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PHILIP MELANCTHON'S  
SERMONS ON THE EUCHARIST  
SHORT TITLE

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of the Graduate School, The University  
of Wisconsin-La Crosse  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

MELANCTHON ON THE EUCHARIST

by  
Russell E. Ross

June 1960

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Philip Melancthon  
1518-1578



PHILIP MELANCHTHON'S  
DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST


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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Systematic Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

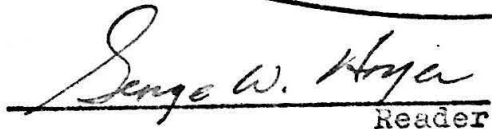
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by  
Randell E. Tonn  
June 1960

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is an attempt to determine, primarily on the basis of his own major writings, opinions and letters, the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist as taught, believed and confessed by Philip Melanchthon. The question we seek to answer is: "What was Philip Melanchthon's doctrine of the Holy Eucharist?" This question is deliberately phrased to exclude the question, "What do other commentators say that he taught and believed?" On the basis of his own words, we seek to determine what is Melanchthon saying about the Eucharist; not what might he be interpreted as saying; what would we prefer him to say; nor even what do we hope that he is not saying.

There has been considerable discussion of Melanchthon's Eucharistic position. The thesis quite generally accepted among most commentators is that in 1530, 1534 or 1540, Melanchthon's Eucharistic doctrine underwent a radical change. This change allegedly involves a denial of the objective presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament. The 1540 edition of the Augsburg Confession, commonly known as the Variata, is frequently cited as the outstanding evidence of this change in Melanchthon's position. This Variata

edition is allegedly an indication of Melanchthon's approach to the Calvinistic doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The evidence available to us on the Variata is presented in Chapter Six.

There is something enigmatic about the person of Philip Melanchthon. He was a scholar of great ability and driving energy; yet, he seems so unqualified for some of the tasks of leadership which were thrust upon him by the course of events in the German Reformation. He preferred to be a scholar of the classics, but he became a professor of theology. A man of deep humility, he refused to accept any theological degree beyond that of the Baccalaureate. Melanchthon was a person of irenic disposition, yet he was forced into a prominent position in many of the bitter doctrinal controversies, particularly the controversy over the Holy Eucharist. He valued highly the friendship of some of the members of Zwinglian or Calvinistic Christianity, yet he found it necessary to attack their theological position. He valued highly the external unity of the church, yet he occupied a leading role in the Reformation movement which inevitably led to a break in the external unity of the church. Melanchthon was not the towering, impetuous figure that Luther was, but as we shall see in our discussion, he was a person of quiet, studiousness with the

capacity for precise formulation. We believe that it is unfortunate that the person and theology of Melanchthon have to a great extent been by-passed in studies on the Reformation Era. This dissertation is undertaken in the firm belief that Melanchthon has a great deal to offer to the theological endeavors of our own age.

All references to the Corpus Reformatorum<sup>1</sup> are referred to as CR followed by the volume reference and page number (CR 2:100).

Melanchthons Werke in Auswahl are referred to as the Studienausgabe.<sup>2</sup>

The source of Luther's letters is indicated as W.A. Br.<sup>3</sup>

The references from the Lutheran Symbols are indicated by the name of the symbol employed followed by the article and paragraph numbers (Apology XIII, 2).

These references to the Symbols are taken from the

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<sup>1</sup>Corpus Reformatorum. Philippi Melanchthonis Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia. Edited by Carolus Gottlieb Bretschneider, Vol. 1-28 (Halis Saxonum: Apud C. S. Schwetschke et Filium, 1834ff).

<sup>2</sup>Melanchthons Werke in Auswahl (Studienausgabe). Edited by Robert Stupperich, Vol. 2,1, 1952; 2,2, 1953; 6, 1955 (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag).

<sup>3</sup>Martin Luther, Briefwechsel. 11 Vols. of D. Martin Luthers Werke (Weimar: Herman Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1924ff.).

Bekenntnisschriften unless otherwise indicated.<sup>4</sup>

The English translations of the original documents are our own unless other sources are specifically referred to.

The abbreviation used for the word "footnote" will be shown as Fn.

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<sup>4</sup> Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche (3. verbesserte Auflage; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1956).



## CHAPTER II

### THE SACRAMENT IN GENERAL

#### The Sacrament as Sign

We might well characterize the theology of Philip Melanchthon as Promise-Theology.<sup>1</sup> The Law-Gospel antithesis as formulated and later expressed in the Formula of Concord is not yet the antithesis in Melanchthon's theology. For Melanchthon, the antithesis is primarily Lex-Promissio with its correlatives of "merit by our works" vs. "the forgiveness of sins is apprehended by faith."<sup>2</sup> Melanchthon defines the Gospel as "the promise of the forgiveness of sins and justification on account of Christ."<sup>3</sup> Faith is not a mere "knowledge of history, but is assent to the promise of God, in which the forgiveness of sins and righteousness are freely offered because of Christ."<sup>4</sup> This promise of the forgiveness of sins cannot be received and accepted except

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Apology IV, 5.

<sup>2</sup>Apology IV, 36.

<sup>3</sup>Apology IV, 43.

<sup>4</sup>Apology IV, 40, 50. Cf. also Apology IV, 48: "Faith . . . is to desire and to accept the offered promise of the forgiveness of sins and justification."

by faith.<sup>5</sup> The faith which accepts God's promise, however, is not in and of itself meritorious: "For faith therefore does not justify or save because it itself is a work which is worthy by itself, but only because it accepts the promised mercy."<sup>6</sup>

God has given His promise of forgiveness of sins and justification not only to the people of the New Testament, but also to those in the Old Testament. The means of justification are the same for the Old Testament believers as for those of the New Testament: "So also the fathers were justified not by the law, but by the promise and faith."<sup>7</sup>

When God gave to the Old Testament fathers His word (promise), He also added to that promise certain signs by which they might be made more sure of the promise. To Gideon, for instance, He gave many signs "from which he was able to determine that the Lord would not fail him when in a little while an attack would be made on the Palestinians."<sup>8</sup> To Abraham, God gave the promise of

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<sup>5</sup> Apology IV, 50.

<sup>6</sup> Nam fides non ideo justificat aut salvat, quia ipsa sit opus per sese dignum, sed tantum, quia accipit misericordiam promissam. Apology IV, 56.

<sup>7</sup> Apology IV, 59.

<sup>8</sup> e quibus colligere potuit, non defuturum dominum paulo bellum illaturo Palestinis. CR 1:479.

grace. To that promise, God added the sign of circumcision.<sup>9</sup>

To the believers of the New Testament, God has likewise given many signs as additions to His promises.<sup>10</sup> Melanchthon discusses the nature of these signs in his "Propositions on the Mass" of 1521.<sup>11</sup> In these "Propositions" Melanchthon posits two groups or kinds of signs. The one group includes such things as looking at a picture of the cross; this is not a good work but a sign reminding us of the death of Christ.<sup>12</sup> Another such sign is looking at the sun; this, likewise, is not a good work, but it may serve as a sign reminding us of the Gospel of Christ.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the miracles of Christ are signs given to Christians.<sup>14</sup> The second group of signs includes Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. These are properly the signs of the New Testament.<sup>15</sup> Although

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<sup>9</sup>Loci of 1521. Studienausgabe, 2,1, p. 142.

<sup>10</sup>Sign is the medieval category under which the Sacraments are discussed. This category is carried over into the Loci of Melanchthon in which he discusses the Sacraments under the heading De Signis.

<sup>11</sup>CR 1:477-481.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Thesis 10.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Thesis 11.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., Thesis 20.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., Thesis 7.

Melanehthon refers to both groups as signs, he makes a distinction between them:

The participation in the Holy Eucharist differs from looking at a painting of a cross or at the sun in this that the sun, the picture of the cross are not signs instituted by God by which it is signified certainly that grace is given to me.<sup>16</sup>

The distinction between the two groups of signs is further defined by the verbs which are predicated of them: Signs devised by men only "remind." Signs given by God, beyond this that they remind, also "assure" the heart concerning the will of God.<sup>17</sup> The miracles of Christ, although they are signs of grace, were not instituted "that they might certainly signify that grace pertains to us."<sup>18</sup> The purpose of the second group of signs, i.e., Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, is "to remind, and assure the heart of the will of God."<sup>19</sup> The Mass, the participation in the Holy Eucharist, has no

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<sup>16</sup>Sed hoc differt participatio mensae a pictae crucis aut solis conspectu, quod sol, picta crux non sunt signa a Deo instituta, quibus certo significetur, mihi donatam esse gratiam. Ibid., Thesis 13.

<sup>17</sup>Signa ab hominibus reperta admonent tantum. Signa a deo tradita, praeterquam quod admonent, certificant etiam cor de voluntate dei. Ibid., Thesis 14.

<sup>18</sup>ut certo significant ad nos pertinere gratiam. Ibid., Thesis 20.

<sup>19</sup>ut admoneant, et cor certificant de voluntate dei. Ibid., Thesis 8.

other function "than to put in our mind the promise of grace, and to assure the heart of the promised grace, of the will of God."<sup>20</sup> Since in the Mass or the Eucharist, something is offered to us by God, it is apparent that the Mass cannot be a means of our offering anything to God.<sup>21</sup>

Melanchthon establishes a very close relationship between the Mass and the word when he writes: "Therefore the Masses are useless without the word."<sup>22</sup> Since the word, as we have seen, is for Melanchthon the word of promise which is accepted by faith, he believes that the laymen should not use the Mass with the opinion that by it their sins are removed or that they make satisfaction for their sins in the participation in the Mass,<sup>23</sup> but they should use the sign, i.e., the Mass, so that they are reminded of the promise of grace in the Gospel, and that they are assured of God's grace toward them.<sup>24</sup> This

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<sup>20</sup>nisi admonere promissae gratiae, et certificare cor de promissa gratia, de voluntate dei. Ibid., Thesis 43.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Thesis 35, 36, 37, 42.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Thesis 44.

<sup>23</sup>cum per id opus se peccata sua delere credunt, seu pro peccatis satisfacere. Ibid., Thesis 52.

<sup>24</sup>Nam pro signo debebant uti, quo admonerentur tantum promissae gratiae in Evangelio, et quo certificarentur de benevolentia dei erga se. Ibid., Thesis 53.

reminding of God's promised grace occurs when one participates in the Mass. The sign is useless or of no more benefit to one who is merely a spectator than it is beneficial merely to glance at a picture,<sup>25</sup> but it is of benefit to the person who partakes of it "if through it he is admonished and assured."<sup>26</sup>

The Sacramental signs are these things to which the promises have been added.<sup>27</sup> As such, they are more than means whereby Christians are to be distinguished from others. In the 1559 Loci we read:

Profane men think that the sacraments are signs of profession, which distinguish us from other people, as though we were yoked together by this bond, even as the toga distinguished the Roman from men of other nationalities, or that they are signs of certain positions before men.<sup>28</sup>

In the 1535 edition of his Loci, Melancthon rather sarcastically refers to those who believe that the

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<sup>25</sup>Non plus prodest spectatori missa, quam prodest intueri pictam tabulam. Ibid., Thesis 54.

<sup>26</sup>si per eam admoneatur et certificetur. Ibid., Thesis 55.

<sup>27</sup>Atque ita vocari non posse sacramentalia signa nisi ea, quae divinis promissionibus addita sunt. Hinc dictum est a veteribus rebus et verbis constare sacramenta. Res signum est, verba promissio gratiae. Studienausgabe, 2,1, p. 144.

<sup>28</sup>Homines profani cogitant Sacramenta esse signa professionis, quae discernant a ceteris hominibus nos, qui quasi huic foederi adiuncti sumus, ut discernebat Romanum toga ab aliorum nationum hominibus, seu esse signa quorundam officiorum erga homines. Studienausgabe, 2,2, p. 497.



Sacraments are nothing more than signs or badges of recognition as "fine men."<sup>29</sup> For Melanchthon the belief that the Sacrament is no more than a sign of profession which distinguishes Christians from Gentiles, as a cowl distinguishes monks, is a corruption of the use of the Sacrament and makes something Gentile out of Christianity.

There are, however, other opinions concerning the use of the Eucharist, but these are as profane as they are unworthy. The first is one of many, that the Eucharist was instituted, not that it should merit anything, not that through it an action of thanksgiving takes place, not that through it we should receive anything of God, but only that it should be a sign of our profession before men, so that by this ceremony, Christians are distinguished from the Gentiles, as the cowl distinguishes monks. Thus, they corrupt the use of this sacrament, and they make something Gentile out of Christianity. They further teach that these signs do not in any way pertain to the conscience and to the will of God toward us.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Sunt belli homines, qui cum velint civiliter interpretari ceremonias, dicunt, sacramenta non esse signa voluntatis Dei erga nos, sed tantum notas professionis nostrae. CR 21:467. The English expression "hot-shots" conveys quite appropriately the meaning of Melanchthon's words. He had used the same term four years earlier to describe the Zwinglians in the Apology XXIV, 68.

<sup>30</sup>Sunt autem aliae opiniones de usu Coenae, sed adeo profanae, ut indignae sint, quae recenseantur. Prior est multorum, quod coena instituta sit, non ut aliquid mereatur, non ut per eam gratiarum actio fiat, non ut per eam aliquid a Deo accipiamus, sed tantum ut sit nota professionis nostrae coram hominibus, ut per hanc ceremoniam discernantur a gentibus Christiani, sicut cuculla discernit monachos. Ita corrumpunt isti sacramenti usum, et gentilitatem quandam ex Christianismo faciunt, et docent haec signa nihil pertinere ad conscientias et ad voluntatem Dei erga nos apprehendendam. CR 1:846.

Melanchthon used several other terms to describe the Sacrament: testimony,<sup>31</sup> witness, seal,<sup>32</sup> and guarantee.<sup>33</sup>

We find that Melanchthon used the terms "sign" and "testimony" in the Augsburg Confession:

That the sacraments were instituted, not that they should be marks of profession among men, but more that they should be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, posited for arousing and confirming faith in those people that use them.<sup>34</sup>

Against the Zwinglian conception of the Holy Eucharist, Melanchthon held that the Sacrament is more than a memorial, a commemoration or a mere spectacle:

Therefore I say plainly and with the most firm faith: the Holy Eucharist is by no means an empty spectacle, but this participation is truly a testimony and a guarantee that the Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ is in those who participate.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>"The Sacraments properly are testimonies of the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation." (*Sacramenta proprie sunt testimonia remissionis peccatorum seu reconciliationis.*) CR 21:850.

<sup>32</sup>"They are witnesses and seals of the divine will toward you." (*Sunt testes kai sragides divinae voluntatis erga te.*) CR 21:209.

<sup>33</sup>The term is pignus. CR 8:941.

<sup>34</sup>quod sacramenta instituta sint, non modo ut sint nota professionis inter homines, sed magis ut sint signa et testimonia voluntatis Dei erga nos, ad excitandam et confirmandam fidem in his, qui utuntur, proposita. Augsburg Confession XIII, 1.

<sup>35</sup>Dico igitur plane et firmissima fide: Nequaquam inane spectaculum esse Coenam Domini, sed vere hanc sumtionem esse testimonium et pignus, quod filius Dei Dominus noster Jesus Christus sit in sumentibus. CR 8:941.



Because Melanchthon believed that a doctrine of the Eucharist which taught that the body and blood of Christ remains present with the elements outside the proper use of the Sacrament was unscriptural, he placed considerable emphasis on the participation (sumtio).<sup>36</sup> It is in the distribution and reception of the bread and wine (sumtio) that the body and blood of Christ are offered and conferred to those who receive the elements. While Melanchthon emphasizes the action of distribution and reception, he does not emphasize it to the exclusion of the elements. The elements do not lose their importance and significance.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Gollwitzer has commented on the "Opinion on the Holy Eucharist" (1556) from which we quoted above: "Auch hier ist wieder die sumtio Subjekt der Aussage und sie-- und weder die Elemente, noch Leib und Blut--ist testimonium und pignus. Nur von hieraus kann die Melanchthonische Abendmahlslehre verstanden und beurteilt werden."

We believe that Gollwitzer has overstated the case in excluding the elements to the extent he does above and in the following comment: "Diese sumtio selbst, nicht die Elemente, ist das signum." Helmut Gollwitzer, Coena Domini (Muenchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, n.d.), p. 66, 65.

We are not fair to Melanchthon if we make such a distinct cleavage between the elements and the participation (sumtio). Cf. Chapter V, p. 98ff. Cf. "In Eucharistis signum est corpus vel panis." CR 21:38. "Signum gratiae certum est participatio mensae domini, hoc est, manducare corpus Christi et bibere sanguinem." CR 21:221.

<sup>37</sup>Gollwitzer also grants that the elements do not lose their meaning in Melanchthon's Eucharistic doctrine:

In a 1551 letter to a friend (no name listed in the CR), Melanchthon indicated the importance of the elements in his Eucharistic doctrine: "And that in the distribution of the bread and the cup to the participants, the body and blood of Christ are given."<sup>38</sup>

Only in the action of distributing and receiving the elements is there a Sacrament since the Sacrament was instituted to be received (ad sumtionem) and not for "the procession or oblation or other show, but for being eaten as it is clearly stated, 'Take, eat.'<sup>39</sup>

The sign, as we have indicated, is for Melanchthon, not merely a memorial, but it is a testimony which applies the grace of God to the recipient.<sup>40</sup> In the 1559 Loci we read:

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"Die Elemente werden nicht bedeutungslos, sie haben aber ihren Sinn nur darin, dass auf Grund des Paktes in ihrem Dargereichtwerden Leibe und Blut von Gott dargereicht wird; sie sind ein pactionale vehiculum seu instrumentum, cum quo exhibetur corpus (CR 2:315). . . . Innerhalbe des Aktes ist eben das Brot dieses Instrument, denn mit seine Dargereichtwerden erhalten wir den Leib (CR 15:1109 - 1551)." Gollwitzer, op. cit., p. 72.

