there does not exist in these days a more virtuous Prince or one who sets a better example to all men, than His Majesty Charles V.”¹² Even contemporaries like Martin Luther, acknowledged and admired the extreme

⁶ Brandi, *Emperor*, 312.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁸ One might find cause to dispute Charles’s personal piety in his many illegitimate children and concubines. However, it is necessary to remember that such strict Victorian conventions hardly applied to the rulers of his time. Indeed, one need only look to Henry, King of England, and Francis, King of France, to observe far more celebrated infidelities. And yet, all three kings maintained within their own minds a healthy sense of self-piety without a hint of self-doubt in the face of this now apparent contradiction. Rather, they continued to see themselves as both the defenders of the faith and the guardians of righteousness.

⁹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 523.

¹⁰ Rady, *Charles V*, 2.

¹¹ Bernardo Navagiero, “Address to the Doge and Senate of Venice by Bernardo Navagiero, Ambassador to the Court of Charles V, July 1546,” in *The Correspondence of the Emperor Charles V.*, by William Bradford (London: Richard Bentley, Publisher in Ordinary to her Majesty, 1850), 436.

¹² *Ibid.*, 444.

level of Charles's devotion.¹³ Charles's sincerity and devotion to his duty to the Church has never been questioned by historians and commentators, as Luther himself extolled Charles saying, "God has given us a young man of noble birth as head of state, and in him awakened great hopes of good in many hearts."¹⁴

The many personal letters that Charles wrote to his son and other family members illustrate the depth of Charles's devotion. In these letters, Charles admonishes his son Philip to "Be devout, fear God and Love him above all else."¹⁵ Charles, though the ruler of many lands, reminds his son that "we are all mortal, you no less than I ..."¹⁶ He advises his son to "Take heed...for nothing is more important than your own soul, and it is important to take your duties seriously from the very threshold of your manhood...."¹⁷ After leading by example, Charles charges Philip to stay true to the Church.

Charles's actions constantly show this faith and devotion.¹⁸ After a victorious battle in Pavia it is recorded that "Charles presently retired to his private chapel to pay his devotion and the next morning went to offer up his public thanksgivings in the church."¹⁹ His actions show the importance that Charles set on religion. In personal letters to his family, Charles expressed that "As for my life, God will do with it as He thinks best."²⁰ Later in life, he attended Mass no less than twice a day in his private chapel: once in the morning for the soul of his late wife, and once

¹³ Rady, *Charles V*, 2.

¹⁴ J. M. Porter, ed., *Luther: Selected Political Writings* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 38.

¹⁵ Charles V, "Political Testament of Charles V, May 1543 (Letter I)," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 486.

¹⁶ Charles V, "Political Testament of Charles V, May 1543 (Letter II)," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 490.

¹⁷ Brandi, *Emperor*, 492.

¹⁸ Charles, raised Catholic as many other kings, kept his life pious, as we will see from various examples throughout his life, shown through both public actions and private letters.

¹⁹ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 111.

²⁰ Brandi, *Emperor*, 489.

in the afternoon for his own.²¹

In addition, Charles saw himself as divinely appointed to lead his kingdom. In letters between Charles and Ferdinand, Ferdinand tells the Emperor that God had given him the wisdom, duty, and right to rule.²² Charles wrote to Ferdinand that it was their duty to God to care for what He had, in His grace, given them. This view was enforced by Mercurino Gattinara, one of Charles's Humanist tutors and advisors, who influenced Charles's duty to the Church²³ and the salvation of his subjects. "Gattinara...knew...that his words would find no merely superficial echo in the mind of the young emperor."²⁴ Charles "was convinced that his family ha[d] a sacred call to perform the duty of worldly pastors and that they must subject all human consideration to this task."²⁵ He said to his assembled generals, "I came, I saw, and God has granted us the victory."²⁶ Charles declares that he has been lead by God to rule righteously. Gattinara declared, it was "as though the Emperor's cause were miraculously guided by God Himself."²⁷

Charles was firm in his duty to the Catholic faith. Loaysa, his confessor, said to Charles "God give[s] no man a kingdom without laying on him an even greater duty than on ordinary men..."²⁸ In turn, Charles gave this counsel to Philip: "Seeing that human affairs are beset with doubt, I can give you no general rules save to trust in Almighty God. You will show this best by

²¹ Navagiero, "Address to the Dodge and Senate...July 1546," in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 437-8.

²² Ferdinand I, "Brief Ferdinands I. an Karl V., 1527," in Alfred Kohler ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990), 125.

²³ Erasmus, *Die Unterweysung eines frummen und christlichen Fürsten voi der aller haylwertigsten und christlichsten lere ...an...Karln den Fünfften* (Augsburg: S. Grimm & M. Wirsung, 1521). Universitatbibliothek Leipzig Sondersammlungen, Leipzig, Germany.

²⁴ Brandi, *Emperor*, 158.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 494.

²⁶ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 360.

²⁷ Brandi, *Emperor*, 282.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 290.

defending the faith.”²⁹ Loaysa further reminded Charles that “Your Majesty once told me that it was your most earnest wish to devote your life to the defense of the Faith, as your only way of proving your gratitude to God, for the innumerable blessings he has heaped upon you.”³⁰ Charles defended the Catholic faith as one who truly believed.

Charles had learned to be devoted to a defense of mother Church. The motto of the highest order of Burgundian knighthood, the Order of the Golden Fleece, as recorded by Olivier de la Marche, reads: “Dear son, draw thou thy sword, for the glory of God and for thine own honour.”³¹ The motto Charles adopted after his ascension to the throne of Burgundy in 1515 added PLVS VLTRA or “still further,” to his defense of the Church.³² From his early years, Charles considered it his purpose to suppress heresy, a devotion he finally put into practice when he took military action against rebellious German Protestants in 1546.³³

Devotion to the faith and its defense was evident from the beginning of Charles’s reign. In 1519, Gattinara wrote to remind Charles of his duty to God and his family to uphold the principles of the faith and his own personal righteousness.³⁴ In that same year, Charles wrote a letter to his aunt Margaret on the possibility that he might be elected to the post of Holy Roman Emperor. He reassured his aunt that the establishment of good relations within the empire would be guaranteed as he and the princes had pledged themselves to the same duties, including the defense of the faith.³⁵ At the Wahlkapitulation of 1519, Charles pledged not only to uphold the

²⁹Charles V, “Political Testament of Charles V, August 1548,” in Brandi, *Emperor*, 583.

³⁰ Garcia de Loaysa, “Garcia de Loaysa to Charles V, 1530,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 349.

³¹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 30.

³² Kleinschmidt, *World Emperor*, 29, 54.

³³ *Ibid.*, 118; Maltby, *Reign*, 59-60.

³⁴ Mercurino Gattinara, “Gattinara an Karl V., 1519,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 59.

³⁵ Charles V, “Brief Karls V. an Margarete, 1519,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 42.

temporal freedoms and rights of the realm, but also pledged to spiritual unity, papal holiness, and the Church as its advocate and defender.³⁶ Specifically, Charles stated that he was “always the defender of the Catholic faith, its holy ceremonies, laws, ordinances, and its holy commandments; for the honor of God, the spread of the faith, and unto the healing of souls”³⁷ and he expected the Christian princes of his realm to follow this example.³⁸ Charles maintained this position throughout his reign. In a 1530 edict to the princes, the *Gutachten des Staatsrates*, Charles stated that the princes should make religion their cause.³⁹

Charles proved a more devoted defender of the Church than his predecessors.⁴⁰ “The Emperor himself was deemed to hold an office midway between temporal and spiritual; he was the defender and patron of the Roman Church, to whom all men looked to drive back the infidel and root out the heretic.”⁴¹ His reputation encouraged members of the Spanish clergy to request that Charles use his political power to protect their right to self-regulate.⁴² As a result, the independence of the Church remained strong in Charles’s realms throughout his reign.⁴³ Charles’s early education in the courts of Burgundy taught him to exemplify the ideal of a Christian king, religiously devoted to defending the church.

Charles declared,

My predecessors, the most Christian emperors of German race . . . were until

³⁶ Charles V, “Anweisung Karls V. an seinen Sohn Philipp, 1543,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 286-87.

³⁷ “immer Verteidiger des Katholischen Glaubens, der heiligen Zeremonien, Gesetze, Anweisungen und der heiligen (Ge)bräuche- zur Ehre Gottes, Mehrung des Glaubens und zum Heil der Seelen.” Charles V, “Erklärung Karls V. gegen Luther., 1521,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 74.

³⁸ Charles V, “Werbungen Karls V. und Franz I. bei den Kurfürsten,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 48.

³⁹ Charles V, “Gutachten des Staatsrates: Juni 1530,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 165.

⁴⁰ Charles V, “The Emperor’s Declaration of Policy, 19 April 1521,” in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 85.

⁴¹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 348.

⁴² Maltby, *Reign*, 18.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 14.

death the truest sons of the Catholic Church, defending and extending their belief to the glory of God, the propagation of the faith, the salvation of their souls. They have left behind them the holy Catholic rites that I should live and die therein, and so until now with God's aid I have lived, as becomes a Christian Emperor.⁴⁴

Maximillian, after becoming Holy Roman Emperor in 1508, sought the medieval ideal of a universal Church and empire. At one point he considered seeking the papacy to unite it with the throne of Germany and accelerate the accomplishment of this dream.⁴⁵ As Maximillian's favorite grandchild and desired successor, Charles was expected to strive for the same goal of universal order.⁴⁶

Expectations for Charles were high, not only from his family, but from all of Christian Europe. The faithful across Europe hoped that a universal Christian order would be founded to defend and uphold the faith.⁴⁷ It was the common dream that all Christendom could be united under one ruler. The Augsburg Confession, Article VII, says "It is also taught among us that one holy Christian church will be and remain forever."⁴⁸ Though several heresies of the fifteenth century, including the Hussites, put a damper on this hope,⁴⁹ it was revived with Charles's ascension to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire in 1519.

The dream of a unified Church existed from the days of Charlemagne and was rejuvenated in the person of Maximillian's young successor.⁵⁰ Charles was the most powerful ruler since Charlemagne: he had nearly as many domains, and had been raised, as a Hapsburg, to be a pious defender of the faith, eager to embark upon crusades against the enemies of the

⁴⁴ Charles V, "The Emperor's Declaration of Policy, 19 April," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 85.

⁴⁵ Maltby, *Reign*, 22.

⁴⁶ Brandi, *Emperor*, 95.

⁴⁷ Oberman, *Luther*, 32.

⁴⁸ Theodore G. Tappert, trans., *The Augsburg Confession: Anniversary Edition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 12.

⁴⁹ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 36-37.

⁵⁰ Oberman, *Luther*, 26, 30.

Church.⁵¹ Who better to restore Charlemagne's empire and bring about the dream of universal peace, religious unity, and Christian order to Europe than Charles, a king indoctrinated and devoted to these goals, essential to the success of a Christian king?⁵²

Charles's dedication to this duty was strong; he viewed himself as a divinely appointed shepherd of the people, personally responsible to God for any failure in maintaining the unity of the Church.⁵³ He sought universal peace within Christendom, and to crusade against the Turks.⁵⁴ Charles viewed himself as responsible to act for the good of the empire's secular and religious welfare, simultaneously head of Church and state,⁵⁵ striving for religious uniformity. Charles's tenure as Holy Roman Emperor represents an attempt of physical unification of church and state more extreme than any attempted by his predecessors under the conditions of the Middle-Ages.

Charles defended the Church from both heretic and infidel. Following the ancient traditions of his upbringing, Charles set his sight on destroying the Turks, widely considered the "ancient enemy of God's Christendom..."⁵⁶ The Venetian ambassador wrote after visiting Charles's court, "The Emperor's hatred towards the Ottoman Empire is well known. It is probable that he formerly entertained hopes of crushing and overcoming this Power, since he always gave out, that his highest aim and object was to do so..."⁵⁷ The Duke of Norfolk asked to work with Charles against the Turks as the Duke "prayed God, that it might please Him and the king his master to permit him now to serve Your Majesty and the King of Hungary against the

⁵¹ Oberman, *Luther*, 27; Kleinschmidt, *World Emperor*, 54-57.

⁵² Brandi, *Emperor*, 13.

⁵³ Charles V, "The Proposition or Speech from the Throne: March 1529," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 240-41.

⁵⁴ Kleinschmidt, *World Emperor*, 93.

⁵⁵ Charles W. Ingrao, *The Hapsburg Monarchy 1618-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 27.

⁵⁶ Brandi, *Emperor*, 511.

⁵⁷ Navagiero, "Address to the Doge and Senate...July 1546," in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 469.

Turk.”⁵⁸ Gattinara calls Charles true and faithful, protector of all Christendom.⁵⁹ “The Emperor was therefore the equal of the Pope as guardian of the Universal Church...,”⁶⁰ but protecting the Church meant unifying it as well.

Charles knew that it was necessary to establish domestic tranquility first, “after which I will undertake to resist [the Turk] with all my power, hoping for due assistance from all the other Princes, as so important an occasion would require.”⁶¹ Charles’s wars with the king of France distressed the idea of a unified Christendom. When the emperor heard the news of his victory over Francis I at Pavia, Charles “forbade all public demonstrations and rejoicings which are customary on like occasions, as quite unsuitable to the present one, when a great Christian King had fallen under such misfortune. Bonfires and illuminations, he said, should be reserved for their triumphs over the enemies of Christendom.”⁶²

Expectations of Reform

Charles was a devout Catholic, dedicated to the unity of Christendom and defense of the faith. While he lived by ideals developed many generations before his time, new ideals for leaders were developing. Charles had been exposed to these ideas by his Humanist tutors and

⁵⁸ Eustace Chapuys, “Chapuys to the Emperor, 25 October 1529,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 259.

⁵⁹ Mercurino Gattinara, “Denkschrift Gattinaras, 1527,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 133.

⁶⁰ Brandi, *Emperor*, 371.

⁶¹ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 241.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 111.

advisors. The modern perspective of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries “offers a rich variety of reformations” in the Holy Roman Empire, including urban and princely reformation.⁶³

Historians accept that through the Reformation, the early modern period ended medieval dualism and gradually unified politics and faith,⁶⁴ first in the secular cities and then, as the secular princes asserted themselves, throughout the realm. Reform, of course, was not new,⁶⁵ but part of a medieval German political tradition of princely action in the affairs of the Church.⁶⁶ In the pre-Reformation period, the princes began to initiate reforms for the Church instead of merely aiding reform. But, in the latter half of the fifteenth century, after a number of Church councils, most notably Basel, failed to bring about meaningful reform within the Catholic Church,⁶⁷ and the situation became ideal for princes like Wilhelm (1445-1517) and George of Saxony. Princes began to take over the reform of the Church with the support of Humanist thinkers.⁶⁸

So many rulers felt that the time was right to exercise their duty in reforming the church in the fifty years preceding the Reformation of 1517 that historians like Schulze have come to describe the period as an *Epochenschwelle*,⁶⁹ others, including Moeller and Brady, as the politically motivated beginnings of confessionalization. The German princes took advantage of the opportunity to turn princely responsibilities for aiding reform into a political co-option of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of the Church.

⁶³ Thomas A. Brady Jr., *Communities, Politics, and Reformation in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 207.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁵ Manfred Schulze, *Fürsten und Reformation: Geistliche Reformpolitik weltlicher Fürsten vor der Reformation* (Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), 10-11.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁸ Erasmus, *Unterweysung*.

⁶⁹ Schulze, *Fürsten*, 11.

Faith and politics drew close as princes and city magistrates began to exercise more control over religious practice within their territories. The acquisition of power over the Church translated into more responsibility to reform the Church, its doctrine, and its administration. As a result, reform became engrained in the collective consciousness of the German people as a responsibility of the ruler, commonly viewed as a *Christenpflicht* of princes to reform, protect, and unify the faith.⁷⁰

Considering the relationship between faith and politics in medieval society and culture, it has been commonly assumed that the Middle Ages constituted a unique and homogeneous “world where religion and the moral order were conterminous and where deviation from it was a grievous transgression.”⁷¹ Thomas A. Brady says that “in medieval Latin Christendom the preservation of government through religion was complicated by the bifurcation of authority into *sacerdotium* and *imperium*, corresponding to a division of its elites into lay rulers and clergy, which gave rise to a bewildering variety of—mostly unstable—situations of governance.”⁷² After the papacy asserted itself in 1050, ecclesiastical authorities were responsible for the internal regulation and reform of the Church. Secular rulers were responsible only for defending the Church to ensure that the ecclesiastical authorities could continue to regulate it.

R. W. Southern writes that “there was indeed a difference in the use of these two powers. The spiritual sword was wielded directly [by the Vicars of Christ], the secular was wielded through the agency of kings and princes.”⁷³ With this “bifurcation of authority,”⁷⁴ the Catholic

⁷⁰ Schulze, *Fürsten*, 8.

⁷¹ Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 49.

⁷² Brady, *Communities*, 170.

⁷³ Southern, *Western Society and the Church*, 143.

⁷⁴ Brady, *Communities*, 170.

Church retained power independent of the state to regulate and reform itself.⁷⁵ There was a clear dualism, a division between the power and exercise of religion and the power of government. Rulers could be expected to act politically with deference for their beliefs, but the institutional exercise of politics was independent from considerations of faith and religion in the first part of the Middle Ages.

By the mid-fifteenth century, Medieval Latin Christendom had ultimately failed to resolve this “structural bifurcation,” which continually undermined the dream of Christian Unity in the Middle Ages.⁷⁶ Eventually this contributed to a pre-Reformation “disintegration of the clergy’s power.”⁷⁷ Beginning in the fifteenth century, the need for reform became universally recognized.⁷⁸ The Church had become disinterested in reform with the division of the papacy between Rome and Avignon in the fourteenth century. This division rendered institutional reforms, even on the part of the monastic orders, nearly impossible.⁷⁹ Even after the papacy was reunited in 1377, the demands of Italian politics, to which the papacy devoted itself, diverted attention away from reform until the Council of Trent was arranged by Pope Paul III in 1545.⁸⁰ With 15th century popes more eager to restore power to Rome than deal with grievances,⁸¹ a new ideal arose regarding the duties of a Christian leader: the duty to actively guide and encourage reform efforts of the Church within the borders of their kingdoms. This concept arose in the

⁷⁵ Southern, *Western Society and the Church* , 32, 34.

⁷⁶ Brady, *Communities*, 171.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁷⁸ Rady, *Charles V*, 12.

⁷⁹ Southern, *Western Society and the Church* , 44, 215-16.

⁸⁰ Oberman, *Luther*, 8.

⁸¹ MacCullough, *Reformation*, 42.

latter decades of the Late Middle Ages and was developed in the Early Modern Period, before and during Charles's lifetime.⁸²

Humanists like Erasmus were at the forefront, espousing the ideal that Christian rulers should engage in active reform.⁸³ Erasmus is considered "the supreme humanist scholar" and detested the corruption and privilege of the church.⁸⁴ However, Erasmus, like other humanists, forged firm friendships with rulers he felt shared his "passion for learned wisdom."⁸⁵ In these rulers, humanists saw hope for reform of the Church in the future, drawing on careful interpretation of doctrines concerning the ruler's "responsibility to play a leading part in Church life" to encourage their active participation in reform.⁸⁶ Dairmaid MacCulloch, in *The Reformation*, states that "Erasmus was enthusiastic for the role of the godly prince . . . as a substitute for what he saw as the failures of the official Church."⁸⁷ The ideas of Erasmus influenced others to look to the princes for reform.

