

The Presbyterian and Reformed Review.

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THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

No. 29—January, 1897.

I.

PHILIP MELANCHTHON.

FEBRUARY 16, 1897, will be the four-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Philip Melancthon. The Protestant world will remember to celebrate the day as one of gracious influences. For the name of the most irenic spirit among the noble group of the great reformers is one that all the churches delight to honor. Lacking the vigor and originality of his great chief, falling short of the constructive force of the resourceful Calvin, and representing in himself no national movement as did Zwingli and Knox, yet as the tried and trusted lieutenant of the mighty leader of the German Reformation, the calm and scholarly theologian, the judicious and temperate advocate, he holds a place of deserved prominence and even more deserved affection. Luther in one of his fine bursts of enthusiasm wrote of him: *Res et verba Philippus; verba sine re Erasmus; res sine verbis Lutherus; nec res nec verba Carolostadius.* Such an estimate was more than kind to Melancthon in so far at least as the comparison with Luther himself was concerned. It was to Luther in no small measure that Melancthon owed his capacity for deeds; without Luther to wield the weapons which he forged in his intellectual armory it is to be feared that the fires in the forge would often have gone out. He shares from their close comradeship a large part of Luther's fame as the herald of intellectual and religious freedom, yet, by the temperate spirit which animated his words and acts, escapes the hostility so often stirred by his rash and rough-spoken leader. If at times he yields too much in the effort to reconcile

other seekers after truth, he never sinks to the level of the time-serving scholars who loved ease or feared innovation too much to follow truth into exile and evil report. Too calm to be convicted of noble but dangerous enthusiasm, too well trained a critic to rush into hasty and overwrought statements, he was yet too courageous to slink back into the shelter of "Mother Church" with Reuchlin and Erasmus when God opened his eyes to the fullness of truth in Christ.

I.

The last years of the fifteenth century are an epoch of profound significance in the history of the human race. Throughout the century the splendid renaissance of life and thought had blazed in a thousand flamboyant forms in the south of Europe, and especially in Italy. A few borrowed brands had scattered sparks in the courts and cloisters of the northern kingdoms, but as a rule those realms were too deeply engaged in the struggle between nationalism and feudalism to pay much heed to the new birth, whether of art or letters, of science or discovery. The glories of antiquity had worked strange transformations in Italy. Quickening intellectual forces, they had too often ministered to moral decay. Glorving in the beauty of form anew revealed to the world, the Renaissance did not see that it was bartering for it the subtler, sweeter and more permanent beauty of soul. Its ideals stormed the tottering strongholds of the papacy, broke down the brave burger spirit of the city republics, and left private morals a prey to license and lust. If we look on one side, we can but rejoice in the recovered literature of the classic past, in the invention of printing which gave it undreamed currency, in the vivid intelligence of awakened mankind, in a multitude of opening avenues of activity. If we look on the other side, we are repelled by the essential paganism of much of the highest intellectual culture, and by the lack of broad and pure motives in most of the leaders of thought. The question that was forcing itself upon the world in the last decade of the century was whether reaction would come before any positive progress was attained. The great world-Church had been permeated and corrupted by the new forces, instead of using them to advance her high mission. The great world-empire lay shattered in its struggle for supremacy with the Church, a prey to divisive elements of its own political structure. The charm of the little courts of the Italian cities passed away with the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and Italy soon became a battleground for the nationalized kingdoms of France and Spain. Germany was a hostile camp armed against itself, peasants hiding their *Bund-schuh* banner against a time of agrarian

revolt, knights muttering behind their castled holds, burgers training their city bands, princes plotting and scheming against each other and their elected lord.