This seemingly contradicts what Gollwitzer has written above. Cf. fn. 35.

<sup>38</sup>Et quod in distributione panis ac poculi  
sumentibus exhibeantur corpus et sanguis Christi.  
CR 7:887.

<sup>39</sup>ad circumstationem aut oblationem, aut alias  
pompas, sed ad manducationem, ut clare dicitur; Accipite,  
manducate. CR 7:887.

<sup>40</sup>signa testificantia, signa applicantia. CR 24:70.

The Holy Eucharist is first of all a testimony of grace to us. It reminds us of the whole Gospel, of the death and resurrection of Christ, it testifies that the benefits of Christ are given to us. And here it is necessary that faith, which believes the promise of grace be added.<sup>41</sup>

In the words of the Eucharist, the participant should hear Christ speaking to him. The Eucharist is not something separate, but an integral part of the self-revelation of God in Christ. In participating in the Eucharist, the recipient should relate this participation to God's total revelation of Himself, of which the resurrection of Christ and His miracles are a part:

I have said these things beforehand, so that we might think of the causes of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, which is a testimony, a sign of the revelation of God. Do not listen to the words of this Eucharist in any other way, than as if you hear Christ Himself speaking to you, and at the same time, think about His resurrection and other miracles, by which you know that God truly revealed Himself to us.<sup>42</sup>

Gollwitzer does not believe that the signs are "conferring signs" (signa conferentia) in Melanchthon's

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<sup>41</sup>Ut Coena Domini primum est testimonium gratiae erga nos. De toto Evangelio, de morte et resurrectione Christi nos admonet, testatur nobis donari beneficia Christi. Et hic necesse est fidem accedere, quae credit promissioni gratiae. Studienausgabe 2,2, p. 498.

<sup>42</sup>Haec praefatus sum, ut cogitemus de causis institutae Coenae Domini, quae et ipsa testimonium est insigne patefactionis Dei. Non aliter audias verba hujus Coenae, quam si ipsum Christum coram tecum loquentem audires, et simul de ipsius resurrectione et ceteris miraculis cogites, quibus se vere Deus nobis patefecit. 1559 Loci. Studienausgabe 2,2, p. 521.

doctrine of the Eucharist.<sup>43</sup> In the 1559 edition of the Loci, however, when Melanchthon discussed the purpose for which the signs were added to the promise, he gave as the first purpose: "that individually they impress upon the users the promise and the will of God toward us and thus by them, faith toward God is aroused and confirmed."<sup>44</sup>

The word offers the forgiveness of sins; the Sacrament likewise:

The sacraments are signs of the will of God toward us, not only are they signs among men. . . . The Word therefore offers the forgiveness of sins. And the ceremony is like a picture of the Word or a seal, as Paul states, making known the promise. Therefore, even as the promise is useless unless it is received in faith, so likewise the ceremony is useless unless faith enters in, which firmly establishes that the forgiveness of sins is offered here.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>"Im eigentlichen Sinne sind sie nur signa commoneficientia, nicht signa conferentia; sie bezeugen den Glauben, sie schaffen ihm aber nicht." Gollwitzer, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>44</sup>Prima, ut privatim commonefacerent utentes de promissione et de voluntate Dei erga nos atque ita per ea fides in nobis erga Deum excitaretur et confirmaretur. Studienausgabe 2,2, p. 519-20. Fidei excitandae gratia signa sunt proposita. Loci 1521. Studienausgabe 2,2, p. 143.

<sup>45</sup>Sacramenta sunt signa voluntatis Dei erga nos, non tantum signa sunt hominum inter sese, et recte definiunt sacramenta in novo testamento esse signa gratiae. . . . Verbum igitur offert remissionem peccatorum. Et ceremonia est quasi pictura verbi seu sigillum, ut Paulus vocat, ostendens promissionem. Ergo sicut promissio inutilis est, nisi fide accipiatur, ita inutilis est ceremonia, nisi fides accedat, quae vere statuat hic offerri remissionem peccatorum.

According to Melanchthon, Bucer had been willing to grant the presence of Christ "with the soul" (cum anima) in the Holy Eucharist. In a letter of 1531, Melanchthon tried to convince him that the presence of Christ with the sign is easily granted once the first proposition of His presence with the soul is accepted:

I rejoiced greatly that you concede the presence of the body of Christ with the soul. I do not see any reason why you are able to so vehemently resist admitting the presence with the sign. If the true presence with the soul is admitted, it is easy to admit it with the sign, just as in the expiatory sacrifice God was not only present in the souls of the saints, but also present in the expiatory sacrifice itself.<sup>46</sup>

According to a letter from Melanchthon to Veit Dietrich, Dietrich had encouraged the use of the term personal union (unio personalis) to describe the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Melanchthon rejected this term as an improper phrase in the discussion of the Eucharist:

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Et sicut verbum ad hanc fidem excitandam traditum est, ita sacramentum institutum est, ut illa species incurrens in oculos moveat corda ad credendum. Per haec enim, videlicet per verbum et sacramentum, operatur spiritus sanctus. Apology XXIV, 69-70.

<sup>46</sup> Magnopere gavisus sum, vos concedere corporis Christi praesentiam cum anima. Nec video causam, cur vehementer adversari possitis, quo minus et praesentiam cum signo admittatis. Si vera praesentia cum anima admittitur, facile est cum signo admittere, sicut certe Deus in propitiatorio non solum aderat in animis sanctorum, sed etiam apud ipsum propitiatorium.  
CR 2:470.



What you argue about the hypostatic or bodily union, in the first place you err in your word. The personal union is called the hypostatic union; this is the union of the divine and human nature in Christ. Neither do the Papists posit such a union, and beyond that, it is new and without doubt improper.<sup>47</sup>

Although Melanchthon here rejects a hypostatic union of the elements and the body and blood, he does not here divide the presence of the effective Christ from the signs:

Nor do you want a hypostatic union of the bread and body, but a real conjunction, as there is of fire and metal in glowing iron, or in another analogy, as is a container and the liquid. Indeed, although I propose a real union, as I have said, I do not assert inclusion or a "soldering-together" (ferruminatio) but a sacramental union: that is, so that by these signs which are given the effective Christ is truly present.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Tu quod disputas de unione hypostatica aut somatike, primum in vocabulo erras. Hypostatica vocatur personalis unio, qualis sola est divinae et humanae naturae in Christo. Talem unionem tou artou nec Papistae ponunt, et prorsus novum est, et haec dubie anosion. Ergo illo vocabulo in hac causa uti te nolo. CR 3:514.

<sup>48</sup> Nec tu hoc volebas, esse conjunctionem hypostaticam tou artou kai somatos, sed realem, ut est ferri et ignis in ignito ferro (utamur) enim qualicumque similitudine seu, ut est vasis et potus. Ego vero, etsi, ut dixi, realem pono: tamen non pono inclusionem seu ferrurationem, sed sacramentalem: hoc est, ut signis positis adsit vere Christus efficax. CR 3:514. Manschreck's citation of this passage is interesting, in that he makes Melanchthon say something far different than these words.

"Sacraments are signs that something else is present. Adoration is not necessary, or in any event, adoration should not be made to the bread . . . There is a real union, like the union of fire and iron.

## The Number of the Sacraments

In the Thirteenth Article of the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon had dealt with the proper use of the Sacraments.<sup>49</sup> The Romanist authors of the Confutation indicated their approval of the article.<sup>50</sup> This was, however, a qualified approval since they prescribed that the Lutherans also number seven Sacraments. In Article Thirteen of the Apology, Melanchthon replies to this prescription by saying that the number of Sacraments listed is not vitally important "if they rightly preserve the matters taught in scripture."<sup>51</sup> He further alleges that

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I believe in a real union, an inclusive one, a sacramental union, which means that with the given signs, Christ is truly effective." The statement concerning the adoration (the quotation above preceding the ellipsis) is not found in the letter from which Manschreck allegedly quotes. The second part of the "quotation" does not say what Melanchthon said. Clyde Manschreck, Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer (New York: Abingdon Press, c. 1958), p. 240.

<sup>49</sup>De usu sacramentorum docent, quod sacramenta instituta sint, non modo ut sint notae professionis inter homines, sed magis ut sint signa et testimonia voluntatis Dei erga nos, ad excitandam et confirmandam fidem in his, qui utuntur, proposita. Itaque utendum est sacramentis ita, ut fides accedat, quae credat promissionibus, quae per sacramenta exhibentur et ostenduntur. Bekennnisschriften, p. 68. Cf. CR 21:848ff.

<sup>50</sup>CR 27:14. Cf. Apology XIII, 1.

<sup>51</sup>si tamen recte conservant res in scriptura traditas. Apology XIII, 2.

there is no uniformity in the numbering of the Sacraments among the ancient church fathers.<sup>52</sup>

The number of the Sacraments is finally a matter of definition, since the number is nowhere determined in scripture. At this point, Melanchthon defines the Sacraments as: "rites, which have the command of God and to which the promise of grace has been added."<sup>53</sup> He believes that if we accept this definition, it is easy to decide which rites or ceremonies are to be called Sacraments and which are not. Since it is not within the province of human authority to promise grace, those signs which are instituted by human authority and not commanded by God are not signs of grace. On the basis of his definition, Melanchthon lists three Sacraments; Baptism,

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<sup>52</sup>Apology XIII, 2. On the seven-fold numbering of Sacraments Cf. Seeberg, III, 4, pp. 282ff. Loofs, Dogmengeschichte, pp. 568ff. "Die Siebenzahl des Sakraments ist von Petr. Lombard in der Mitte des 12. Jh. festgelegt worden. Sent. IV, d a, 1." Bekenntnisschriften, p. 292, fn. 2.

"Holy Writ incidentally mentions all seven sacraments, but does not summarize them in the figure seven. Again, no formal enumeration of the seven sacraments is found in the Fathers. The formal numeral seven presupposes a well-developed concept of a sacrament. This emerged only around the middle of the 12th Century. . . . The existence of the seven sacraments has been regarded as a truth of faith since the middle of the 12th Century. Expressed first as a scientific conviction of theologians, it was confirmed by the official teaching of the church from the 13th Century on." Ludwig Ott, Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1958), p. 338.

<sup>53</sup>Apology XIII, 3.



the Holy Eucharist and Absolution, which is the Sacrament of repentance.<sup>54</sup>

Melanchthon does not classify confirmation and extreme unction, in the form in which they have survived in the Western Church, as Sacraments by the above definition. Confirmation and extreme unction are rites accepted by the fathers, but inasmuch as they were not commanded by God, the church has never regarded them as necessary to salvation. Melanchthon states that these rites should be distinguished from the three Sacraments previously listed which have the express command of God and the promise of grace.<sup>55</sup>

Melanchthon ascribes to the Romanists the belief that the priesthood, the Sacrament of Order, was established for the purpose of offering sacrifices and meriting for others the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, they do not understand the function of the priesthood as the ministry of the word and the administration of the Sacraments.<sup>56</sup> "If, however, order is understood of the ministry of the word, we would not unwillingly call order

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., XIII, 4.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., XIII, 6. On Melanchthon's rejection of the Romanist numbering of the sacraments cf. also in Chapter VI, "Melanchthon After Luther's Death" in our discussion of his "Reply to the Articles of the Bavarian Inquisition," pp. 219ff.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., XIII, 7.

a Sacrament."<sup>57</sup> Again, if the laying on of hands were understood of the ministry of the word, Melanchthon would not be unwilling to call this rite or ceremony a Sacrament.<sup>58</sup>

Melanchthon admits that marriage was commanded by God, and it has promises attached to it. These promises, however, do not pertain primarily to the New Testament, but to bodily welfare. Yet, if anyone wishes to call marriage a Sacrament, he may do so, but in doing so, he should distinguish it from those rites which "are strictly signs of the New Testament and are testimonies of grace and the forgiveness of sins."<sup>59</sup>

Melanchthon believed that a dispute over the numbering of the Sacraments is not as important as is the correct understanding of the proper use of the Sacrament.<sup>60</sup>

#### Faith and Sacrament

We have briefly discussed the importance of faith in the theology of Melanchthon. For him faith accepts and

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., XIII, 11.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., XIII, 12.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., XIII, 14.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., XIII, 18.

believes the promises of God, and therefore it receives what God's promises offer, viz., the forgiveness of sins and justification.<sup>61</sup> We believe that if we are going to understand and evaluate correctly the Eucharistic doctrine taught by Melanchthon, we must study that doctrine from the vantage-point of the doctrine which for Melanchthon was the basic doctrine of the Christian faith, justification by faith through Christ. The Sacrament is the sign of that grace and forgiveness. The significance of the sign cannot be properly evaluated unless we are aware of Melanchthon's position that faith which accepts the promises of God's forgiveness is the only basis of salvation or justification. Melanchthon's insistence on "faith is righteousness"<sup>62</sup> may appear to lead to the point where, for him, the Sacraments seem to be relatively unimportant in God's plan of salvation.<sup>63</sup> But this is superficial. The Holy Eucharist and Baptism are vitally important to him, but he did not consider them an end in themselves. They are always signs, testimonies etc. which impress upon the recipient the

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., IV, passim.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 147, 256, 264.

<sup>63</sup>We believe that it may be that Melanchthon's insistence on the importance of faith in the Eucharist which has led some commentators to see a close relationship between Melanchthon and the Calvinists or Zwinglians.

promise of God's forgiveness in Christ through faith, and evoke faith in the recipient.

In the 1521 edition of the Loci, Melanchthon discussed the relationship of faith and sign:

The signs do not justify, as the Apostle says: "Circumcision is nothing," thus baptism is nothing, the participation (i.e. in the Eucharist) is nothing, but they are witnesses and seal of the divine will toward you, by which your conscience is restored to certainty, if you doubt the grace, the love of God for you.<sup>64</sup>

Since for Melanchthon it is faith alone which saves,<sup>65</sup> he thinks of the Eucharist as the confirmation of faith: "Neither does the participation in the Holy Eucharist blot out sin, but faith blots it out; this (faith) is confirmed by this sign."<sup>66</sup>

Although the Holy Eucharist offers the forgiveness of sins, it is not a satisfaction for sin:

It is certain that the Holy Eucharist was instituted because of the forgiveness of guilt. For it offers the remission of sins, in which it is necessary to truly understand guilt. And yet it does not make satisfaction for guilt, otherwise the Mass would be on a level with the death of Christ. Neither can the

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<sup>64</sup>Studienausgabe 2,1, p. 142.

<sup>65</sup>Studienausgabe 2,1, p. 141.

<sup>66</sup>Nec delet peccatum participatio mensae, sed fides delet; ea vero hoc signo confirmatur. Loci 1521. Studienausgabe 2,1, p. 156. Ita nec participatio mensae justificet, sed fidem confirmat, ut supra dixi. CR 21:211.

remission of guilt be accepted in any other way than by faith. Therefore the Mass is not a satisfaction, but a promise and a sacrament requiring faith.<sup>67</sup>

Against the belief that the Sacraments are effective ex opere operato sine bono motu utentis, Melanchthon appeals to the authority of Augustine to show that this is not the position of the early church: "Augustine says that the faith of the sacrament, not the sacrament justifies."<sup>68</sup>

The effect of the preached word and Sacrament is the same. They both arouse, nourish and strengthen faith.<sup>69</sup> The Sacrament, however, goes beyond the general proclamation of grace in the preached word in that the Sacrament is the individual application of the word of

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<sup>67</sup> certum est coenam Domini institutam esse propter remissionem culpae. Offert enim remissionem peccatorum, ubi necesse est vere culpa intelligere. Et tamen pro culpa non satisfacit, alioqui missa esset par mors Christi. Nec remissio culpae accipi potest aliter nisi fide. Igitur missa non est satisfactio, sed promissio et sacramentum requirens fidem. Apology 24, 90.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., XIII, 23.

<sup>69</sup> "Just as faith is aroused, nourished and confirmed by the word, so also the sacraments are signs which make an impression on the eyes, recall to mind the promise and faith is aroused by this recollection and by the word and visible sign it is kindled and increased." (Sicut fides per verbum excitatur, alitur et confirmatur, sic sacramenta quoque sunt notae incurrentes in oculos, commonefaciunt de promissione et hac cogitatione excitata et verbo et nota visibili fides accenditur et augetur.)  
CR 10:810.

forgiveness.<sup>70</sup>

The Holy Eucharist is not a work which merits the forgiveness of sins before God. Therefore, participation in the Holy Eucharist without faith, which accepts the promise of forgiveness there offered, is useless:

The participation does not merit remission, nor is the participation itself of advantage without faith, or as they say, ex opere operato, but previously a sacrifice which merited forgiveness was made by the Son of God Himself.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>"so that we understand that the divine promises are applicable to us when we see the promises of God, as it were, written on our bodies by the immersion in water or by the consumption of the body of the Lord." (ut proprie nobis divinas promissiones applicari sentiamus, cum videmus promissiones Dei velut scriptas in corporibus nostris immersione in aquam aut sumptione corporis Domini.) CR 21:470.

<sup>71</sup>Non meretur sumtio remissionem, nec prodest ipsa sumtio sine fide, et ut loquuntur, ex opere operato, sed multo ante sacrificium factum est ab ipso filio Dei, quod merebatur remissionem. CR 7:236.

"The Mass is not beneficial without faith. For then righteousness would be by works. Since, therefore, the Mass requires faith, which believes that sins are forgiven, it necessarily follows that it was instituted so that by it we might receive something." (Missa sine fide non prodesse. Alioqui enim iustitia esse ex operibus. Cum igitur Missa requirat fidem, quae credat remitti peccata, necessario sequitur, eam institutam esse, ut per eam aliquid accipiamus.) CR 1:840.