The idea of a ruler leading both the temporal and spiritual, had been developed and dispersed, Charles could not avoid it. Though he relished his duties to defend the Church and unify Christendom, the new expectation was also that he would lead the Church in reform. One of Charles's boyhood tutors, Mercurino Gattinara, was instrumental in providing Charles with

⁸² Oberman, *Luther*, 9.

⁸³ John Hale, *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance* (New York: Touchstone, 1995). Humanists like Erasmus and their "humanist moral teaching emphasized the obligations of honor individual conduct and the pursuit of the collective good in terms that contradicted neither the Ten Commandments nor the Sermon on the Mount," 198.

⁸⁴ MacCulloch, *The Reformation*, 97, 101.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

instruction on how to guide his people to reform.⁸⁸ The example of Charles's predecessors in Germany, Spain, and Burgundy, must also have inspired in Charles a sense of his duty to reform.

At this point, on the eve of the German Reformation, religious reform came under the direct control of Germany's secular rulers. According to Brady and Moeller, this period began the process that brought an end to the dualistic relationship between faith and politics. Co-option of the Church was happening, in a Catholic and Protestant context. As the idea of secular leaders co-opting religious reform became generally accepted, even Martin Luther endorsed this popular initiative.

Luther, widely considered the driving force of the Reformation, was initially opposed to the idea of a princely duty to reform the faith, and intended an ideal separation of the temporal and the spiritual to include a separation between church and state.⁸⁹ In the early years of the Reformation, Luther took care to warn the princes repeatedly not to, "ply their trade too far and try to become shepherds instead of hangmen."⁹⁰ However, effective protection on the part of Frederick the Wise,⁹¹ the scare of the Peasant's Revolt of 1524-5⁹² and the overwhelming popularity of this social ideal soon brought Luther to a very different opinion. From that point, Luther took care to place emphasis on his writings concerning the subjection to princely authority,⁹³ and "God's will that the temporal sword and law be used for the punishment of the wicked and the protection of the upright."⁹⁴ Throughout *Social Discipline in the Reformation*, R.

⁸⁸ Brandi, *Emperor*, 91.

⁸⁹ Hans J. Hillerbrand, ed., *The Protestant Reformation* (New York: Harper, 1968), 47.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁹¹ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 41.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 186.

⁹³ Hillerbrand, ed., *The Protestant Reformation*, 49.

Po-Chia Hsia demonstrates how, for Protestants (particularly Lutherans) the symbol of Luther—a Luther in favor of the rule of princes over the church—constituted a powerful incorporation utilized by the governments of German lands.

Luther, who had encouraged the temporary leadership of the princes in the case of any possible Reformation as early as 1520, began, with even more vigor, to call the princes to arms in defense of their faith and liberty. Luther seems to have come to this decision even before the peasants' revolt, despite the ramifications of princely authority on the administration and organization of the church. In 1523, Luther wrote, "With this I hope that all this wicked and lying terror with which the Romanists have long intimidated and dulled our conscience has been overcome, and that they, just like all of us, shall be made subject of the sword."⁹⁵

Luther continually stressed the necessity that the princes reform the church where the clerics had failed.⁹⁶ He encouraged the German princes to appeal to Charles in matters of reform, recording, "Presented with such an opportunity we ought to apply ourselves and use this time of grace profitably."⁹⁷ By 1525 he added sentiments that "ecclesiastical discipline" be provided by the Elector of Saxony himself.⁹⁸ And while the peasants' revolt had a pronounced effect on Luther's challenge to the princes, Luther's change in policy seems to be a testament to the cultural prevalence of princely duty to reform the Church.

As an adult, Charles V spoke of reform in nearly every correspondence, including those written before his election as Holy Roman Emperor in 1519. Charles took this duty seriously as did his entire family. Later letters between Charles and his brother Ferdinand in 1526 and 1527

⁹⁴ Hillerbrand, ed., *The Protestant Reformation*, 45.

⁹⁵ Porter, *Selected Political Writings*, 63.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 39, 41.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁹⁸ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 186.

go even further in demonstrating this point as each, in turn, espoused his own beliefs that princes had a duty to reform the Church.⁹⁹ Charles related these feelings to his son in a letter from 1543.¹⁰⁰

As Reformation teachings instilled the cities with a sense of salvation through the community, a new combination of faith and politics undermined medieval dualism. According to Brady and Moeller, during the Reformation the community came to act as an intermediary for its people in a way it had not under the dualism of the late medieval social system.¹⁰¹ However, the process of assertion in the cities was not purely dependent upon political initiative. The Protestant faith played a key role in altering the politics of the cities. The “idea that the city was fully responsible before God” became a tenant of faith and took hold among the people and their leaders, enticing “the [political] attack of the councils on the Catholic institutions in their city.”¹⁰²

Protestants were not, however, the only group to lead reform. “[U]rban reform lay in the fact that the legal and psychological corporation thus formed rejected the sacral-temporal dualism of the medieval society and saw the civic corporation as a holy community, a sacral corporation through which the citizens’ welfare—religious and temporal—was seen to be mediated.”¹⁰³ In these cities, “each citizen understood that he was part of the whole, sharing responsibility for his part in the welfare of the great organic community, the ‘collective

⁹⁹ Charles V, “Brief Karls V an Ferdinand I, 1526,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 118; Ferdinand I, “Brief Ferdinands I. and Karl V., Auszug,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 125.

¹⁰⁰ Charles V, “Anweisungen Karls V. an seinem Sohn Philipp, 1543,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 286-87.

¹⁰¹ Bernd Moeller, *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 73.

¹⁰² Brady, *Communities*, 67-68.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 4.

individual', to which he was tightly bound by laws and duties."¹⁰⁴ The relationship between faith and politics had become so close that "the conviction that the whole of the urban community stood as a unit before God also was obviously bound to influence the internal politics of the city after the introduction of the Reformation."¹⁰⁵

The Reformation helped the cities assert themselves and ensured that city politics would become more religiously charged by the sixteenth century. Reformation principles were entwined with city politics as a result of direct intervention, as was the case in formations of theocracies in Geneva with Calvin, in Strasbourg with Bucer,¹⁰⁶ and in Zurich with Zwingli.¹⁰⁷ These cases went beyond self-assertion and the expression of faith, resulting in radical revolution. But these are not the only examples of how cities brought about a closer relationship between faith and politics. Moderate cities, not led by a Reformer, show a unity between faith and politics nearly as strong as the theocracies of Calvin, Bucer, and Zwingli.

Many cities relied on their political leaders to lead their souls and bring the community to salvation. It was common for a political leader to be considered responsible for the salvation of his state. Political leaders were religious leaders for their community—or kingdom.

In 1508, in the City of Ulm, "the main church composed the center of the civic and religious life of the town."¹⁰⁸ Muehlhausen, a city of Alsace, declared "as early as July 1523 . . . that it wished to place itself under the word of God, so that Christian brotherly love and unity

¹⁰⁴ Thomas A. Brady Jr., *The Politics of the Reformation in Germany: Jacob Sturm (1489-1553) of Strassburg* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1997), 3.

¹⁰⁵ Moeller, *Cities*, 67.

¹⁰⁶ Brady, *Communities*, 5.

¹⁰⁷ Moeller, *Cities*, 78.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

may be planted among us.”¹⁰⁹ The Basel City Council openly declared that “the government of every city is established primarily to augment and support the honor of God and to prohibit all injustice and especially the grossest sins and crimes according to the ordinance of holy Christianity.”¹¹⁰ Within most cities, the relationship between faith and politics had become stronger than before the Reformation.

According to Pörtner, confessionalization at the local level was of “crucial importance”¹¹¹ as “confessionalization . . . involved the common people as both object and subject.”¹¹² Mack Walker confirms, in *German Home Towns*, that the hometowns are crucial to attaining an understanding of how most Germans lived. By the end of the era most secular rights were contingent upon confession, especially on the local level.¹¹³ The Reformation was the capstone of a movement of co-option that had started in the 1450’s. This was the world that Charles grew and developed in: reformation permeated political and religious life. Faith penetrated every aspect of culture and society, with no separation of faith and politics.

The secondary sources describe a process by which faith and politics came closer in the early modern period. Thomas Brady defines the “spirit of confession” as the “intellectual and organizational hardening of the religious communities in more or less stable church structures with their own doctrines, constitutions, and religious moral styles.”¹¹⁴ Hsia adds that confessionalization represented the co-option of Catholic, Calvinist, and Lutheran religious institutions by the state, making it easier for the state to draw upon the Church not only to

¹⁰⁹ Moeller, *Cities*, 65.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹¹¹ Regina Pörtner, *The Counter-Reformation in Central Europe: Styria, 1580-1630* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 181.

¹¹² R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550-1750* (London: Routledge, 1989), 5.

¹¹³ Brady, *Communities*, 396.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 378.

confessionalize, but introduce rigorous central government control as social discipline.¹¹⁵ Charles sought to build unity in a Catholic context as others sought to establish themselves through Protestantism. In any case, confessionalization increased the unity between faith and politics with “church discipline function[ing] as an instrument of social control in the emerging territorial states of all three confessions.”¹¹⁶

The princes led the process of confessionalization.¹¹⁷ State rulers, both Protestant and Catholic, were more directly motivated by ideology than their predecessors had been.¹¹⁸ Neither the prince-bishop Albrecht of Mainz nor Charles V (r.1519-1555) proved immune to the influence and proliferation of such a popular idea. In a personal letter from 1519, Albrecht reminds Charles that as Kaiser he is responsible for his God-given duty to uphold the faith and eliminate heresies, bringing the Church under control.¹¹⁹ Additionally, Albrecht wrote on the same subject to Luther in 1521. In that letter he assures the young cleric that, “I will conduct and show myself, if God will, a pious priest and Christian prince.”¹²⁰ The idea that princes should be responsible for religious reform had penetrated all levels of the nobility, as it had the populace.

“Europe’s tithe-payers...often felt that they were taxed for a far-away religious institution which did them little direct good.”¹²¹ After Adrian was made pope, he “openly admitted the partial guilt of the Vatican in the decline of the Church.”¹²² There was widespread dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church that led its followers to seek reform. Secular leaders

¹¹⁵ Hsia, *Social Discipline*, 5.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹¹⁷ Brady, *Communities*, 381.

¹¹⁸ Stephen J. Lee, *The Thirty Years War* (London: Routledge, 1991), 23.

¹¹⁹ Albrechts Mainz, “Überlegungen Albrechts von Mainz, 1519,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 44-45.

¹²⁰ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 96.

¹²¹ MacCullough, *Reformation*, 31

¹²² Brandi, *Emperor*, 185.

had co-opted the duty of reforming the church, but with that power over religious reform, they also gained political power.

Reform as a Means of Self-Assertion

Brady, in *Communities, Politics and Reformation in Early Modern Europe*, proposes that the Protestant cities of Germany began the confessionalization process early in the Reformation as a way to assert themselves against the oppressive power of the empire. “The princes who accepted Luther’s teachings gained from them an ideological basis for opposition to the Emperor...”¹²³

Much of this had to do with the power of the Hapsburg monarchy, and the threat of oppression. Charles Ingrao clarifies that “the . . . prospect of Hapsburg hegemony . . . troubled the dynasty’s relationship with the rest of Germany.”¹²⁴ It was clear that the emperors planned to accomplish hegemony by bullying the autonomous polities within the empire¹²⁵ into what Hsia characterizes as a process toward greater submission under a more centralized government.

In response, a number of German cities asserted themselves against the ambitions of the empire. “They commonly did so by bringing religious personnel and practice more closely under their own control, pursuing what may be called a ‘domestication’ of urban religion.”¹²⁶ A number of German princes followed the same practice and incorporated the religious institution to their own power, creating a close relationship between faith and politics.

¹²³ Maltby, *Reign*, 25.

¹²⁴ Ingrao, *Hapsburg*, 27.

¹²⁵ Moeller, *Cities*, 105.

¹²⁶ Brady, *Communities*, 171.

Beyond the initial teachings of the Reformers, “Protestant theology . . . was city born” and was, in large part, formed by how the cities unified the Protestant faith with city politics in the early modern period.¹²⁷ The idea that Protestantism could help city officials assert themselves against the power of the emperor was appealing, and “Protestant parties struggled to win their cities to the Reformation” for this very purpose.¹²⁸ According to Moeller, this accounts for at least one reason the “Reformation . . . shook [many] townsmen to their depths . . . [and] found . . . broad, general support in all of the cities.”¹²⁹

As in the case of the cities, the dynastic growth of the Hapsburgs alarmed and alienated German princes who feared the unchecked power of their emperor.¹³⁰ Margrave Albert of Brandenburg led the way, instituting a Protestant program of reform as early as 1525,¹³¹ and was followed in electoral Ernestine Saxony, where Protestant reform had been enacted by the princes as early as 1527.¹³² The conversions and reforms of other princes followed, including Duke Ernest of Brunswick-Lüneburg (1527),¹³³ George of Anspach (1528),¹³⁴ and Philip of Hessen (1528).¹³⁵

¹²⁷ Ibid., 13.

¹²⁸ Moeller, *Cities*, 65.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 60.

¹³⁰ Ingraio, *Hapsburg*, 26-27.

¹³¹ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 185-86.

¹³² Ibid., 186.

¹³³ Ibid., 187-88.

¹³⁴ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 187.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 187.

The fear-driven reform was especially evident in princes like Ulrich, third Duke of Württemberg, who was exiled by the emperor for the fifteen years before 1534.¹³⁶ It was in that year that Ulrich asserted himself against the emperor and embraced Protestantism.¹³⁷ Ulrich regained his lands, and drew princely politics closer to the considerations of faith than ever before. Ulrich's reinstatement "was . . . a turning point within the Protestant movement"¹³⁸ as many other princes followed suit. These princes included Elector Joachim II of Brandenburg (1539),¹³⁹ Maurice of Albertine-Wettin Saxony (1539),¹⁴⁰ and Frederick of Pfalz (1546).¹⁴¹ The relationship between faith and politics became so close, as Brady and others recognize, that before the Schmalkaldic War, the political gains of the Lutherans translated directly into religious gains.¹⁴²

The Schmalkaldic League was formed in 1531 to resist the influence and power of the Hapsburg Emperor Charles V. According to Bernd Moeller, both the princes and the cities took part and gained from the alliance. Politics and faith had ended the dualism of the late Middle Ages, and League members soon came to "dream of a Protestant on the Imperial throne" as their ultimate goal.¹⁴³ The League was a powerful force throughout the 1530's and 40's, not only

¹³⁶ Brady, *Communities*, 81.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 81-82.

¹³⁹ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 306-7.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 306.

¹⁴¹ Hans Rott. *Friedrich II. von der Pfalz und die Reformation*. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1904), 52.

¹⁴² Brady, *Communities*, 373.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 122.

because of its political assertion, but as “a center for the stabilization and expansion of Protestantism, and the emperor’s chief opponent.”¹⁴⁴

The interests of Goslar are representative of the interests of Protestant cities in general, and according to Blume, are primarily concerned with the political independence and subsequent well-being of the city. In the case of Goslar, Blume insists that the leaders became Protestant in 1527 to obtain their economic and political freedom.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, it was not the self-interested Protestant leaders, cautious in their political exercises, who insisted upon entrance into the league when it was founded in 1531, but the people who, because of their zealous Protestantism, demanded it. Blume states that the leaders gave in for fear of the people and fear of further aggression by Heinrich des Jungeren, the Catholic prince whom they had rebelled against in 1527.¹⁴⁶ The League sought to institute a “Reichsreform” by which the emperor would become less independent and more reliant on the princes for his power.¹⁴⁷ “Above all, religious reform placed powerful new weapons in the hands of princes and cities alike that made it easier for them to resist imperial pretensions.”¹⁴⁸ In this way, the Protestants and their allies hoped to gain lasting independence in a measure of autonomy from Charles V.¹⁴⁹

By the time Charles was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1519, he had to find a way to deal with all the complexities of Europe and the Empire. Charles was expected to uphold traditional expectations and to respond to new challenges, while maintaining the duties considered essential for a Catholic prince.

¹⁴⁴ Brady, *Communities*, 110.

¹⁴⁵ Gundmar Blume, *Goslar und der Schmalkaldische Bund 1527/31-1547* (Goslar: Selbstverlag Goslar, 1969), 56.

¹⁴⁶ Blume, *Goslar*, 56.

¹⁴⁷ Hartung, *Reichsstände*, 56.

¹⁴⁸ Maltby, *Reign*, 23.

¹⁴⁹ Brady, *Communities*, 239.

The best example for the weight of universal expectation is contained in the letter that Erasmus wrote to Charles in 1521 on the eve of the Diet of Worms that would address the political and religious complexities of Germany for the first time. Erasmus personally reminded Charles of his religious duties while simultaneously managing to encapsulate the high expectations held by all Humanists and Europeans in general at this time.

Erasmus urges Charles to seek divine wisdom to rule, harkening back to Biblical examples of David and Solomon. “Seek wisdom...that you may govern and rule freely and willingly, this is a very godly thing and truly the wisdom that princes should covet.”¹⁵⁰ Likewise, Charles was to seek wisdom from God in shepherding his subjects. Erasmus proceeded to exhort the young prince on his Christian virtues, the maintenance of which, were vital in obtaining the wisdom he had been counseled to seek. “A young prince should think virtuous thoughts continuously [and] pay heed to the requirements of virtue in all things.”¹⁵¹ In addition, Charles was exhorted to keep the holy faith, defend it and Christendom against the machinations of the heretic, Jew, and Turk.

Above all else, the Prince must remember that his blessed to have the Christian Faith and therefore must quickly learn the Christian teachings and the Holy Gospel, and proclaim to men, through declaration and example, that the teachings of Christ do no longer trouble him, but rather flow through him.¹⁵²

Erasmus further counseled Charles to be more virtuous than the heathen princes against whom he was expected to crusade. “A Christian Prince should always far surpass the heathen in Virtue.”¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ “Suchet Weisheit dass... ain ganz goettlich ding das man frei und willig regier und beherscht warlich das est die Weisheit so die Fuersten begeren sollen.” Erasmus, *Unterweysung*.

¹⁵¹ “Einem jungen Fuersten soll maestettigs Tugent in allerlai weyss einbilden... [und] nach Tugend regel achten in alles...” Ibid.

¹⁵² “Dies soll man vor allen dingen dem Fursten in sem gemuet einbilde, das er guntz ain christliche glaube hab, und die Christliche ler unnd haylig Evangelium bald lern, und mann soll dem Fuersten vortagen und einsagen das die lere Christi unsers liebe herzen nyemats mer belange und aingee dunn den Fuersten.” Ibid.

