GERMANY DIVIDED INTO SEPARATE CAMPS:

The Peasants' War split Germany into two hostile camps—Catholic and Lutheran. The Catholics blamed the peasants' revolt on Luther's preaching. German princes who had favored the Romanist side were confirmed in their opposition to Luther. Others who had hesitated definitely abandoned reform and turned to Rome. For the princes who sided with Rome some kind of desperate social revolution lay back of the Protestant Reformation. These princes sought out and killed many evangelical preachers as instigators of rebellion. Duke Anthony of Lorriane in his suppression of the revolt in Elsass butchered without mercy evangelical preachers where ever he could find them. The Roman Curia preached that Luther was another Huss reviving ecclesiastical and social communism of the extreme Hussites (Taborites). Rome declared that all who attacked the church of Rome were attempting to destroy the bases of society. After the Peasants' War the Roman Catholic league of princes grew stronger in numbers and cohesion.

Among those who favored Luther the Peasants' War made it clear that only the strong princes could maintain political order. After 1525 territorial centralization around the greater princes and nobles increased. The Reformation followed the lines of the political development. Instead of a national evangelical church there would be territorial churches ruled and protected by the princes who adopted the principles of Luther.

The radical movement broke up into fragments and much of it reappeared in the guise of the maligned and persecuted Anabaptists—the name embracing a wide variety of religious opinions. Some segments of Anabaptism embraced the social revolution crushed by the princes. Luther and the princes were as determined as the Catholics to give them no recognition. The Anabaptists won their following largely among the artisans and working men of the towns. The Lutheran reform found its strength in the middle and upper classes. Catholics were stronger among upper and lower classes. The Lutheran Reformation ceased to be a national movement, and the power of Luther's preaching and his influence had greatly diminished. In his own circles he was still a great hero and slowly his reform spread especially in northern Germany and Scandanavia.

THE DEATH OF FREDERICK THE WISE: On May 5, 1526, during the dark days of the Peasants' War Luther's protector, the tolerant Frederick, died. Frederick was followed as Elector by his brother, John the Steadfast, a declared and active Lutheran.

LUTHER'S MARRIAGE: Luther's repudiation of clerical celibacy had opened the way for marriage. Luther had encouraged many of his associates to marry and had helped arrange marriages for many monks and nuns. He had repeatedly denied that marriage was for him. Many leading figures in his reform had married—Carlstadt, Bucer, Zell, Bugenhagen, Regius and Link. Luther in the pulpit and in his writings defended marriage. Marriage was a bold and dangerous step for clergy, monks and nuns. Bishop Wilhelm von Hohenstein excommunicated eight monks and nuns who married. Duke George and Albert of Mainz arrested two priests who married. Luther personally performed the marriage ceremony of Link who had given up his office as Vicar of the Augustinians in Germany and had become minister of the church in Altenburg. Only armed guards protected the couple from the enraged clergy of the cathedral.

During the peasants' War Luther wrote Albert of Mainz urging him to give up his mistress and to live a chaste life by marrying. Once the peasants had been defeated, Albert decided he preferred to continue to live with his mistress and
to remain archbishop in good standing with the Roman Church.

At Easter in 1523 a sixty year old merchant of Torgau, Leonard Kopp helped twelve nuns escape from the Nimbachen Cloister of the Cistercian Order. Nuns had been hearing reports of monks leaving their monasteries, of monks and nuns marrying, and Luther's writings were smuggled into nunneries and read. Kopp delivered barrels of herring to the cloister. The nuns were hidden in empty barrels and smuggled form the cloister in Kopp's covered wagon. This was a crime punishable by death in the eyes of Rome and the civil government. Luther accepted responsibility for the nuns. Three returned to their families. Luther was able to arrange positions as governesses or marriages for all but one--Katharine von Bora. She was from a noble family and had been placed in the cloister when her mother died and her father married again. She was sixteen when she became a nun; her superior was a sister of her mother and another nun was the sister of her father. Luther placed her in the home of Cranach the painter. One of Luther's students, Jerome Baumgartner, son of a distinguished family of Nurenberg, fell in love with her and wanted to marry her, but when he visited his family and told of his plans for marriage, they removed him from the school and forbade the marriage. Katharine became ill over the bitter disappointment. Luther tried to promote a marriage with Dr. Glatz whom she despised. Katharine was high spirited and had a strong will. At 26 she was considered past the eligible age for marriage. She confided to Armsdorf that she would never marry Glatz but urged him to tell Luther that she would be willing to marry either Armsdorf or Luther. Armsdorf delivered her message.

Many of Luther's followers had been urging him to marry. There was something inconsistent and Romish in an unmarried preacher. Luther had begun to wrestle with the idea that he should marry to be consistent with his own teaching. During a visit with his parents his father urged him to marry and have children that would continue the family line.

Luther would not have considered marriage under Frederick but John the Steadfast loyally stood by Luther. Once Luther made up his mind he did not delay. In May of 1525 he intimated that he would marry Katharine. On June 10 he told Spalatin that he did not believe in long engagements. On June 13 he was betrothed to Katharine in the Augustinian Cloister which the Elector had given him for a home, in the presence of Bugenhagen and Janas, the chief pastors of Wittenberg, the jurist, Dr. Apel who had married a nun, and the painter Cranach and his wife who brought the bride. Melanchthon and Schurf were not invited because Luther knew they did not approve. The following morning there was a wedding breakfast. The formal celebration of the wedding was held June 27. The list of invited guests was large. Spalatin from the Elector's Court was invited to furnish game for the feast. Koppe was invited to bring a keg of the best Torgau beer. Luther's parents came.