"By this union he wants those who are being admonished to believe that God is propitious to them, he wants God to be invoked, and thanks to be given Him; neither is the work itself beneficial without this faith which accepts the remission of sins because of the death of Christ, and invoking Him." (Hac ipsa consociatione admonitos vult credere, quod Deus ipsis sit propitius, vult invocari Deum, et ipsi gratias agi, nec prodest ipsum opus sine hac fide accipiente remissionem peccatorum propter mortem Christi, et invocante eum.) CR 7:887.



## The Use of the Sacrament

As we have shown, it was Melanchthon's firm conviction that any use or participation in the Sacrament without faith in God's promise of forgiveness is of no benefit. We may summarize Melanchthon's position on the proper use of the Eucharist in two points: it is to be received, eaten and drunk; it is to be eaten and drunk in faith.

Against the Roman theophoric procession of the blessed host, which he considered an abuse of the Sacrament, Melanchthon insisted that Christ had instituted the Holy Supper to be eaten (ad sumtionem). Against the belief, which he also ascribed to the Romanists, that the Sacrament is effective ex opere operato sine bono motu utentis, Melanchthon insisted that it is not the Sacrament, but the faith of the Sacrament which justifies.

Participation in and reception of the Sacrament for the sake of the participation and reception is not enough for Melanchthon. In other words, the participation in the Eucharist is not an end in itself. According to his "Refutation and Explication" of 1546, Melanchthon indicated the purpose of the reception of the Eucharist:

that the mind of the partaker contemplating this action is moved, so that it believes that it is accepted because of the Son of God and becomes a member of the Son of God, because by this testimony the Son of God declares that He joins us to

Himself as members, and that we are cleansed by the washing of His blood.<sup>72</sup>

In the Holy Eucharist, the participant should be assured of the forgiveness of his sins. This assurance of forgiveness, however, is not based on the fact of participation, nor on the merits of the priest, but on the sacrifice of Christ:

Thus therefore the participation of the Holy Eucharist takes place so that we might think about our sins, the wrath of God, the sacrifice of the Son of God, the forgiveness of sin, and reconciliation, and faith being aroused in true repentance, we may be sure that our sins are forgiven, not because of our participation, or the good work of the priest, but because of the sacrifice made by the Son of God Himself in His obedience and death.<sup>73</sup>

For Melancthon, the distribution of the elements is the means by which the body of Christ is "given" (exhibeantur) to the participants:

And that in the distribution of the bread and the cup to the participants, the body and blood of Christ is given to them: And that this participation was principally instituted to confirm

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<sup>72</sup> quod mens sumentis intuens in hanc sumtionem moveatur, ut credat, se recipi propter filium Dei, et membrum fieri filii Dei, quia hoc testimonio ostendit filius Dei, nos sibi adiungi tanquam membra, et nos ablui sui sanguine. CR 7:236.

<sup>73</sup> Sic igitur fiat sumtio coenae Domini, ut nostra peccata, iram Dei, sacrificium filii Dei, remissionem peccatorum, et reconciliationem cogitemus, et in vera poenitentia fide erecti, statuamus nobis remitti peccata, non propter hanc sumtionem, aut opus sacerdotis, sed propter sacrificium ab ipso filio Dei in ipsius obedientia et morte factum. CR 4:312.



faith, because it is a testimony that Christ links us to Himself as members.<sup>74</sup>

The proper use of the Holy Eucharist contains several elements. The first of them is evident from the words which command us to eat and drink and at the same time admonish or remind us of the remission of sins and that the benefits of Christ are offered and applied to those who participate.<sup>75</sup> To this are added other elements such as invocation, thanksgiving and confession. The communicants, as they receive the Eucharist, should also recognize the bond which unites them. This bond obligates them to mutual love because they are members of the same body.<sup>76</sup> According to Melanchthon, the celebration of the Holy Eucharist should include these elements:

the proclamation of the benefits of the Son of God; the consecration containing the words of the Gospel, by which the Eucharist is instituted; the distribution and reception of the body and blood of the Lord; invocation or prayer to God, asking for forgiveness because of the expiatory sacrifice of the Son of God; application of faith; the thanksgiving in which the joyful mind coming before God, calls upon Him, subjects

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<sup>74</sup>Et quod in distributione panis ac poculi sumentibus exhibeantur corpus et sanguis Christi: Et quod haec sumtio principaliter instituta sit ad confirmandam fidem, quia est testimonium, quod Christus adiungat nos sibi tanquam membra. CR 7:887.

<sup>75</sup>CR 7:236-37.

<sup>76</sup>CR 7:237.

itself to Him and praises Him with word, confession and action.<sup>77</sup>

In reply to a letter from a Pastor in Rabenstein, Melanchthon addressed himself to the question of communion for children. This Pastor had contended that children should be permitted to participate in the Holy Eucharist. From Melanchthon's reply, it seems that the Pastor's basic reason was that he believed that the Holy Eucharist confers the gift of the Holy Spirit, and that children should not be denied this gift by being refused the right to receive the Sacrament. Melanchthon gave several reasons why, in his opinion, children should not be permitted to partake of the Eucharist. First, "Baptism is the testimony to them that they are members of the true Church and are in the grace of God."<sup>78</sup>

As to the argument that the Eucharist confers the gift of the Holy Spirit, Melanchthon replied, "The baptism of infants is truly the testimony of the gift of

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<sup>77</sup> Concio de beneficiis filii Dei; consecratio continens recitationem verborum Evangelii, quibus Coena instituitur; distributio et sumtio corporis et sanguinis Domini; invocatio seu oratio ad Deum, petens remissionem propter sacrificium propitium filii Dei, fides applicans, gratiarum actio, in qua mens laeta accedens ad Deum, invocat eum, subicit se ei, et celebrat eum voce, confessione, et moribus. CR 7:237.

<sup>78</sup> Iudico baptismum eis testimonium esse, quod fiant membra verae Ecclesiae. CR 7:828.

the Holy Spirit."<sup>79</sup>

Finally, on the basis of the Apostle Paul's command that anyone who intends to partake of the Sacrament should examine himself, and Christ's command that with the Eucharist we are to show forth His death, Melancthon writes, "These things pertain to a proper age, at which one is capable of understanding doctrine."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Baptismus infantum vere testimonium est de donatione Spiritus sancti. CR 7:829.

<sup>80</sup>Caeterum Coena Domini instituta est, ut sit exercitium discentium, quia Christus iubet ibi annuntiare mortem Domini. Praeterea Paulus iubet discerni corpus Domini. Item, iubet, ut se quisque probet. Haec omnia conveniunt propriae aetati, quae iam doctrinae capax est. Ideo mihi placet mos nostrarum Ecclesiarum. CR 7:829.

In reconstructing Melancthon's thought as we are attempting to do in this dissertation, we believe that it is in order that we establish a distinction but not a division between his writings and his systematic. Melancthon's systematic or dogmatical writings are not separate to the work in which we find it in most modern systematic works. A verse or two of scripture are cited and followed by an extended discussion of the meaning of some word passage.

Melancthon's systematic might more accurately be referred to as systematic discussions on the basis of a text of scripture.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE EXEGETICAL WRITINGS OF MELANCHTHON

#### ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST

We have to deal here primarily with four works composed by Melanchthon; his commentary on Matthew, his commentary on First Corinthians, his Postil on First Corinthians, and his commentary on the Gospel of St. John. Melanchthon does not interpret the sixth chapter of St. John eucharistically in its primary sense. We will here comment on it, however, since many recent commentaries take the position that the Gospel of John, chapter six, refers to the Holy Eucharist.

In reconstructing Melanchthon's theology as we are attempting to do in this dissertation, we believe that it is in order that we maintain a distinction but not a division between his exegesis and his systematics. Melanchthon's commentaries or his exegetical writings are not exegesis in the sense in which we find it in most modern commentaries where a verse or two of scripture are cited and followed by an extended discussion of the meaning of words and phrases.

Melanchthon's commentaries might more accurately be referred to as systematic discussions on the basis of a text of Scripture.

Principles of Hermeneutics<sup>1</sup>

Although Melanchthon does not treat extensively the principles of interpretation which guided him in his exegesis of the scripture texts on the Holy Eucharist, he does in the process of his letters and opinions enunciate some principles of interpretation. These principles we seek to extract and discuss briefly.

Before he came to the University of Wittenberg, Melanchthon's background was humanistic. Hildebrandt has gone so far as to ask whether this early humanistic training with its emphasis and reliance on the powers of human reason is not the basic problem in Melanchthon's theology.<sup>2</sup> The question Hildebrandt asks is whether Scripture was enough for Melanchthon. Manschreck has indicated that he believes Melanchthon had two sources of

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<sup>1</sup>For a fuller discussion of Melanchthon's hermeneutical principles Cf. Randell Tonn, "An Investigation of the Hermeneutical Principles Reflected in the De Iustificazione (Article IV) of the Apology in its Interpretation, Use and Application of Holy Scripture" (An unpublished Bachelor of Divinity Thesis, Library of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, 1959), chapters 5 & 6; Hansjoerg Sick, Melanchthon als Ausleger des Alten Testaments (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1959), passim.

<sup>2</sup>Franz Hildebrandt, Melanchthon; Alien or Ally? (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946), p. 12.

doctrine, one of which was human reason.<sup>3</sup> We believe that the question of the relationship of Scripture and reason in the total theology of Melanchthon has not been adequately investigated, nor is it our intention to make a general investigation of it here. It is, however, mentioned as a problem which needs to be investigated further, and also we mention it that in the treatment of the Holy Eucharist, Melanchthon's emphasis and reliance on Scripture over against the vain cogitations of human reason might stand out in bold relief.

For Melanchthon, the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist must be drawn from and understood on the basis of the Word of God and not on the basis of any scientific discipline. He readily granted that what the Word of God says may be foreign to human reason and scientific disciplines. He insists, however, that it is the Word of God and not reason or geometry or any other scientific discipline which is able to satisfy man's conscience. Discussing Oecolampad's allegation that Melanchthon's position on the Eucharist leads to absurdities, Melanchthon wrote in reply:

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<sup>3</sup>Melanchthon, driven by faith and reason, had come to the mysterious barrier between the finite and the infinite. Clyde Manschreck, Melanchthon, The Quiet Reformer (New York: Abingdon Press, c. 1958), p. 231.

But absurdities are much less offensive to him who remembers that an opinion concerning divine matters is to be made from the Word of God and not from geometry. Whoever says he is being tempted does not have a sure basis which is sufficiently able to calm his conscience if he digresses from the Word of God.<sup>4</sup>

If the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist is to be drawn from the Scriptures, Melancthon believes that it cannot be based on human reason. In an opinion submitted to Philip of Hesse in 1534, Melancthon concluded on the basis of our Lord's words, "Take, this is My body," that with the bread and the wine we have the true body and blood of Christ. These words of Christ are the final court of appeals, and because of them, the imaginations of human reason are to be rejected: "Here we should throw away those thoughts which are raised by human reason."<sup>5</sup> Again when he comments on such questions as how Christ descends from heaven and reascends to heaven,

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<sup>4</sup>Sed absurda minus offendunt eum, qui meminerit, de rebus coelestis ex verbo Dei, non ex geometrica faciendum esse iudicium, qui tentatus didicerit, nullam esse rationem, quae conscientiam satis docere possit, cum a Verbo Dei discesserit. (CR 1:1049) Herrlinger has summarized the position of Melancthon very well when he writes, "Above all, the authority of scripture is opposed to the Swiss." (Vor allem spricht gegen die Schweizer die Autorität der Schrift.) Th. Herrlinger, Die Theologie Melancthons in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung und im Zusammenhange mit der Lehrgeschichte und Culturbeziehung der Reformation (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1879), p. 128.

<sup>5</sup>Hier sollen wir aber die Gedanken, so die Vernunft richtet, wegwerfen. CR 2:801.



how He is concealed in the bread, Melanchthon states that these questions are the cause of Zwingli's great doubt. Melanchthon writes: "We ought to flee from such thoughts as these and hold to the words which say that the body is there; for with them Christ bears witness to us that He is essentially present with us."<sup>6</sup>

In a reply to Carlstadt, Melanchthon readily grants that the literal meaning of the Words of Institution may very well be opposed to human reason.

And I consider this enough for a simple instruction that we should not depart from the Words unless they are contrary to other statements of Scripture. Now these Words on the Eucharist are not contrary to other statements of Scripture even though they are foreign to reason.<sup>7</sup>

It seems elementary to say that if the Scriptures are to be regarded as the source of the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, that doctrine should be extracted from those passages which deal directly with the Eucharist. Yet, Melanchthon finds it necessary in a 1530 opinion to reject the words from Mark thirteen, "Of this day or

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<sup>6</sup>Dergleichen Gedanken soll man fliehen, und bei den Worten bleiben, welche sprechen: der Leib sey da; denn Christus will uns damit bezeugen, dass er wesentlich bei uns sey. CR 2:801.

<sup>7</sup>Und das acht ich zu einem einfaltigen Unterricht genug seyn, denn wir sollen nicht von Worten weichen, sie seyn denn wider andre Schrift. Nu sind diese Wort vom Nachtmahl nicht wider andre Schrift, ob sie schon der Vernunft fremd sind. CR 1:760.

hour knows no man, not the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father" as applying to the Holy Eucharist. Melanchthon writes in reply to the allegation that these words must be considered in the proper interpretation of the doctrine of the Eucharist:

I do not know how anyone could apply this passage to the sacrament unless he wanted to prove thereby that each nature retains its own properties and that therefore the human nature must be confined to one place as is the normal case in a human body.<sup>8</sup>

Melanchthon goes on to state that from this passage, we can prove nothing more than we can from the death of Christ; viz., that the human nature of Christ was mortal. It does not follow that the human nature is not exalted or that Christ, the Person, is not true God.

The doctrine of the Holy Eucharist is to be based on scriptural passages which are taken in their natural sense, or in the strict sense of the words.<sup>9</sup> Melanchthon

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<sup>8</sup>Ich weiss nicht wie man diesen Spruch wollte auf das Sacrament deuten, es waere denn, dass sie wollten dadurch anzeigen, dass jede Natur ihre Eigenschaften behalte, und derhalb musste des Leibs Natur auch an einen Ort gebunden seyn, wie es natuerlich mit einem Leib zugehet. CR 2:225.

<sup>9</sup>"The literal, not the figurative, meaning is the most appropriate meaning of the words of institution, and there is no compelling reason to depart from this meaning." (Die reale, nicht figuerliche Auffassung ist der nachste Wortsinn der Einsetzungsworte, von dem abzuweichen kenn Glaubensbrund vorliegt.) Herrlinger, op. cit., p. 128.

believes that if we are to depart from the natural, strict and literal sense of the words, there must be a compelling reason for doing so. He wrote to Oecolampad that in the interpretation of the Words of Institution, he could not find this compelling reason for departing from the strict sense of the words: "For I find no firm basis which satisfies the conscience which departs from the strict sense of the words."<sup>10</sup>

The only legitimate and compelling reason which Melancthon could find for advancing a figurative interpretation of the Words of Institution would be if that literal interpretation were at variance with another article of faith. In this statement, "that there is a communion of the present body in this Eucharist,"<sup>11</sup> there is no conflict with any other article of faith. He goes on to write:

Since the strict sense of the words is not opposed to any article of the faith, there is no sufficiently great reason why we should depart from it. And this teaching concerning the presence of the body agrees with the other statements of scripture which speak of the true presence of Christ with us.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Nullam enim firman rationem invenio, quae conscientiae discendenti a proprietate verborum satisfaciat. CR 1:1048.

<sup>11</sup>In illa Coena praesentia corporis koinonian esse. CR 1:1049.

<sup>12</sup>Cum proprietates verborum cum nullo articulo fidei pugnet, nulla satis magna causa est, cur eam deseramus.

Richard would have us believe that Melanchthon gave up this principle or at least found a compelling reason for taking the Words of Institution in a sense other than the literal after 1538: "Since 1538, he seems to have surrendered the literal signification of este (sic) in the Words of Institution. . ." Unfortunately, however, he gives no evidence to support this assertion. It is noteworthy that Herrlinger is of the same opinion. He cites from a 1538 letter written by Melanchthon to Veit Dietrich. Before we look more closely at the letter to which Herrlinger makes reference, we feel constrained at that point to demonstrate that Herrlinger's quotation of Melanchthon quite frequently leaves something to be desired. Herrlinger writes: "After that time (1535), Melanchthon gives up the literal meaning of esti" and "but he does not approve if someone on this account makes of the Eucharist merely a symbol," citing CR 3:511 as evidence.<sup>13</sup>

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Et haec sententia de praesentia corporis convenit cum aliis scripturis, quae de vera praesentia Christi apud nos loquuntur. CR 1:1049.

<sup>13</sup>"Melanchthon gibt seitdem (1535) die eigentliche Auffassung des esti auf. Aber er billigt es nicht wenn man deswegen aus dem Abendmahl ein leeres Symbol macht," Herrlinger, op. cit., p. 142. Herrlinger quotes this reference as follows: "In posterioribus scriptoribus non pauca sunt loca, quae tantum videntur nuda symbola facere. Origenes simpliciter vocat tupikon kai symbolikon arton. Sed ut praesentiam omnino ponendam esse sentio, ita de modo parousias non disputo," p. 142.

Now to return to the original question of the surrender of the literal signification of the esti. In a letter to Veit Dietrich, Melanchthon addresses himself to the charge which Amsdorf had made to Luther, that Luther "was nourishing in his breast a viper, meaning me."<sup>14</sup>

Melanchthon writes: "I think you remember how atrociously they are suspicious of me and how they have spoken.

