THE COMPLETION OF ZWINGLI'S REFORM IN ZURICH:

By the end of 1525 the Reformation in Zurich had assumed its own distinctive form. Zwingli as prophet and preacher enjoyed the full confidence of the two councils. The councils and the majority of the people were dedicated to following the Word of God as preached by Zwingli. The debates of 1523 and 1524 had brought to an end the recognition of the authority of the bishop of Constance and of the pope. The councils had provided for the orderly removal of images from the churches. The organs had been removed and extreme unction discontinued. The monasteries had been closed and their property confiscated to care for the poor and to provide for education. The mass was abolished in Zurich in April, 1525. Zwingli had substituted the sermon for the mass and the Lord's Supper was administered in both kinds and served by deacons to the people in the pews. Zwingli was conducting a school to train preachers, known as the Carolinum, and conducted in the Great Minster. On July 19, 1525 he introduced his full program of linguistic instruction for the preachers. Church courts had been established to handle discipline and cases involving marriage (May 10, 1525). Toward the end of 1525, Joachim am Grut, the city clerk, who was critical of Zwingli was removed from office.

Throughout these reforms Rome had not taken action against Zwingli and Zurich, hoping Zurich would continue to furnish troops for the pope. Zwingli considered the Anabaptists his most difficult battle. In spite of victories in debates with them in January, March and November and many private discussions, the Anabaptists had continued to increase in numbers. The imprisonment of Anabaptist leaders had not prevented riots.

The defeat of the Peasants' Revolt in Germany had produced much unrest and fear in Switzerland. Catholics blamed the unrest on Zwingli preaching. Zwingli and his Secret Council of Six had assumed tight control of Zurich.

It was in this eventful year that Zwingli had found time to write one of his most important works, The Commentary on the True and False Religion. He repudiated the sacrificial nature of the mass and set forth the Lord's Supper as a mere sign but one which was a corporate act of the church of social rather than individual significance.

Zwingli was keenly aware of the precarious situation of Zurich faced by the alliance of the Catholic cantons and the demands that Zurich be expelled from the Confederacy. Zwingli was already working on plans to spread the reform to other cantons and to bring them into a strong alliance with Zurich.

ZWINGLI AGAINST GROWING OPPOSITION:

In 1526 Zwingli faced severe challenges from both Anabaptists and Catholics. The Anabaptists defied the order to bring children to baptism or be banished. A register of baptisms was instituted. On March 7 the council decreed death by drowning for Anabaptists but Zurich delayed in enforcing the decree. In November Conrad Grebel was executed for treason.

In June, 1526, Archduke Ferdinand gathered the leading Catholic states at Ratisbon to plan action against the heretics threatening and disturbing the church. At the meeting of the Swiss Diet at Luzern
the suppression of heresy was declared the most urgent duty. Faber became imperial Councillor in 1526 and went to work to organize the Catholic party in Switzerland. Plans for a debate were discussed in Baden as early as January 15, 1526. The debate was set for May 21–June 13, 1526. The plans were for John Eck to meet Zwingli in Baden. The councils of Zurich were afraid to let Zwingli leave the city. Oecolampadius, who had been preaching reform in Basel since 1522, had to take Zwingli's place. Elaborate plans were worked out for Zwingli to receive daily reports and to give Oecolampadius advice. Eck carefully prepared Seven Theses and made the most of Zwingli's absence. In a vote taken at the end of the debate the majority voted Eck had won (82 to 20). The victory strengthened the Catholic party.

Zwingli planned and worked to build a protective alliance. He wanted to bring Bern and Strassburg into alliance with Zurich. He carried on constant correspondence with those sympathetic with reform. He worked to strengthen reform in the Common Lands of Switzerland. He sent preachers into the Catholic cantons. He worked for an alliance with France and southern Germany. His plans were to replace cardinals and papal legates with preachers. It would be an alliance based on a common religion.

THE SPREAD OF THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND:
Hostility against Zwingli continued to grow in and out of Switzerland. At home Zurich took severe measures against his vocal Anabaptist critics. On January 5, 1527, Manz was drowned. Blaurock was scourged and banished. Grebel was arrested, condemned to be drowned, but died of plague in prison. In anger his body was burned. Foreign Anabaptist agitators were banished from Zurich. Zwingli grew increasingly bitter at Catholics calling him a heretic and Anabaptists calling him "False Prophet."

