



The title page of the 1533 edition of Luther's German Bible, which was wonderfully done and affected the German language; the cherubs unroll its pages; it states that it is published with the permission of the Elector of Saxony and by the printer Hans Lufft.

scholarship of the Renaissance, which Erasmus represented, had anything to do with the drive for reform, which Luther and some of the friars represented. There was a saying at the time: 'Erasmus laid the egg and Luther hatched it.' But it was only an epigram, they were amazingly unlike. Erasmus was learned in all the ancient world, Luther was deep in the Bible. Erasmus was clever and subtle and witty, Luther thought those three qualities to be superficial and rather irreligious. Luther

was a part of the truly religious drive towards reform and drastic change, he was never one for academic argument. Sometimes he wrote books all in a whirl, as though when he started he had no idea where his pen would take him. Often his pen took him into bold utterances about which a person with more prudence would have thought twice.

On the last day of October 1517 he issued ninety-five theses against indulgences. They were moderate. But indulgences made a lot of money for good causes and some less good, and they were part of a people's piety; so they were defended. But no one could defend them by saying it is a reasonable act to buy forgiveness, or by claiming that they were taught in the Bible. The only defence possible was that the pope authorized them; therefore Friar Martin was a heretic because he denied the authority of the pope. And Friar Martin of the whirling pen had an easy answer. Buying forgiveness is obviously wrong. If the pope authorizes it, the pope is wrong. It cannot be heresy to say what is true.

He became a European leader because the Emperor Charles V made a serious mistake in 1521: Luther was tried before the Diet of Worms (from late Latin *dieta*, a meeting). There Luther stood alone before all the might of the empire, and stuck to the truth he saw, and so captured the imagination of Christendom. He was declared an outlaw and had to go into hiding.

Germany divided and has stayed divided to this day. Everyone agreed on the need for reform of the Church. Bavaria, Austria and some of the Rhineland decided in the end that reform meant better and celibate clergymen, better schools and universities, and better social care; but Catholic practices of 1600 were much the same as those of 1500. Indulgences were still granted, though the obvious abuses were ended; the mass was little changed and still in Latin; most of the old rituals were carried on; pilgrimages continued; there was still much devotion to Mary and the saints; and there was still the authority of the pope. The north of Germany,