[The Teacher] said that he would rather repudiate the testimony of all the ancient authors than change his own doctrine."<sup>15</sup> He goes on, "I indeed do not state that I

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The original quotation reads in full: Ego quantum possum disputationibus illis interim sepositis sequor quod existimo tutissimum, veram atque adeo somatiken parousian eina in usu eucharistiae, quam verba coenae et Paulus omnino videntur ponere, et verba Niceni concilii plane testantur tum etiam fuisse coelesiae sententiam: en te iera trapeze keisthai ton agnon tou theou ton airona amartian tou kosmou tametsi in posterioribus scriptoribus non pauca sunt loca, quae tantum videntur nuda symbola facere. Sic Origines, in quem nuper indidi, qui tamen est ex vetustissimis, in Matth. c. 11, quam particulam in nuper edito codice Erasmus a se versam adiecit, simpliciter vocat tupikon kai sumbolikon arton. Sed ut praesentiam omnino ponendam esse sentio, ita de modo parousias non disputo.

First of all, we see that Herrlinger's quotation is a somewhat mutilated quotation which does not actually give the sense of the words originally written in this letter. Secondly, the reference cited by Herrlinger is not from a letter by Melanchthon at all, but it is a letter written by Caspar Cruciger to Veit Dietrich. Cf. CR 3:510.

<sup>14</sup>viperam eum in sinu alere, me significans.  
CR 3:503.

<sup>15</sup>Meminisse te puto, quam atrociter de me suspicati et locuti sint. Dixit, se potius omnes veteres scriptores, omnium testimonia repudiaturum esse, quam mutaturum suam sententiam. CR 3:503.

believed this. I sought to inquire what the church has taught."<sup>16</sup> Then follow the words to which Herrlinger apparently makes reference:

Et tamen ille tantum synechdochen facit in hac propositione o artos esti soma. Non igitur vult panem esse Deum, non iungit ut Sacramentum, sicut aderat ad arcam Deus, et ad arcam adorabatur. Tantum largitur. Nec vellim addi plura, esti illud etiam spectandum est, Sacramentum in usu consistit, manducanti exhibetur corpus, et in usu adest Christus, quare scis reprehendi Papistas qui cum inclusionem imagentur, postea asservant, circumferunt, ostendunt, iubent adorari. Ibi ne Lutherus quidem concedit adorationem. Itaque si Synechdochen retinemus, idque in usu, adoratio fit, ut ad arcam directa non in panem, sed in Christum, qui se pollicitus est in nobis efficacem fore.<sup>17</sup>

We do not believe that Melanchthon is here denying the literal meaning of the esti. On the contrary, he is polemicizing against an attempt to make a one for one mathematical equation of "bread equals God," and of what he considers a Papistic perversion of the presence of Christ in the theophoric procession and the attendant adoration of the blessed host. We believe that Melanchthon fears that the esti is being taken to mean a local, lasting inclusion which he attributes to the Papists, and with this type of inclusion he would not agree.

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<sup>16</sup>Ego vero non postulo mihi credi. Quid sensisset Ecclesia, non alienum putabam inquirere. CR 3:503.

<sup>17</sup>CR 3:504.



The Words of Institution

As we have indicated above, Melanchthon could find no compelling reason for interpreting the Words of Institution in any other way than the strict, literal and natural sense of the words. It is on the basis of Christ's Words, "Take, This is My body," that Melanchthon in a letter to Philip of Hesse concluded, "that truly the body and blood of Christ are with the bread and the wine, that is, the essential, not figurative, Christ."<sup>18</sup>

Although Melanchthon has here taken an opportunity to criticize the symbolical interpretation of the Sacrament on the basis of the Words of Institution, in his exegetical study of Matthew twenty-six, he is primarily concerned with what he regards as a perversion of the Holy Eucharist in the Roman church. He writes: "First of all, I would like to say a few things concerning the Papistic Mass so that the reader may learn to recognize the error of this Mass, and having been warned of it, he may learn to detest this 'error and idolatry.'"<sup>19</sup>

This error and idolatry of the Papists is: "The

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<sup>18</sup>Dass wahrhaftig mit dem Brod und Wein der Leib Christi und Blut, das ist wesentlich Christus, nicht figuerlich, sey. CR 2:801.

<sup>19</sup>Errorem et idolatricum. CR 14:1008.



Papists have said and continue to say that their Mass is an offering or a sacrifice which is necessary for the church and that it merits to him who performs it and for the others for whom it takes place the forgiveness of sins as the Pharisees thought that they merited forgiveness to themselves and others by the slaughter of cattle."<sup>20</sup>

These opinions do not agree with the statements of Scripture, "by one sacrifice He perfected the saints" and "the just shall live by his faith." "For," says Melanchthon, "if the work of the one who performs a sacrifice merits forgiveness, then forgiveness is not accepted by faith."<sup>21</sup>

In this commentary on Matthew twenty-six, Melanchthon enunciates a principle which we shall discuss at some length in chapter four. This principle, which is of the greatest importance in his Eucharistic position, is here formulated, "that nothing is a Sacrament except in its own use." We shall attempt in chapter four to

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<sup>20</sup>Papistae dixerunt et dicunt, suam missam esse oblationem seu sacrificium, quod sit necessarium Ecclesiae, et mereatur facienti et aliis, pro quibus fit, remissionem peccatorum, sicut Pharisei dicebant, se mereri remissionem sibi et aliis, mactione pecudum. CR 14:1008.

<sup>21</sup>Una oblatione consummavit Sanctos. Iustus fide sua vivit. Iam si opus sacrificuli meretur remissionem, non accipitur remissio fide. CR 14:1008.

sketch the importance of this rule; for the present, we are concerned with demonstrating its exegetical basis, and that it is not a rationalistic defensive teaching devised by Melanchthon solely as a refutation of the Romanists.

The Lutheran Church has insisted that the primary scriptural source of the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist is the Words of Institution. Melanchthon asserts that this principle he has here enunciated is drawn from this primary source, viz., the Words of Institution, when he says, "as the Institution states."<sup>22</sup> The Words of Institution further indicate that the Holy Eucharist was instituted for the purpose of being received. If the intended purpose of the Eucharist is reception or participation (sumtio), then it follows that "this practice of carrying the bread in procession is idolatry and ought to be avoided."<sup>23</sup>

In the Holy Eucharist, there are given to the receiver the "good promises of the New Testament because of the Son of God who died and rose again."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Sicut institutio sonat. CR 14:1008.

<sup>23</sup>Illam consuetudinem circumgestandi panem esse idolatricam et fugiendam. CR 14:1008.

<sup>24</sup>Bona promissa in Novo Testamento propter filium Dei mortuum et resuscitatum. CR 14:1009.

The participation in the Eucharist was instituted that it might be a testimony that the gifts of the New Testament are given and conferred. Furthermore, "in this participation, we ought to arouse faith."<sup>25</sup> Melanchthon, however, repeatedly makes the point that it is not "this, your work, or this, your participation, nor on account of your participation" that one receives the forgiveness of sins in this Sacrament. Rather, one receives this forgiveness because of the Son of God who suffered on the cross for us, and "on account of the Son of God Who merited forgiveness by His suffering."<sup>26</sup> There is no forgiving power in the action of participation in the Sacrament. Perhaps here we have an explanation why Melanchthon was not as vitally and perhaps intemperately concerned about the nature of the presence of Christ in the Sacrament as were some of the more radical followers of Luther. For Melanchthon, it is not your eating, your drinking, your participation in the Sacrament as such which is of primary importance. We believe that to ask whether Melanchthon conceives of the Sacrament as a "conferring vehicle" of grace would be to ask a question

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<sup>25</sup>In hac ipsa sumtione debemus fidem excitare.  
CR 14:1009.

<sup>26</sup>Propter filium Dei, qui meruit remissionem sua passione. CR 14:1010.

to which Melanchthon does not directly address himself. We must remember that he is polemicizing against the Roman view of the Sacrament which conceives of the Sacrament as being effective ex opere operato sine bono motu utentis. This opinion, according to Melanchthon, is a perversion of the scriptural doctrine of the Holy Eucharist.

In his commentary on the Words of Institution in Matthew, Melanchthon regards the principle purpose of the Eucharist as being "that it should be the nerve-center (nervus) of the public congregation."<sup>27</sup> The Eucharist is not intended to be a private celebration. If this purpose is to be maintained in the actual administration and distribution of the Eucharist to the participation, the elements of "invocation and thanksgiving" should be added.<sup>28</sup> In keeping with this proper purpose of the Eucharist, the Sacrament is to be received by such people who "repent, who are not secure, having a sinful disposition."<sup>29</sup> So we see that according to him, if the Eucharist is to be properly received and to fulfill its established function as the nerve (nervus) of the public

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<sup>27</sup> Ut sit nervus publicae congregationis. CR 14:1009.

<sup>28</sup> Invocatio et gratiarum actio. CR 14:1010.

<sup>29</sup> Agentes poenitentiam, non sint securri, habentes malum propositum. CR 14:1009.

congregation, the three elements of "repentance, faith, invocation and thanksgiving" should be joined together.<sup>30</sup>

For a proper celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the recitation of the Words of Institution must be one of the constituent elements of the celebration. In an "Opinion" composed by Melanchthon at Jueterbock, Melanchthon lists the various elements which should be present in the celebration and administration of the Eucharist:

Therefore, all of these items occur together: the proclamation of the benefits of the Son of God; the consecration containing the recitation of the words of the Gospel by which the Eucharist is instituted; the distribution and reception of the body and blood of the Lord; the invocation or prayer to God asking forgiveness on account of the expiatory sacrifice of the Son of God; faith which is applied; a thanksgiving in which the happy mind coming before God, prays to Him, subjects itself to Him and praises Him with its voice, confession and actions.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Poenitentiam, fidem in consolationem, invocationem et gratiarum actionem. CR 14:1010.

<sup>31</sup> Concurrunt ergo haec opera omnia, Concilio de beneficiis filii Dei; consecratio continens recitationem verborum Evangelii, quibus Coena instituitur; distributio et sumtio corporis et sanguinis Domini; invocatio seu oratio ad Deum, petens remissionem propter sacrificium propitium filii Dei; fides applicans; gratiarum actio, in qua mens laeta accedens ad Deum, invocatur eum, subicit se ei, et celebrat eum voce, confessione, et moribus. CR 7:237.

We might here point out that Melanchthon finds a type of the Holy Eucharist in the sacrifices of the Old Testament: "The lamb which was burnt was a type of the death of the Son of God. The libation and the pouring out of the wine were types of the Gospel and of the distribution.

## The First Corinthian Passages

Herrlinger has commented on the significance of the First Corinthian passages for Melanchthon's doctrine of the Eucharist: "Now much more he sees in the word of Paul (1 Corinthian 10:16) the communion of the body of Christ, the authoritative interpretation of the Words of Institution which hold fast to the objective presence of the body and at the same time do not bring the body into an improper relationship to the bread."<sup>32</sup>

In support of this statement, Herrlinger cites the following words of Melanchthon as evidence: "I regard it as very safe to say that there is a true and therefore a

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And there is in the church of all times one proper sacrifice which is truly a payment for us, namely, the single sacrifice of the Son of God which was prefigured by the sacrifices of other times. Neither is it displeasing to us to accommodate a type to this whole action." (Agnus crematus, typus fuit mortis filii Dei. Libatio, et vini effusio typus erant Evangelii, et distributionis. Et verum est in Ecclesia omnium temporum unicum esse iuge sacrificium, quod vere fuit pretium pro nobis, scilicet sacrificium proprium filii Dei, quod significatur sacrificiis quorumcunque temporum. Nec tamen displicet nobis, typum accomodare, ad hanc totam actionem in Coena Domini.) CR 7:242.

<sup>32</sup>Vielmehr sieht er nun in dem Wort des Paulus (1 Cor. 10:16): Die authentische interpretation der Einsetzungsworte, welche die reale Gegenwart des Leibes festhält, zugleich aber denselben mit dem Brod in keine ungehoerige Verbindung bringt, Herrlinger, op. cit., p. 142.

bodily presence in the use of the Eucharist which the words of the Eucharist and Paul seem to posit."<sup>33</sup>

Herrlinger further finds that after 1538, Melanchthon relies more heavily on the words of Paul than he does on the Words of Institution in the Gospel. This finding is in general agreement with Herrlinger's position that there is a radical change in Melanchthon's Eucharistic doctrine after 1534. Apparently, the point that Herrlinger is trying to make is this; that Melanchthon could find refuge in the term "communion" for his doctrine which he had now allegedly modified to the extent that he no longer held to a true presence of the body of Christ in the bread.<sup>34</sup> We have found that Melanchthon does use the words of Paul more frequently after 1534 than he had previously.<sup>35</sup> However, we believe that his use of the words of Paul should be investigated a little more thoroughly than simply saying he uses them more frequently.

In 1538, Melanchthon issued a brief opinion on the Holy Eucharist in which he dealt with the relationship

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<sup>33</sup>Existimo tutissimum, veram atque adeo in usu eucharistiae quam verba coenae et Paulus omnino videntur ponere, Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>34</sup>"So hat Melanchthon das in pane seit 1534 aufgegeben," Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. CR 3:504; CR 3:620; CR 7:882.



of the words of Paul on the Eucharist to the words of the Gospel. We quote this opinion here in full:

There is no basis to tear Christ into two parts so that He is with us according to His Godhead but absent from us according to His Manhood. But He has simply said that He gives us His body and blood. And Paul also says that the Eucharist is a communion of the body and blood of Christ. So if Christ were not bodily present, it would be merely a communion of the spirit and not of the body or blood. And I consider this sufficient for a simple instruction: We should not depart from the words unless they are contrary to other statements of Scripture. However, these words of the Eucharist are not contrary to other statements of Scripture even though they may be foreign to reason.<sup>36</sup>

On the basis of this opinion, we see that Melanchthon does not interpret Paul's words to mean anything else than this, that Christ is present "body" in the Sacrament. We also observe that Melanchthon alludes first of all to our Lord's Words, "He gives us His body and blood" and then refers to the words of Paul, "Thus Paul also says." Melanchthon here posits an agreement of Paul's words with those of Christ; the body and blood of

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<sup>36</sup>Es hat keinen Grund Christum also zureissen, dass er nach der Gottheit bei uns sey, und nach der Menschheit nicht bei uns sey, sonderlich weil er gesprochen, er gebe uns sein Leib und Blut. So spricht Paulus es sey das Nachtmahl eine Gemeinschaft des Leibes und Blutes Christi. So aber Christus nich leiblich da, waere es nur des Geistes Gemeinschaft, und nicht des Leibes oder Blutes. Und dieses achte ich zu einem einfaeltigen Unterricht genug seyn. Denn wir sollen nicht von Worten weichen, sie seyen denn wider andre Schrift. Nun sind diese Worte vom Nachtmahl nicht wider andre Schrift, ob sie schon der Vernunft frembd seyn. CR 3:619-20.

Christ are given in the Eucharist. Furthermore, on the basis of Paul's words, he insists that if Christ is not present "bodily" then there is in the Eucharist nothing more than a "fellowship of the spirit and not of the body and the blood."

In his "Opinion on the Holy Supper" of 1551, Melancthon attempts to show that the doctrine of transubstantiation which "was recently thought out" and which teaches that "only the accidents of the bread remain, not the substance,"<sup>37</sup> is a fabrication which is unknown to the ancient church. More important than this that the doctrine is not known in the ancient church is this, that the doctrine of transubstantiation, as formulated by the Roman church, does not agree with Paul's words when he "calls it bread even in the use of the Sacrament; 'who eats this bread.'"<sup>38</sup> Since Paul calls it bread, also in the use of the Sacrament, we may safely conclude that the bread remains.<sup>39</sup> Melancthon goes on to state: "Secondly, the bread is the body of Christ is to be understood as a synecdoche which is used in Scripture,

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<sup>37</sup> Quod tantum accidentia panis maneant, non substantia. CR 7:882.

<sup>38</sup> Appellat panem etiam in usu Eucharistiae: qui manducat de pane hoc. CR 7:882.

<sup>39</sup> Itaque recte dicitur, quod panis maneat. CR 7:882.

that is, with the bread and the wine, the body and blood of Christ are offered and given."<sup>40</sup> What Melanchthon is trying to point out is that when we say, "The bread is the body of Christ, we mean, by synecdoche, that the body and blood of Christ are offered and given together with the bread and the wine."

As to the allegation that Melanchthon gave up the "in pane" formula, his words in this same opinion are significant:

Now many things have been disputed here regarding an inclusion of the body in the bread or of a physical or lasting union. But very simply and truly, it ought to be said: the sacraments are sacraments in their use; therefore, it is sufficient to the conscience that in the use, when these things, bread and wine, have been given, the body and blood of the Lord are given, and thus Christ is truly present and effective in us.<sup>41</sup>

There is a Sacramental union of the elements and the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, and Melanchthon believes that this term "sacramental union"

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<sup>40</sup>Secundo: panis est corpus Christi intelligatur synecdochen esse, quae est usitata in scriptura, id est, cum pane et vino exhibetur et porrigitur corpus et sanguis Christi. CR 7:882.

<sup>41</sup>Iam multa disputantur hic de inclusione corporis in panem, de physica vel durabili coniunctione. Sed simplicissimum et verissimum est, quod dici solet: sacramenta esse sacramenta in usu; quare conscientiae satis est, quod in usu, datis his rebus pane et vine, detur corpus et sanguis domini, atque ita Christus vere adsit in nobis et est efficax. CR 7:882.

is sufficient, and that there should be no additional questions concerning a physical or lasting union: "This union is sacramental; these things having been given, a presence of Christ is given. And I do not see why we should ask more questions here concerning a physical and lasting union."<sup>42</sup> The understanding of the "in pane" formula as equaling a physical union which remains outside of the Sacramental use of the Eucharist is the meaning which Melanchthon here rejects.