On September 23, 1527, the Synodal Organization of Zurich was completed. In reality Zwingli was bishop and sole leader.

Zwingli took a very active interest in and encouraged reform in other Swiss cantons and cities. Sentiment for reform had been growing in Bern. The Bernese authorities decided to hold a debate. Bishops and delegates from all the cantons were invited. Zwingli and Burgo-master Diethelm Roust from Zurich attended. Ten Theses were drawn up by Zwingli and the Bernese pastors, Haller, Roll and Kolb. They were planned as an answer to John Eck. The debate was held on January 6, 1528. The first thesis declared the supremacy of the Word of God. The church was born of the Word and knows no stranger. All church ordinances not grounded in the Word were to be rejected. The second thesis rejected tradition as authority. The church makes no law but is governed solely by the Word. The third thesis declared the blood of Christ the only satisfaction for sin. The fourth thesis denied any real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The fifth denied the sacrificial nature of the mass. The sixth condemned the idea of the mediation of the saints. The seventh condemned the doctrine of purgatory as unscriptural. The ninth declared that marriage is from God and is not to be forbidden. The last thesis condemned monasticism and declared that it is worse in the clergy than in laymen. The debate won Bern for the reformation and the authorities published a decree approving the Ten Theses on February 7, 1528.

About a year later Basel joined the reformation. Capito had preached reform and made many converts between 1512 and 1520. The work had been continued by Oecolampadius, a close friend of Zwingli. Under his preaching the civil authorities had taken over control of the church. In 1529 the mass was abolished. Erasmus fled to Louvain.

Hofmeister won Schaffhausen with his preaching. Wytenbach, Zwingli's old teacher at Basel, turned Biel to reform. St. Gallen, Glarus and Muelhausen in Alsace accepted the reformation.
Strassburg turned from Luther to Zwingli. Matthew Zell had preached the Lutheran reform there as early as 1521. The movement had been carried forward by Wolfgang Capito, Martin Bucer and Hedio. These preachers had become fast friends of Zwingli.

Zwingli's preachers also won a considerable number of followers in southern Germany.

The spread of Zwingli's movement raised strong and bitter hostility among the Catholics. War threatened. Zwingli feverishly worked to build up a league to meet the threat. He was encouraged by Philip of Hesse who expected war in Germany. Zwingli planned to include in the league all of the Swiss who shared a common religion, Philip of Hesse, the French, Ulrich of Wurttemberg, Savoy and as much of southern Germany as possible. Many of the Swiss would not trust any foreign alliances frustrating Zwingli's plans. The Catholic League was growing and making plans to completely surround Bern and Zurich.

THE DIET OF SPEIER (February 21, 1529):

When the Diet of Speier condemned the reformers and ordered them to conform to Catholic practice, nine of the fourteen cities signing the "Protest" from which "Protestant" was derived, were Zwinglian. Philip of Hesse and Zwingli were sure the Catholics would move to crush the Protestants.

THE MARBURG COLLOQUIY:

Philip of Hesse called on Luther to meet with Zwingli at Marburg to work out an agreement on religion that would furnish the basis for a firm and strong political alliance to meet the Catholic threat. Zwingli was eager for such an alliance. Luther did not want to go to Marburg. He did not believe it was right to use force in religion. He disapproved of the kind of alliance Philip and Zwingli thought was necessary for survival. Philip of Hesse was the leader among the German princes. Luther did not dare refuse the prince's demand that he go to Marburg.

Zwingli had been aware of Luther, had been an ardent admirer, and had followed his work almost from its beginning. He had read everything from Luther that he could secure and had encouraged the sale of Luther's books in Zurich. He had urged his people to read Luther. Zwingli strongly resented the papists charging that he was tied to Luther's apron strings. Zwingli insisted that he had learned Christian doctrine not from Luther but from the Word of God. He maintained that he had first learned his reformation principles from Wyttenbach long before Luther had started his reformation.

Luther was jealous of Zwingli's role of leadership and his reluctance to claim Luther as the leader of reform. Luther was distrustful of Zwingli both in politics and doctrine.