Reactions to the wedding were many and varied. Schurf declared Luther had undone all he had accomplished. He prophesied that the world and the devils would laugh and Luther's work would come to naught. Luther declared the angels would laugh and the devils weep and rage. Gifts poured in from magistrates, the University, and from friends everywhere. Elector John declared the Augustinian Cloister should be their home and gave them a hundred florins to begin house-keeping. The Archbishop of Mainz sent Katharine a gift of twenty florins. Erasmus quipped that the Reformation had begun as a tragedy and had ended as a comedy with everyone getting married. The Papists declared that the whole Reformation was the result of Luther lasting after nuns. Luther's followers rejoiced that he had thrown off the appearance of the monk.

LUTHER'S HOME:

Marriage brought great changes in Luther. He was 42 at the time of his marriage. His bed had not been made or changed for years. Katharine cleaned and remodeled the Cloister. Luther ate regular meals and kept regular hours. The house was always filled with guests—students, preachers without work, escaped monks and nuns, relatives, travellers who came to see the great reformer.
Katharina was equal to the challenge. She raised food in the large garden and orchard. Later Luther bought from her brother the family farm and Katharine with the children would spend harvesting time at the farm. She was a good overseer.

Six children brought great joy to Luther and Katharina and to their friends. Hans was born June 7, 1526. His baptism was a great event and he was showered with gifts. Elizabeth, born May 4, 1527, lived less than a year. The parents were deeply grieved. Magdalena was born May 4, 1529. Martin was born on November 9, 1531. Paul was born on January 29, 1533. Margarethe was born on December 17, 1534. Luther loved his children, played games with them. The cloister was filled with all the noise of a growing family. Luther's family set the ideals of German family life for years. Luther made no secret of his great love for his wife. Magdalena became seriously ill and died in the summer of 1542.

THE CHURCH AND THE CATECHISM:

The early years of marriage were very busy years in the church for Luther. It was no secret that the alliance of Romanist princes were determined to completely eradicate Lutheranism. A number of Lutheran preachers were killed by Catholic princes. The emperor was at war with France. In the peace of Madrid, January 14, 1526, following the emperor's victory at Pavia and the capture of the King of France, emperor and king agreed to fight the Turks and to destroy the heretics in Germany. The pope became alarmed at the strength of the emperor and removed the immediate threat against Germany by negotiations with the King of France, absolving him from the treaty and persuading him to join an alliance of the Italian cities against the emperor. War was renewed, ending in the sack of Rome and the capture of the pope.

During these wars Luther prepared the famous German Mass of 1526 for his churches. He worked out an Order of Visitation to guide the territorial churches. He also wrote his Small Catechism, one of his most important works, to guide the educational program of the churches.

THE REFORMATION IN PERIL:

The meeting of the Diet at Augsburg in 1525 was sparcely attended by Catholics and Lutherans because of the Peasants' War. When the Emperor could not attend the meeting of the Diet at Speyer in 1526 the emperor's brother, Ferdinand of Austria presided. He demanded that the Edict of Worms against Luther be enforced and that all innovations in worship and doctrine be forbidden. The Lutherans had a majority and declared the Edict of Worms could not be enforced. They demanded the right of priests to marry, giving the cup to the laity, use of German as well as Latin in worship, that private masses be abolished, the reduction of the number of holy days, and that Scripture should be explained by Scripture. After much fencing the princes declared that until a General Council was held each prince would conduct the church in his territory and would so live as he hoped to answer to his God and his emperor. This was a triumph for Lutheranism that provided the opportunity for the development of the territorial churches under the guidance of Luther.

Blunders by Philip of Hesse, leader of the German princes, greatly weakened the Lutheran party. Confidence in his leadership was shaken when he married the daughter of Duke George of Saxony, the bitter foe of Luther. Then Otto von Pack, a scoundrel who was steward of the Chancery of Ducal Saxony, delivered to Philip of Hesse a forged copy of a supposed treaty of the Catholic princes pledging themselves to a deadly assault on the Lutherans. Philip believed the forged document and began negotiations for an alliance with France and Zapolja, the enemy of the House of Austria in Bohemia. The German princes were suspicious of such alliances. The affair brought division to the Lutherans and when the forgery was discovered the Lutheran alliance was discredited.

When the Diet met at Speyer in 1529 the hands of the emperor had been freed and he could command both French and Italians to join him in suppressing heresy in Germany. The Catholics had a clear majority in the Diet. The Lutherans were a weak and divided minority. The Catholics demanded the Edict of Worms be accepted
and enforced, that no Lutherans be tolerated in Romanist districts, no further innovations were to be introduced, no one was to be forbidden conducting or hearing masses, Zwinglians and Anabaptists and all sects should be denied authority or revenues, Lutherans were to conform to Roman practice and the medieval ecclesiastical rules were to be restored, and all bishops should have the right to deal with preachers in their dioceses.

It was these Catholic demands at Speyer in 1529 that called forth from the Lutheran minority the Protest from which came the name "Protestantism." The Protest was read to the Diet on April 19, 1529. The Lutherans protested that the Diet of 1526 could not undo the work of the Diet of 1526. They declared they must obey God when faced with the choice of obeying God or the emperor. They proclaimed the right of the minority to defend itself against the majority.

The Catholic majority rejected the Protest.

Philip of Hesse took the lead in pledging the Lutheran princes and cities to mutual defense if attacked by the Catholics. Fearing that such an attack was imminent, Philip of Hesse demanded that Luther meet Zwingli at Marburg to perfect an alliance between the Germans and the Swiss.