¹⁵³ “Ain Christlicher Fuerst soll die Heidnische mutt Tugenden weit uebertreffen.” Ibid.

Erasmus also told Charles that he would receive more blessings by being a virtuous and a good example than by conducting wars against the heretics in Germany. War, he makes clear, is “...truly the greatest, murderous evil...”¹⁵⁴

A pious Prince should never incite a war in any way, and yet, if there should still be the necessity of war, after every possible attempt to employ alternatives and means to avoid it, he should prosecute that war so as to inflict the least possible damage and consequence for his subjects, and with the most minimal cost in Christian blood.¹⁵⁵

The Humanist expectation was that Charles should defend the faith against the Turks with the sword, but against the German heretics, primarily through example and not by violence.

Finally, Erasmus made it clear that “...although a Prince be not a bishop, pope or monk, he is nevertheless and after all a Christian, the greatest [Christian] among many.”¹⁵⁶ According to Erasmus, Charles, as the greatest Christian, had as much, if not more, right to lead Christendom as any monk, bishop, or pope.

This idea would prove influential as Charles sought to balance his duties by upholding the traditional expectations while embracing the new expectation that he bring about reform. Charles had to halt the spread of Protestantism, restore the Church to its former glory, and guide a united Christendom in its divine destiny to overcome the Turk.

¹⁵⁴ “...wol ein grosst moerder ubel ...” Erasmus, *Unterweysung*.

¹⁵⁵ “Ain frummer fuerst soll nymmer in kain weg ain krieg bewegen noch annehmen er hab ihnen dann nach versuchung und fuer wendung aller anderer weg und mittel in kain weg vermenden meugen...das brieg mitt dem wenigsten schaden und nachtail seiner unterthanen mit dem wenigsten kosten des Christlichen bluets gefuehrt.” Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ “Obwohl ain Fuerst nicht ein Bishoff, papst oder moench ist, so ist er dannocht ain Christ das wohl das allergoesst ist.” Ibid.

CHAPTER III

“What is lost today will not be found to-morrow and I have done nothing so far...but blame myself for this long delay.”

- Charles's Personal Notes of Reflection, January 1525

This thesis has sought to explain why Charles would vehemently promise, and then fail, to provide decisive military intervention against the Protestant threat until 1546. I will now argue that Charles's religious beliefs were an important motive for his actions. A princely responsibility to guide reform peacefully in his part of Christendom precluded the use of military force so long as the possibility of a council was in view. Through this approach, Charles sought to save Christendom, his subjects, and his soul.

The available materials provide evidence of a faith-based explanation to complement the secular explanations for Charles's hesitation. Considering these religious motives may provide historians with an explanation for some seemingly inexplicable and illogical elements of Charles's policies toward the Protestants. Specifically, this faith-based theory will explain Charles's determined effort to avoid direct military action against the rebellious Germans between the years 1521 and 1546.

Charles's response to the Protestant threat will be analyzed through three connected, but distinct periods of his reign; these periods are: the Period of Deliberation (1521-1530), the Period of Negotiation (1530-1546), and the Period of Disillusion (1546-1555). The examination will demonstrate that the strategy of faith-based reform was devised and employed by Charles V to guide his policy on the German Protestants. Additionally, the evidence will demonstrate that Charles's motives were equally yoked to his faith and to politics.

Period of Deliberation (1521-1530)

This period is a time of great reflection. In 1521, Charles took a hard line against Luther's teachings and any willing to listen to them. At the conclusion of the Diet of Worms on April 19, 1521, Charles made this abundantly clear.

A single monk, led astray by private judgment, has set himself against the faith held by all Christians for a thousand years and more, and impudently concludes that all Christians up till now have erred. I have therefore resolved to stake upon this cause all my dominions, my friends, my body and my blood, my life and soul.¹

Soon thereafter, Charles reaffirmed his determination by issuing the Edict of Worms, which officially placed Luther and all his supporters under the ban of the Empire on May 6, 1521.²

Such declarations suggest that Charles was dedicated to a violent eradication of the new heresy and confident in his ability to do so. Charles believed himself to be, "appointed by peculiar privilege [defender] of the faith,"³ chosen by God to be a judge and administrator, responsible for the defense of the faith and salvation of his subjects. Failure would be a "grievous disgrace, an eternal stain upon ourselves and our posterity, if, in this our day, not only heresy, but its very suspicion, were due to our neglect."⁴ In 1521, Charles's course seemed preordained by the tradition in which he had been raised.

Charles soon found a need for additional contemplation. Following the conclusion of Worms and Charles's impassioned and decisive declaration, the challenge of Luther's heresy proved more resilient than Charles had realized. Luther was taken to Wartburg under the protection of his powerful benefactor, Frederick the Wise. Luther there continued to compose

¹ Charles V, "The Emperor's Declaration of Policy," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 86.

² Rady, *Charles V*, 24.

³ Charles V, "The Emperor's Declaration of Policy," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 86.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

heretical writings, including a German translation of the New Testament, and gained sympathy and support from the masses and their leaders.⁵

A glimpse of Luther's popular support is best captured in a statement by the Wittenberg jurist, Jerome Schurf, who, upon Luther's return, declared, "Oh, what joy has Dr. Martin's return spread among us! His words, through divine mercy, are bringing back every day misguided people to the way of truth."⁶

The princes, eager to take this opportunity to assert themselves politically, recognized the import of popular support, and availed themselves of a number of opportunities for rebellion from 1521 to 1530. A complete account of misdeeds and violations of the Edict of Worms committed during this period by the Protestant princes would be nearly impossible, but a few significant incidents highlight the whole.

Among those committed to Protestantism by 1530's Diet of Augsburg were Elector John, Duke of Saxony, George, Margrave of Brandenburg, Ernest, Duke of Lueneburg, Philip, Landgrave of Hessen, John Frederick, Duke of Saxony, Francis, Duke of Lueneburg, Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt, Nuremburg and Reutlingen;⁷ and a number of cities that eventually entered into the Protestant faith in order to resist the Hapsburgs.⁸ While this small group does not represent a majority, their disregard for an Imperial Edict is evidence of greater insubordination.

The princes were not, however, content with conversion, and would reinforce insubordination with rebellion leading up to the Diet at Augsburg. As early as June 1525, Charles received a letter from the Duke of Bourbon warning him of the political danger posed by

⁵ MacCulloch, *Reformation*, 132.

⁶ Phillip Schaff, *History of the Church*, (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1888), 6:390.

⁷ Theodore G. Tappert, trans., *The Augsburg Confession*, 57.

⁸ Charles V, "Copy of the Minute of a Letter from the Emperor to the Archduke Ferdinand His Brother: 26 March, 1526," in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 239.

his Protestant subjects: “But I tell you in truth... [of] the various cabals which are beginning to be formed, and which are of no small consequence.”⁹ These and other ominous warnings were confirmed in October 1526, when the Protestant princes convened the Synod of Homberg to officially declare their religious rebellion and right to issue ecclesiastical regulations “concerning the extremely good fortune of the emperor by the grace of God ...”¹⁰ Then, just prior to the Diet of Speyer, Philip of Hesse and John of Saxony “forged the League of Torgau to articulate their defiance of the Edict of Worms.”¹¹

By 1528, Philip of Hesse, the first to publicly embrace the new Protestant persuasion in 1524,¹² boldly offended the peace of the Empire with his ill treatment of neighboring Catholic bishops.¹³ This action offended Catholics and Protestants alike, Melancthon setting down his disgust with the declaration, “It stained the good cause and it provoked the natural resentment of the German Catholic sovereigns.”¹⁴ However, similar actions were perpetrated by Protestant rebels from 1521-1530, and throughout the reign of Charles V.

Charles also faced, for the first time, the prospect of these rebellious elements drawing foreign powers into an alliance against him. Beginning in February 1530, Charles received word from his Ambassador Chapuys in London of the dangerous and treacherous actions of his subjects.

Sire, I have heard, that the German who arrived here the second day in Christmas week, and whom I mentioned to your Majesty, comes from Duke Frederick, Elector of

⁹ Charles Bourbon, “Copy of an Original Letter from the Duke of Bourbon to the Emperor: 12 June, 1525,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 117.

¹⁰ “de quibus parati sumus deo et caesari ex dei verbo reddere rationem.” Aemilius Ludwig Richter, ed., *Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnung dess Sechszehnten Jahrhunderts* (Weimar: Verlag des LandesIndustriecomptoirs, 1876), 56.

¹¹ Rady, *Emperor*, 46.

¹² *Ibid.*, 45.

¹³ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 239.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 239.

Saxony...He said to someone, that the time was come, when people of talent and courage would find plenty of employment in Germany...[he] is dying with fear of being discovered.¹⁵

Charles was forced to recognize the weakness of his position as a newly elected Emperor, who had not yet been crowned, and was therefore uncertain of his ability to enforce his much publicized edict. He makes this uncertainty clear in a highly confidential correspondence to his brother Ferdinand written June 25, 1525.

First, as to the movement of the Lutherans, and the evil they have done, and to all appearance mean to do; it has annoyed, and does continue to annoy me bitterly. If it were in my power to remedy it speedily, I would spare neither my person nor my estates in the cause [re-affirms commitment to resolve and Edict of Worms], but you see the difficulty there is in it, especially since I hope to be in Italy soon...to take possession of my crowns... When that is done, I mean to exert all my power in the extermination of this sect... nothing doubting...¹⁶

Despite this affirmation of his dedication, Charles advised Ferdinand to “[await] my... return” before engaging them.¹⁷ Charles proceeds to elaborate for Ferdinand his specific concern that, should premature action be taken, the Protestants might use his postponed coronation (February 21, 1530 at Bologna) to “allege, and with truth, that at present I am myself in fact, no more than King of the Romans, and that on this account the election of another ought to be deferred.”¹⁸ Charles knew the extent of his vulnerabilities in Germany, but was also aware that his Protestant rivals knew them.

Apart from the dynastic consequences, Charles must have considered in conjunction with his possible removal, that:

They [Protestants] would raise suspicions, zizanie, scruples, diffidence and great jealousy both between the Potentates of Italy, and the several Princes of Germany... Under this

¹⁵ Eustace Chapuys, “Chapuys to the Emperor: 6 Feb. 1530,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 310-18.

¹⁶ Charles V, “Extract from the Minute of a Letter from the Emperor to the Achduke Ferdinand his Brother King of Bohemia: 25 June, 1525,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 133.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 134.

pretext they would bring me into some quarrel which I should have difficulty getting out of; whilst you would be involved in the same... Wherefore, my good brother, I advise you to keep this matter very secret...until I have assumed my said crowns as Emperor.¹⁹

The instruction is designed to avoid any overly hasty military action, which might threaten Charles's ability to maintain the peace and unity of Christendom, or directly address the German heresy with authority.

Charles's "habit was to ponder long upon a subject..." before coming to a decision,²⁰ a cautious and calculated development of policy.²¹ The instructions to Ferdinand show great conflict. A great number of Charles's statements in this letter reflect an attempt to remain steadfast in his determination to act decisively against the Protestants, as he had promised at Worms. But, Charles hesitates to take any action, or allow any action to be taken, that might endanger the peace or his ability to take action in the future. It is probable that this indecision rose from inner conflict between a sworn duty to defend the faith from heretics, and a duty to defend the peace and unity of its nations.

William Maltby agrees that, "Charles believed in the old religion and in the ideal of imperial unity."²² Charles felt strongly about his duty to maintain the "peace and repose of Christendom" and confirmed it in many letters.²³ "To tell you my mind, I do not wish for war... [but] if you so advise, and that the affairs will admit of it, I should wish to conclude a good peace...."²⁴ Military action by Charles might succeed for a time, but also endanger the peace and

¹⁹ Charles V, "Extract...25 June, 1525," in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 134.

²⁰ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 344-45.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

²² Maltby, *Reign*, 49.

²³ Charles V, "The Emperor to the Lady Regent Mother of the King of France: 25 August 1525," in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 145.

²⁴ Charles V, "Extract...25 June 1525," in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 137.

unity of Christendom by igniting the passions and struggles of a Holy War, that would end in destruction. This concern was widely held in Europe at the time. The ever-present danger of invasion by Turks has been established. As one ambassador later observed, “those who are against... war maintain, that there never was a more dangerous enterprise both for the Emperor and for all Christendom... [and that] the Turk would certainly come down upon him by sea and by land.”²⁵ With the added danger of a religious schism within the Empire, many began to wonder whether a war against the Protestants would be prudent.²⁶

The Protestant movement was never short of sympathizers, which included the French King, Francis I, those ill-disposed toward the Hapsburg Dynasty, and devout Catholics such as Erasmus and Charles’s own sister Mary.²⁷ Charles’s ambassador to London, Chapuys, expressed dismay that Lutheran merchants, detained in England under suspicion of anti-Hapsburg espionage, garnered lenient punishments and generated considerable support when publicly persecuted for their beliefs. He wrote,

The Lutheran merchants...have undergone no further punishment than to be paraded through some streets of the city...carrying certain books that they were obliged to burn publicly. I do not see what good has resulted from it, since it now appears, that where one spoke of such matter before, there are now a hundred who discourse of them freely and without fear.²⁸

²⁵Navagiero, “Address to the Doge and Senate...July 1546,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 472-74. This was the opinion of Valentin von Teteleben who expressed a similar concern that “if the Turks should perchance make war on the Emperor and Germany, and Germany is in strife and inner turmoil, they will be able to destroy everything within it...the Emperor cannot go to war with the Lutherans for the faith.” Valentin von Teteleben, *Protokoll des Augsburger Reichstage 1530*, ed. Herbert Grundmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), 151.

²⁶ Navagiero, “Address to the Doge and Senate...July 1546,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 472-474; Valentin von Teteleben, *Protokoll*, 151.

²⁷ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 243. “If the war against the Lutherans and heretics goes badly, the King of France and other rulers will take opportunity to attack him.” Valentin von Teteleben, *Protokoll*, 151. “I will only entreat you to be cautious respecting two points...namely, as to reading his books printed at Antwerp, and the care necessary to be taken that all the persons about you should so conduct themselves as to give no occasion to any reports of your becoming a Lutheran convert, as some are beginning to fear and to whisper.” Ferdinand I, “Archduke Ferdinand King of Hungary and Bohemia, to his Sister the Queen Dowager of Hungary and Bohemia: 19th April 1527,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 244.

²⁸ Chapuys, “Chapuys 6 Feb. 1530,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 328-9.

Concerns about sympathy for the Protestants complicated Charles's plans, and made it necessary to avoid military action without careful preparation.

Charles had alternatives, being reared in matters of the state and faith by a number of Humanist tutors. These tutors had become advisors to the young Emperor. Among these were Erasmus of Rotterdam, who had urged Charles to seek alternatives to warfare and avoid the shedding of Christian blood,²⁹ and Adrian of Utrecht, as of January 9, 1522, Pope Adrian VI, who preached to Charles the necessity of reform to eliminate abuses and improve procedures throughout the Church and Christendom. Unfortunately, in the midst of these difficulties, Adrian died, eliminating a potential long-term ally, but not before reiterating this advice to Charles in a 1522 letter.

Sire! The cause of all our misfortunes and our adversity in general is, as St. Chrysostom observes, that we pervert the divine rules, by setting our affections on what we think convenient for us, rather than on that promise, which adds all temporal good to those who first seek the things eternal.³⁰

This, and other statements made by Adrian were an admission of papal guilt, a condemnation of abuses, and general call for reform, with regard to the indiscretions of the Church.³¹ Such advice must have appeared prudent considering the demands for a national assembly that the princes were endorsing by the 1526 Diet of Speyer.³² Charles's course of action seemed decided when the princes and cities seemed willing to negotiate, albeit in a setting unsanctioned by the Pope.

Yet Charles was not hasty in following this course either. Based on comments Charles had made to his brother Ferdinand in 1525, and the rebellious behavior of his princes and several cities in Germany, Charles placed little confidence in the sincerity of Protestant motives. Charles

²⁹ Erasmus, *Unterweysung*.

³⁰ Adrian of Utrecht, "Pope Adrian the Sixth to Charles the Fifth: 3 May, 1522," in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 45.

³¹ Maltby, *Reign*, 50.

³² *Ibid.*, 50; Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 181.

made no secret of his intention to inform the princes of his coronation out of a desire to put the rebels on their guard: “I am not writing to them to prepare themselves, nor to come to meet me, because they would require money, and would afterwards hold me responsible for it.”³³ Charles knew loyalty would not bring the princes to his coronation or to negotiation—they were too self-interested.

In 1526, Charles complained to his brother that several Protestant cities were “practicing upon such princes and persons as they know to be unfavorable to our interests, in order to move and attract them towards themselves, and thus to join in a common cause against us.”³⁴

Furthermore, Charles was confident of his cause. When Charles’s religious background and reflections regarding Luther’s position were weighed against the tradition of the Catholic faith and its leaders at the Diet of Worms, one can be certain that Charles was convinced of his position. In his mind, no rational person could believe Luther’s doctrine or wish for schism. Those who did convert to Protestantism were either artfully deceived or willfully sinned to gain political advantage over Charles at the expense of Christendom, and he frequently spoke of both sorts throughout the conflict.³⁵

With these considerations, Charles thought it prudent to be cautious and wait, despite the insistence of his brother that it would be advantageous to give in to princely demands for an

³³Charles V, “Excerpt...25 June 1525,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 135.

³⁴Charles V, “Copy...26 March, 1526,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 239.

³⁵ Charles’s official opinion ranges from an assumption of princely error to one of willful rebellion: many subjects labor under a “misapprehension to the excusing of all sorts of new doctrines and sects.” “The Resolution of the Majority 7 April 1529,” in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 242. “[S]uch evil, grave and perilous doctrines and errors have arisen in our holy faith.” Charles V, “The Proposition or Speech from the Throne: March 1529,” in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 240. Maravall, J.A., “Las etapas del pensamiento político de Carlos V,” *Revista de estudios políticos*, (1958): 93-146. “[N]othing has yet been effected owing to the Protestants’ obstinacy, and to efforts of certain persons who, for reasons of their own, have obstructed us...” Charles V, “Letters and Papers of Charles V (Spanish),” 306, in *The Emperor Charles V*, by Martin Rady (New York: Longman, 1988), 112.

unsanctioned national assembly of the German nation.³⁶ Charles wrote to Ferdinand from Seville in March 1526:

I consider your advice very good concerning that which you thought necessary...should I approve of it; but following your said advice, I deem it better not to approve of it; and wish you to dissemble and delay, in order to gain time, if it is possible to do so...no innovations whatever should be permitted against the obedience due to the Church; but that the customs and ceremonies of the same, should be preserved exactly as they have always been kept, believed, and held until my arrival. I am determined not to meddle in any way with dispensing, changing or altering anything in our Faith; nor will I consent, that in my time our said Faith should receive any offense from the German nation; by whose example other provinces of Christendom, might become perverted and corrupt, if they saw that I could suffer such things without opposition.³⁷

However, a number of other passages suggest that Charles's refusal to permit an unsanctioned national council, which might endanger his and the Pope's authority, did not signify so much distrust that he would not consider a sanctioned one.