A letter to Valentine Weigel (1533-88) of approximately nine years before the opinion above discusses further this same question:

It is unadulterated madness to imagine that when the words have been spoken by the consecrator that the body of Christ enters (immigret) into the bread so that it is thought to remain there forever as wine when it is poured into a beaker stays there unless it is poured out again. The Sacraments, rather, are covenants of the exhibition. When these things are received, Christ is at the same time present and effective. This sacramental presence is willful (voluntaria) and is not a geometric or magical inclusion by which it is thought that Christ remains in the bread. When a man is baptized, the Holy Spirit is truly present in that action, but He does not remain in the water outside of the action. Therefore we should execrate questions such as, whether a mouse chewing on the consecrated bread is eating the body of Christ. Also to be detested is the practice of parading the bread in public

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<sup>42</sup> Haec coniunctio est sacramentalis; positis his rebus ponitur praesentia Christi, nec video, cur plures quaestiones hic moveri debeant de physica et durabili coniunctione. CR 7:882.

exhibition. Therefore the bread and wine which are left over after the communion, which were not consumed by those whose intention it was to participate in the Holy Eucharist, are not a sacrament, since the whole action is the sacrament. For the sake of the uninstructed and for the sake of reverence I counsel that the last communicant, whether one or many, should drink what remains in the cup. When the use of the Sacrament has ceased, the Sacrament also ceases. Christ is not to be adored under the species of bread. At the same time the bread remains with the body of Christ in the Sacrament.<sup>43</sup>

Melanchthon's interpretation of the word "communion" (koinōnia) bears further investigation. In the "Opinion on the Supper of the Lord" of 1560, he expresses himself at some length on his understanding of the meaning of this word:

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<sup>43</sup>Et est merus furor, fingere, quod dictis verbis a consecrante sic immigret corpus Christi in panem, ut ibi semper manere cogatur, sicut infusum vinum in cantharum manet, nisi rursus effundatur. Sed sacramenta pacta sunt exhibitionis. Cum illae res sumuntur, simul adest Christus et est efficax. Haec sacramentalis praesentia est voluntaria; non est inclusio geometrica vel magica, qua cogatur Christum in pane manere. Cum baptizatur homo in ipsa actione vere adest Spiritus sanctus; non manet in aqua extra actionem. Sunt igitur abominandae illae quaestiones; an mus, rodens panem consecratum, comedat corpus Christi. Et abominandus est mos circumferendi panis in spectaculis. Quare ea, quae post communionem de pane et vino reliqua sunt, quae non manducatur ab iis, quorum sit intentio, uti coena domini, non sunt sacramenta, quia actio tota est sacramentum. Sed propter imperitos et reverentiam consulo, ut reliquum in poculo edibat ultimus communicans, vel unus vel plures. Cessante usu sacramenti cesset quoque sacramentum. Christus sub panis specie non est adorandus. Panis simul cum corpore Christi manet in sacramento. CR 7:876-877.

It does not say that the nature of the bread is changed as the Papists teach; it does not say as do those in Bremen that the bread is the substantial body of Christ; it does not say as Hesshusius that the bread is the essential body of Christ: but that it is a 'communion'; that is, that by which an association (consociatio) with the body of Christ takes place. This happens in the use and certainly not without thought as when the mice chew on the bread.<sup>44</sup>

We believe that Melanchthon found in Paul's words in First Corinthians not a semi-legitimate excuse for altering his own doctrine of the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, but that he found in the term "koinōnia" the safeguard against what he considered a Romanist misinterpretation of the Words of Institution which would have these Words of Institution teach a physical and/or lasting union of the body and blood of Christ with the elements of bread and wine.

That Melanchthon understood the words of First Corinthians in the same sense and of the same meaning

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<sup>44</sup>Non dicit, mutari naturam panis, ut Papistae dicunt; Non dicit, ut Bremenses, panem esse substantialem corpus Christi: Non dicit, ut Hesshusius, panem esse verum corpus Christi: sed esse koinonia id est, hoc, quo fit consociatio cum corpore Christi; quae fit in usu, et quidem non sine cogitatione, ut cum mures panem rodunt. CR 9:962.

We believe that the citations above and the previous discussion of the Words of Institution are sufficient to reject the contention of Neve that "he (Melanchthon) refused to go beyond the expression of Paul, I Cor. 10:16, that the bread is the 'communion of the body of Christ.'" J. L. Neve, A History of Christian Thought (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, c. 1946), I, 261.



as the Words of Institution is further indicated in his commentary on First Corinthians, chapter ten where he writes: "It is therefore the cup of blessing, the cup from which the blood of Christ is drunk as the Words of Institution of the Eucharist in Matthew, Mark, Luke and First Corinthians, chapter eleven indicate."<sup>45</sup>

In his Postil on First Corinthians, chapter eleven, Melanchthon concerns himself primarily with the proper use of the Holy Eucharist. The Sacraments are signs which are added to the Word. He recounts how Abraham was given the promise and then God added a sign. God gave the word of promise to Moses and then added certain signs. Likewise, in the New Testament where we have the Gospel, God has also added the signs of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. Melanchthon gives the following as a reason why God added the signs to His Word: "He wishes to add the signs to the word so that the word may become more evident."<sup>46</sup> The effect of the Word and Sacrament are the same: "And the Word and the Sacrament signify the same thing as Augustine says: 'The

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<sup>45</sup> Est igitur calix benedictionis, calix, quo sumitur sanguis Christi, sicut sonant verba de institutione Coenae apud Mattheaeum, Marcum, Lucam et infra cap. 11. CR 15:1107.

<sup>46</sup> Vult addere signa verbo, ut verbum sit illustrius. CR 14:521.



sacrament is the visible Word."<sup>47</sup>

That God's purpose for giving the sign is not always understood, Melanchthon readily points out:

There are many who have civil and human opinions concerning baptism and the Holy Eucharist. They think that these rites are instituted only for the purpose that those people who are called Christians might be discerned from other men such as Jews and other nations in the same way as the cowls distinguish the monks from others. Or they think that the Eucharist is a sign of mutual good feeling as friendships are signs of good will among all people. These are human imaginations which do not<sup>48</sup> rightly judge the nature of the sacraments.

Another perversion of the Sacrament which does not recognize its true use or its nature as a sign is that of the Papists. Melanchthon goes on, "The Papists have another imagination that the Sacraments are works by which we merit for ourselves and others the forgiveness of sins."<sup>49</sup> He labels this as an "opinio ethnica."

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<sup>47</sup>Et rem eandem significant verbum et sacramentum, sicut Augustinus inquit: "Sacramentum est verbum visibile." CR 14:521.

<sup>48</sup>Multi de sacramentis ut de Baptismo et Coena Domini habent civiles et humanas opiniones, cogitant has ritus institutas esse, tantum ut coram hominibus discernant eos qui vocantur Christiani a Judaeis et aliis gentibus, sicut cuculli discernant Monachos a caeteris, aut putant coenam Domini esse signum mutuae benevolentiae, quia convivia apud omnes gentes sunt signa amicitiae. Hae sunt humanae cogitationes quae non recte de sacramentis iudicant. CR 14:521.

<sup>49</sup>Papistae aliam habent imaginationem, quod sint opera per quae meremur nobis et aliis remissionem peccatorum. CR 14:521.

In this Postil on First Corinthians, chapter eleven, Melanchthon asserts that the true use of the Eucharist is the participation in this Sacrament with repentance and faith. The true understanding of the nature of a Sacrament and its proper use is not to be found in an ex opere operato conception of this Sacrament. The thought that anyone can merit for himself the forgiveness of sins is contrary to the proper use of the Sacrament in repentance and faith. Melanchthon goes on to explain what he means by the proper use of the Sacrament in repentance and faith:

This thing is given which reminds you of the promise of the Gospel and the suffering of Christ and that by faith through Christ you receive forgiveness. This does not happen because of your own participation, but your participation is a testimony that Christ wishes to give you and other individuals His own benefit. When you know this, then think, "Behold, the benefits of Christ pertain to you. Here this ceremony testifies in what He applies Himself to you."<sup>50</sup>

If one is to use the Sacrament correctly, he must link it with the suffering of Christ and the shedding of

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<sup>50</sup> quod sit res proposita, quae admoneat te de promissione Evangelii, et passione Christi, et quod fide propter Christum accipias remissionem, non propter hanc tuam sumtionem, sed haec sumtio est testimonium, quod Christus velit tibi et singulis applicari suum beneficium. Cum scimus, ideo sumes, cogites: Ecce ad te pertinet beneficium Christi. Id testatur hac ceremonia, in qua se tibi applicat. CR 14:522.

His blood.<sup>51</sup> Any other use of the Sacrament which does not include the participation in faith and repentance, such as the theophoric procession of the consecrated host, has no evidence in Scripture.<sup>52</sup>

#### The Gospel of John, Chapter Six

In his commentary on the Gospel of St. John, Melanchthon indicates that he does not interpret the verses in chapter six as referring in their strict sense to the Holy Eucharist. He writes: "In this chapter, you will observe what it is to eat the flesh of Christ; namely, to believe in the crucified Christ and to trust that He makes alive those who are in death."<sup>53</sup>

In a letter to Philip of Hesse in 1534, Melanchthon indicates again that the words of St. John, chapter six do not refer primarily to the Holy Eucharist, but that Christ, who is true God and Man, is nevertheless

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<sup>51</sup>De coena Domini, verbis admonemur Christum pro nobis esse passum, ipsius sanguinem pro nobis fustum. Gestus idem admonet, nos fieri membra corporis Christi, et nobis dari sanguinem, quo abluti sumus. CR 14:521.

<sup>52</sup>Nihil dicit scriptura. CR 14:522.

<sup>53</sup>In hoc capite potissimum observabis, quod sit manducare carnem Christi, scilicet credere in Christum crucifixum, simul mortificare, et confidere, quod in morte vivificet. CR 14:11-6.



## CHAPTER IV

### SYSTEMATIC WRITINGS ON THE EUCHARIST

#### Melanchthon's Christology as Related to the Holy Eucharist

The doctrines of Christology and the Holy Eucharist are intimately related to one another. The doctrine one holds of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ will have an impact on his doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. And conversely, one's doctrine of the Holy Eucharist may have an equally influential thrust in the formulation of his Christology. This is evident as we study the history of the Eucharistic controversies of the sixteenth century.

As an example, we might refer to the effect the Zwinglians' Christology had upon their conception of the presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. The Zwinglians held that after His ascension, Jesus Christ is locally present at the right hand of God in heaven; therefore, He is not and cannot be present in the Holy Eucharist except to the faith of the recipient. In 1529, Melanchthon wrote to Oecolampad: "You contend that the body of an absent Christ is represented as in a play."<sup>1</sup> In a 1532 letter to Bernhard

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<sup>1</sup>Vos absentis Christi corpus tanquam in tragoedia representari contenditis. CR 1:1048.

Rothmann, Melanchthon calls it a "profane dispute" to argue that Christ is nowhere but in heaven or to say that "He is seated affixed to one place."<sup>2</sup>

Melanchthon alleges that the basis of the Zwinglian Christology lies in their rationalistic approach, and mildly ridicules the Zwinglian conception of Christ when he compares it to Homer's Jupiter. He writes to Nicholas Gerbeling:

They seem to me gradually to be changed from theologians to vain disputers about words: for I see that they plainly divert the dogmas of Christ to reason and philosophize. . . . Thus these people depict Christ as sitting in one certain place, as Homer depicts his Jupiter, living among the Ethiopians. It seems to me to be most inconsistent with Scripture to do away with the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>3</sup>

Melanchthon considered the Zwinglian doctrine that Christ is present only in a certain part of heaven as an opinion that is unworthy of a Christian. This belief, according to his letter to Oecolampad of 1529, is taken from a source other than Scripture:

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<sup>2</sup>Quorsum opus est, illas prophanas disputationes, quod nusquam nisi in coelo sit Christus, et quod sedeat uni affixus loco, spargere? CR 2:620.

<sup>3</sup>Videntur mihi ex Theologis paulatim fieri mataiologi: video enim, eos plane ad rationem revocare dogmata Christi, et philosophari. . . . Ipsi sic pingunt Christum, certo aliquo loco sedentem, sicut Homerus Jovem suum, convivantem apud Aethiops. Mihi alienissimum a scriptura videtur, tollere praesentiam Christi ex Eucharistia. CR 1:974.

For that is an opinion unworthy of Christians that Christ occupies a certain part of heaven so that He sits there as one enclosed in jail. You gather many absurdities which follow on this statement. You also collect certain statements of the Fathers, which seem to support your case. However, absurdities are less offensive to him who remembers that an opinion concerning divine matters is to be based on the Word of God and not on Geometry; and when one is tempted there is no theory which is sufficiently capable of quieting his conscience when he forsakes the Word of God.<sup>4</sup>

The belief that the body of Christ cannot be in many places is, for Melanchthon, obviously a whim or human fancy: "From these authors, the people should know that it is not safe on the basis of a human fancy to adopt the view that the body of Christ cannot be in many places."<sup>5</sup>

How strongly Melanchthon was opposed to the Zwinglian doctrine that the body of Christ can be present only locally in one place is expressed in several letters. In 1527 he wrote to Spengler:

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<sup>4</sup>Nam illa est indigna Christianis opinio, quod Christus ita quandam coeli partem occuparit, ut in ea tanquam inclusus carceri sedeat. Tu colligis absurda multa, quae sequuntur hanc sententiam. Colligis etiam quasdam veterum sententias, quae pro te videntur facere. Sed absurda minus offendunt eum, qui meminerit, de rebus coelestibus ex verbo Dei, non ex Geometrica faciendum esse iudicium, quique tentatus didicerit, nullam esse rationem, quae conscientiam satis docere possit, cum a Verbo Dei discesserit.  
CR 1:1049.

<sup>5</sup>Ab his auctoribus sciat populus non esse tutum discedere propter somnium plane humanum, quod Christi corpus non possit in multis locis. CR 1:911.



Zwingli wrote to me and begged me to write to Osiander and ask him not to attack his party so vehemently. But the words of Zwingli made no impression on me. For I see that in his Friendly Exegesis, he does not treat Luther in a very friendly way.

In 1530, shortly before the Augsburg Diet, Melanchthon wrote to Martin Goerlitz, "I would rather die than to affirm what they believe: The body of Christ cannot be but in one place."<sup>7</sup> He went so far as to reject any alliance with the Zwinglians as a contamination of the Lutheran cause when in 1529 he wrote to Baumgartner:

I have written to you previously concerning making an alliance. Oh, that that agreement may be hindered. For I would rather die than to contaminate the cause of our people with an alliance with the Zwinglians!

The previous letter to which Melanchthon here refers is one which he had written about a month earlier in which he had also strenuously objected to an alliance

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<sup>6</sup>Cinglius mihi scripsit, meque rogavit, ut ad Osiandrum scriberem et hortarer, ne vehementius suae factioni adversaretur. Sed me non movent Cinglianae literae. Video enim in illa amica exegesi non valde amice tractari Lutherum. CR 1:901.

<sup>7</sup>Ego mori malim quam hoc affirmare, quod illi affirmant: Christi corpus non posse nisi in uno loco esse. CR 2:25.

<sup>8</sup>Scripsi tibi nuper de concilio foederis faciendi. Utinam illa coniunctio impediatur. Nam mori malim, quam societate Cinglianae causae nostros contaminari. Magna, mi Hieronyme, res est, sed pauci considerant. Ego ad mortem usque vapulabo eius rei causa. CR 1:1077.

with the Zwinglians:

The Strassburgers and certain others of the Zwinglian doctrine desire to make an alliance with our party and your city. I thought you should be admonished concerning this matter, and I beg you, my Jerome, that you bear in mind my apprehension. I am moved in conscience that I write to you again concerning this matter. I ask that as much as you are able, you give attention, so that the Zwinglians are not accepted in any association of an alliance. It is not proper to defend an impious doctrine or to confirm the influence of those who follow an impious dogma lest their poison be further disseminated.

In a letter to Bucer, Melanchthon describes the spirit of Zwingli as more rational than Christian:

Zwingli sent his confession here; in it he does not wish to seem to diverge in words from our true doctrine, and in addition, he makes a disturbance in certain other articles. It is seen that there is more of a Helvetic than Christian spirit in him, which impells him to send such a ferociously written confession.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Foedus cupiunt facere Argentinenses et alii quidam Cinglianae doctrinae iurati cum nostris et cum vestra urbe. Ea de re putavi vos admonendos esse, teque oro, mi Hieronyme, ut meam hanc sollicitudinem boni consulas. Moveor conscientia, ut ad vos de hac rescribam. Quaeso autem, ut quantum poteris, des operam, ne recipiantur Cingliani in ullius foederis societatem. Neque enim convenit, ipiam sententiam defendere, aut confirmare vires eorum, qui impium dogma sequuntur, ne latius serpat venenum. CR 1:1070.

<sup>10</sup>Cinglius huc misit exomologēsin, in qua certe non vult videri verbis discrepare a vera nostra sententia, et praeter rem tumultuatur in aliis quibusdam articulis. Videtur in homine magis Helveticus quidam quam Christianus esse spiritus, qui impulerit eum tam ferociter scriptam confessionem minime in tempore huc mittere. CR 2:221-22.