But new signs of hope were beginning to appear. With the fall of Granada in January, 1492, a substantial gain was made by the powers of Christendom against the too long advancing arms of Islam. In the same year Columbus opened the way for the adventurous and the oppressed to the New World. Savonarola thundered from the pulpit in the duomo of Florence against wickedness in high places, and John Colet, neither priest nor deacon but plain seeker after truth, began to lecture in the University of Oxford upon the epistles of St. Paul. Throughout Germany men trained in the new learning began to look with searching eyes into the doctrine and demeanor of the Roman Church, and to print keen satires upon its priests and practices. Such things all men might see more or less clearly, and such things bred hope. The storm of protest, the scholarly exposition, the biting sarcasm of these preachers of reform and the anonymous clamoring tongues of the "*obscuri viri*" were a vast step forward in moral hopefulness over the blind leadership of the blind guides who had preceded them. But after all, they imported little for real progress. They still appealed to men and not to God. They were voices crying in the wildernesses, bidding men prepare the way of the Lord. Some lacked wisdom where they had courage, some loved a life of scholarly ease too much, some dared not forsake the authority of the Church in the strength of triumphant faith. Endowed with learning, they lacked the baptism of the Spirit. Such things men could see: they could not foresee the significance of the birth of a Luther (1483), a Zwingli (1484), an Ecolampadius (1482), a Farel (1489).

It was into such a world that Philip Schwartzerd was born on February 16, 1497, in the little town of Bretten, in the lower Palatinate. He was the son of George Schwartzerd, an armorer to the Elector Palatine Philip, and of Barbara Reuter, his wife. His mother was the daughter of a sister of the famous John Reuchlin of Pforzheim, the celebrated humanist, who had bravely fought the battle for the new learning and especially for the study of the much-decried Hebrew, and had won for himself the title in his own generation, which later was to be applied to his nephew, of the "teacher of Germany." His father died while he was still a mere boy, and Reuchlin assumed the direction of his education and fastened upon him the stamp of humanism by familiarly using the Greek equivalent of his name, Melanchthon.* This usage was

* Schwartzerd means "black earth;" hence Melanchthon, from $\mu\epsilon\lambda\alpha\nu$ and $\chi\theta\acute{\omega}\nu$.

common in that day and many names still wear the classic mask, while others have shaken off the pedantic imposition. Reuchlin himself was known as Capnion, even in his own writings; Erasmus and Ecolampadius are familiar instances.* Under the direction of Reuchlin the youth attended the Latin school at Pforzheim, whither he went in 1507, and the universities of Heidelberg and Tübingen. From his earliest boyhood he displayed that precocity of intellect which is so characteristic of the Renaissance, and early became imbued with enthusiasm for classical studies. The bonds of the middle ages were long since shattered, the discoveries of the age in science and in nature were realizing the dreams of the past, the splendid schools and universities, which were springing up everywhere, were offering an outlet to the thought that had been smothered in the cloister or stilled at the stake. To such a lad as this sweet studious boy, the world was full of delight. He early mastered Latin and Greek, writing and speaking them with accuracy and fluency. He studied Hebrew. He engaged in disputations, after the manner of the age, which attracted wide notice among scholars. In 1511, when only fourteen, he took his Bachelor's degree at Heidelberg: on January 25, 1514, when not quite seventeen, he took his Master's degree. In 1516, he won a tribute from the prince of northern humanists more precious than any academic honor. In that year Erasmus exclaimed in his notes to the New Testament, published at Basel: "Immortal God! what expectations does Philip Melanchthon excite, who is yet a youth—yea, we may say a mere boy, and has already attained to equal eminence in the Greek and Latin literature. What acumen in demonstration, what purity and elegance of style, what rare learning, what comprehensive reading, what tenderness and refinement in his extraordinary genius."†

Such is the testimony of the contemporary best fitted to judge the achievement of this youth in his twentieth year. Naturally Melanchthon was greatly pleased by the notice taken of him by Erasmus, and responded by celebrating the learning of his patron in Greek verse. He was already lecturing on classical literature in the young but vigorous university which Duke Eberhard had founded with imperial sanction at Tübingen in 1477. He was also hard at work upon the characteristic task of annotating Terence and Plutarch, and preparing a brief and convenient grammar of the Greek language. This grammar, which was published in 1518, was an epoch-making book and generations of German youth found it the gateway to the fascinating fields of Greek life and thought.

* Desiderius Erasmus, Gerhard Gerhardson; and Hussgenn, or Hauschein.

† Quoted in Schaff's *Melanchthon*, p. 109.