I have good hope, that by this time all things are so well provided for, that your subjects will not fail to preserve in their loyalty, love and obedience towards you...I am ready to do my best to assist you. Meanwhile my advice would be, to employ, as much as possible, such conciliatory means as I have no doubt you well know how to find, without entering into any spirit of bitterness against your subjects; in order to endeavor to keep up in their minds a just abhorrence of the evil state of things now prevalent in your country; for were they to lose this feeling, the consequences might be such as I advise you seriously to reflect upon.³⁸

While inner conflict was still apparent in his verbal attempts to reconcile his desire to act militarily in decisive fashion with his misgivings, Charles belies an affinity for delayed military action and compromise.³⁹ In confirmation of this assessment, Charles closes the letter with the following,

I have hastened the departure of the said Duke [Henry of Brunswick] with credentials such as he wished for, referring him for the interpretation of the said credentials to the

³⁶ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 181.

³⁷ Charles V, "Copy...26 March 1526," in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 240.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 238-9.

³⁹ Rady, *Emperor*, 44-45.

instructions which I have therewith given him; of which this is the substance; to keep alive the good feeling in those who are favorably disposed towards our Faith, and to try and win over to the right side those who have seceded; as you will see more in detail by the said writing. This, it appeared to me could not fail to be of some use.⁴⁰

With the proceedings at the Diets of Speyer in 1526 and 1529, the Emperor adopted and finalized an ambitious plan for reform. This faith-based strategy was designed to preserve peace and unity within Christendom, as well as maintain defense of the Catholic faith. Reform was to be accomplished by means of a sanctioned Church council and, though limited to non-doctrinal reforms would produce a reconciliation of Protestant grievances to orthodox Catholic practice.

While Charles attempted to confront disunity and disobedience, all of Europe was at the mercy of the Turks.⁴¹ Charles issued a strict call to the princes to repent their wickedness, enforce the Edict of Worms and return to the faith⁴² and the 1526 Diet at Speyer became the setting for Charles's first official pledge to the princes to seek a council of reform from the Pope.⁴³

It is the gracious will...or our most gracious Lord...that the Electors, Princes, and Estates of the Holy Empire...should at this present Diet deliberate, consider and finally by common conference resolve upon measures, ways, and means whereby the Christian faith and the well-established good Christian practice and order of the Church in general may be maintained until the meeting of a free Council, and here among the members of the Holy Empire unity of each with all may be secured.⁴⁴

Charles's contemporaries marked this moment as a turning point in the negotiation process.

In the past, Your Imperial Majesty graciously gave assurance to the electors, princes, and estates of the empire, especially in a public instruction at the Diet of Speyer in 1526, that for reasons there stated Your Imperial Majesty was not disposed to render decisions in

⁴⁰Charles V, "Copy...26 March 1526," in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 242.

⁴¹ Fritz Hartung, *Karl V. und die deutschen Protestanten am Vorabend des Schmalkaldischen Krieges* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), 45.

⁴²Charles V, "The Proposition, or Speech from the Throne: 25 June 1526," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 183; "The Declaration of the Cities: 4th August 1526," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 184-88.

⁴³ Charles V, "The Proposition...25 June 1526," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 183.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

matters pertaining to our holy faith, but would diligently urge it upon the pope to call a council.⁴⁵

However, relations with the Papacy deteriorated to the extent that in 1527 Charles's troops had sacked Rome. Charles's chancellery cited Clement VII's "neglecting his duty" as the primary cause.⁴⁶ Charles's conflicts with the papacy at this time were at least partially the result of Clement's taking a defensive stance toward Charles as a result of his requests for an official reform council, but Charles's victory allowed him greater leverage in his efforts to secure one.

When the Diet at Speyer resumed in 1529,⁴⁷ Charles remained equally conciliatory towards the Princes and their grievances in spite of continued abuses of power, and intentional failure to uphold their pledge at the 1526 session.⁴⁸ However, Charles, encouraged by his successes in Italy, and emboldened by the prospect of his rapidly approaching coronation, now felt more capable than ever of fulfilling his commitment for a council of reform, and more hopeful that the process would succeed.

In his prepared Proposition Speech, Charles attempted to look to a future in which order would be restored and grievances would be addressed. Determined against all odds to set things right without recourse to arms if possible, Charles declared,

It is your Majesty's will, intention and strict command to every Estate, spiritual and temporal, or higher or lower degree, by the duty which everyone owes to your Imperial Majesty and the Holy Empire, at peril...of incurring such strict pains and penalties as are comprised in the published edicts, that until the assembly and holding of the aforesaid Council, no one, whether of spiritual or of temporal estate, shall, to the detriment of our true Christian faith, use violence or force against ancient usages and customs, or go over to any wrong or strange creed, or attach himself to any new sect, as may hitherto have happened in some places."⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *Augsburg Confession*, 7.

⁴⁶ Alfonso de Valdes, *Dialogue of Lactancio and an Archdeacon*, trans. John E. Longhurst (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1952), 26-27.

⁴⁷ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 239.

⁴⁸ Charles V, "The Proposition...15 March 1529," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 241.

⁴⁹ Charles V, "The Proposition...15 March 1529," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 240-41.

Charles also forbade any and all acts of violence either by or against Protestants to keep the peace until such time as the council should address the divisions in the Empire.

Further, your Imperial Majesty bids and commands every Estate, spiritual and temporal, by the duty which everyone owes to your Imperial Majesty, and on pain of losing everyone his sovereignties...that, until the assembly and holding of the aforesaid Council, no one, whether of spiritual or temporal Estate, shall, by act of deed, in any wise use force against another to deprive and despoil him of authority, goods, rents, dues, and customs.”⁵⁰

Years later, Charles would confirm his dedication to a reform strategy.

It must be known that since the year 1529, when...he visited Italy for the first time and had an interview with Pope Clement, the Emperor never ceased whenever he saw either Pope Clement or Pope Paul, and in every journey, and at every Diet in Germany, and at every time and opportunity, continually to solicit, either personally or through his ministers, the convocation of a General Council to provide a remedy for the errors which were being propagated in Christendom.⁵¹

Based on this evidence, this plan of action was firmly in place by the Diet of Augsburg in 1530.

Though Charles was not remiss in issuing his call to unity and repentance in the name of sacred Christian duty, he was more disposed to discussion and mutual negotiation, with the goal of reform acceptable to himself and the Church.

Upon official reception of his crowns, Charles determined to solve Germany's religious issues personally.⁵² In conjunction with the diet, and against the Pope's wishes,⁵³ he requested the composition of the Augsburg Confession to “amicably and charitably...hear, and understand, and weigh the judgments, opinions, and beliefs of the several parties”⁵⁴ in order that “the Holy

⁵⁰ “The Resolution of the Majority, 7 April 1529,” in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 242.

⁵¹ *The Autobiography of the Emperor Charles V*, trans. Leonard F. Simpson (London: Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1862), 72-4.

⁵² Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 255.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 255.

⁵⁴ *Augsburg Confession*, 5.

Empire of the German nation may be unified again.”⁵⁵

According to the Papal Legate Campeggio, it was during the diet, and in the course of preparation for the princely response, that Charles discussed with his advisors the course of action to be taken. At this point Charles, to Campeggio’s shocked dismay,⁵⁶ confirmed his commitment to a peaceful reform strategy, and, in a move more favorable to the Papacy, entertained a plan of military action should that strategy fail.

In the event that the Lutherans, as expected, refuse to “defer to his judgment in religious matters” and return to the fold with minor redress for grievances,⁵⁷ Charles and his advisors determined to move forward to “arrange for a General Council of the Church to be called at a convenient and suitable time...on condition that in the intervening period no innovations damaging to the Catholic faith and Church would be introduced and that the Edict of Worms will be properly and effectively upheld in an unaltered form.”⁵⁸ If the Lutherans refused to attend the council, it was discussed, though not determined, “how toughly the Lutherans should be dealt with, what measures taken to win over the rank and file and isolate the towns from the princes, and at what stage it would come down to armed conflict.”⁵⁹

Nevertheless, the key to these deliberations was Charles’s ambition for pursuing reform. By 1530, Charles’s dedication to reform was so strong that he was convinced that his plan would

⁵⁵ “das Heilig Reich der Deutschen Nation in einigkeit auch widerum bracht warden moecht.” *Römischer Kayserlicher Maiestat ausschreiben an die Fürsten auf den ytzigen angesetzten Reichs tag zu Augspurg*, 1530. Universitatbibliothek Leipzig Sondersammlungen, Leipzig, Germany.

⁵⁶ Lorenzo Campeggio, “Campeggio’s Instructions to the Emperor: January 1530,” in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 257. Campeggio instructed Charles to eliminate the princes should they disobey, to “...take fire and sword in hand.”

⁵⁷ Lorenzo Campeggio, “Campeggio to Clement VII: 30 June 1530,” in Stephanus Ehses, ed., *Concilium Tridentinum* (Friburgi Brisgoviae, 1904), 4:xxxvi-xxxvii.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Incidentally, this also serves as evidence that Charles wished to undermine the power base of the princes who refused to negotiate by winning over the rank and file, and taking the cities away from their party.

not only work, but would alleviate the need for armed conflict. Sensing the imminent danger of their position, the princes produced the most amicable official response endorsed by the Protestants over the course of their thirty year struggle with Charles. The language throughout the confession is complimentary towards reconciliation.

Wherefore in dutiful obedience to Your Imperial Majesty, we offer and present a confession of our pastors' and preachers' teaching and of our own faith, setting forth how and in what manner, on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, these things are preached, taught, communicated, and embraced in our lands, principalities, dominions, cities, and territories...we offer in full obedience to a general, free, and Christian council as the electors, princes, and estates have with the highest and best motives requested in all the diets of the empire which have been held during Your Imperial Majesty's reign.⁶⁰

In addition to their willing submission to Charles's offer of a reform council, the princes also emphasized the importance "to unite...in agreement on one Christian truth" and "restore unity" to Christendom, the latter phrase appearing more than half a dozen times within the document itself.⁶¹ So mild was their response that Martin Luther said, "It pleases me well, and I know not how to better it...for I cannot tread so softly and gently."⁶²

Whether the by-product of a purely instinctive response for self-preservation on the part of the Princes or a legitimate desire to reach a compromise, the mild tenor of the Confession was what Charles had hoped for. Upon receiving the Confession, Charles had nothing but hope for compromise when he openly declared, "One must win the Lutherans over with mildness."⁶³

By the conclusion of the diet, and in spite of the compromise with the princes, Charles had allowed, with his actions of good faith and tolerance at Augsburg, the religion of his subjects to remain a matter of personal preference and self-regulation, at least until a general council of

⁶⁰ *Augsburg Confession*, 6-8.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁶² Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 256.

⁶³ "Man muss die Lutheraner mit Milde zu einer der beiden Moeglichkeiten ueberreden." Charles V, "Gutachten des Staatsrates: Juni 1530," in Kohler, ed. *Quellen*, 165.

the Church could convene.⁶⁴ Even though the Confession at Augsburg seemed positive for Charles's faith-based strategy, Charles would not have been naïve enough to think that every prince would be satisfied with non-doctrinal reforms that failed to increase their personal power. Charles suspected princely motives based on their betrayals and indiscretions perpetrated in the name of religion. The majority of Protestant princes proved to be self-interested, grasping onto Protestantism as an opportunity to assert themselves over the Church and the Emperor. With high probability for failure, why would Charles embark on such a risky strategy?

Charles believed the Protestants either to be in error or in rebellion, not sincerely convinced of the need for schism. Given his view of the situation, Charles could not believe that a faithful person would part ways with the Catholic faith. Charles hoped that by following a more moderate course of negotiation and abstaining from reacting with force, he might succeed in winning Catholic sympathizers to the justice of his cause, and satisfy sincere Protestants to accept his reform efforts and repent by returning to Catholicism.

Charles gave instructions to “keep alive the good feeling in those favorably disposed towards our faith and try and win over to the right side those who have seceded,”⁶⁵ “win over the rank and file,”⁶⁶ and “to keep up in their minds a just abhorrence of the evil state of things now prevalent in your country.”⁶⁷ Ideally, he may have hoped, a mass exodus of pro-Protestant sentiment back to the fold of the Church would result in the capitulation of those remaining Protestant rebels now dispossessed of their allies and popular support.

Despite potential complications, by 1530 Charles decided on a faith-based strategy of

⁶⁴ Charles V, “Antwort Karls V. auf die Anfrage der altgläubigen Reichsstände im Hinblick auf das weitere Verfahren in der Religionsfrage: September 1530,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 170.

⁶⁵ Charles V, “Copy...26 March 1526,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 242.

⁶⁶ Campeggio, “Campeggio to Clement VII: 30 June 1530,” in Stephanus Ehses, *Concilium Tridentinum*, xxxvi-xxxvii.

⁶⁷ Charles V, “Copy...26 March 1526,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 239-40.

reform. Over the course of the next sixteen years, he would persistently pursue this strategy with continued negotiations with and concessions to the Protestants. In pursuing this strategy, he would live up to one of the more famous historical observations of his character: “His habit was to ponder long upon a subject; but when he had formed his opinion, he would maintain it with firmness bordering on obstinacy.”⁶⁸

Charles was convinced that Protestants would return to the Catholic fold after being shown the error of their ways. Had Charles understood the true nature of the Reformation as a demand for doctrinal reform or schism, reform might have succeeded. However, Charles was doomed to failure before entering, what might best be termed, the Period of Negotiation (1530-1546).

Period of Negotiation (1530-1546)

The period of negotiation, the sixteen years after the Diet of Augsburg, can be looked upon as one of hope, obstinacy, and disappointment, as well as demonstrations of loyalty and betrayal. Near the end of this period, Bernardo Navagiero, Venetian Ambassador to the Court of Charles V, remarked that during this period, the Protestant princes viewed Charles’s actions as both conciliatory and hostile. “To the Lutherans he has appeared sometimes in the light of friend, and sometimes in that of an enemy.”⁶⁹ While Charles doggedly pursued a peaceful plan of meaningful non-doctrinal reform throughout the period, he also prepared for the possibility of war in the event that negotiations broke down.

⁶⁸ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 344-45.

⁶⁹ Navagiero, “Address to the Doge and Senate...July 1546,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 461.

Naturally, Protestants had hoped that Charles's amiable response at Augsburg, along with the sack of Rome and perpetual bickering with the Pontiff over the council, was a sign of willingness to tolerate the Protestant faith. They hoped, "Christ reigns in such a way that the Emperor who persecutes Luther for the Pope is forced to destroy the Pope for Luther."⁷⁰ Charles made his intentions to affect a peaceful reform abundantly clear, seeking, above all, to reunite the people and obtain God's aid in avoiding war if at all possible.⁷¹ Both parties would be disappointed.

Charles dedicated his time and energies to the realization of a general and meaningful reform from his coronation in 1530 and foreign hostiles in 1536. While focused on his empire, Charles was primarily engaged in reforming the Protestants back to Catholicism. He tried to simultaneously ensure that both parties kept peaceful and productive negotiations in the interim. The sheer number of diets, colloquies, and other major negotiations he held during this period of negotiation stand as evidence, and all primarily to discuss questions of religion and reconciliation. From 1530-1546, Charles authorized, and conducted the major Diets of Nuremberg (1532), Regensburg (1532), Regensburg (1541), Ratisbon (1541), Speyer (1542), Nuremberg (1542), Nuremberg (1543), Speyer (1544), Worms (1545), and the ill attended Diet of Regensburg (1546).

In addition, Charles attempted three conferences for Hagenau, Ratisbon, and Worms from 1540 to 1541 for religious compromise; all three were inconclusive.⁷² Charles finally succeeded in setting up an encouraging conference when he arranged for and personally nominated six

⁷⁰ Anonymous, *Luther's Works*, vol 49, *Letters II*, ed. Gottfried G. Krodel (Fortress Press: St. Louis, 1972), 169.

⁷¹ Charles V, "Gutachten des Staatsrates: Juni 1530," in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 165.

⁷² Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 341.

theologians (three Protestant, three Catholic) to participate in a special Colloquy in association with the 1541 Diet at Regensburg.⁷³ However, despite Charles's best efforts, including concessions to the Protestants, this Colloquy and its promise of a concord broke down without producing more than a few months debate and some organized discord.⁷⁴ Similar religious conferences Charles summoned at Ratisbon and Regensburg, each in 1546,⁷⁵ were equally futile.

Beyond his efforts within the Empire throughout this period, Charles also dedicated a great deal of his political capital toward bringing the Papacy into agreement with his plan for the convocation of a general council of the Church. In fulfillment of his repeated promise to obtain such an agreement at both Diets of Speyer (1526/29) and at Augsburg (1530),

the Emperor never ceased whenever he saw either Pope Clement or Pope Paul, and in every journey, and at every Diet in Germany, and at every time and opportunity, continually to solicit, either personally or through his ministers, the convocation of a General Council to provide a remedy for the errors which were being propagated in Christendom.⁷⁶

Between 1532-41, a good deal of the time Charles spent outside of Germany was devoted “in part, to expedite the Council with the Pope”⁷⁷, and when Clement VII died, against Pope Paul III's wishes,⁷⁸ Charles ensured that the council would be held not in an Italian, but in an Imperial city per Protestant requests.⁷⁹ With his efforts, Charles actually succeeded in obtaining that

⁷³ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 341.

⁷⁴ Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 19-20.

⁷⁵ Brady, *Communities*, 202.

⁷⁶ Simpson, trans., *Autobiography*, 72-74.

⁷⁷ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 304-5. Or as Charles put it in a Letter to Johann Friedrich in 1533, “[E]ins gemeinen Christlichen Concilium darin man moecht die ergernus und misbreuch... in ein Christliche vereinigung bringen.” Charles V, *Römischer Kayserlicher Maiestat [unsers] aller gnedigsten herrn [und] des Bapsts geschickten*. Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig Sondersammlungen, Leipzig, Germany.

⁷⁸ It is perhaps important to refer to the fact that in this Charles was also in line with the advice given him by Erasmus in 1521. For Charles, according to Erasmus, was the equal, if not the superior, to any “bishop, pope, or monk” by virtue of his divine calling as Christendom's greatest King. Erasmus, *Unterweysung*.

council, which convened for the first time at Trent in 1545.⁸⁰

The princely response was not favorable to reform and was a rejection of the emperor's plans. The princes had been convinced that Charles would attack them sooner than later because of the 1521 Edict at Worms. They used the period of negotiation and de facto hold on military action to increase their power in any way they could. Resistance to reconciliation came almost immediately when on February 27, 1531, Philip, Landgrave of Hessen and John Frederick, Elector of Saxony, the two most powerful Protestants in the Empire, officially established an alliance of military defense (the Schmalkaldic League) at Schmalkalden in what is now Thuringia.⁸¹

The official declaration named its members and laid out the purpose of the Schmalkaldic League:

We John, by the grace of God, Archmarshal and Elector of the Holy Roman Empire and John Frederick, father and son, Dukes of Saxony &c.; Philip, Otto, and the brothers Ernest and Francis, all Dukes of Brunswick and Lueneburg; Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, &c.; Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt, &c.; the brothers Genhard and Albret, Counts of Mansfeld...do all men to wit:- Whereas it is altogether likely that those who have the pure Word of God preached in their territory, and thereby have abolished many abuses, are to be prevented by force from continuing this service...Now we, solely for the sake of our own defense and deliverance...have agreed that whenever any one of us is attacked on account of the Word of God...all the others shall immediately come to his assistance.⁸²

Reflecting religious conviction and cautious good will the declaration of the League was a bold challenge to Charles's sovereignty. Between 1532 and 1541, a number of princes either converted to Protestantism, or installed measures of Protestant reform in their lands.⁸³ Both were

⁷⁹ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 304-5.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 354.

