as mentioned above, the saints, in contrast to the awesome Christ-God, were “approachable.” Private devotions, many bordering on the superstitious or even the idolatrous, fulfilled the layman’s need for pious activity. As the reception of Communion decreased almost to the point of extinction, the people’s efforts to gaze upon the Host, termed Corpus Christi (Body of Christ) piety, have become legendary and alternately the subject of amusement or scandal. Examples of these would be the crowds pressing to view the Sacred Host carried in procession, the extravagance and popularity of the devotion called “Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament,” and the introduction of the dual elevation at mass. The scriptural doctrines of the Church as the Body of Christ and, perhaps more importantly, that of the Priesthood of the Laity, had become obscured and practically denied.

This was the state of Eucharistic liturgy and piety that prevailed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. With the retrospective glance that history allows, it might be said that those who later became known as Protestants indeed had legitimate complaints about the lack of aware, participatory worship. Also most disturbing to the Germanic peoples was the “Romanization” of the church in general and of the liturgy in particular. Yet, history also recognizes that the reformers took rather radical steps in their attempts to effect change. Dix, a Protestant scholar, recognizes

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... the force of a single idea carrying the who protestant movement forward with an impetus sufficient to overcome the strength of tradition, the resistance of sincere opponents and critics and even the mistakes and faults of the Reformers themselves.7
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That “single idea” was “the conception of a personal relation of each individual soul to God.”

Dix most interestingly points out that although this notion of the individual’s relationship to God was not liturgically expressed (or expressable?), it was not truly ignored in medieval Christian practice. He cites, as an example, the multiple private devotions and the emphasis on personal sacramental confession. But, the fact that it was denied practical expression in the Eucharistic liturgy, the “vital act” of the church’s life, is what gave the reformers “such explosive force.” This force swept this [the liturgy] ruthlessly away. And it proceeded to sweep after it just those elements of catholic tradition which stood in the path of its most extreme and unbalanced expression—the idea of the church as the sphere of redemption, the sacraments as effectual signs of grace, and with these the doctrines of the apostolic ministry and the communion of saints.9

The Protestants reacted to over-ritualization, the lack of preaching,