The two men were very different spirits. Zwingli had not passed through the shaking conversion experience of Luther. Nor had he experienced the great inward struggles that plagued Luther. Zwingli had been drawn to the ministry out of a love of learning. For Luther religion was a quest for salvation. For Zwingli it was the search for truth. Luther was against all philosophy and speculation. Zwingli had a much higher respect for human learning. Luther was concerned with saving his own soul from sin and damnation. Zwingli was concerned with saving his fatherland from perishing. Luther came to Marburg expecting failure. Zwingli came with high hopes and great expectations.

As early as 1524, the two men had become aware that they differed over the Eucharist. Both condemned the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation—the idea that the bread and wine changed into the body and blood of the Lord. Luther believed the Lord was spiritually present in the bread and wine so that when the believer took the bread and wine he also took the spiritual Christ. Christ was in, by, with and under the bread and wine. Luther's critics branded his doctrine "Consubstantiation."
As early as 1522-23 Zwingli had read the work of a Dutch theologian, Cornelius Hendri{x} Hoen, on the Lord’s Supper. Hoen was a follower of a pre-Reformer in Holland named Wessel Gansfort. Hoen’s work had been brought to Zurich by a Netherlands scholar, Hime Rode, who visited Zurich in 1522-23. Hoen taught that the “This is my body” means “This signifies my body”. Zwingli had accepted the teaching of Hoen and found it corroborated by Pico della Mirandola and Erasmus.

Luther insisted that “This is my body” must be taken literally—Christ was spiritually present in the bread and wine.

Luther was accompanied to Harburg by Melanchthon, Justus Jonas, and Caspar Cruciger from Wittenberg. Zwingli was accompanied by Oecolampadius of Basel. Zwinglian cities in Germany were represented by Bucer and Hedio of Strassburg. Others at Harburg were Myconius from Gotha, Brenz from Hall, Osiander from Nurnberg, and Stephen Agricola from Augsburg.

The Colloquy opened at six o’clock on the morning of October 2, 1529, with greetings from Philip of Hesse’s chancellor who warned against giving their Catholic enemies the pleasure of division. Luther wrote on the table in big letters “This is my body.” Oecolampadius urged that the language was figurative and cited John 6 where Jesus says that he is the bread of life. He pointed out that Jesus said the flesh profits nothing. Zwingli spoke of his high regard for Luther and his pleasure in meeting him. Zwingli insisted that Christ’s body is in heaven. The Lord’s Supper is a symbol. Luther continued to pound the table and shout, “This is my body.” Philip of Hesse did his best to keep the discussion friendly. Luther declared that he and Zwingli were of a different Spirit and that one of them was a preacher of the devil. Zwingli insisted that Luther still had one foot in Rome. Luther charged Zwingli with sinful exaltation of human reason. Philip of Hesse insisted that Luther draw up fifteen articles for consideration in an effort to reach an agreement. To Luther’s great surprise Zwingli heartily agreed with fourteen of the propositions and with about half of the fifteenth. Luther’s articles dealt with the Trinity, the person of Christ, Justification by faith, baptism, good works, confession, secular authority, the authority of Scripture, and total depravity. Zwingli agreed with the part of the fifteenth article that dealt with communion, rejecting transubstantiation, the sacrificial nature of the mass, and the laity should receive both bread and wine. Luther and Zwingli could not agree on whether the Supper was a symbol or whether Christ was spiritually present.

Philip of Hesse insisted that they sign the fourteen articles on which they agreed and an agreement to show Christian charity to each other, in so far as it was compatible with their conscience, and that they pray to God to lead them through his Spirit to an understanding. Luther refused to shake hands with Zwingli.

Luther went home to draw up his Schwabach Articles, the first of the Lutheran confessions of faith, in which he set forth his definition of the church. The true church would be composed of those who subscribed to these articles which were an expression of Luther’s faith in the articles of Marburg. Luther declared there could be no alliance with anyone who did not hold the true faith. He declared that Zwinglians were not members of the Church of Christ, but were liars and the very incarnation of lying, deceit and hypocrisy.

The plans for an alliance had failed. Philip of Hesse and Zwingli were bitterly disappointed. With Germans and Swiss divided, the Catholics would conquer.