In an opinion dated approximately the same time, Melanchthon discussed at some length the Zwinglian doctrine of Christology and its effect upon the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist:

- 1) The Zwinglians teach that the body of Christ can be only in one place.
- 2) Again the body of Christ cannot be anywhere otherwise than locally, and they vigorously contend that it is contrary to the nature of a body to be anywhere, except in a local manner. Again, that it is contrary to the nature of a body, to be in various places at the same time.
- 3) Therefore they teach that the body of Christ is circumscriptively in one certain place in heaven, thus, that at the same time, it cannot be anywhere else in any other mode, and that the body is truly and really separated from the bread, nor is it in the bread nor with the bread.
- 4) Therefore, Bucer is obviously wrong when he contends that they teach the same as we do. For we do not say that it is necessary that the body of Christ be in one place. Rather, we say that it can be in different places at the same time, whether this happens locally, or in a hidden way, in which all the parts of the Person of Christ are present as at one point. Therefore, we posit the true and real presence of the body of Christ with the bread. . . .
- 11) They simply teach that the body of Christ is in heaven, and that it is not really with the bread or in the bread.

Opposing these formulations, Melanchthon points out that the difference in the two Eucharistic positions is a difference of doctrine and not merely one of formulation:

14) We teach that the body of Christ is truly and really present with the bread or in the bread.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>The editor of the Corpus Reformatorum gives as the historical occasion of this Opinion:

According to Melanchthon's "Opinion on Carlstadt's Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist," (1525) Carlstadt was willing to grant that Christ (according to His divine nature) was present to those who used the Sacrament properly. In reply to Carlstadt's position, Melanchthon stated that there is no basis for dividing Christ in this manner so that He is with us according to His divine nature but absent from us according to His human nature. Since He has given us His body and blood to comfort us, we may be sure that Christ desires to be present with us,

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Occasionem scribendi dederat Bucerus, qui in Comitibus Augustanis Pontano persuadere voluerat . . . doctrinam Zwinglii verbis magis differe a sententia Lutheri de sacra coena, quam re. CR 2:222.

1) Cingliani sentiunt corpus Domini tantum in uno loco esse posse.

2) Item corpus Christi non posse alicubi esse, nisi localiter, et valde contendunt, quod repugnet naturae corporis alicubi esse, non localiter. Item quod repugnet corporis, simul in diversis locis esse.

3) Et propterea sentiunt, quod corpus Christi sit in loco certo circumscriptum in coelo, ita, quod simul nullo modo possit alibi esse, et quod vere ac realiter distet a pane, nec in pane nec cum pane sit.

4) Ergo manifeste fallit Bucerus, cum disputat, quod idem sentiunt nobiscum. Nos enim dicimus, quod non sit necesse corpus Christi in uno loco esse. Item nos dicimus, quod simul possit in locis diversis esse, sive id fiat localiter, sive alio arcano modo, quo diversa loca personae Christi simul, tanquam unum punctum, praesentia sunt. Ideo veram et realem corporis Christi praesentiam cum pane ponimus. . . .

11) Ipsi simpliciter sic sentiunt, quod corpus Christi sit in coelo, et non sit vel cum pane, vel in pane realiter. . . .

14) Nos docemus, quod corpus Christi vere et realiter adsit cum pane, vel in pane. CR 2:223-24.

not only in our thoughts but also truly and substantially:

They all confess that Christ is effective in those who use the Sacrament properly, for He says: "We will come to Him and make our dwelling with Him." Also, those who do not teach that the body and blood of Christ are in the Eucharist confess that Christ, according to His Godhead, is with those who use the Sacrament properly. There is, however, no basis for dividing Christ so that He is with us according to His Godhead but not with us according to His Manhood. But because He has said that He gives us His body and blood to comfort us, we should firmly believe that He wants to be with us, not only in our thoughts, but also objectively and essentially.<sup>12</sup>

The division of Christ into two persons with which Melanchthon charged the Sacramentarians, he says, is the error of Nestorius. Instead of positing the presence of only one nature of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, Melanchthon taught that the whole Christ is present in

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<sup>12</sup>Es bekennen alle, dass Christus in den Menschen, so das Sacrament recht brauchen, wirkt, wie er spricht: wir wollen zu ihm kommen, und ein Wohnung bei ihm machen. Auch bekennen die, so lehren, dass nicht Christus Leib und Blut im Nachtmahl sey, dass dennoch Christus wahrhaftiglich nach der Gottheit bei denen sey, so das Sacrament recht brauchen.

Nu hats je keinen Grund Christum zerreißen, also, dass er nach der Gottheit bei uns sey, nach der Menschheit nicht bei uns sey, sonderlich diewiel er gesprochen, er gebe uns Leib und Blut damit uns zu troesten, dass wir gewisslich dafuer halten sollten dass er nicht allein mit Gedanken bei uns seyn wollt, sondern wahrhaftiglich und wesentlich. CR 1:760.

Four years later Melanchthon reiterated his belief that Christ cannot be divided so that the humanity is separated from the divinity. *Ubi nihil est opus divellere ab humanitate divinitatem.* CR 1:1049.



the Sacrament:

Nestorius posited two persons in Christ, and that it was possible for the human nature to be in Christ without the divine.

Thus, if we should allege that only the body of Christ is in the Sacrament and would not state that the divinity is there, it would follow that we are dividing Christ after the example of Nestorius. Therefore, we reply that the whole Christ is in the Sacrament so that no one may suspect that we divide the natures or posit two persons.<sup>13</sup>

Gollwitzer has referred to this Christology in reference to the Eucharist as "that which makes possible the Real Presence" (Ermöglichung der Realpraesenz).<sup>14</sup> He has further expressed the conviction that Melanchthon found this possibility of the "Real Presence" elsewhere than in the doctrine of the Ubiquity of the body of Christ, viz., in the Ubiquity of the total Person of Christ. He writes: "Melanchthon always taught the ubiquity of the total Christ. He never taught the ubiquity of the body of Christ, nor did he ever

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<sup>13</sup>Nestorius duas personas posuit in Christo, et posse naturam humanam in Christo sine divina esse.

Ita si nos poneremus tantum Christi corpus in sacramento, et divinitatem non poneremus ibi esse, sequeretur, quod divideremus Christum exemplo Nestorii. Ideo respondimus, quod totus Christus sit in sacramento, ne quis suspicetur nos divellere naturas, aut duas personas ponere. CR 2:226.

<sup>14</sup>Helmut Gollwitzer, Coena Domini (Muenchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1937), p. 70.

acknowledge it."<sup>15</sup>

In this connection we may note that in the seventeenth century John Gerhard, in his Loci, defended himself against the charge of his opponents who appealed to the consensus of Melanchthon and Hesshusius to support their contention that some of the Lutheran theologians had not taught the communication of the attributes of the divine nature of Christ to His human nature. In reply to this charge, Gerhard attempts to show that it is without basis in fact, and quotes from several of Melanchthon's writings to support his opinion. Gerhard refers to Melanchthon's "Writing on the Supper" of 7 April 1560 and from his letters to Martin Goerlitz and Oecolampad. To Goerlitz: "I would

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<sup>15</sup>Melanchthon hat die Ubiquitaet des totus Christus immer gelehrt; er hat aber die Ubiquitaet des corpus Christi nicht nur nie gelehrt, sondern sie auch nie anerkannt." Ibid., p. 70.

Richard and Herrlinger are of the opinion that Melanchthon at one time held to the theory of Ubiquity, but that he later gave it up. Richard dates this surrender of the theory of Ubiquity in 1531. Richard, op. cit., p. 243. Herrlinger writes: "In der That seher wir seitdem bei Melanchthon keine Spur mehr von der Ubiquitaetslehre, die er im Juli 1530 (CR 2:224) noch entwickelt hat." Herrlinger, op. cit., p. 140.

Ritschl has also expressed his conviction that Melanchthon rejected "Luthers ubiquitische Spekulationen," and that he came to regard Luther's theory of Ubiquity as Eutychian. Otto Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1927), IV, 7, 19. On this question cf. further Ritschl's discussion of the Diet at Ratisbon, IV, 31.

<sup>16</sup>John Gerhard, Loci Theologici (Preuss Edition, Berlin: Gust. Schlawitz, 1865), I, 564.



rather die than to affirm what they affirm, that the body of Christ can be in only one place."<sup>17</sup> To

Oecolampad: "In the promises of Christ there is no cause to divide the humanity from the deity."<sup>18</sup> And in his "Writing on the Supper":

The true body and true blood are offered in the cup. Now the question has arisen, in what manner can Christ be present bodily in the Sacrament since a body cannot be in many places? I answer, Christ said He would be present. Therefore, He is truly present in the Sacrament, also bodily; no other reason should be sought. The Word so states. Therefore, it must necessarily so happen. Because this pertains to the body, Christ can be wherever He wills, whenever He wills. There is a difference between His body and our reason. In this controversy there should be no dispute about ubiquity, nor do the Scholastics speak about this ubiquity; they recite the simple teaching concerning the bodily presence of Christ, and that the humanity of Christ is everywhere (ubique) most intimately joined to His divinity. In Christ, the divinity and humanity are inseparable. In the sacrament and its action, the body and blood of Christ are everywhere (ubique) according to the Word: This is My body, this is My blood. And: I am with you even unto the end of the world.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>CR 2:25.

<sup>18</sup>CR 1:1048.

<sup>19</sup>Verum corpus et verus sanguis exhibetur in poculo. Quaestio jam oritur, quomodo Christus possit esse corporaliter in sacramento, cum ideo corpus non possit esse in diversis locis? Respondeo, Christus dixit, se affuturum. Ergo vere adest in sacramento et corporaliter, nec quaerenda est alia ratio. Verbum ita sonat. Ergo necesse est ita fieri. Quod vero ad corpus attinet, Christus quando vult, potest esse, ubique vult. Quare alia jam est sui corporis et nostra ratio.

Melanchthon's Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist  
and the Church Fathers<sup>20</sup>

Melanchthon had a profound respect for the doctrine of the ancient church, not only in the teaching on the Holy Eucharist, but in other areas as well. This respect, almost reverence, for the ancient church has been incorporated into the Symbolical Canon of the Lutheran Church.<sup>21</sup> His appreciation of the church's theological

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De ubiuitate non disputandum in hac controversai, nec Scholastici dicunt de hac ubiuitate, sed recitant simplicem sententiam de corporali praesentia Christi, et est ubique humanitas Christi conjunctissima divinitati, et sunt deitas et humanitas in Christo inseparabiles, ergo Christi corpus et sanguis in sacramento ejusque actione sunt ubique, juxta verbum: Hoc est corpus meum, hic est sanguis meus. Et: Ero vobiscum usque ad consummationem seculi. CR 9:1087-88.

<sup>20</sup>On Melanchthon's relation to the Ancient Church Cf. Peter Fraenkel, "Revelation and Tradition, Notes on Some Aspects of Doctrinal Continuity in the Theology of Philip Melanchthon," Vol. XIII, Fasc. II Studia Theologica (Lund: Apud C. W. K. Gleerup, 1959), pp. 97ff. The article is very well written and thoroughly documented. Also, Adolf Sperl, Melanchthon zwischen Humanismus und Reformation. Eine Untersuchung ueber den Wandel des Traditionsverstaendnisses bei Melanchthon und die damit zusammenhaengigen Grundfragen seiner Theologie (Muenchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1959). Sperl contends (especially pp. 174ff.) that in the course of the Eucharistic controversies Melanchthon came to regard the agreement of the Lutheran Eucharistic doctrine with that of the Ancient Church as a matter of necessity and not merely fact.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. "Verzeichnis der Zitate aus kirchlichen und Profanschriftstellern" in the Bekenntnisschriften which lists the citations of the Fathers in the Lutheran Symbols. Bekenntnisschriften, pp. 1145ff.

heritage was such that he frequently expressed the opinion that he did not want to be the author or defender of a new dogma in the church. To John Brenz he wrote, "I do not wish to be the author or defender of a new dogma in the church."<sup>22</sup> To Paul Eberbach: "A good man does not lightly depart from the teaching of the ancient writers."<sup>23</sup> To Spengler he wrote in 1527:

I do not wish to be author of a new dogma in the church. And as I have urged that he (Billicanus) should appeal to the ancient authors, as I also do. Since they again and again affirm that Christ is present in the Eucharist, I do not wish to contradict the consensus of the church.<sup>24</sup>

To Oecolampad, Melanchthon wrote that he had investigated the teachings of the ancient church relative to the positions of the Lutherans and the Zwinglians on the Holy Eucharist and adds, "I do not wish to appear

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We believe that it is most unfortunate that the recent edition of the Book of Concord has omitted the "Catalogus Testimoniorum." The Book of Concord; the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert et al. (Philadelphia: Muehlenberg Press, 1959).

<sup>22</sup> Non velim esse autor aut defensor novi dogmatis in Ecclesia. CR 2:824.

<sup>23</sup> Et non est moni viri, temere a veterum scriptorum sententia discedere. CR 1:820.

<sup>24</sup> Ego nullius in ecclesia novi dogmatis auctor esse velim. Itaque semper eum sum hortatus, ut veteres scriptores adhiberet in consilium, et ego quoque facio. . . . nolo ego ab ipso ecclesiae consensu dissentire. CR 1:901.

as the author or defender of any new dogma in the church."<sup>25</sup>

Melanchthon's consistent refusal to be the author or defender of a new dogma in the church is not, however a slavish adherence to that which has once been taught in the church.<sup>26</sup> A letter to Myconius sheds considerable light on Melanchthon's relation to the ancient church's position on the Eucharist:

I am sending you the statements of the ancient writers on the Holy Eucharist as I promised I would. These statements testify that they believed the same as we do, viz., that the body and blood of Christ are truly present in the Holy Eucharist.<sup>27</sup>

In other words, Melanchthon felt safe in appealing to the consensus of the ancient Fathers of the church in support of his Eucharistic position because he was convinced on the basis of his study of the Fathers that the Lutheran position agreed with theirs. This assertion is borne out in Melanchthon's letter to Paul

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<sup>25</sup>Ego enim nolim alicuius novi dogmatis in ecclesia vel auctor vel defensor existere. CR 1:1048.

<sup>26</sup>As we have observed elsewhere, Melanchthon was ready to depart from the teaching of Augustine if Augustine had said that Christ could be present in only one place. Cf. chapter six, p. 127 for documentation.

<sup>27</sup>Mitto tibi locos veterum scriptorum de coena Domini, ut promisi, qui testantur, illos idem sensisse, quod nos sentimus, videlicet, corpus et sanguis Domini vere adesse in coena dominica. CR 2:29.

Eberbach where he makes this statement: "I know this, that the teaching of Luther is the most ancient in the church."<sup>28</sup> In this same letter, Melanchthon summarizes some of the testimonies of the Fathers which support the Lutheran view of the Holy Eucharist:

Origen, as is his custom, dallies with allegories, nor can anything certain be drawn from him. In Jerome there are some statements which, although they do not strongly support our position, yet they by no means support the opponents. In Nazianzus, no sufficiently clear statement is to be found. Gratian cites a statement from Basil which is certainly not opposed to our position. I have not included Damascene who copiously defends our position.<sup>29</sup>

At the close of the letter, Melanchthon gives the reason for collecting the statements of the Fathers:

"Thus I have gathered these statements on the Holy Eucharist, so that we might have at hand the testimonies of the ancients in which it is affirmed that the body of Christ is truly present in the Holy Eucharist."

In the Tenth Article of the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon brings to the fore the

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<sup>28</sup>Hoc scio Lutheri sententiam perveterem in ecclesia esse. CR 1:823.

<sup>29</sup>Origines ludit suo more allegoriis, nec quidquam ex eo certi potest colligi. Apud Hieronymum extant loci quidam, qui, ut non magnopere muniunt nostram sententiam, tamen adversariis nihil patrocinantur. Apud Nazianzenum nullam satis claram sententiam reperi. Ex Basilio citat Gracianum locum quendam certe non adversatur nostrae sententiae. Damascenum non adscripsi, qui nostram sententiam copiose defendit. CR 2:30.

relationship of the Lutheran Church to the Ancient  
Church:

We defend the accepted doctrine of the whole church, that in the Holy Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present and are truly given with these things that are seen, viz., the bread and wine.<sup>30</sup>

Extra Usum Res Ipsas  
Non Habere Rationem Sacramenti<sup>31</sup>

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the formula in Melanchthon's doctrine of the Eucharist. He derived this formula, variously phrased, from the Words of Institution and from Paul's words in First Corinthians: The divine institution, however, speaks only of participation, as it is written: take, eat. Again, the bread which we break is the communion

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<sup>30</sup>Itaque collegi hos locos de coena Domini, ut in promptu haberemus testimonia veterum, in quibus affirmatur, vere adesse corpus Christi in coena dominica. CR 2:32.

<sup>31</sup>This formula is also taken over in the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VII, 85. The editors of the Bekenntnisschriften cite as references: CR 9:409. 472. 848. 156. 371.

Melanchthon indicates that Luther had approved the formula. Cf. CR 8:178. 397. 9:472. 848. He further indicates that Westphal attacked the formula. Cf. CR 9:156. 189. For Luther's use and practical application of this formula Cf. his letters written to Simon Wolferinus in W. A. Br., 10, 336ff; 347ff.; 658ff. In the letter of 20 July 1543 (W. A. Br. 10, 348) Luther explicitly refers to Melanchthon's formula, indicating his approval of the same.



of the body. These words speak expressly of partaking.<sup>32</sup>

In his "Opinion on the Eucharist" of 1536, Melanchthon again appealed to the words of Christ for support of his formulation that Christ is present in the proper use of the Sacrament which is eating and drinking: "Our Lord speaks only of the participation, not of other things or actions outside the participation."<sup>33</sup>

In his "Opinion on Transubstantiation" (1551) in which he discussed the nature of Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist, Melanchthon wrote:

But most directly and simply it should be said: the Sacraments are Sacraments in the use; therefore, it is sufficient to the conscience that in the use, when bread and wine are given, the body and blood of Christ are given, and so Christ is truly present in us and is effective.<sup>34</sup>

This formula was set forth by Melanchthon in the discussions at Ratisbon, where he expressed it as

<sup>32</sup>Institutio autem divina tantum de sumptione loquitur, ut scriptum est: accipite, manducate. Item, panis quem frangimus, est koinonia somatos. CR 9:276.