⁸¹ Donald Kagan, Steven Ozmet, and Frank M. Turner, *The Western Heritage: Since 1300*, 8th ed. (New York: Prentice Hall Publishing, 2002), 360.

⁸²“The Schmalkaldic League, 27 Feb. 1531,” in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 301.

direct violations of the agreement they had made at Augsburg in 1530 to maintain the status quo until the commencement of a general council of the Church. With this act of defiance, the princes put a damper on Charles's and Christendom's best hopes for reconciliation.

It is significant that the League, which "married a traditional political form with a novel religious purpose,"⁸⁴ soon devolved into a "purely political" association as the majority of its members sought to employ the alliance to realize their own dreams of power.⁸⁵ With the aid of Protestant princes from other territories Württemberg, in southwest Germany, converted to Protestantism in 1534 and Pomerania followed in 1535.⁸⁶ Meanwhile, more radical changes were installed by Philip of Hessen, Maurice (Moritz) of Albertine Saxony, and Joachim II of Brandenburg, whose lands had converted before 1530.⁸⁷ Between 1530 and 1546, the Protestant princes made use of the protection afforded by Charles's good will, and the League, to rebel and, in a number of cases, enrich themselves at the expense of their neighbors.

Some even used the League as a weapon, to increase the number of Protestant-held territories, and negotiate with foreign powers hostile to the Hapsburgs, elevating their own power. In 1539, 1545, and again in 1546, Protestant representatives of the League continued negotiations for "an alliance between England and the League."⁸⁸ Fortunately for Charles, all three attempts broke down.⁸⁹ Protestant princes actively sought the aid of Charles's fellow Catholics in Bavaria and France as well, rivals to the Hapsburgs. When Philip entered

⁸³ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 305-6.

⁸⁴ Brady, *Communities*, 124.

⁸⁵ Hartung, *Reichsstände*, 13,16.

⁸⁶ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 305.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 307; Fritz Hermann, *Mortiz von Sachsen (1521-1553)* (Leipzig: Sax-Verlag Beucha, 2003), 60-61.

⁸⁸ McEntegart, *Henry VIII*, 217.

⁸⁹ McEntegart, *Henry VIII*, 198-99.

Wuerttemberg in 1534, he did so with Bavarian backing and French bullion, negotiated through the League.⁹⁰

Philip of Hessen, often accused of using the League as a base for his own power,⁹¹ and plotting, as early as 1529,⁹² to attack the Emperor, in 1524 used the League to force the conversion and conquest of Württemberg with the previously deposed “Prince of Thieves,” Duke Ulrich of Stuttgart.⁹³ More offensive than the forced conversion or restoration of an Imperial criminal, was the invasion during the period of truce covered by the Peace of Nuremberg, which had concluded in 1532.⁹⁴

In 1541, Philip and John Frederick employed the League in the most notorious action of League hostility, when they declared war on Heinrich of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel in 1542.⁹⁵ Within the year, they invaded the territory, overthrew and imprisoned Heinrich, and oversaw the conversion of his lands, including the disputed city of Goslar.⁹⁶ With the fall of Heinrich, the last hope of Catholicism in the North German Plain faded, as did the greatest barrier to the spread of the Protestant faith.⁹⁷

In the years that followed, the seizure of Church possessions escalated.⁹⁸ Before the end of 1542, John Frederick took control of the Bishopric of Naumburg and Kloster Dobrilug,

⁹⁰ Brady, *Communities*, 118.

⁹¹ Hartung, *Reichsstände*, 16.

⁹² Brady, *Communities*, 110.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 118-19.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁹⁶ Hermann, *Mortiz*, 66-71.

⁹⁷ Brady, *Communities*, 182.

⁹⁸ Hermann, *Mortiz*, 63.

converting both and proving, in the aftermath of Goslar, that “[He] was determined to extend his power in all directions”⁹⁹ Other Protestants proved equally willing to take advantage of their faith and the League to increase their own power. Albrecht Alcibiades, Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach, became known for his reputation as an unscrupulous hired gun.¹⁰⁰ Maurice, who had lusted after Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, but backed out of a planned alliance with Philip and John Frederick in 1541,¹⁰¹ now quietly expanded his influence over a number of bishoprics and Church lands throughout the 1540s.¹⁰² Philip of Hessen has been described as a secular, self-interested politician—among the shrewdest villains of his day.¹⁰³ Frederick of Pfalz converted to Protestantism in 1545, only to cool on the League when their promises to aid him in conquering Denmark were not forthcoming.¹⁰⁴ All of these actions “bel[ie]d the Schmalkaldic League’s avowed defensive purpose,”¹⁰⁵ and created a state of chaos and confusion within the Empire.

None of these actions fostered an environment for peaceful negotiation or reconciliation. The princes were content to continue resistance with little concern that their actions might drive Charles to war. This lack of concern, however, resulted from Charles’s response to their behavior.

Charles responded to these indiscretions, and attempts to take advantage of his good will, with mild passivity. True to his goals, and his character, “He never used force, until patience and

⁹⁹ “[er] war bestrbt, seine Macht nach allen seiten auszudehnen.” Ibid., 58-59.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 67.

¹⁰¹ Rott, *Friedrich*, 20-21; Brady, *Communities*, 182.

¹⁰² Hermann, *Mortiz*, 59.

¹⁰³ Westermann, *Türkenhilfe*, 33; Rott, *Friedrich*, 29.

¹⁰⁴ Rott, *Friedrich*, 34-35, 27.

¹⁰⁵ Brady, *Communities*, 183.

subtlety had failed.”¹⁰⁶ His devoted confessor Loayosa was incensed by the activities of the princes, and with several fiery pleas, urged Charles to open his eyes, take advantage of peace with France, and cessation of hostilities with the Turk, and act with military force before it was too late.

Sire! Nothing in this life is so important to you at the present juncture, as that Your Majesty should come out triumphantly from this affair in Germany...be assured that all further attempts in the same right course will be crowned with unprecedented success. To this end I venture to entreat Your Majesty, should this evil not be overcome by force of arms, that you hesitate not to make every pecuniary sacrifice for faith? Your Majesty once told me, that it was your most earnest wish to devote your life to the defense of the Faith, as your only way of proving your gratitude to God, for the innumerable blessings he has heaped upon you.¹⁰⁷

Yet Charles remained firm in his course of action, passing up the 1530-32 window of opportunity, and continued negotiations for reform.

At the same time, the indiscretions of the princes, especially their conquest of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, were at least partially, if not completely, responsible for Charles’s consideration of war as early as 1540. The princes’ activity had “provide[d] the Emperor Charles V with an excellent reason to settle the German question by force of arms.”¹⁰⁸

Charles sought to form a coalition not only with the Papacy and Catholic lords of Germany, but also with several notable Protestant lords including Phillip, Maurice, Joachim and Albrecht Alcibiades. In 1541, Charles concluded a short-lived pact with Philip of Hessen, prying him away from the League.¹⁰⁹ In 1543 Charles not only obtained the services of Albrecht Alcibiades, but also attempted to buy Maurice away from his would-be Protestant allies, appealing to his wish to rule all Saxony with an inaugural offer to award him the electorate of his

¹⁰⁶ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 345.

¹⁰⁷ Loaysa, “Garcia de Loaysa to Charles V, 1530,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 349.

¹⁰⁸ Brady, *Communities*, 183.

¹⁰⁹ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 307.

uncle.¹¹⁰ Maurice initially declined the offer, but the Protestant forces of Germany were never unified, and held intense domestic rivalries from the beginning.¹¹¹ It was also clear that many would remain loyal to Charles if the situation came to war.¹¹² Charles's success in maintaining a number of key Protestants in his alliance undoubtedly intensified Protestant paranoia, and perhaps played a role in scuttling any hope Charles had of making his reform-based policy work.

After years of frustration as the princes had compounded their sins by systematically rejecting every council, conference, colloquy, and compromise offered since 1530 on various theological grounds,¹¹³ a unilateral, last minute rejection of any attendance or negotiation at a conference presided over by Catholics, the hard won council of Trent (1545), dispelled any doubt that Charles would now have to deal with the Protestants militarily.¹¹⁴ After much patience, efforts at negotiation and tolerance, and repeated violations of his edicts, in 1545 Charles finally came to the conclusion that war with the Protestants could not be avoided.

Charles's conclusion was only confirmed by the added refusal of the princes to attend another Diet of Regensburg in the summer of 1546.¹¹⁵ Charles arrived early, on April 10, but when the theological colloquy continued "in a spirit of meanness, acrimony, and intransigence" for six weeks, Charles lost all "faith in talk with the Protestants."¹¹⁶ War was coming, a fact which Charles lamented with palpable frustration in a letter to his sister that June.

¹¹⁰ Hermann, *Mortiz*, 32, 37, 67.

¹¹¹ Adolf Hasenclever, *Die Kurpfälzische Politik in den Zeiten des Schmalkaldischen Krieges* (Heidelberg: Heidelberg Abhandlungen, 1905), 13,14.

¹¹² Hermann, *Mortiz*, 81-2.

¹¹³ Navagiero, "Address to the Doge and Senate...July 1546," in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 471.

¹¹⁴ Johann Friedrich, *Bestendige und warhafftige, Vorantwortung*. Universitatbibliothek Leipzig Sondersammlungen, Leipzig, Germany; Brady, *Communities*, 202.

¹¹⁵ Maltby, *Reign*, 58. Charles V, "Letter from Charles to Mary, June 1546," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 547.

¹¹⁶ Brady, *Communities*, 202.

All my efforts on my journey here, and the Regensburg conference itself, have come to nothing. The heretic Princes and Electors have decided not to attend the Diet in person; indeed they are determined to rise in revolt immediately...to the utter destruction of the spiritual lords...if we hesitate now we shall lose all. Thus we have determined, my brother and the Duke of Bavaria, that force alone will drive them to accept reasonable terms...unless we take immediate action all the Estates of Germany may lose their faith, and the Netherlands may follow.¹¹⁷

Charles composed similar sentiments to his son, Philip of Spain, in February 1546: “The religious question is in such a position and the confusion of Germany so great that there is little hope that the Protestants, of their own accord, will abandon their errors and return to the communion of the Church.”¹¹⁸

Charles and many Catholics were still concerned that a war might create sympathies for the Protestants, strengthening divisions within the Christian community that could never be healed. A series of observations recorded by the Venetian Ambassador Bernardo Navagiero in his 1546 address to the Doge and Senate of Venice, show that they, and Charles himself, were still troubled by many of the same concerns that had first prompted a peaceful reform-strategy.

Of greatest note, are concerns that sympathies might be raised for Germany that could attract “the hostility of France and England... [who] would come to the relief of the Protestants” and subsequently contribute to the division it was already assumed would bring the Turk, perhaps “at the invitation of the Protestants themselves.”¹¹⁹ Additionally, it was feared that the coming war was “likely to be a fierce one; and even should matters stop short of it, I question whether the rest of Germany will ever get over the hatred it has conceived for the House of Austria” an eventuality that would further damage the peace and unity of Europe.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Charles V, “Letter from Charles to Mary, June 1546,” in Brandi, *Emperor*, 547-48.

¹¹⁸ Charles V, “Letters and Papers of Charles V (Spanish),” 306, in *The Emperor Charles V*, by Martin Rady (New York: Longman, 1988), 112.

¹¹⁹ Navagiero, “Address to the Doge and Senate...July 1546,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 473.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 472.

Charles meticulously presented his case for war before all Christendom littered with examples of Protestant offenses that he had previously ignored or grudgingly tolerated. Charles also downplayed religion as the primary cause, hoping to avoid sympathy for the Protestants plight, and ensuring an increased defection of Protestants. Charles wished to make it clear that he sought to divide a political threat, not destroy a religion.¹²¹

In a letter to his sister Mary from June 9, 1546, Charles revealed his plan to justify the coming war in such a way that he might realistically maintain a majority of support, prevent the intervention of foreign sympathizers, ensure the war's speedy execution, and the post-war viability of reform.

After fully considering all these points, I decided to begin by levying war on Hesse and Saxony as disturbers of the peace, and to open the campaign in the lands of the Duke of Brunswick. This pretext will not long conceal the true purpose of this war of religion, but it will serve to divide the Protestants from the beginning. We shall be able to work out the rest as we go along. Be assured, I shall do nothing without careful thought: if our enemies outside Germany intervene, they will be too late.¹²²

By 1546, Charles had no choice but to prosecute a war to remove John Frederick and Philip to halt the spread of the Protestant heresy. But, Charles planned to remove John Frederick and Philip not only to stop the spread of heresy, but for renewed and more successful reform negotiations with new Protestant leaders. The new Protestant leaders would be his allies, Maurice and Albrecht, who had pledged and renewed their loyalties to Charles that same year.¹²³

The failure of the League to attract all Protestants to their cause, including instances in 1532 and 1535 when Catholics and Protestants put aside their differences to battle the Turks and then the Anabaptists,¹²⁴ made reconciliation seem like a possibility. Charles rejoiced that the

¹²¹ Hermann, *Mortiz*, 67.

¹²² Charles V, "Letter from Charles to Mary, June 1546," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 548.

¹²³ Hermann, *Mortiz*, 79-80.

necessity of war might not prohibit the continued pursuit of his reform strategy in its aftermath. He wrote, “We have hopes that Maurice and Albert... will submit to the rulings of the council.”¹²⁵

With hindsight, this appears a desperate move. Both Maurice and Albrecht were notorious for their ambition and greed; both had demanded a high price for their service to Charles: Albrecht wealth and Maurice the Electorship.¹²⁶ Despite any promises this was a political blunder on Charles’s part, and demonstrates how desperate Charles was to make reform work, apparently for no reason other than to satisfy the demands of his religious duties and be the savior of all Europe. True to his character, Charles had chosen and would not alter his course until he had exhausted all the possibilities for his plan of reform.¹²⁷

Charles followed his plan precisely, in the letter of indictment, and declaration of war issued to John Frederick and Philip in August 1546. True to the strategy he had laid out, Charles accused the princes of being rebellious, disobedient, oppressing the citizens of the Empire, and causing disunity and danger to the land. He also charged them with refusing to attend imperially mandated councils.¹²⁸

For all these reasons, Charles officially declared war while tactfully neglecting to indicate the Protestant heresy as cause. Charles understood and desired a war of politics that would serve the long-term purposes of his faith-based agenda. He did not want complications or the fervor of a Holy War, which might hinder that agenda.

¹²⁴ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 302, 305-6.

¹²⁵ Charles V, “Letter from Charles to Mary, June 1546,” in Brandi, *Emperor*, 548.

¹²⁶ Hermann, *Mortiz*, 82. Ulrich Köpf and Rainer A. Mueller, eds., *Deutsche Geschichte in Quellen und Darstellungen*, vol 3, *Reformationszeit 1495-1555* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam Jf. GmbH & Co., 2001), 445.

¹²⁷ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 345.

¹²⁸ Charles V, *Römischer kaysерlicher Majestat Declaration wider Hertzog Johans Friderichen* [Official Declaration of War 1546]. Universitatbibliothek Leipzig Sondersammlungen, Leipzig, Germany.

On the eve of war, in 1545-6, Charles had the majority of Catholics behind him, convinced it was “the cause of God and must prevail.”¹²⁹ Furthermore, Charles had the endorsement of the pope (Rome pledged 800,000 ducats or more)¹³⁰ and effectively deprived the Protestants of all potential allies from among the ranks of German Catholic Christendom. There would be no Bavarian alliance for the League this time. In addition, Charles had a number of Protestant princes in his alliance, including Maurice and Albrecht, and others unwilling to risk siding with the League, including Joachim of Brandenburg, and a number of cities and Protestant aristocrats from all over the Empire.¹³¹ The only princes of significance on the side of the League were John Frederick and Philip themselves, prompting Navagiero to comment that “the Lutherans have no good leader(s).”¹³²

Even the Protestant Maurice, who openly declared to Philip his confidence in Charles’s good intentions,¹³³ pitched in by composing a well-publicized document declaring the justice of Charles’s cause and imploring his father-in-law, Philip, and uncle, John Frederick, to be reasonable and think about the injustice of their position.

To the high-born Prince, Duke John Frederick...and the high-born princes, lords of the empire...our beloved brothers, we proclaim and, in friendship, make known...how that we are well aware of the difficult and troubling circumstances of the Saxon people, their cause being the same in our own lands, and [yet], we, in council, find no reason to oppose the Emperor and Royal Majesty, our merciful lord, as our authority would allow...For we have, now, to our greatest joy, observed that the difficulties might have been resolved by other means...[and] that his Majesty has no intention of deploying his might of war in order to exterminate Our Christian Faith.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Navagiero, “Address to the Doge and Senate...July 1546,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 472.

¹³⁰ Charles V, “Letter from Charles to Mary, June 1546,” in Brandi, *Emperor*, 548.

¹³¹ Navagiero, “Address to the Doge and Senate...July 1546,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 472.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 472.

¹³³ “Dass weiss Gott, dass ich gern auf allen Seiten gut sehe.” Hermann, *Mortiz*, 28, 80.

¹³⁴ “Dem Hochgebornen Fuersten Hertzog Johans Friederichen...unnd den Hochgebornen Fuersten Herrn Augustum...unser freundlichen lieben Bruder kundt unnd zu wissen dass Wir keinen Zweifel tragen...in was beschwerlichen und sorglichen Faellen die Sachsen stehen unnd aus was Ursachen dieselbige unsere Landschaft unnd Wi rim Rath nicht finden

Joachim publicly endorsed this position as well, and joined Maurice in urging John Frederick and Philip to be reasonable and come to terms in the interest of justice.¹³⁵

John Frederick, Philip, and the other members of the League remained unmoved by the pleas of those bound to profit by their downfall. As expected, all members of the League were quick to cry for a Holy War,¹³⁶ vehemently and publicly defending the justice of their cause. John Frederick feebly defended his position by denying everything. He pled innocence in the attack on Heinrich of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, reasoning that Heinrich provoked the attack by persecuting his own subjects in Goslar. He justified his rejection of Trent by claiming it was tainted by the presence of the Pope, then reaffirmed his dedication to loyalty and peace within the Empire.¹³⁷ Thanks to Charles's careful planning, they were, however, unable to generate any significant sympathy, as Charles made ready to bear down on them within the year.