Upon the completion of his twenty-first year, in 1518, Melanchthon found himself already famous. His fame rested on no single brilliant performance, such as is occasionally the cause of early notice, but upon solid character and attainments. He had proved himself to be possessed of sound scholarship, resting on a remarkable capacity for the acquisition of knowledge, a mature judgment in critical matters, a courageous and undogmatic disposition. Despite a delicate and unimpressive person, he had a winning presence and high qualities as a speaker. The neighboring universities, envious of his growing reputation, began to compete for his promising career. Ingolstadt and Leipsic extended invitations to him. But through the good offices of Reuchlin and under his advice, he chose rather to accept an invitation from the Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony to the Greek chair in his new university of Wittenberg (founded in 1502). We may well recognize the hand of Providence in leading the young scholar into the growing light at Wittenberg, and away from Ingolstadt where Dr. Eck, the fierce assailant of the Reformation, was a leading spirit. He reached Wittenberg August 28, 1518. Four days after his arrival, he was inducted into office, delivering a Latin oration on "The Improvement of the Studies of Youth" which made a fine impression as an academic performance by the beauty and vigor of its style, but won even higher applause for its broad philosophic grasp of the subject. The influence of this address was neither local nor temporary. It was widely circulated, fell in with the best views of the most progressive thinkers, and was the cornerstone of the new education in Germany. Compayré, the well-known French writer on Pedagogy, criticises Melanchthon as having "worked more for high schools than schools for the people," the latter task being left to Luther and Sturm. But as a scarcely less distinguished writer upon educational topics points out,* the division of Christendom wrought by the Reformation left Protestantism without organized institutions for carrying forward the work of higher education, and it was in a large measure due to the labors of Melanchthon that the new learning became a part of the heritage of the Protestant Churches.

Melanchthon was doubtless already in sympathy with the bold monk who had flung his defiance in the face of the papal agent in the previous year. But to defy Tetzels and denounce the sale of indulgences did not make a Reformation. Erasmus, Reuchlin, Hutten, Colet and More, sympathized with these things quite as much as Melanchthon. As yet, Luther had merely risked penance, torture or martyrdom. Many another had risked and suffered

* Oscar Browning, *Educational Theories*, p. 46.

these penalties for the truth's sake, to the sorrow of wise and faithful hearts but without much stir in the world. Not a few doubted to what this thing might grow, but none foresaw the actual end. So in the lull before the storm, Melancthon settled down as the brilliant and popular representative of the new learning. His published works gained him reputation with an ever-widening circle. Students thronged his lecture-room. The whole university sat at his feet. Loving the subtlest beauties of classic thought and the most recondite discussions of philosophy, he bent his soaring spirit to the simplest needs of his time and labored to supply the elementary instruments of scholarship. He put forth a Latin grammar on new principles: he prepared elementary treatises on logic and dialectic, on rhetoric, on physical science, on psychology, and on ethics. These were of inestimable value to Germany, as yet without schools, schoolmasters or books breathing the spirit of the new learning. In all this he was the child of the Renaissance, a precious specimen of what it could produce as a mere intellectual force, an invaluable link between it and the more prosaic and practical genius of later times. It was this Melancthon who turned to Erasmus for advice in 1519, as the conflict between light and night assumed a wider significance. It was but the true Erasmian cry of "Peace! peace! where there is no peace," that he got in answer. At a later date, December 10, 1524, Erasmus gave more of the same advice with a significant commentary in these words: "Plato says you cannot guide the multitude without deceiving them. Christians must not lie, but they need not tell the whole truth." There was no room in Melancthon's honest heart for any such suggestion of the devil as this. He was still the humanist, but he was now a man and had found that men have battles to fight. He wrote to Erasmus as late as August 1, 1530, declaring his desire for peace. But it was peace on "fair conditions." He desired no peace at the sacrifice of conscience or of truth. It is at this point that the humanist passes into the larger and fuller man, the reformer. He had been laboring in the spring of this year upon his most enduring work, which upon the 25th of June was read aloud before the representatives of Church and State in diet assembled, and which is known to posterity as the Augsburg Confession.

II.