<sup>33</sup>Tantum autem Dominus loquitur de sumptione, non de aliis rebus, aut actionibus extra sumptionem. CR 8:942.

<sup>34</sup>Sed simplicissimum et verissimum est, quod dici solet: sacramenta esse sacramenta in usu; quare conscientiae satis est, quod in usu, datis his rebus pane et vino, detur corpus et sanguis domini, atque ita Christus vere adsit in nobis et sit efficax. CR 7:882.



follows:

God is not to be placed under obligation where He does not bind Himself. Christ does not bind Himself to the bread outside of the use, because He is present for man's benefit, not because of the bread.<sup>35</sup>

From this basic rule, Melanchthon developed two further implications: A ceremony does not have the nature of a Sacrament, i.e., it is not a sign of the grace of God, when anything is instituted outside of and beyond the Word of God.<sup>36</sup> A rite does not have the nature of a Sacrament outside of the use for which it was instituted.<sup>37</sup>

After the Ratisbon discussion, Melanchthon recalled with some obvious pleasure how, when he had in the discussion with Eck used this formula that "no work or rite can be a Sacrament outside of its

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<sup>35</sup> Deus non est alligandus, ubi ipse se non alligat. Christus non alligavit se ad panem extra usum, quia adest propter hominem, non propter panem. CR 4:249. 264.

<sup>36</sup> Ceremonis non habet rationem sacramenti, i.e., non est signum gratiae Dei praesens, cum aliquid instituitur extra et praeter verbum Dei. CR 21:869. Cf. also CR 9:156. 431. 471. 499. 626.

<sup>37</sup> Ritus extra usum institutum non habet rationem sacramenti. CR 8:178. 397. 660. 9:156. 157. 189. 371. 408. 409. 410. 472. 500. 627. 765. 848. 941. 23:66. 28:418.

instituted use"<sup>38</sup> Eck was so completely discomfited by his failure to find an answer for this formulation that he left in a rage. That evening, Eck drank so freely he became sick. When he did not appear on the following day, there were even rumors that Eck had died. But, as Melanchthon remarks, Eck was still alive but he did not return to the Colloquy again.

On the basis of his formula derived from the Words of Institution and First Corinthians, Melanchthon became convinced that:

The adoration in the procession and illegitimate Masses is ungodly. Therefore, one should apply the rule: flee idols, that is, one should not pray to them, nor encourage the adoration with his presence, or bowing the head etc.<sup>39</sup>

Melanchthon unequivocally rejects the adoration of the host outside the use and the theophoric procession because they are actions for which the Holy Eucharist was not instituted. In fact, he refers to these actions as idolatry:

The Papistic adoration in the procession, in the storage and the exhibition are idolatry, because nothing has the character of a

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<sup>38</sup>"Es koennte kein Werk oder Ding Sacrament seyn, ausser dem eingesetzten Brauch." CR 9:940.

<sup>39</sup>Die Anbetung im Umtragen und unrechten Messen abgoettlich ist. Darum soll man die Regel halten: fugite idola, das ist, man soll sie nicht anbeten, soll auch die Anbetung nich staerken mit Beyseyn, Neigen u. CR 9:941.

Sacrament outside of the use instituted by God,<sup>40</sup>  
since no creature is able to make a Sacrament.

To a friend at the University of Leipzig he wrote  
in 1551:

The Sacraments have the character of divine  
Sacraments in the instituted use and not out-  
side of that use, as the Holy Spirit is not  
bound to the water outside the action of  
Baptism. The Holy Eucharist was not instituted  
for procession, exhibition, or other show, but<sup>41</sup>  
for eating as it is clearly stated, Take, eat.

In the same letter, Melanchthon states that he  
would not hinder anyone who desired to remove the  
practice of the elevation of the host. It is clear  
that in making this statement, he does not feel that  
there is anything intrinsically wrong with the practice  
of elevation, but he felt it should be done away with  
because it tended to support the practice of the  
theophoric procession:

Since, therefore, the practice of elevation  
strengthens that pomp of the procession,  
and similar abuses, I would not wish to stop

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<sup>40</sup> Papisticam adorationem in circumstatione,  
repositione et oblatione simpliciter idolatricam esse,  
quia nihil habet rationem sacramenti extra usum a Deo  
institutum, cum nulla creatura possit sacramentum  
facere. CR 9:276.

<sup>41</sup> Sacramenta in usu instituta rationem habere  
divinorum sacramentorum, non extra usum institutum, ut  
Spiritus sanctus non est alligandus ad aquam extra  
baptismi actionem. Non est autem instituta Coena  
Domini ad circumstationem, aut oblationem, aut alias  
pompas, sed ad manducationem, ut clare dicitur,  
Accipite, manducate. CR 7:888.

those who do away with the elevation.<sup>42</sup>

In Melanchthon's thought, the improper use of the Holy Eucharist is closely related to the improper use of Baptism. Thus, he states that if someone were to use Baptism as a means of cleansing a leper, he would be superstitiously transferring the intended use of Baptism to a use for which it was not instituted. He believes that this can be applied to the Holy Eucharist by analogy:

Against these things (procession, adoration), we ought to posit this true and useful rule: A Sacrament is a Sacrament in the use for which it was divinely instituted. Thus, if anyone wishes to misuse Baptism for cleansing a leper, he would superstitiously transfer Baptism to a use for which it was not instituted. Therefore, it would not be a Sacrament. The Holy Eucharist was instituted by Christ for participation. Beyond the action He is not to be bound to anything to which He has not bound Himself by His Word. He speaks<sup>43</sup> only of the action, Take, eat, This is My body.

Melanchthon held to this formula through the years.

In an Opinion of 1558, he reiterates it:

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<sup>42</sup>Cum igitur elevationis ritus confirmet illam pompam circumgestationis, et similes abusus, non velim impediri eos, qui tollunt elevationem. CR 7:888.

<sup>43</sup>Contra haec opponi debet vera et utilis regula: Sacramentum est Sacramentum in usu, ad quem divinitus est institutum, ut si quis vellet baptismo abuti ad sanandam lepram, is magice transferret baptismum, ad finem extra institutionem. Ideo non esset Sacramentum. Extra actionem non est alligandus ad ullam rem, ad quam se ipse non alligat suo verbo. Tantum autem de actione dicit, Accipite, comedite, hoc est corpus meum. CR 7:887.

The Papistic errors are apparent. Outside the instituted use, they carry around, store, offer and adore the bread. Against these four errors, we hold to the rule: Nothing has the character<sup>44</sup> of a Sacrament outside of the instituted use.

The question had been asked if the body of Christ descends into the stomach when one has received it in the Eucharist. In an Opinion signed jointly by Melanchthon and John Brenz, the answer is given that it does not:

Therefore, by no means is it to be said that the body of Christ goes into the stomach, or that it is torn by the teeth, as is stated in the Papal decree. Luther also expressly approves the synecdoche and frequently repeats it.<sup>45</sup>

The opinion of Melanchthon and Brenz was that once the Sacramental action of eating the bread has ended and the bread has passed into the stomach and is changed, the bread becomes food for the body. At this

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<sup>44</sup> Sed Papisitici errores manifesti sunt, qui extra institutum usum circumgestant panem, reponunt, offerunt, et sibi adorant. Contra hos tetros errores teneamus regulam: Nihil habet rationem Sacramenti extra usum institutum. CR. 9:430.

<sup>45</sup> Nequaquam igitur dicendum est, descendere corpus Christi in ventrem, aut dentibus atteri, sicut in Papistico decreto dicitur. Lutherus etiam synekdochen probat, et saepe eam repetit. CR 9:277.

The formula "dentibus atteri" is precisely that formula which Luther gave Melanchthon in his instruction prior to Melanchthon's 1534 Cassell meeting with Bucer. Cf. Chapter VI, p. 165.

This formulation is later rejected by the Lutheran Church in the Formula of Concord, Epitome, VII, 42.

time, the character (ratio) of the Sacrament ceases.<sup>46</sup>

Manducatio Oralis - Manducatio Indignorum

These two concepts, the manducation of the unworthy and the oral manducation are highly important for the Lutheran theology of the Holy Eucharist. Because the Roman Church held to these two concepts, Luther was willing to concede that a true Sacrament existed in the Roman Church. In spite of the theory of Transubstantiation with its corollary of the lasting presence of Christ with the bread and wine outside of the proper use of the Eucharist; in spite of the theophoric procession of the blessed host which the Lutherans regarded an abuse of the Sacrament in the Roman Church; in spite of the fact that the Roman Church considered the Holy Eucharist as an expiatory sacrifice on behalf of the living and the dead; in spite of all these considerations regarded as Roman abuses of the Sacrament, the Lutherans admitted the existence of the Sacrament in the Roman

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<sup>46</sup> "When the bread has been eaten, passes into the stomach and is changed, it is now bodily food, and the nature of the Sacrament ceases. Therefore, this absurd phrase that the body of Christ, or Christ, passes into the stomach ought to be forgotten about." (Cum autem facta sumptione panis descendit in ventrem, et alteratur, estque iam cibus corporalis, desit ratio sacramenti. Ideo omittetur ista absurda phrasis, corpus Christi vel Christum descendere in ventrem.)



Church. At the same time, because the Zwinglians denied both concepts of the oral manducation and the manducation of the unworthy, the Lutherans denied the existence of the legitimate Sacrament in their churches.<sup>47</sup>

Among the interpreters of Melanchthon's Eucharistic doctrine, there is general agreement that Melanchthon at one time held to the doctrine of oral manducation and the manducation of the unworthy at one time, but that he later gave it up or seriously modified his position.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Werner Elert has commented on the importance of the oral manducation and the manducation of the unworthy for Lutheran theology in its relation to the Roman Church: "Sie bildeten den Masstab dafuer, dass Luther in der roemischen Kirche das Sakrament anerkannte, waehrend er es den Schweizern absprach." Over against the Swiss the situation was entirely different: "Ganz anders war die Lage gegenueber der Reformierten Lehre. Hier wurde mitden Folgesaetzen von der manducatio oralis et indignorum auch deren grundlegende Voraussetzung bestritten, der Realpraesenz und der Realempfang des Leibes Christi, worin auf Lutherischer Seite der Sinn des ganzen Aktes erblickt wurde." Werner Elert, Morphologie des Luthertums. (Muenchen: C. H. Beck, 1952-53), I, 271.

<sup>48</sup>Richard, although he offers no evidence to support his assertion, states that Melanchthon modified Luther's doctrine of oral manducation already at the Marburg Colloquy. J. W. Richard, Philip Melanchthon (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), p. 243.

Herrlinger writes that "Die Lutherische manducatio oralis ist schon 1529 nicht die Ansicht Melanchthons gewesen. wenn er gleich eine reale und substanzielle Mittheilung und Geniessung des Leibes Christi festhaelt, die von der manducatio spiritualis-contemplatione fidei bestimmt verschieden ist." Herrlinger, op. cit., p. 133. Herrlinger quotes from S. Bullinger, Reformations-geschichte II, p. 225ff. in support of his view: "In der oeffentliche Colloquium vorangehenden Privatunterredung Zwingli's mit



These two concepts, as far as we have been able to determine, are not expressed with the technical terms,

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Melanchthon operirte der erste wie immer mit John 6. 'Da gab Melanchthon nach, das geistlich Niessen des Libs und Bluets Christi, das es Glauben waere. Auch das der Herr (John 6) rede von dem liblichen Essen, und dass die Capernaitien verstanden habind, sie muessen sin fleisch liblich aessen und sin Bluet liblich trinken. Da sie, die Lutherischen im Nachtmahl mit der Meinung seynd, das der Lib und Bluet Christi circumscriptive mit im Mund gaeben werede, noch werde der selb Lib wahrhaftig genossen, abscondito modo. Zwingli antwort, die verborgen wys moechte mit der Geschrift nit dargebracht werden. Antwort Melanchthon: Damit wirds dargebracht, dass der Herr gesagt, das ist min Lib, das ist min Bluet.' Aus diesem Bericht erhellt dass Melanchthon zu Marburg zwar eine manducatio realis, aber nicht oralis vertheidigt hat." We believe that the evidence offered by Herrlinger is rather weak. We believe that some primary evidence should have been offered, rather than relying on secondary evidence as he does. It is highly probable that Bullinger understood Melanchthon's words in the light of his own Zwinglian view-point.

According to Scaltet's report, Peucer, Melanchthon's son-in-law, stated that Melanchthon gave up the doctrine of oral manducation after reading Oecolampad's Dialogue which he received while at Augsburg for the Diet of 1530: "Narrabat mihi (Scalteto) Peucerus: sacerum suum Melanchthonem, lecto dialogo Oecolampadii de Coena Domini, suam de orali manducatione carnis Christi sententiam mutasse et postea semper triumphasse hoc argumento: Patribus doctrina Synusiastarum fuit ignota, Augustinus crassissimus fuit Zwinglianus ergo etc." This statement quoted in Th. Diestelmann, Die Letzte Unterredung Luther's mit Melanchthon ueber den Abendmahlsstreit (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht's Verlag, 1874), p. 209. Diestelmann adds this very significant statement, that the assertion of Scaltet, "nicht weiter verbuergt ist." Ibid., p. 209.

Gollwitzer is also of the opinion that Melanchthon renounced the oral manducation of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Gollwitzer, op. cit., p. 83. Gollwitzer's general approach to Melanchthon's doctrine of the Eucharist is that for Melanchthon, the Sacrament consists in the action; that Christ is present to the action of the Sacrament and not to the elements. (Here he generally agrees with Herrlinger.)

manducatio oralis - manducatio indignorum in Melanchthon's Eucharistic writings. They are, however, indirectly expressed several times. The Tenth Article of the Augsburg Confession reads: "Of the Holy Eucharist, they teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are distributed to those who partake in the Eucharist."<sup>49</sup> In this Article, the reception of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist is not restricted to those who partake in faith, but it is predicated of those who eat (vescentibus). The same is true of the Apology to the Augsburg Confession:

That in the Holy Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present and are truly given with these things which are seen, the bread<sup>50</sup> and wine, to those who receive the Sacrament.

In the Variata Edition of the Augsburg Confession (1540), Melanchthon wrote: "the body and blood are 'offered'

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However, as we have demonstrated elsewhere, Melanchthon's emphasis on the action must be understood in the light of his polemics against the Roman position which he rejected because he believed the Roman Church taught a local and lasting (durabilis) inclusion and presence of the body and blood in the elements of bread and wine. Gollwitzer fails to take this consideration into adequate account in his discussion.

<sup>49</sup>Bekenntnisschriften, p. 64.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 248.

(exhibeantur) to those who partake."<sup>51</sup>

In the Wittenberg Concord of 1536, Melanchthon expressed the manducation of the unworthy in these words:

Therefore, as Paul says, also the unworthy partake, thus they teach the body and blood of the Lord are given also to the unworthy, and that the unworthy partake, where the words and institution of Christ are maintained. But such partake unto judgment, as Paul says, because they abuse the Sacrament, since they use it without faith and without repentance."<sup>52</sup>

In a 1541 writing, "Of the Multiple Abuse of the Sacrament and of the True Use of the Holy Eucharist," Melanchthon commented on the words of Paul, "They who eat and drink unworthily are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord":

Since, however, it is written: He who eats and drinks unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, there is no doubt that God is terribly angered by the profanation of the Holy Eucharist, and that the many great calamities, public and private, are the punishments of their sins."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>The 1540 Variata are quoted in Bekenntnisschriften, p. 65.

<sup>52</sup>Quare sicut Paulus ait, etiam indignos manducare, ita sentiunt porrigi vere corpus et sanguinem Domini etiam indignis, et indignos sumere, ubi servantur verba et institutio Christi. Sed tales sumunt ad iudicium, ut Paulus ait, quia abutuntur Sacramento, cum sine poenitentia et sine fide eo utuntur. CR 3:76.

Cf. also Bucer's letter to his colleagues in which he discusses the formulations of the Wittenberg Concord. CR 3:80.

<sup>53</sup>Cum autem scriptum sit:

For the doctrine of the manducation of the wicked (manducatio impiorum) in the theology of Melanchthon, we turn to his subscription to the Smalcald Articles.<sup>54</sup>

The German version of these Articles reads:

Halten wir, dass (unter) Brot und Wein im Abendmahl sei der wahrhaftige Leib und Blut Christi (im Abendmahl) und werde nicht allein gereicht und empfangen von frommen, sondern auch von bösen Christen.<sup>55</sup>

The Latin translation of the Smalcald Articles which dates from 1580 is even more explicit in the teaching of the manducation of the wicked:

De Sacramento altaris statuimus panem et vinum in coena esse verum corpus et sanguinem Christi et non tantum dari et sumi a piis, sed etiam a malis Christianis et impiis. [Our emphasis]

To the Smalcald Articles, Melanchthon subscribed with the singular, well-known exception in regard to the

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Qui sumit indigne, reus erit corporis et sanguinis Domini, non dubium est, Deum horribiliter irasci profanationi coenae Domini, et multas calamitates, publicas et privatas, horum delictorum poenas esse. CR 4:310-11.

<sup>54</sup>On Melanchthon's subscription to the Smalcald Articles and his doctrine of the manducatio impiorum Ritschl has commented: "so wird man Frank geben muessen, wenn er darauf hinweist, dass die manducatio impiorum Melanchthon jedenfalls nicht anstoessig sei, obwohl er sich nirgends bestimmt fuer sie ausgesprochen habe. Melanchthon hat jedoch ohn jedes Bedenken, nur mit Vorbehalt wegen der Superioritaet des Papstes ueber seine Bischöfe, Luthers Schmalkaldische Artikel unterschrieben, in der die manducatio impiorum ausdruücklich behauptet wird." Ritschl, op. cit., IV, 27.