Charles had devised the perfect means for fighting a war necessary to continue fruitful negotiations toward reform, while preserving enough good will and social capital to ensure that future negotiations might occur. Charles's attempts at negotiation and the princes' forceful use of the League for secular and political gain, rather than defense of religion, had given Charles adequate cause for war.

dass wir uns wider die Roemische Keyserliche unnd Koenigliche Majestaet Unsere allergnaedigste Herren als Unsere Obrigkeit einlassen sollen...Als wir dann nun am liebsten gesehen dass die Beschwerden in andere Wege hetten koennen abgewendet werden...dass ihre Majestaet mit dieser Kriegruestung nicht gemeynet sind zu tilgen Unsere Christliche Religion." Moritz, "Die Abwendung des Herzogs Moritz von Sachsen vom Schmalkaldischen Bund," in Köpf, ed., *Deutsche Geschichte*, 446.

¹³⁵ Hermann, *Mortiz*, 81-82.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹³⁷ Johann Friedrich, *Warhafftiger Bericht und Summari Ausfuerung, warumb inen zu unschulden auffgelegt wird* (1546). Universitatbibliothek Leipzig Sondersammlungen, Leipzig, Germany; Moritz, *Unnser von Gotts genaden Moritzes Hertzogen zu Sachssen* (1546). Universitatbibliothek Leipzig Sondersammlungen, Leipzig, Germany.

Period of Disillusion (1546-1556)

With the swift and utter defeat of the overmatched League, whose forces were decisively routed at the Battle of Mühlberg on the 24 April 1547,¹³⁸ Charles immediately turned the advantage of victory toward a renewal of his reform strategy. Though the war had been a success, it removed any doubt Charles had of the necessity of reform strategy. In a 1548 letter to his son, Charles ruled out military victory alone as sufficient to maintain unity and defend the faith, and reaffirmed his position that only a council could cure Germany's ills. "After all our trouble and labor in bringing back the German heretics, I have come to the conclusion that a general council is the only way."¹³⁹

As a devout son of the Church, Charles took the opportunity to attempt a restoration of orthodoxy throughout the Empire by instating the Augsburg Interim at the 1548 Diet of Augsburg. This Interim was intended to maintain order until the Council of Trent could recommence and all German delegates be persuaded to attend, and contribute towards healing the religious grievances which had long troubled Germany and Europe.

All of the old ceremonies as they have been use, even in the sacrament of baptism, will remain intact... The old ceremonies as used by the universal church in the Mass, will not be changed as they are ideally suited for it [etc.]... And when his Imperial Majesty shall have achieved the necessary reformations of the churches [referring to the council], no one who loves Our Holy Faith and our collective peace is to despise it, but rather by the highest means possible, seek to support and promote it.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 358.

¹³⁹ Charles V, "1548 Testament to Philip," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 583.

¹⁴⁰ "Die alten ceremonien, so be idem sacrament der tauff gebraucht warden, sollen alle blieben... Item in den alten ceremonien, so die allgemein kirch bei der messe gebraucht, soll man nit endern, dann sie seindt alle zu dem, das man in der mess handelt, gantz bequem [usw.]... Derhalben, wann die kayserliche maiestat ein nutzlich reformation der kirchen verschaffen [referring to the council], so wuerdt di niemant, so unserer heiligen religion und gemeinem fried guenstig ist, verachten, sonder zum hochsten zu befuerdern verhelffen." "Folgen der Niederlage: das Augsburger Interim," in Köpf, ed., *Deutsche Geschichte*, 455, 460.

The document proved lenient, demanded few concessions from Protestants,¹⁴¹ and allowed a number of concessions to them, including the right of the clergy to marry and receive communion of both kinds.¹⁴² Yet Protestants throughout Germany¹⁴³ rejected the requirement that they readopt traditional Catholic beliefs and practices, including all seven sacraments, in the Interim.¹⁴⁴

The feeling of discontent was compounded by popular resentment, and sympathy, for the imprisoned rebels John Frederick and Philip. This sentiment grew both inside and outside of Germany, especially for John Frederick, who was perceived to be the most devout of the pair, and soon became a heroic martyr in sympathetic tracts of Protestant propaganda. “The Elector [John Frederick]...abides steadfast in the faith, and is in a very good state of health. There is no hope, unless, what I trust will not be the case, he should change his religion: he does not despair of the word of God.¹⁴⁵” Such sentiment, despite carrying a Protestant bias, was not dissimilar to that which had been felt for King Francis when he had spent time as Charles’s prisoner after his defeat and capture at the Battle of Pavia. On that occasion, many, including Erasmus, had come out in support of his release.

If I were conqueror, I would thus speak to the conquered; my brother, fate has made you my prisoner; a like misfortune might have happened to me. Your defeat shews the fragility of all human greatness: Receive your freedom; become my friend. Let all rivalry cease between us except that of virtue.¹⁴⁶

At that time, Charles acquiesced, releasing Francis upon terms that Francis promptly broke,

¹⁴¹ Hartung, *Reichsstände*, 33.

¹⁴² Kagan, *The Western Heritage*, 367.

¹⁴³ Brandi, *Emperor*, 602.

¹⁴⁴ Acton, John Emerich et al., *The Cambridge Modern History* (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1904).

¹⁴⁵ John Hooper, “John Hooper to Bullinger April 26 1549 Antwerp,” in *Zurich Letters, First Part*, 85 in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 368.

¹⁴⁶ Erasmus, “Plea of Erasmus 1525,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 162.

maintaining constant military harassment against Charles until Francis's death in 1547. With memories of this treachery in mind, and the prospect of a peaceful religious settlement in sight,¹⁴⁷ Charles found it expedient to refuse similar demands to release his current prisoners, bound by virtue of their defeat, and subsequent endorsement of the Capitulation of Wittenberg.¹⁴⁸ John Frederick and Philip stirred up rebellion and war before, and could be expected to again, disrupting the reconciliation process for their own ambitions.

Charles, as witnessed by concessions, still sought a peaceful solution to the differences that existed between Protestants and Catholics, and had been lenient with those rebellious princes who had ended their rebellion and submitted to his victory. William Bradford recorded, "In dispensing punishment, he was inclined rather to moderate than to extreme measures."¹⁴⁹ By right, Charles could have decreed the death penalty for the League's leadership, and initially he did condemn John Frederick, based on his armed rebellion against the Empire.¹⁵⁰ The legality of this decision was set out anonymously on April 24, 1547.

Concerning the Duke, there can be no doubt, in light of the severity of his crimes, but that any number of punishments and chastisements that might possibly be inflicted by a monarch of great humanity, which your Majesty is, would certainly be well deserved... However, in chastising him, it is necessary to remember to keep to moderation so as to ensure that the manner of the punishment may improve and correct that which his guilt has corroded and blotted out.¹⁵¹

In the end, Charles mercifully settled for John Frederick willing capitulation to Charles's terms,

¹⁴⁷ Brandi, *Emperor*, 601. The Council of Trent would reconvene from its 1547 recess in 1551.

¹⁴⁸ Köpf, ed., *Deutsche Geschichte*, 448.

¹⁴⁹ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 345.

¹⁵⁰ Hartung, *Reichsstände*, 31. Philip was not sentenced to death, more than likely as a result of his speedy surrender before the Battle of Mühlberg, and his son William was permitted to succeed him as Landgrave.

¹⁵¹ "Der Herzog von Sachsen, darueber besteht kein Zweifel, verdient in Anbetracht der Schwere seines Verbrechens jegliche Strafe un Zuechtigung, die bei der Menschlichkeit eines grossen Monarchen, wie es Euer Majestaet ist, zu verhaengen moeglich ist... Jedoch ist es notwendig, bei seiner Zuechtigung Mass zu halten und sich nicht hinreissen zu lassen, dass die Art der Strafe bessern und geraderichten soll, was Schuld verdorben und verbogen hat." "Gutachten zur Frage," in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 373.

including the loss of some, yet not all, lands and titles.¹⁵²

Charles exercised even more leniency with the other princes. Charles's punishments in the post-war period seemed graded not only by the magnitude of offense and involvement of the prince, but also their rank and size of their territory. Charles treated those of lesser rank and territory with greater lenience, and yet, remained extremely lenient regardless of the prince. Frederick of Pfalz, a great prince, who had committed to the League, but withdrawn from the conflict, incurred only minimal wrath for his near betrayal.¹⁵³ Though Charles forced him to restore the old Church in his lands in the Interim, he did not force Frederick to reconvert to Catholicism.¹⁵⁴ Wolrad of Waldeck, a far lesser prince, was treated with even greater lenience, as Charles demanded only an apology, overlooking the fact that Wolrad and his lands remained Protestant throughout the Interim.¹⁵⁵ Naturally, Charles had little time to deal with princes as insignificant as Wolrad; however, his efforts to address even their rebellion afforded him an excellent opportunity to extend his mercy and spirit of reconciliation to the lowest levels of the imperial aristocracy.

Despite his efforts, Charles remained the enemy of his Protestant subjects until his downfall. Charles, despite his good will, was unable to do enough to satisfy his discontented subjects. As he had so confidently expressed in his sentiments concerning the nature of the Holy Church and the obvious errors of Luther at the Diet of Worms (1521), Charles could not imagine anyone legitimately abandoning the one true faith. In his mind, those who were sincere in their protests and truly erred would surely accept non-doctrinal reform as an acceptable compromise;

¹⁵² Köpf, ed., *Deutsche Geschichte*, 448.

¹⁵³ Rott, *Friedrich*, 85.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁵⁵ Gerhard Ritter, ed., *Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte*, vol 41, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Protestantismus und seiner Weltwirkungen* (Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr, 1968), 62.

those who would not, or the insincere, attempted nothing short of a devilish co-option of religious faith to satisfy the ends of their own ambitions.¹⁵⁶ For the latter, Charles, whether he was willing to submit to compromise on religion or not, could do nothing, as they would always seek greater advantages. But the sincere were beyond compromise. Charles was not aware that refusing to submit to religious compromise impeded his ability to parlay with them. The masses and public opinion had become dedicated to Luther's teachings and the principle of complete schism.¹⁵⁷ The populace could not be moved by the promise of a council and procedural reforms, but yearned for doctrinal change.

Charles still believed that a council addressing the corruption in Church procedures could heal and prevent a doctrinal schism that had already occurred in Germany without his knowledge. As a result, Charles ignored all signs of discontent, and placed all his hopes and efforts into realizing the council and its promised resolution.

Given the general discontent and self-inflicted ignorance of the Emperor, the ever-ambitious Maurice, now Elector of all Saxony, and Albrecht his companion in the continued seizure of rebellious lands by imperial decree,¹⁵⁸ sensed an opportunity to marshal anti-Hapsburg sentiment in their favor. Almost immediately, Maurice took full advantage of his close kinship with the imprisoned, at whose expense he had profited handsomely, to curry the favor of popular opinion by humbly seeking their release.

Charles respectfully refused, blithely dismissing the sinister implications of the request as misguided affection of a son-in-law and nephew. Many biographers embrace the opinion that

¹⁵⁶ Ferdinand I, "Brief Ferdinands I. an Karl V., Auszug," in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 126.

¹⁵⁷"I cannot tell you how much favor he [Luther] enjoys here..." Gaspar Contarini, "Dispatches of Gaspar Contarini, the Venetian Ambassador," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 89.

¹⁵⁸ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 368.

Maurice's resistance represented a type of repentance and return to his defense of the Protestant confession. In this spirit, Johannes Hermann claimed Maurice was not a traitor, but a champion of his faith.¹⁵⁹ However, considering the circumstances, notions of kinship and Protestant valor are more accurately discarded in favor of Maurice trying to enhance his own political powers.

To justify his return to the Protestant's cause, Maurice claimed to have been deceived with regard to Charles's true motives.¹⁶⁰ This, however, is unlikely. Since at least 1530, Charles consistently and zealously pursued a strategy of reconciliation, intended to eliminate the need for a Protestant Reformation. Charles never concealed the fact that the decisions of a general council of the Church should be acceptable to all parties, including the Protestants. In Charles's view, these decisions would constitute the only reform necessary.

This position remained constant from 1530 and was nearly identical in 1548: Charles demanded orthodoxy and council attendance. The only difference in 1548 was that Charles now made these demands from a position of greater political advantage. This cannot have been overlooked by Maurice, a politician who had proved himself as well-endowed with worldly savvy as any of his era.¹⁶¹

When he sided with Charles, Maurice coveted the electorship of his uncle. Now that he had it, Maurice had joined his fellow princes, both Protestant and Catholic, in developing serious misgivings in response to the new and powerful Hapsburg advantage. Additionally, Maurice, armed with an electorship, sensed an opportunity to gain another, more coveted prize: complete autonomy from Charles. This had been the same prize sought by his predecessors, John Frederick and Philip. However, considering his recent alliance with the Emperor, and Charles's

¹⁵⁹ Hermann, *Mortiz*, 7.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁶¹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 610, 612.

apparent willingness to dismiss his indiscretions, Maurice had a greater chance of autonomy.

By becoming the champion of John Frederick and Philip, Maurice, and Albrecht Bellator, Margrave of Brandenburg-Kulmbach,¹⁶² were soon on course to be hailed as the new defenders of the faith. They had been Judases¹⁶³ who betrayed the faith by allying with Charles in the war, but had now repented to become its greatest protectors.¹⁶⁴

Maurice and Albrecht sought primarily to increase their own power. From the official conclusion of the conflict with the League at Mühlberg in 1547, both wasted no time in enlisting Imperial directives to enrich themselves through the subjugation of their former allies. Maurice had already occupied Electoral Saxony during the war and subsequently inherited his uncle's electoral title and most of his lands in June 1547. Albrecht had been well paid for his services as well. In 1550, Maurice was commissioned by Charles to capture the rebellious city of Magdeburg, which had rejected the 1548 Interim and was promised that, if victorious, he would become its patron; Maurice dutifully besieged that city with Albrecht's aid for an entire year before determining upon his own course of rebellion against Charles in 1552.¹⁶⁵ Resistance at Magdeburg was intense, and in February 1550 three of Charles's opponents, Hans, Margrave of Kuestrin, Albert, Duke of Prussia, and John Albert, Duke of Mecklenburg, formed an alliance to resist Maurice. "To all appearances [Maurice] was the Emperor's tool."¹⁶⁶

In Charles's hour of triumph, and the potential realization of his wish to resolve

¹⁶² Later named Alcibiades for his "bellicose" nature. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed., s.v. "Albert (prince)."

¹⁶³"Moritz du rechter Judas, was hast du getan." "Die Reaktion der Öffentlichkeit auf das Vorgehen von Moritz," in Köpf, ed., *Deutsche Geschichte*, 452.

¹⁶⁴ Brandi, *Emperor*, 611.

¹⁶⁵ Agnes Varkonyi, *Age of Reforms (Megujulasok kora)* (Budapest: Magyar Koenyvklub, 2001); Brandi, *Emperor*, 602.

¹⁶⁶ Brandi, *Emperor*, 602.

Germany's religious division peacefully, both Maurice and Albrecht became suddenly devoted to the Protestant cause. Over the ensuing months all was blamed on Charles, as Hans of Kuestrin, Maurice, John Albert of Mecklenburg, and Albrecht, among others, joined an anti-Hapsburg alliance.

Charles, who had been focused on the Council at Trent, hardly noticed. On October 11, 1551, the council confirmed the doctrinal validity for the orthodox conventions of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Protestant representatives for the German Estates, at least the few who attended (the only major attendees were the prince-bishop Electors of Mainz and Treves), were displeased. Charles, desperate to salvage the situation, exercised his will to affect the postponement of a ruling on the "question of communion," especially lay access to the cup. But it was only a matter of time before the Protestants issued a new protest condemning the council as the tool of the corrupted Catholic Church and refused to abide by its rulings. Charles continued to advance the value of the council until its adjournment, but despite his enthusiasm, "[his] last hope was gone" when this session of the council finally ended in April 1552.¹⁶⁷ The Protestants would not yield to the edicts of an official council, and Charles would never approve an unofficial one.

Less than a year after the council's convocation, Maurice and Albrecht successfully made the transition to defenders of the Protestant faith with the 1552 Treaty of Lochau and issue of a Protestant manifesto declaring "We will march on the Emperor himself."¹⁶⁸ Maurice's Treaty of Chambord created an anti-Hapsburg alliance which included King Henry II of France and Germany's Protestant princes in a plot to overthrow the Emperor, and pledged to Henry II the imperial cities of Metz, Toul, Verdun, and Cambrai along with their diocese should he

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 601-2.

¹⁶⁸ Princes of Germany, "Apologia 1552," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 604.

succeed in taking them.¹⁶⁹

Charles had been repeatedly warned by his advisors, including both Mary and Ferdinand, of Maurice's questionable loyalty to his Interim edicts since 1548. He had been warned concerning Maurice's most recent plotting since at least 1551, but Charles, in his confidence, refused to listen, and chose to remain oblivious to the danger until he received the unexpected, official declarations of war from his presumed allies in 1552.¹⁷⁰

For important reasons we hold it for right and proper, nay we advise and do most sincerely entreat that His Majesty in his own person and with a great following should come to meet us. In the last resort our two armies must fight each other, calling on God to decide between us. The cup must be drunk to the dregs ere it can be flung down.¹⁷¹

These sentiments were reinforced by two epistles personally issued to Charles by his fair-weather allies that same year.

Maurice informed Charles that they would be blameless for the rebellion to follow, and that their actions should be interpreted as acts of good will to set Charles back upon the straight and narrow path of righteousness. Additionally, he now made use of his new position of advantage to demand the release of John Frederick and Philip, "whom we love" as well as the restoration of their inheritance.¹⁷²

"In the name of God Almighty, his beloved son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, with God's strength and powerful hand, we seek a settlement that will affect the release of John Frederick and Philip."¹⁷³ The last request can be assumed to have implied the exception of the

¹⁶⁹ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 363; Brandi, *Emperor*, 603-4; Köpf, ed., *Deutsche GeschichteI*, 462.

¹⁷⁰ Brandi, *Emperor*, 605; Bradford, *Correspondence*, 369.

¹⁷¹ Princes, "Apologia 1552," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 604.

¹⁷² Moritz, *Ausschreiben etlicher Chürfürsten*. L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

electoral title and any lands that had been gained at his loved ones expense during the war. Thus it was with even more irony that Maurice concluded his letter both with a promise that he did not act out of self-interest and cursed any man who did, “May sword and fire hound them and punish them for their blasphemy and disloyalty.”¹⁷⁴

Albrecht’s letter was more insulting. He spoke openly to Charles of the necessity to continue the reformation, and then proceeded to congratulate himself and his allies on the many duties fulfilled and services performed by their sacrifice of rebellion, to save the reputation of their sovereign lord Charles and appease God by correcting his indiscretions.¹⁷⁵

After the tradition of our forefathers, also we, without glory report for many years until now, as true princes of the holy kingdom, dedicated to the upholding of the Roman emperor’s highness and the holy kingdom, welfare and liberty all our best wishes, our lives, goods, and life’s blood thereto truly and willingly we lay down.¹⁷⁶

In addition, Albrecht took the opportunity to point out the inadequacies of Charles’s plan, including the claim that the Council of Trent ignored the greatest concerns of “our Holy Religion” and that Charles’s councils had failed to produce unity in the Empire.¹⁷⁷ One can only assume Albrecht was not referring to the endless discords and delays brought to those councils by his Protestant brethren. Albrecht went so far as to suggest the Emperor join him in a secret pact against all Germans hostile to Germany. Further reading clarifies that Albrecht was thinking primarily of Germany’s prince bishops as those Germans hostile towards Germany; however, given his mercenary background, one cannot rule out a double-cross of Maurice.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. On a note of interest, a few years later, Maurice was killed in Battle with Albrecht, who had betrayed him at Seivershausen.