Like all great historical movements, the Reformation owed its success to the union of several coördinate causes. In the first place, it was produced by coincident upheavals in Church and State and

* *Epistle DCCXIV.*

society. To look at it exclusively from the point of view of either theology, politics or social philosophy, is, therefore, to miss a large part of its complex history. In the second place, in each of these great departments of human activity the movement was made up of a number of interacting causes. The whole world was in a state of flux. The minds of men were stimulated to unwonted activity, and the facilities for the communication of thought and for the coöperation of thinkers had been recently enormously increased. It is impossible in so brief and biographic a paper as this, to dwell upon the political and social phases of the Reformation. It is sufficient to recall the fact that the political fortunes of all the great European States were passing through a stage of transformation. In most of the great powers national centralization was taking the place of feudalism, while Germany, by the choice of the king of Spain to be her emperor, delayed for more than three centuries and a half the realization of a true spirit of nationality. The social movement, if less familiar, is of even more significance than the political. The peasants, long prosperous and contented, were suffering from economic and industrial changes which were intensified by the growing power of the great nobles and the rapid decline of the petty nobility who became little better than outlaws. The citizens of the more prosperous towns, with the impulse of the new education behind them, eagerly seized upon the freedom of the new theology to maintain and enlarge their ancient political privileges and to increase and develop their social importance. One of the ablest economic writers of our generation has pointed out that social revolutions do not come until the revolting class is already enjoying considerable prosperity, and that a religious revival must carry with it the hope of material amelioration in order to become thoroughly popular. A broken and despairing people cannot rise, nor do they hear with hope the call of the preacher of reform.* The age of the Reformation constantly recalled the connection of Wyclif with the rising of Wat Tyler and the end of English villeinage, and of the preaching of Huss with the Moravian wars. The brief rule of Savonarola in Florence was a contemporary portent, and the rumblings of peasant discontent became vocal in the cause of Luther in the midst of the Diet at Worms, when the anxious von Hutten made his memorable threat of the *Bundschuh*. The program of the diet illustrates the situation in Germany in 1520. The principal topics set down for discussion are: 1. An ordinance against private war, vehemently demanded by the cities and towns. 2. A settlement of disputes between the lords temporal

* Thorold Rogers, *The Economic Interpretation of History*, pp. 80, 81.

and spiritual. 3. A provision for a vicar in the emperor's absence; the Duke of Saxony alone capable of commanding respect. 4. The ease of Friar Martin Luther.

All the conditions of unrest necessary to produce a great upheaval were therefore present. But even with such conditions not every form of theological propaganda would meet the needs of the time. Wyclif had deeply influenced England and the whole of western Christendom by his simple appeal to the supreme authority of the Scriptures; but he had not gone deep enough in his theology, and while the necessity of the doctrine of justification by faith to his positions is obvious, he never gave it due prominence as the one conclusive refutation of mediæval Romanism. Savonarola had thundered for reforms, and Erasmus had satirized the Church for its vices and disorders; but neither they, nor their friends and followers, had laid hold of the inability of man to cleanse himself, of the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit, and of the sufficiency of saving grace in Jesus Christ. In other words, it was not till the theology of the reformers embraced in its program the principles of an infallible Bible, above all tradition, of justification by God's free grace, and of the inalienable right of every believer to personal access to the Bible as the source of grace and to the exercise of his individual judgment as to the means of grace, that the conditions of a successful reform were attained.

Even with such a program much depended on the personality of the leaders of the movement. Northern Christendom was seething with religious discontent. Much of it was ready for the evangelicalism of the reformers, much of it was only half aroused and lacked the robustness of spirit to accept the Augustinian Paulinism of Luther and his coadjutors. All were shocked by the neglect and worldly spirit of the papal system and the decay of religion in the monastic orders; but not all could agree on the way in which these evils were to be met and remedied. Luther, the peasant monk, vigorous in body, full of the superstitions of his class, deeply imbued with the sense of sin and the longing for redemption, was a type of one class of the age; Luther, the honest man, keen of intellect, impatient of sham and imposture, resolute of will, fertile in expedients, rich in speech, was a type of another class of his age. The union of the two types gave him a great power over his contemporaries. At Wittenberg, whither he went in 1508, he gradually became a mighty influence. He dominated his senior, Carlstadt, as independent a thinker as himself, gained the judicious support of his noble patron, the elector Frederick, and finally won for his closest comrade the youthful Melancthon. It was a strong alliance. All the elements of the age—peasant,