¹⁷⁵ Albrecht, *Dess Durchleughtigen, hochgebornen Fürsten vnd Herrn* (1552). L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Albrecht, *Dess Durchleughtigen, hochgebornen Fürsten vnd Herrn* (1552). L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Charles had been thoroughly and indiscreetly charged by both letters, which found their way to a printer a few weeks after issue. In response to their various actions and claims throughout the year 1552, the imperial councilor Hans Böcklin took the opportunity to record of the princes, upon the margin of Charles's own copy of their manifesto, "The devil may trust in you, for I shall not, the princes cared nothing for religion and still less for the word of God."¹⁷⁹

Charles's response to all of this might best be described as one of total shock. "Written on the 4th of April in the utmost perplexity, and distress of mind and body," Charles's own confidential correspondence to his brother Ferdinand from his residence at Augsburg demonstrates how completely he had been caught off guard by their actions.¹⁸⁰

[K]nowing well how little myself am in any posture of defense...if I linger much longer...I stand a chance of finding myself some morning taken in my bed... I have been resolving on my departure...But where to go?...I am well aware, whatever I determine on...if it fails, the fault will be mine...Finding myself in such extremities, recommending myself to God, I would rather be set down as an old fool, than allow myself to be undone in my old age, without attempting all I can to prevent it, aye and more. If I am to choose between a great disgrace and a great danger, I will take the part of danger...And therefore I have determined to set off...for Flanders, where at present I have the most troops...and there I shall not be far from Germany.¹⁸¹

What is most interesting about this letter is that Charles, despite having some semblance of a plan, wrote fretfully of his situation. The desperate and simple plea, "But where to go?" makes him seem as uncertain as he was 20 years before, and yet obviously more confused, bitter, disturbed, and deeply shaken.

Charles possessed no desire to expend the money necessary to raise another army,¹⁸² nor

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Princes, "Apologia 1552," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 611.

¹⁸⁰ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 369-70.

¹⁸¹ Charles V, "Letter to Ferdinand 1552 in Bradford," *Correspondence*, 370-72.

¹⁸² Bradford, *Correspondence*, 369.

to upset the council with the promise of a compromise so fragile. Charles had even praised Maurice for his loyal service as late as January 1551.¹⁸³ Charles was desperate to stall for time, in part to organize a resistance and in part to ensure that the council remained in session long enough to conclude a hoped for, last-minute, reconciliation. He was so desperate that in both February and March 1552, he offered to release the prisoners, John Frederick and Philip, and arrange for new negotiations at the next diet more acceptable to the Protestants. Maurice rejected Charles's offer on both occasions.¹⁸⁴

Charles might have hoped, for the sake of the council and reconciliation, to hold out, maintaining good relations with Maurice and Albrecht to avoid a disastrous war which might prevent the attendance of German delegates and spoil what he believed to be his last legitimate chance to settle the matter, resolve the differences, and prevent the ruinous disunity that would leave Christendom vulnerable to Ottoman incursion. Other, more secular, factors, like the maintenance of his troops at Augsburg, also played a significant role in Charles's inaction. However, no other explanation can account for all of these circumstances as completely as one that considers Charles's own faith.

Maurice and Albrecht remained unmoved, as they proceeded to lead the recently forged alliance in overrunning the southern German states and parts of present day Austria. Charles was forced flee over the Alps to preserve his liberty, for so swift was Maurice's approach to Augsburg that he had no time to carry out his planned relocation to Flanders and was forced to reside at Innsbruck until May 19th.¹⁸⁵ With the Protestant rebels bearing down, Charles accepted

¹⁸³ Brandi, *Emperor*, 602.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 606.

¹⁸⁵ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 373.

each new report of their advance with a manner both “passive and inert,”¹⁸⁶ still “unable to grasp the fact that the rebellion was directed in bitter earnest against his own person.”¹⁸⁷ On the night of May 19th, a dejected Charles “broken down in health and spirits”¹⁸⁸ slipped quietly and sadly out of Innsbruck, over the Alpine pass of the Carinthia Villach, and out of historical significance.

In his absence, Maurice and the victors negotiated a treaty, the Peace of Passau, with Charles’s brother Ferdinand.¹⁸⁹ Maurice used his new position of advantage not only to demand the release of Philip, but also to demand the convocation of a Protestant national gathering similar to that first suggested in 1525, for the settlement of religion. Furthermore, Maurice and his allies insisted upon the cessation of all claims that Protestants restore Church lands taken before 1552.¹⁹⁰ Finally, fearing his uncle’s return, Maurice attempted secretly to block the release John Frederick. However, Charles had already released him.¹⁹¹

While Ferdinand was eager to agree to any concessions to ensure the future peace and prosperity of his own lands, Charles refused, even ignoring Ferdinand’s tears. To agree to the Protestant demand that he should give up hope for the council (even a council that had been adjourned April 28, 1552 due to Maurice’s advance on the Tyrol) and agree to a national assembly recognizing their faith was unthinkable. Similarly unthinkable, was the thought that he should permit the lands of the Church to be violated. “Ferdinand might stand to lose his present and future safety: Charles stood to lose his immortal soul.”¹⁹² Charles would not give in on his

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 373.

¹⁸⁷ Brandi, *Emperor*, 606.

¹⁸⁸ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 373.

¹⁸⁹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 610-11.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 612-13.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 613.

¹⁹² Brandi, *Emperor*, 614.

faith and he then proceeded to instruct Ferdinand to bid the princes accept this offer and wait until the next diet where they would return to a discussion on the virtues of the council.

Ferdinand had had enough, and that same day began the journey back to Passau where he concluded the peace against his brother's will in the late summer of 1552. Betrayed by his own brother, Charles grudgingly agreed on August 15, 1552.¹⁹³

The result of the shameful and humiliating treaty was not only to confirm the release of the traitor Philip, but also guaranteed the permanent legal position of the Protestant faith within the Empire.¹⁹⁴

As touching the articles concerning religion, and in the interest of peace and justice, it is the decree of his Majesty the King of the Romans...that...no party adhering to the terms of the Confession of Augsburg...may by means of force, or in any other way, be compelled from his religion and faith to act against his own conscience and will...¹⁹⁵

The latter was reaffirmed three years later by the Peace of Augsburg (1555) and its principle: *Cuius regio, eius religio* (He who rules, his the religion).¹⁹⁶

In order to bring peace into the holy Empire of the Germanic Nation between the Roman Imperial Majesty [Ferdinand] and the Electors, Princes, and Estates: let neither his Imperial Majesty nor the Electors, Princes, &c., do any violence of harm to any estate of the Empire on account of the Augsburg Confession, but let them enjoy their religious belief, liturgy and ceremonies as well as their estates and other rights and privileges in peace; and complete religious peace shall be obtained only by Christian means of amity, or under threat of the punishment of imperial ban.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 614-15.

¹⁹⁴ "Der Ausgang des 'Fürstenkriegs': Passauer Vertrag 1552," in Köpf, ed., *Deutsche Geschichte*, 463-66.

¹⁹⁵ "Auf den Artickel die Religion auch Friede un Recht belangend, bedenckt die Roem. Koenigl. Majestaet ...dass...keinen Standt der Augspurgischen Confession...mit der That gewaltiger Weise, oder in andere Wege, wider sein Consciencz und Willen von seiner Religion und Glauben dringen..." "Passauer Vertrag 1552," in Köpf, ed., *Deutsche Geschichte*, 463.

¹⁹⁶ Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 363. "Und damit soelcher Fried auch der spaltigen Religion halben...so sollen die Kei. Mai., wir, auch Churfuersten, Fuersten und Stende des heil. Reichs keinen Stand des Reichs von wegen der Augspurgischen Confession und derselbigen Lehr, Religion und Glaubens halb mit der Tat gewaltiger Weiss uberziehen, beschedigen, vergewaltigen oder in andere Wege wider sein Consciencz, Gewissen und Willen von dieser Augspurgischen Confessions Religion." "Der Reichstagsabschied," in Köpf, ed., *Deutsche Geschichte*, 476-477.

¹⁹⁷ "The Peace of Augsburg, 25 Sept. 1555," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 363.

Protestantism had become an officially recognized and doctrinally separate faith within the Empire. Schism had come and despite all his efforts, Charles had failed to defend the faith or the unity of Christendom with his strategy of reform.

The devout Charles was devastated by his failure, and over the last years of his life, his actions, which historians have neither fully explained nor understood,¹⁹⁸ might best be described as those of a disillusioned and guilty man, tortured by his inability to stamp out the Protestant threat and ensure salvation for himself and his subjects. According to William Maltby,

Charles was painfully aware that under his rule the religious unity of Latin Christendom had shattered, perhaps forever. His failure either to suppress the Reformation or to compromise with it was the greatest of his disappointments and a contributing factor in the mental depression that engulfed his later years.¹⁹⁹

The mournful actions of Charles's later years provide another evidence of his sincere beliefs, primarily due to their undeniable connection to his Protestant failures. Charles never forgave himself for his failure, and the princes would never be far from his mind until the day of his death.

In the aftermath of Passau (1552), Charles became tired, disillusioned, and a failure "in his own mind."²⁰⁰ His initial response was to repeat his most glorious conquest and capture of the French King at Pavia (1525) during his Italian War (1521-1526). Then, Charles had felt himself chosen by God, preserved from defeat and awarded a divinely appointed victory as a sign of higher purpose for which he was destined.²⁰¹ In reverence to God, he forbade all secular celebration including "bonfires and illuminations" and spent the night and following morning in

¹⁹⁸ Maltby, *Reign*, 105.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 122.

²⁰⁰ Maltby, *Reign*, 105.

²⁰¹ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 348.

prayer and thanksgiving.²⁰² And on that occasion, he had been viewed with utmost admiration. “In summa the Emperor hath used such demeanor in all things both be word, deed, and countenance, and toward all manner off persons, that every wise man hath ben most joyful to see it *magna cum admiratione in aetate tam tenere*.”²⁰³

To recapture this tremendous feeling of divine favor and momentum, “his lucky star,”²⁰⁴ Charles turned his attention towards the recovery of those lands overrun by the French in conjunction with the Treaty of Chambord. Yet, “[a]lthough the Emperor recovered his power and authority [for a time], he felt conscious that his lucky star, in which he had placed unbounded confidence, was set. He became disgusted with state affairs, yet he worked on, but with evident disinclination.”²⁰⁵ By Christmas 1552, the disappointing withdrawal of more than 60,000 Imperial troops from the siege of Metz ensured its continued occupation by the French.²⁰⁶ This effectively ended Charles’s attempt to relive past glories. It was his last campaign, and it only served to reinforce the failure Charles had come to embrace as his defining characteristic.

In 1553, Charles retired to Brussels and “sank into profound depression, locking himself in his apartments and refusing to see anyone.” He wept “constantly like a child.”²⁰⁷ At that point, abdication became inevitable. Spurred on by his failure to recapture God’s grace and haunted by his inability to accomplish his divine duty to defend the faith and unity of Christendom, Charles proceeded to abdicate his thrones. To Philip, he abdicated Naples and Milan in 1554, his position as Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece and the Netherlands in 1555, and Spain and

²⁰² Ibid., 111.

²⁰³ Dr. Sampson, “Dr. Sampson, King Henry’s Ambassador at the Court of Madrid to Cardinal Wolsey,” in Sir Henry Ellis, *Original Letters Illustrative of English History: 1418-152*, vol. 1 (London: Harding, Triphook, & Lepard, 1825), 266.

²⁰⁴ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 374.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 374.

²⁰⁶ Maltby, *Reign*, 68.

²⁰⁷ Maltby, *Reign*, 110.

Franche-Comte in 1556. To Ferdinand he left the Holy Roman Empire in 1556 (finalized 1558).²⁰⁸ His corresponding actions suggest the additional significance of these abdications not only as products of depression, but of penance, for in the process of abdication, he ceaselessly expressed the deepest shame for his failures and his unworthiness to be sovereign.

This was nowhere more apparent than in his last face-to-face interaction with his son Philip at the ceremony for his official abdication of the Netherlands. Clad in mourning clothes, Charles approached his son Philip, handed him a diamond heart and fighting back tears uttered the words, “[M]ay God preserve me from evil forebodings, and grant that thy heart may never become as hard as this stone, towards thy father.”²⁰⁹ With that he collapsed into his chair weeping.²¹⁰ Philip would never speak to or see his father again, and, as Charles had feared, neglected and distanced himself from his father, as though ashamed; in the end Philip allowed Charles to fall into poverty as his pension lapsed repeatedly.²¹¹

Final Days

In September 1557, Charles, eager to continue his penance, set sail for Spain and his chosen retirement destination, the Jeronimite monastery of Yuste in Extremadura.²¹² En route, his reflections continued to expose the same feeling of shame, spirit of rejection, and sense of failure that had so belabored his abdications. In many ways, Charles’s writings would, from this

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 112-13.

²⁰⁹ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 377-78.

²¹⁰ Maltby, *Reign*, 112.

²¹¹ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 380.

²¹² Maltby, *Reign*, 112.

time, resemble the sermons of a self-condemning priest, calling the sinners of his flock to repentance in order that the souls of his parishioners might avoid his fate. To Seld, his Vice Chancellor of State, Charles remarked,

[L]et this be a moment to thee, dear Seld, of the Emperor Charles, whom thou hast so often seen surrounded by the most brilliant court and victorious armies, and now seest alone, forsaken even by his menial servants; he whom thou hast served faithfully so many years, now takes the place of a servant in waiting on thee.²¹³

Charles made use of his present state to issue additional precautionary advice to his sisters, Maria and Elanora. In greatest sorrow he expressed the ancient sentiment, “naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I return to it.”²¹⁴ Given the knowledge that Charles was on his way to a modest but adequate villa and in full expectation of a reasonably sufficient pension, the extreme sense of hopelessness and lack of self-worth suggest that the nakedness Charles spoke of may have referred as much to his guilty conscience and emotional state as his loss of political relevance and economic power.

Charles had always believed, and been instructed, that it was his responsibility to ensure Christendom’s well-being, as well as the spiritual well-being of his subjects. He was to do this both by defending it from heretics and by maintaining its unity and strength for the inevitable conflict with the infidel Turk. Additionally, Charles believed in a princely responsibility before Almighty God for the collective salvation of his territories and the individual souls within them; Charles believed he would be answerable to God for the souls he had lost. In 1521, at the Diet of Worms, Charles claimed that he was, “...always the defender of the Catholic Faith, its Holy Ceremony, its commandments, its tenants and its Holy traditions, for the Glory of God, the

²¹³ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 378-79.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 379.

growth of the Faith, and for the healing of souls.”²¹⁵ In his mind, they were his, entrusted to him by God and he had failed them. Charles never ceased to see the princes as his children gone astray and in these, his later years, they were never far from his thoughts.

In letters to his brother, the man most responsible for continued dealings with the Protestants in Germany, he repeatedly asked for mercy, forgiveness, and long suffering charity towards his onetime enemies. On the eve of his ascension, Ferdinand received the following letter from Charles.

The more that I think upon the confusions in Germany, the less I see that there is any other means to secure tranquility and prevent further disorder than the Reichstag and a general council of the estates in which all may convene and council together in friendship in order to affect a collective solution.²¹⁶

Most notable is how adamant Charles is, that Ferdinand continue to pursue an end to heresy, but also a strictly peaceful means in arriving at a compromise with the Protestants in Germany. Charles implies that Ferdinand should proceed with the unauthorized assembly of the German nation (“allgemeine Versammlung der Staende”²¹⁷) in the interest of the greater good of the Empire. It is also notable that in the after-math of his reign, Charles twice refers to the heresies in Germany as “Wirren,” confusions or errors.

In 1546-47, Charles had attempted to exercise his duty by forcefully leading his princes, in his later years he regretted this decision. He would sit for hours and contemplatively gaze upon the portrait of John Frederick, which he had commissioned for placement on the wall of his private cell, and cry, “Oh, if I had let him alone as he was, I should have remained such as I have

²¹⁵ “immer Verteidiger des katholischen Glaubens, der heiligen Zeremonien, Gesetze, Anweisungen und der heiligen Gebraueche- zur Ehre Gottes, Mehrung des Glaubens und zum Heil der Seelen.“ Charles V, “Erklaerung Karls V. gegen Luther,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 74.

²¹⁶“Je meh rich an die Wirren in Deutschland denke, um so weniger sehe ich, dass es ein anderes Mittel gaebe, um dort gesicherte Ruhe zu verschaffen und die besagten Wirren zu maessigen und zu verhindern, dass die Unordnung noch aerger werde als durch einen Reichstag und eine allgemeine Versammlung der Staende, wo man ueber eine gemeinsame Abhilfe freundschaftlich beraten koennte.” Charles V, “Brief Karls V. an Ferdinand I., Auszug, June 1554,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 453-54.

²¹⁷“General assembly of the estates”

been.”²¹⁸ In his state of failure and depression, Charles began to reflect and reconsider the methods he had employed in Germany and their correlation to the will of God. Considering the portrait, it is evident that this became very personal. However, Charles did not limit his reflections to individuals, and by the end of his first year in seclusion would frequently cry out in anguish of his soul, proclaiming, “I have been so absurd as to waste many years of my life in endeavoring to make the minds and dispositions of millions go together on the most intricate and mysterious of subjects!”²¹⁹

Charles came to the conclusion that while he had been correct to pursue a policy of negotiation, he had been incorrect to use force as he had in Germany, when heresy was so far progressed; it was no longer reasonable that the princes should be forced, only that they should be admonished in the way they should go, and ultimately tolerated until such time as God should be their judge.

Charles advised his brother, in a 1555 letter, to conclude the Peace of Augsburg and, if they would not repent, to leave the princes in God’s hands.

As touching the recent development in the affairs of the Empire at this Reichstag, it is now clear that unless God himself intervenes to open their eyes, one can only conclude that the princes and estates must be left to their own downfall.²²⁰

Charles had done all he could do for his princes in Germany, and now left it to God to open their eyes or to allow their hearts to be hardened, as Charles determined to submit himself to the will of God.

Charles had decided to leave their fates to God but, his thoughts were fixed upon his

²¹⁸ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 380.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 380.