burger and noble rank ; political, social and theological progress ; intellectual, moral and religious thirst—were well represented. Frederick was the strongest political force in Germany ; Melancthon was not inferior to any contemporary as a man of intellect and learning ; Luther was a great glowing soul, aflame with love to God and man, bold, capable, imaginative, simple. The great regret that rises as we look upon them is that Frederick refused the call of Germany and permitted Charles to become emperor and a curse to the age. His clear vision penetrated the weakness of the imperial system, and he turned from the impossible task. He reckoned as men must. But had he counted Luther among his helpers and taken God to be his guide, history might tell another story. This weakness of Frederick's, and the inability of Luther to follow the less stable Carlstadt to his more Biblical doctrine of the eucharist are the chief sources of regret in the enthusiasm this group awakens.

Luther nailed his ninety-five theses condemning the sale of indulgences to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, October 31, 1517. Local sentiment rallied to his support, and Tetzel was forced to avoid Wittenberg. For three years the discussion of his bold action went on, before the papal court decided to act. The pope was that cultivated and profligate scion of the house of Medici who, when he was chosen the chief bishop of Christ's flock, exclaimed, "Since God has given us the papacy, let us enjoy it." He was at first disposed to treat the affair of the theses with contempt, saying, "It is a drunken German who wrote the theses ; when sober he will change his mind." But after several attempts to quiet the controversy through the authorities of the Augustinian Order, a commission, a citation to Rome, an interview with the papal legate Cajetan at the Diet of Augsburg (1518) and a conference with the nuncio Miltitz at the house of Spalatin (1519), he perceived, especially after the Leipsic disputation (1519), that action was indispensable unless the whole of Germany was to go free from papal bondage. A bull was therefore prepared in the early summer of 1520, and promulgated June 15. The execution of the bull, attended with more or less successful opposition, went on in Germany in the autumn. Meanwhile Luther was girding himself for life-long battle. In July he published his address to the emperor and "the Christian nobility of the German nation, respecting a Reformation of the Christian Estate." In October he issued his pamphlet on "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," and, in a different and non-polemical vein, a beautiful tractate on "Christian Freedom," with a dedicatory letter to the pope. At last, on December 10, the final decla-

ration of war was made, when, accompanied by Carlstadt, Melancthon and other members of the faculty of the university, Luther led a procession of students and citizens outside the Elster gate and under an oak tree formally burned the papal bull. The next day he attacked the pope in a public lecture, and soon after defended his position in a treatise. This chain of events culminated in the famous Diet of Worms of 1521, Luther's abduction and friendly confinement in the Wartburg, and the imperial edict (May 8) condemning Luther and his views.

During these eventful years Melancthon had been the constant companion and adviser of Luther. Under his influence he had given more and more study to theology. In 1519 he took his degree in divinity, but neither then nor at any time was he ordained. He is a great example of the work which a scholarly layman can do for the Church of Christ. To Luther his aid was invaluable. Moderate in temper, skillful in exegesis, laborious and accurate in scholarship, a master of Greek, and not unfamiliar with the then little-known Hebrew, he was able to temper, correct and support the bold, popular and enthusiastic inspirations of Luther. It is much easier in this generation to underestimate than overestimate Luther. He was a German of the Germans. He appealed to his own nationality by his weaknesses as well as by his strength. A man of his age, he was coarse, as Shakespeare was coarse, because he was natural and untrammelled by artificial restraints and conventions. He was too impatient of opposition: but his success is due to his ability to beat down opposition and his confident belief in his grasp on eternal truth. His human weakness showed itself in a habit of hard speech in controversy, and in too great self-confidence. These abuses of his powers narrowed his usefulness, and separated him from his brethren, making division where united action would have advanced the cause of the Reformation. But despite these shadows his was one of the most splendid natures that have changed the course of history and wrought righteousness in the earth. When Luther set out on his perilous journey to Worms, leaning upon the uncertain staff of an imperial safe-conduct, the spectre of John Huss, whom a like safeguard had not saved at the Council of Constance, rose with mournful admonitions before his and his friends' vision. On parting with Melancthon he said, "My dear brother, if I do not come back, if my enemies put me to death, you must go on teaching and standing fast in the truth: if you live my death will matter little." But Melancthon was the scholar and not the popular leader. He needed the great strength of will of Luther, as Luther needed his

great stores of knowledge. So when Luther did not return, but was carried off to the Wartburg, and Carlstadt, Münzer and the Zwickau brethren began their brief but perilous rule in Wittenberg, Melanchthon proved incapable of dealing with them, and only the hazardous return of Luther in December, 1521, saved the Reformation from being seriously compromised. The same is true in later years. With a noble spirit of fellowship, he sometimes showed a weak spirit of compromise, yielding too much to Romanism in the *Interims*, surrendering the Lutheran position on the will to a semi-Pelagian synergism, and again and again showing that he was better fitted to counsel and instruct than to maintain a system or lead a movement.

During the momentous months that followed the Diet at Worms, Luther and Melanchthon each had in hand an epoch-making work. Luther at the Wartburg labored hard upon a translation of the New Testament, and Melanchthon at Wittenberg upon the first statement of Protestant theology, his *Loci Communes*, or "Theological Commonplaces," the first edition of which appeared late in 1521. Luther vigorously pushed on his popular appeals, sending forth publication after publication, running through the whole gamut of the literary scale—exposition, argument, denunciation, satire, humorous narrative, sublime hymns, above all Bible translations; Melanchthon supplied careful exegesis, scholarly commentary and judicious adaptations from the long and tedious course of scholastic philosophy. Thus Luther was kept from breaking off too recklessly from the historic continuity of Christian history, and while rejecting the papal system and the tergiversations and trivialities of the mediæval schoolmen, was led to cling to all that was sound and evangelical in every age. Luther awoke to find himself a Hussite and a Wyclifite; Melanchthon did not suffer him to forget that God has not left himself without a witness in any age or people. The continuity of Christian thought thus testified to is one of the most important services of Melanchthon's life, and it was this which gave the Reformation its hold upon the educated and thoughtful men of Germany.

In the meantime Melanchthon, not being in clerical orders, had married without creating such a stir as was made by the marriages of Carlstadt in 1521 and Luther in 1525. He was married in 1520, to Catharine Krapp, daughter of the burgomaster of Wittenberg, and settled down in a little house in the College street, the garden of which connected with Luther's. Here Melanchthon spent the rest of his life, forty fruitful years, and here he died. Not a few calls came tempting him away; calls from sister universities, Heidelberg, Nuremberg, and Tübingen; calls from foreign lands,

Denmark, France and England; but he was deaf to all appeals, and, save for brief journeys to the diets and councils where he wielded so much influence, he abode at home in his little house and garden.

Ten stormy years led up to the great diet of Augsburg, at which Melancthon's most permanent contribution to the Reformation was produced:—years in which Hutten and Sickengen and their confederated knights were broken and overthrown; in which the Peasants' Wars raged: in which the empire fought battles in the interest of the kingdom of Spain and the house of Austria: in which his most Catholic majesty sacked the eternal city; in which the Imperial Diet at Spires (1526) gave Lutheranism a breathing space, and again at the same city in 1529 revoked its earlier action and gave the occasion for that noble protest whence sprang the glorious name of Protestant. At length, in 1530, the diet met at Augsburg and the Protestant princes presented the Augsburg Confession, mainly the work of Melancthon* and warmly commended by Luther. As the chief confessional statement of the Lutheran Church it is a document of the highest importance. Protestantism does not rest on this, or on any human statement, but on the Bible. Confessions are, however, of great significance as setting forth systematic and authoritative statements of essential doctrines. The Augsburg Confession consists of two parts: the first contains the "chief articles of faith:" the second, "articles in which are recounted the abuses which have been corrected." As originally presented, the Confession set forth the Lutheran theology as it was accepted by its great founder. Melancthon made a number of changes from time to time, especially in 1540, to meet the views of the Swiss reformers with whom he was seeking common ground. The principal change in this respect was a modification (in Article x) of the Lutheran view of the eucharist.