²²⁰ “Was die Entwicklung der Reichsangelegenheiten auf diesem Reichstag betrifft, ist diese sicherlich so beschaffen, dass, wenn Gott nicht eingriff und den Fuersten und Staenden die Augen oeffnet, man nur zu dem Urteil kommen kann, sie seien auf ihren eigenen Untergang aus.” Charles V, “Brief Karls V. an Ferdinand I., August 1555,” in Kohler, ed., *Quellen*, 464-65.

onetime subjects. In addition to his peculiar devotions before the portrait of John Frederick, Charles exhibited an even stronger and more revealing emotional response upon being informed of the fate of Maurice, who had been killed on the field at Sievershausen.²²¹ Charles collapsed, and tearfully cried out, “O Absalom, my son, my son!”²²²

There is depth of feeling and torture in Charles’s words and actions. Charles was bitterly grieved and decidedly disturbed on a spiritual level throughout his twilight years. Charles’s failures in Germany were the principle motivation for his self-inflicted penance. Throughout his life, Charles had viewed himself as the party most responsible for the earthly and, in the case of his subjects, the spiritual salvation of Christendom. In the darkest days of his exile, the warning of his confessor-

Nothing in this life is so important...as that Your Majesty should come out triumphantly from this affair in Germany. If God vouchsafe to grant that you may be the means of rescuing that nation from the heresy which pervades it...doubtless Your Majesty would then deserve the name of the most fortunate Emperor ever known in all Christendom.²²³

-must have haunted him, reminding him once more of his failed obligations toward God. “Your majesty once told me, that it was your most earnest wish to devote your life to the defense of the Faith, as your only way of proving your gratitude to God, for the innumerable blessings he has heaped upon you.”²²⁴

None of his confessions or exhortations was ever sufficient to alleviate the suffering Charles felt for his failures and they continued to torment him.

Charles spent less than a year at the monastery in Extramadura. However, in that time, it is clear that Charles was doing everything in his power to atone for his failure and make his

²²¹ Köpf, ed., *Deutsche Geschichte*, 471.

²²² Bradford, *Correspondence*, 374. Here Charles is referencing the relationship between David and his treacherous son.

²²³ Loaysa, “Garcia de Loaysa to Charles V, 1530,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 348.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 349.

peace with God. According to William Bradford,

He attended the usual services of the Convent, conversed with the Prior and the Monks on theological subjects, and read with deep interest the writings of the Fathers, especially of Saints Bernard and Augustine, whose spirit and eloquence were in perfect accordance with his own state of mind. At midnight he would walk up and down his dormitory, and along the cloisters of the monastery, and would punctually awaken the monks in time for the second night service. It is related that a sleepy young novice once answered him angrily; ‘can you not be satisfied with turning the world upside down, but must you come here to disturb the peace and rest, for which you are said to have given up all its pomps and glories?’²²⁵

In his last days, Charles had completely given himself to a course of traditional Catholic penance in order to save his soul from Hell. This became more pronounced on September 20, 1558, when Charles charged the other members of the monastery to join him in a procession “all praying, himself included, for the repose of his soul.” In a symbolic act of abject humility and utter abasement before God, Charles placed himself in a coffin as a man already dead, at the whim of divine mercy, until the procession arrived at the High Altar. It was here, on that chilly September evening, that Charles, weeping, “threw himself on the ground and received the last benediction.”²²⁶

On September 21, 1558, after nearly a year of open regrets, continual self-depredation, weeping, and devoted theological pursuits of monastic study, prayer, and confession, Charles succumbed to a fever (most likely pneumonia), which according to his contemporaries, was brought on by the extreme fervor of his most recent penance.²²⁷ In his final act of penance, Charles sacrificed himself in a final attempt to reconcile himself to God for his failures. Charles had not stopped the spread of Protestantism for a number of reasons, but this last act confirms a faithful motivation for his actions.

²²⁵ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 382-83.

²²⁶ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 383-84.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 384.

Charles's actions cannot be explained without accounting for his faith; these actions with respect to the Protestant princes, and the formulation and persistent prosecution of his reform-strategy, are the greatest example of this faith.

CHAPTER IV

“Peace will depend not so much on your actions as on those of others. It will be a difficult task for you to preserve it...”

-1548 Testament from Charles to Philip

Could Charles have Succeeded?

Could an alternate plan of action have successfully neutralized the Protestant threat, eliminating the need for doctrinal compromise, or the official recognition of the Protestant heresy? The obvious alternative was an earlier use of force.

With his last breath, Charles did not recommend the moderate course of action he had recommended to his brother in Germany, but a course of brutal military action and harsh repression, specifically designed to prevent the spread of the Protestant heresy to Spain or the Netherlands: “Charles exhorted the officers of the Inquisition and all the authorities, to be watchful; and un-abating in their severities against the encroaching ‘plague of doctrine’” should it make an entry to Philip’s lands.¹ Then he directed his last dictation to Philip.

It is well known, that in defense of our Catholic religion against the falsehood and slander of heresy, I have performed various and great labors not without danger to my earthly pilgrimage. Heavy diseases have followed my exertions and now feeling myself to sink under them, I wish to confer once again, as I have already done in my last testament, with my well beloved son Philip, who knows what the Catholic faith is, on this important subject. I exhort, warn, I adjure him, nay, as a father I command him, to punish heresy, with the utmost rigor, without regard of persons, without extending mercy to any; and to uphold all Courts of Equity and Justice in their full powers against this crime. So will he do his duty to the Catholic faith, and God will bless him. Moreover he will have done what is most pleasing and most dear to me his father.²

Despite the immense effort he had expended to save the souls of his German princes,

¹ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 384.

² Charles V, “Charles’s last Message to Philip,” in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 384-85.

Charles had been, merely an elected peer, a patriarch for the Empire. In his final years, once his attempts to become more absolute had met with a resounding defeat,³ he renounced the continued use of violence within Germany. However, in Spain and the Netherlands, where the Protestant heresy was not so well established, Charles was not an elected peer, but a divinely appointed monarch established through decades of heredity. As a result, he insisted that should heresy like that he had failed to snuff out in Germany ever rear its ugly head in these countries, Philip should continue the policy of stiff repression Charles had adopted throughout his reign in the Netherlands, and wipe it out. Considering the “deep feeling of mortification and disappointment, which his contest with the [German Protestants] had occasioned,” it is not impossible that, in his last moments, Charles did not wish, as he had at Worms so many years earlier, that he had acted sooner and more ruthlessly to save the Church and its souls in Germany as well.⁴ Charles was determined to ensure that Protestantism should make no more advances beyond the Empire, and that his son would succeed where he had failed, and save his soul where Charles had lost his.

While Charles in his last years may have believed that expedited military action would have made a difference, the results of countless religious conflicts in the centuries since his death have proven him wrong, particularly the outcomes for the Armada and the Thirty Years War, both of which took place during the tenures of his immediate successors. Had Charles decided upon a course of armed conflict in Germany, the political circumstances that faced him, even in the years before 1517, were ill suited for the constitution of a united Catholic resistance. It is the collective conclusion of two eminent historians that, “The temporal and spiritual organization of

³ The final defeat came with his failure to elevate his son Philip to the Holy Roman throne.

⁴ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 385.

Christendom was indeed in a state of strange confusion”⁵ and “[t]here was no union of religious principle at work, no banding of Protestants against whole communities of Catholics, but more frequently Roman Catholic against Roman Catholic, and Protestants against Protestants as might best be suited to their worldly policy; the Pope and the Emperor usually at variance, and the Turk brought in to determine the fate of Christendom.”⁶

For practical reasons, Charles, despite his power, was incapable of arresting the spread of a Protestant movement. By the time of his election in 1519, Protestantism had gained popularity and spread throughout his discontented Empire. Any chance of military resistance would have required the dedicated and continual support of all Catholics, including the Pope, the King of France, and local Catholic princes within the Empire itself. As it was, Charles, to his extreme frustration, received little or no help at all from his would-be Catholic allies, all of whom placed their rivalry with his family, the Hapsburgs, above the immediate security of Christendom.

The French Kings, often hailed as the Most Christian Kings, were by far the worst. Francis I (r.1515-1547) harassed Charles constantly from the time Charles was elected in 1519 until Francis died in 1547. In 1519, he challenged Charles in the election of the Holy Roman Emperor by putting his own name forward as a candidate⁷ and, in what has gone down as his most blatant act of harassment, Francis and his heir, Henry II repeatedly engaged Charles in a series of wars now known as the Hapsburg-Valois Wars.⁸ These wars included the Italian War (1521-1526), The War of the League of Cognac (1526-30), the second Italian War (1536-38), the third Italian War (1542-46), and, after Francis’s death, the fourth Italian War (1551-1559). All of

⁵ Brandi, *Emperor*, 255.

⁶ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 368-69.

⁷ Maltby, *Reign*, 20.

⁸ Brandi, *Emperor*, 431.

these wars were on-again-off-again in nature, but instrumental in diverting Charles's time and resources away from solving the religious problems in Germany. In addition, Francis and Henry took other measures to incite their Hapsburg rival and disrupt his efforts to maintain peace and unity within Europe and the Empire. These included repeated negotiations with the Protestants in which Francis attempted to win them over,⁹ the constant breaking of his oaths and treaties including the 1526 Treaty of Madrid,¹⁰ openly joining the Protestants in opposing the council of Trent,¹¹ lending financial support to Charles's enemies including the Dukes of Gelderland and Württemberg,¹² making and renewing an alliance with the Ottoman Turks in order to increase his advantage,¹³ and, in the case of Henry II, finally concluding an alliance with the Protestants at Chambord in 1552.¹⁴

According to Karl Brandi, the French King exercised a "policy of naked prestige, undisguised and unexcused."¹⁵ Consequently, Charles was "but little inclined to affection for...them."¹⁶ This response was confirmed in a testament to his son; Charles left the following advice when writing to his son upon his narrow escape from still another possible encounter with the King of France in 1548.

France has never kept the faith and has always sought to do me hurt...But act cautiously and try and keep the peace for the weal of Christendom and your own subjects. The French will always be casting about for excuses... Never yield to them, not so much as

⁹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 362-63.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 265.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 264.

¹² *Ibid.*, 226.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 352, 467.

¹⁴ Ernst Schulin, *Kaiser Karl V. Geschichte eines übergrossen Wirkungsbereiches* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1999), 128-29

¹⁵ Brandi, *Emperor*, 376.

¹⁶ Navagiero, "Address to the Doge and Senate...July 1546," in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 466.

an inch; they will take an ell. From the beginning of time these French Kings have been greedy for their neighbors' land.¹⁷

Charles was also distressed by the English, who eventually joined the French in aiding Charles's enemies. This was most apparent in their negotiations to join the French, and Protestant Schmalkaldic League in an anti-Hapsburg alliance¹⁸ and their support of Francis in opposing a general council of the Church, in order to ensure that the pope would not become subservient to the interests of the Hapsburgs.¹⁹ Additionally, the English provided another distraction to Charles as well as division of Catholic Christendom in the divorce proceedings of Henry VIII and Charles's own beloved aunt Catherine of Aragon. According to Chapuys, one of Charles's ambassadors to London, "She prays that you will be pleased to intercede in her favor with the Pope..."²⁰ If Charles hadn't enough problems negotiating a council and keeping the peace, this difficulty did little to alleviate the situation.

As for the Pope, Charles found himself unable to depend upon the Popes at almost every turn.

Because the Catholic Church faced in Germany a religious revolution of unprecedented magnitude, one might have expected the popes to join hands with the devoutly Catholic emperor to stem the advance of the Reformation. But they did so only at times, not consistently, because as temporal rulers the popes were no less anxious about Hapsburg tyranny...than other...potentates.²¹

The pope was not just a spiritual, but also a political leader who was required to look after his own interests in addition to those of the Church. As a result, the majority either sided with the French in order to resist the power of the Hapsburgs or did everything in their ability to impede

¹⁷ Charles V, "1548 Testament to Philip," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 584.

¹⁸ Brandi, *Emperor*, 434.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 264.

²⁰ Chapuys, "Chapuys 6 Feb. 1530," in Bradford, *Correspondence*, 320.

²¹ Tracy, *Impresario*, 306.

Charles's efforts to secure a general council of the Church for fear that it would endanger the political and spiritual position of the papacy.²² The former had been at play when Clement VII agreed to the League of Cognac in 1526²³ and again when Paul III had agreed to alliance after prematurely withdrawing his promised military and financial support for the war against the German Protestants in 1547.²⁴

Charles was even more frustrated by the never-ending attempts to stall or postpone the council he so wished to convene. These attempts had begun during the very promising, but short, pontificate of the reform pope, Adrian IV, a personal friend of Charles and avid advocate of reform, who was nevertheless blocked in all of his efforts to convene a council by members of his own clergy in Italy.²⁵ Among those resisting the council were the future successors of Adrian, Clement VII and Paul III, both of whom obsessed with the glories of the world.²⁶

These difficulties were exacerbated when, in 1524, Clement VII replaced Adrian as Pope.²⁷ Clement, by far the most dedicated to blocking the council, repeatedly denied imperial requests to that affect²⁸ and instead adhered to the voices of those cardinals who detested "this spirit of moderation"²⁹ as an affront to their power. In January 1530, before the Diet of Augsburg, that Clement ordered the papal legate, Campeggio, to command Charles to dispense with all talk of a council and simply destroy the heretics.

²² Bradford, *Correspondence*, 382.

²³ Tracy, *Impresario*, 306.

²⁴ Brandi, *Emperor*, 566.

²⁵ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 46-47.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁷ Brandi, *Emperor*, 218.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 311.

²⁹ Bradford, *Correspondence*, 46.

Your Highness...with your just and awful Imperial Ban, will subject them to such and so horrible an extermination that either they shall be constrained to return to the holy Catholic faith, or shall be utterly ruined and despoiled both of goods and life. And if any there be, which God forbid, who shall obstinately persevere in that diabolical course...Your Majesty will then take fire and sword in hand, and will radically extirpate these noxious and venomous weeds....³⁰

Of course, Charles disregarded this command, and, to the displeasure of the pope, continued to pursue his policy of negotiation and to offer a council of the Church to reform abuses at least until 1545. By the mid-1540's Charles had even declared that if the Pope should oppose him a council would still be held and the abuses still reformed whether the pope approved or not.³¹ Papal politicking had made it "increasingly difficult [for Charles] to do anything to help the church."³²

Eventually, Pope Clement and then the equally vindictive Pope Paul III died and Charles got his way. The council, with Protestant delegates present, began a serious investigation of abuses and discussions concerning their reform, but by then it was 1551 and the opportunity, if any had existed, was gone. In the end, the popes played as great a role as the Protestants in delaying the council and ensuring its failure.³³

Charles clarified his feelings toward the papacy and their machinations most bluntly to his son Philip in 1548, "You yourself know how unreliable Pope Paul III is in all his treaties, how sadly he lacks all zeal for Christendom, and how ill he has acted in this affair of the council above all. There will always be trouble with the Pope."³⁴

In addition, Charles lacked the support of his would-be Catholic allies in Germany. The

³⁰ Campeggio, "Campeggio's Instructions to the Emperor: January 1530," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 257.

³¹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 509.

³² *Ibid.*, 351.

³³ Tracy, *Impresario*, 117.

³⁴ Charles V, "1548 Testament to Philip," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 583.

dukes of Bavaria were full members of the Catholic League and yet, along with a number of other Catholic lords, continually followed their own interests by joining the Protestants in resisting compromises at the diets.³⁵ By so doing, they hoped to maintain a condition of chaos in which they might enhance their own powers. The Bavarians in particular, allowed themselves to be courted by the Protestants for an alliance, and eventually sided with Philip of Hessen and the Schmalkaldic League in the invasion of Württemberg.³⁶ This allowed the Protestants to maintain their presence in southwest Germany and aided them in adding an additional ally to their cause against the Emperor. In most other battle situations, including the final war between Maurice and Charles in 1552, the Catholic princes of Bavaria and a number of others remained neutral, declining the opportunity to come together and arrest the advance of Maurice.

Finally, Ferdinand, exemplary of a Catholic, and familial, ally, did not live up to Charles's expectations. Ferdinand had been a constant advocate of compromises that went beyond what Charles was willing to make with his Protestant enemies,³⁷ particularly when Ferdinand failed to follow Charles's instructions not to give in to doctrinal compromise or to recognition of the Protestant heresy at Passau (1552) and Augsburg (1555).

Charles, at times, must have felt himself the only prince to care for the fate of Christendom. Such thoughts were no doubt far from his mind when in a famous piece of instruction to his son he declared, "Peace will depend not so much on your actions as on those of others. It will be a difficult task for you to preserve it, seeing that God has bestowed so many great kingdoms and principalities on you."³⁸ Charles had received little or no aid in resisting the

³⁵ Brandi, *Emperor*, 441-42.

³⁶ Rott, *Friedrich*, 28; Westermann, *Türkenhilfe*, 30.

³⁷ Tracy, *Impresario*, 168; Bradford, *Correspondence*, 238.

³⁸ Charles V, "1548 Testament to Philip," in Brandi, *Emperor*, 583.

Protestants, either from fellow Catholics or from his own family, leaving little wonder that Charles failed. But, even if a coalition had been a possibility, it would not have guaranteed success in halting the advance of Protestantism.

By Charles's birth in 1500 the anti-Catholic grievances against the abuses of the clergy were already over one hundred years old. However, Charles pressed on with his resistance, apparently oblivious of the depth and extent of the Reformation, and determined to save Christendom, even if he had to do so himself. In this, Charles had his true downfall. Charles never imagined the Reformation to represent more than a mild discontent amplified by the machinations of Luther and accelerated by the greed of his subject princes. According to Karl Brandi, "He counted on the half-hearted, unfinished nature of German Protestantism and forgot the half-religious, half-political, but vital elements which were concealed under the surface."³⁹

Charles was decidedly unaware that he was one hundred years too late to prevent the schism that had already developed. His sentiments at Worms (1521) blinded his perception of the situation. "A single monk, led astray by private judgment, has set himself against the faith held by all Christians for a thousand years and more, and impudently concludes that all Christians up till now have erred."⁴⁰ For Charles, this was not possible. There could be no schism that could not be healed, because there could be no faith beyond Catholicism.

Charles was doomed to failure, for even under the best of conditions the depth and breadth of the Reformation was already beyond the capabilities of military defense and beyond Charles's devout understanding. As a result, no policy Charles could have chosen would have been likely to succeed. Charles neither failed because he did not declare war soon enough, nor as consequence of choosing a strategy embracing the need for hesitation and moderation. No

³⁹ Brandi, *Emperor*, 530-31.

⁴⁰ Charles V, "The Emperor's Declaration of Policy, 19 April," in Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative*, 86.

alternate strategy, not even the force of arms would have succeeded. Charles's failure was the result of a lack of aid from his Catholic allies and the lack of personal understanding of the crisis that faced him. Charles's extreme devotion had made him an incompetent defender of his faith, as Adrian of Utrecht once said,

“Let a man be never so good, how much depends on the times in which he is born!”⁴¹

⁴¹ Leopold von Ranke, *History of the Popes: Their Church and State* (New York: Colonial Press, 1901), 4:196.

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