This confession, as its original title, "Apology," denoted, represents as broad a position as was consistent with thorough-going Protestantism. Luther thought it too mild, the Swiss reformers thought it did not go far enough. It placed the Reformation at the outset on a firm foundation of historic orthodoxy. It set forth the unity in trinity of the Godhead, the divinity of Christ, the sinfulness of Adam's fall, the nature of justification by faith, of new obedience, of the work of the Spirit, of the ministry of the Church, of the sacraments, of repentance, of predestination, of free will, of ecclesiastical orders and rites, of civil government, of

* The first part is based on the Articles of Marburg and Schwabach of 1529, principally the work of Luther.

good works and the worship of saints. In these articles the Church of Rome is condemned especially for its views upon justification, new obedience, repentance, good works, the ministry, the Church, civil government, the worship of saints, and the exclusive mediatorship of Christ. Various heresies, such as Arianism, Pelagianism, Donatism, and Manichæism are condemned, and some of the contemporary differences with Anabaptism and Zwinglianism are asserted. Private confession is conceded to Rome, and a real, if not a magical, presence is claimed for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The prevailing theology is distinctly Augustinian, and the position upon predestination and free will is rather that of Luther than of Melanchthon. Among the few articles that are narrower than the general tendency of Protestantism, that on "Christ's return to judgment" (xvii) condemns pre-millenarianism in the same breath with the Anabaptist doctrine of annihilation for the wicked—a condemnation which was early disputed in the Lutheran Church as well as sister denominations. The seven articles of the second part of the confession assail communion in one kind, the celibacy of the clergy, the sacrifice of the mass, obligatory and specific confession, feast and fast days (incidentally taking a low view of the sanctity of the Sabbath), monastic vows, and the temporal authority of prelates. The conspicuous omission is the almost entire absence of any assault upon the papacy such as Luther would have been sure to make. Melanchthon refrained from an attack which would have only prejudiced his cause. Yet in the light of the articles of Smalkald (1537), we are obliged to acknowledge that Melanchthon was not perfectly sound on this point, doubtless sharing with many of his fellow-humanists a great respect for the traditional and once real splendor of the great Catholic Church.

The breadth and acceptability of the Augsburg Confession as a protestant symbol is shown by the readiness with which it was accepted in its modified form * by John Calvin as pastor in Strasburg, and at the Conference at Ratisbon (1541); by Farel and Beza at the Conference at Worms (1557), and by various representatives of the Reformed Churches into the seventeenth century.

Not unnaturally the Confession called forth a Roman Catholic reply. This was ordered by the emperor and the Romanist members of the diet, and under the title of a "confutation" was adopted August 3, 1530. It accepts the greater part of the first division of the Confession; but rejects the whole of the articles on the Church, on justification and good works, and on the worship

* In controversial literature the forms are known as the *variata* and *invariata*.

of saints, and of course the entire second part, although it acknowledges that abuses had grown up in the Church which demanded reform. Melancthon at once began a defense of the Confession, and this "Apology" was offered to the diet on September 22, but rejected. It was then rewritten and published in Latin, together with a German translation, chiefly the work of Justus Jonas, in 1531. This "Apology" is a work of great vigor and scholarship, written in Melancthon's best style, and is at once an authoritative interpretation of the Confession and one of the finest statements of Lutheran theology. Without having originally any place in the series of Church symbols, it has been accepted as such on several occasions and has received well-merited reverence.

The Augsburg Confession marks the high-water mark of Lutheran concord. Soon after it was published Luther and Melancthon began to draw apart under the influence of the progress of events. The growth of Protestantism in other countries made Luther draw back and assert with ever greater narrowness of sympathy the essential doctrines of his own system. Melancthon, on the other hand, influenced by his more genial and charitable nature, inclined more and more to examine and accept the views of other reformers. From about 1533 the two friends engaged in sharp differences, and it required all of Luther's affection and all of Melancthon's self-control to prevent a serious breach. Luther was spared the trial of seeing Germany plunged in civil war because of religious differences. His death in 1546 seemed almost the signal for the long-threatened war. What Luther escaped, Melancthon had to endure. It was a sore trial to his pious heart. He bore the difficulties of the next fourteen years with forbearance and gentleness. By giving a qualified approval to the Augsburg and Leipsic *Interims*, he showed the tendency of his mind to go the utmost length in any attempt at concord, and reaped the inevitable consequence of losing the confidence of more resolute and far-sighted men, and gaining the hostility of those who could not comprehend how a man of his views could honestly make such concessions. Having sacrificed the cause of Lutheranism to the papacizing influences of the political situation, he also went too far, in the opinion of his critics, in his fraternal relations with the representatives of the Reformed Church, and so brought upon himself the accusation of being a secret Calvinist, an accusation which ripened into the appellation of Crypto-Calvinist applied to him and some of his followers. Out of these differences two distinct parties grew up, one clinging tenaciously to Luther's views, the other supporting Melancthon in admitting a greater latitude in the statement of doctrine.

The attitude of Melancthon to the doctrines of grace was not stable, and is not capable of exact statement on that account. Moreover his views suffered alike from the defense of his followers and the assaults of his opponents, neither party representing them so much as some one expression or some possible consequence of them. He in general held to the doctrine of salvation through the free and sovereign grace of God, but he could not give up some kind of assertion of freedom in the human will. In the *Loci* of 1521 he stands nearest Luther, denying any freedom to the will in civil or religious matters; in the Augsburg Confession he claims freedom for the will in civil matters; in the *Loci* of 1533 he calls denial of free will Stoicism; in his later years he claimed a freedom for the will as actively recipient of the work of the Spirit similar to the semi-Pelagian view. He at times is plainly alarmed by the prevalent fatalism of some of the sects, at others is influenced by the long course of scholastic philosophy, and seems unable to distinguish clearly between the inability of the human will in a state of sin to work out its own salvation and the observed inelination of some men to do what is right. In a similar way his view upon the relation of justification by faith and good works is unstable. He seems never to have lapsed into the Roman view of the merit of good works; though holding at one time that they were necessary to eternal life, and at another that they are only the natural fruits of regeneration, he in his later years settled down to the position that good works were the necessary result of justification by divine command.

His later years, full as they were of the bickerings of faction and the storm of war, had a large measure of consolation in the wide spread of the Protestant faith, in the break up of the effort made in the Council of Trent to enforce a policy of reaction, and in the friendship of many noble fellow-workers. His correspondence with Calvin is one of the fine monuments of these years. In Calvin he found a soul not less lofty and resolute than Luther's, a mind as clear as and even more vigorous than his own, and a personality of extraordinary magnetism and command. He approved Calvin's attitude in the case of Servetus, recognizing the necessity of putting down anarchy which veiled itself under a plea of liberty of conscience, and in general gave his confidence and encouragement to Calvin both in his theological and civil struggles. For himself, though so often the adviser of princes, he was essentially the thinker and writer, irresolute in the day of conflict and loving repose. Steadily refusing foreign invitations, he gathered his little family about him in Wittenberg and there died April 19, 1560. He was buried by the side of his great leader and devoted friend.

The death of Melancthon left the way open for the triumph of the division in the Lutheran Church which insisted on an extreme development of Luther's views. This was consummated in the Formula of Concord of 1577. The spirit of Melancthon, however, remained in Germany influencing the Church which condemned his followers, penetrating the new Church which was making conquests in the Palatinate and elsewhere, and winning a welcome for its piety and peaceableness to the furthest bounds of the Protestant peoples. It is not therefore the humanist, nor the reformer, great and abiding as was the work of each, who to-day receives the widest and most spontaneous applause, but the pure and devoted Christian. Happy the mind which placed the lamp of learning for the feet of them who sought truth; happy the pen that wrote the words of soberness to establish truth and rebuke error; happier far the life which brought forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness so richly that for four hundred years his example has led men to Him who is the Prince of Peace. He left behind him a great array of works on many subjects, works which fill twenty-eight large volumes in the collection known as the *Corpus Reformatorum*, but the greatest monument to his memory is the sweet and living influence of his consecrated life.

He being dead yet speaketh, and his testimony is to the love of God in Christ Jesus and the free gift of eternal life.

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