<sup>55</sup>Bekenntnisschriften, p. 450-51.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 451.

jurisdiction of the Pope in these words: "Ich Philippus Melanchthon halt diese abgestellte Artikel fuer recht und Christlich. . . ."57

### The Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice

We may summarize Melanchthon's position on the Holy Eucharist as a sacrifice in two statements: the Holy Eucharist, for him, is not an expiatory sacrifice on behalf of the living and the dead; the Holy Eucharist is a sacrifice of praise, of thanksgiving or commemoration.

In the twenty-fourth article of the Apology, Melanchthon defines an expiatory sacrifice as: "A work of satisfaction for guilt and punishment, i.e., one which reconciles God or placates the wrath of God, or which merits the forgiveness of sins for others."58

He defines the sacrifice of praise (sacrificium eucharistikon) as:

A Eucharistic sacrifice, which does not merit the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation, but one which is performed by those who have been reconciled so that we may give thanks or return thanks for the forgiveness of sins which we

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 463-64.

<sup>58</sup>Opus satisfactorium pro culpa et poena, hoc est, reconcilians Deum seu placans iram Dei, seu quod meretur aliis remissionem peccatorum. Apology 24:19.

have received, and for the other blessings we have received.<sup>59</sup>

Because of his insistence on the belief that it is not the bare Sacramental action, nor the participation in the reception of the Sacrament which justifies,<sup>60</sup> Melanchthon rejected any conception of the Holy Eucharist which would regard that Eucharist as effective ex opere operato sine bono motu utentis. On the same principle that it is faith which justifies, Melanchthon believes that even if it were granted that the Mass is a good work, it would still be contrary to the Gospel to claim that that work can merit the forgiveness of sins for the living and/or the dead.<sup>61</sup>

Melanchthon characterizes the Roman position on the Mass as an expiatory sacrifice as follows:

The adversaries teach and write that the Mass is a work of such sort that it can be applied on behalf of the living and the dead so that it merits not only the forgiveness of sins and grace, but also every kind of other good thing, such as good health, victory and riches ex opere

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<sup>59</sup> *Sacrificium eucharistikon, quod non meretur remissionem peccatorum aut reconciliationem, sed fit a reconciliatis, ut pro accepta remissione peccatorum et pro aliis beneficiis acceptis gratias agamus, seu gratiam referemus. Apology 24:19.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ita nec participatio mensae iustificat, sed fidem confirmat. CR 21:42. Nec delet peccatum participatio mensae, sed fides delet. Studienausgabe, 2,1, p. 156.*

<sup>61</sup> *CR 2:354.*



operato to those who have made a confession.<sup>62</sup>

This opinion he regards as contrary to the Gospel, "For if works merit grace for us and they are able to make us righteous before God ex opere operato, as they say, then righteousness would not be by faith."<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, Melanchthon rejects the idea that the Mass is an expiatory sacrifice because he believes that this would place it (the Mass) on the same level as the death of Christ:

If the Mass is a sacrifice for sins, for what purpose is the suffering and death of Christ unless we wish to make the suffering of Christ equal to the gesticulation of the priest?<sup>64</sup>

Strictly speaking, for Melanchthon, there is only one expiatory sacrifice, which is the sacrifice of Christ:

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<sup>62</sup>Adversariam partem scribere et docere, missam opus esse eiusmodo, quod applicatum vivis et mortuis non tantum remissionem peccatorum et gratiam, verum etiam omnis generis alia bona, utpote bonam valetudinem, victoriam et divitias ex opere operato iis mereatur in confesso est. CR 2:354.

<sup>63</sup>Nam si opera nobis gratiam mereri et iusto coram Deo pronuntiare possunt ex opere operato, quod vocant, iustitia ex fide non erit. CR 2:354.

<sup>64</sup>quia si missa satisfactio est pro peccatis, quorsum Christi mors et passio nisi Christi passionem sacrificuli gesticulationibus aequiparare velimus? CR 2:354.

To the Romanist belief that the Mass is a sacrifice for sin, that it merits to the one who performs it and to others forgiveness of sins, Melanchthon applies the words of Paul, "Who eats unworthily, will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." CR 7:235.



The suffering of Christ is a sufficient sacrifice, as the Scripture says, "by one sacrifice He perfected the saints;" therefore, there is no work which is another sacrifice for daily sins.<sup>65</sup>

In a general sense, the Old Testament Levitical sacrifices can be called expiatory sacrifices:

because of the signification or similitude, not because they merited the forgiveness of sins before God, but because they merited the forgiveness of sins according to the righteousness of the law, so that these for whom they were made should not be excluded for this state.<sup>66</sup>

Melanchthon believes that the Mass cannot be an expiatory sacrifice since an expiatory sacrifice is a "ceremony or work, which we return to God."<sup>67</sup> In the Mass we do not offer anything to God. Instead, the Mass is a Sacrament in which we receive something from God:

Sacrament: it is a ceremony or work in which God shows us this, that which conveys a promise linked to a ceremony, as baptism is not a work which we offer to God, but in which God baptizes

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<sup>65</sup>Christi passio est sufficiens sacrificium, sicut dicit scriptura: una oblatione consummavit Sanctos; ergo non est opus alio sacrificio pro quotidianis peccatis. CR 2:304.

<sup>66</sup>Propitiatoria sacrificia propter significationem seu similitudinem, non quod mererentur remissionem peccatorum coram Deo, sed quia merebantur remissionem peccatorum secundum iustitiam legis, ne illi, pro quibus fiebant, excluderentur ab ista politia. Apology XXIV, 21.

<sup>67</sup>Ceremonia vel opus, quod nos Deo reddimus. Apology XXIV, 18.

us, i.e., a minister in the stead of God does; and here God offers and gives the forgiveness of sins.<sup>68</sup>

Since in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist our Lord offers and distributes to us His body and blood and all the good gifts of the New Testament, "It follows, this is by no means a sacrifice, by which we offer anything to God, but we only receive the things which are offered."<sup>69</sup>

According to Melanchthon, the Lutherans were attacked because they did not use the words, "we offer to Thee the Son." To this Melanchthon replied: "Neither the words of the Gospel speak thus, nor did antiquity so speak."<sup>70</sup> If these words, however, are intended to mean, "We pray to Thee eternal Father because of the Son,"<sup>71</sup> then, says Melanchthon, the Romanists should not attack the Lutherans for they pray thus in the Holy Eucharist. Melanchthon indicates, though, that he does

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<sup>68</sup> Sacramentum est signum promissionis per quod Deus aliquid nobis promittit aut exhibet. Sacrificium est opus nostrum, quod nos Deo reddimus, ut eum honore afficiamus. CR 21:871. Cf. also CR 23:64; 22:450; 1:478. 842.

<sup>69</sup> Sequitur, illud nequaquam esse sacrificium, quo nos Deo nihil offerimus, sed oblata tantum recipimus. CR 2:355.

<sup>70</sup> Nec verba Evangelii sic loquuntur, nec sic locuta est antiquitas. CR 4:315.

<sup>71</sup> Oramus te aeterne pater propter filium. CR 4:315.

not believe that this is what the Romanists mean with these words.<sup>72</sup>

Melanchthon rejects the Roman thesis that the Mass can be applied on behalf of the dead saying that the Mass is of no benefit to one who is absent from its use.<sup>73</sup> Not only is there no mention of the offering for others in the words of the Gospel, but also the ancient church understood the sacrifice as a "common action of thanksgiving" and not as a necessary, meritorious work which applied the merits of Christ to us and others.<sup>74</sup>

When the Romanists had charged in the Confutation that the Fathers had called the Mass a sacrifice, Melanchthon replied in the Apology:

We are not ignorant that the Fathers called the Mass a sacrifice, but they did not intend that the Mass conferred grace ex opere operato, and the application for others to merit for them the forgiveness of sins, guilt and punishment. . . . But openly they testify that they are speaking of the action of thanksgiving.

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<sup>72</sup>CR 4:315. Cf. also CR 7:243.

<sup>73</sup>Sacramentum absentis nihil prodesse. CR 2:353.

<sup>74</sup>CR 7:234. Offerimus pro aliis. . . . Et in verbis Evangelicis nulla mentio fit oblationis pro aliis. Et certa vox est: unica oblatione consummavit sanctos, et sumtio singulis mandata est. Sacrificium vero tantum ut communem gratiarum actionem vetus Ecclesia intellexit, non opus ad applicanda merita Christ pro nobis et aliis necessarium. CR 7:247.

And therefore they call it eucharistian.<sup>75</sup>

Melanchthon states that the Romanists had charged that the Lutherans retained only one part of the Holy Eucharist, i.e., the use of the Sacrament, but that they omitted the other part, the offering and the sacrifice. He replies: "We confess that the whole action of the Holy Eucharist is a sacrifice of praise, or, as they say, commemorative."<sup>76</sup> These sacrifices are, "Prayer, faith, hope, joy of conscience, thanksgiving, confession, a good intention."<sup>77</sup>

The Apology contains another list of the things Melanchthon regarded as the sacrifices of thanksgiving or praise: "Proclamation of the Gospel, thanksgiving, the afflictions of the saints, the good works of the saints." Of these Melanchthon comments:

These sacrifices are not satisfaction for those who do them, or applicable to others, which merit for them ex opere operato the forgiveness of sin or reconciliation. For they are done by

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<sup>75</sup>Non ignoramus missam a patribus appellari sacrificium, sed hi non volunt, missam ex opere operato conferre gratiam, et applicatam pro aliis mereri eis remissionem peccatorum, culpae et poenae. . . . Sed aperte testantur se de gratiarum actione loqui. Ideoque vocant eucharistian. Apology 24:66.

<sup>76</sup>Fatemur totam actionem coenae Domini sacrificium laudis, seu, ut vocant, commemorativum esse. CR 4:313.

<sup>77</sup>CR 4:313.

those who have been reconciled.<sup>78</sup>

Melanchthon contends that his understanding of the Eucharist as a sacrifice of praise is in accordance with that of the ancient church. When they refer to the sacrifice, they do not have in mind a sacrifice for sins, but a commemorative sacrifice. The sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving refers to such things as:

The proclamation of the benefits of the Son of God, the consecration containing the recitation of the words of the Gospel by which the Eucharist is instituted, the distribution and partaking of the body and blood of Christ; invocation or prayer to God, asking forgiveness because of the expiatory sacrifice of the Son of God; faith applied to life; thanksgiving.<sup>79</sup>

These things, asserts Melanchthon, the ancient church certainly did not regard as an expiatory sacrifice.

The Holy Eucharist, for Melanchthon, has more than one purpose (finis). Therefore, it can be said that

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<sup>78</sup> Praedicatio Evangelii, fides, invocatio, gratiarum actio, confessio, afflictiones sanctorum, immo omnia bona opera sanctorum. Haec sacrificia non sunt satisfactiones pro facientibus, vel applicabiles pro aliis, quae mereantur eis ex opere operato remissionem peccatorum seu reconciliationem. Fiunt enim a reconciliatis. Apology 24:25.

<sup>79</sup> CR 7:237. Concio de beneficiis filii Dei; consecratio continens recitationem verborum Evangelii, quibus Coena instituitur; distributio et sumtio corporis et sanguinis Domini; invocatio seu oratio ad Deum, petens remissionem propter sacrificium propitium filii Dei; fides applicans; gratiarum actio.

after the proper use of the Sacrament which is to remember the benefits of Christ and to receive them by faith so as to be quickened by them, then the element of sacrifice is added. It is added only, however, after the conscience has been calmed by faith and freed from the terrors of sins:

Then truly it earnestly gives thanks for the benefit and suffering of Christ, and uses this ceremony to the praise of God, so that by this obedience it shows forth its gratitude, and testifies that it magnifies the gifts of God. Thus, it becomes a sacrifice of praise.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Tum vero serio agit gratias pro beneficio et passione Christi, et utitur ipsa ceremonia ad laudam Dei, ut hac obedientia gratitudinem ostendat, et testatur se magnificare dona Dei. Ita fit ceremonia sacrificium laudis. Apology 24:74.



## CHAPTER V

### MELANCHTHON'S CONCEPTION OF THE PRESENCE OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST IN THE EUCCHARIST

There is perhaps no other one dogma of the Christian faith, outside of the early church's contention for the essential deity of Jesus Christ and the correlative dogma of the Holy Trinity which is intimately related to the former, which has been the subject of more debate than the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. The statement that "the Sacrament is primarily something to be celebrated, not to be speculated on"<sup>1</sup> has unfortunately not always been recognized nor put into practice in the course of the New Testament church's history. Nor did the Eucharistic Controversies of the sixteenth century succeed in settling all the questions surrounding the Holy Eucharist.

At the risk of making a gross oversimplification of the entire controversy surrounding the blessed Holy Eucharist, we submit that one of the major questions to which the church has sought to give theological

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<sup>1</sup>Sasse, This is My Body: Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c. 1959), p. 13.

expression is: "In what manner is the body and blood of Jesus Christ present in the Holy Eucharist?" Again, at the risk of misrepresenting by oversimplification, we may group the church's answer under several rubrics.

The answer of the Western Church became the doctrine of Transubstantiation, a theory of the presence of the body and blood of Christ which became binding upon the consciences of all members of Christendom subject to the authority of the Roman bishop in the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. The first chapter of the Confession (Innocentianum) formulated at this Council states:

One indeed is the universal Church of the faithful, outside which no one at all is saved, in which the priest himself is the sacrifice, Jesus Christ, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the species of bread and wine; the bread (changed) into His body by the divine power of transubstantiation, and the wine into the blood, so that to accomplish the mystery of unity we ourselves receive from His (nature) what He Himself received from ours. And surely no one can accomplish this sacrament except a priest who has been rightly ordained according to the keys of the Church which Jesus Christ Himself conceded to the Apostles and to their successors.<sup>2</sup>

This explanation of the mode of presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist is reaffirmed in the thirteenth session of the Council of Trent held

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<sup>2</sup>Henry Denzinger, Enchiridion Symbolorum. Translated by Roy J. Deferrari (The Sources of Catholic Dogma) (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., c. 1957), pp. 169-70.

on the eleventh day of October, 1551. The English translation of the fourth chapter of this session reads:

But since Christ our Redeemer declared that to be truly His own body which He offered under the form of bread; it has, therefore, always been a firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy council now declares it anew, that by the consecration of the bread and wine a change is brought about of the whole substance of the bread and wine into the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood. This change the holy Catholic Church properly and appropriately calls Transubstantiation.<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting to note that Chapter I, session thirteen of the Council of Trent is entitled, "On the Real Presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Sacred Sacrament of the Eucharist."<sup>4</sup> In this chapter, the Church of Rome posits a doctrine of the "Real Presence," and equally as explicitly rejects a figurative interpretation of the presence of Christ in the

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<sup>3</sup> Quoniam autem Christus Redemptor noster corpus suum id, quod sub specie panis offerebat, vere esse dixit, ideo persuasum semper in ecclesia Dei fuit, idque nunc denuo sancta haec synodus declarat, per consecrationem panis et vini conversionem fieri totius substantiae panis in substantiam corporis Christi Domini nostri, et totius substantiae vini in substantiam sanguinis ejus. Quae conversio convenienter et proprie a sancta catholica ecclesia transsubstantiatio appellata est. H. J. Schroeder, Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1941), p. 352.

<sup>4</sup> De Reali Praesentia Domini Nostri Jesu Christi in Sactissimo Eucharistiae Sacramento. Ibid., p. 350.

Sacrament.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the Church of Rome finds itself, along with the Lutheran Church, contending against Sacramentarian Christianity which found it impossible to accept a belief in the objective presence of Christ's body and blood in the Holy Eucharist.

Luther's answer to the question of the nature of the presence was one which has frequently been referred to as the doctrine of the "Real Presence."<sup>6</sup> For Luther, the body and blood of Christ are truly present in the Holy Eucharist and are given to those who receive the elements, i.e., to both the believers and the unbelievers. In the Small Catechism, Luther had defined the Sacrament:

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.<sup>7</sup>

After the first great controversy with the Zwinglians over the Holy Eucharist, Luther's formulation in the Smalcald Articles became:

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<sup>5</sup>Indignissimum sane flagitium est ea a quibusdam contentiosis et pravis hominibus ad fictitios et imaginarios tropos, quibus veritas carnis et sanguinis Christi negatur, contra universum ecclesiae sensum detorqueri. . . . Ibid., p. 350.

<sup>6</sup>Sasse, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup>Es ist der wahre Leib und Blut unsers Herrn Jesu Christi, unter dem Brot und Wein uns Christen zu essen und zu trinken von Christo selbst eingesetzt.  
Bekennnisschriften, p. 519-20.

Regarding the Sacrament of the Altar, we teach that (under) the bread and wine in the Eucharist are the true body and blood of Christ (in the Eucharist) and are offered to and received by not only the devout but also by the evil Christians.<sup>8</sup>

According to Luther, the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation is an unnecessary theory to explain the miracle of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. In the Smalcald Articles, he refers to Transubstantiation as "hair-splitting sophistry."<sup>9</sup>

For Luther, the objective presence of the body and the blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist is not dependent upon the faith of the recipient nor upon the faith and character of the priest who administers the Sacrament and distributes the elements.<sup>10</sup> The presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist is dependent upon the institution of Christ.<sup>11</sup> The benefit of the Sacrament, however, is dependent upon the faith

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<sup>8</sup>Vom Sakrament des Altars halten wir, dass (unter) Brot und Wein im Abendmahl sei der wahrhaftige Leib und Blut Christi (im Abendmahl) und werde nicht allein gereicht und empfangen von frommen, sondern auch von bösen Christen. Bekenntnisschriften, p. 450-51.

<sup>9</sup>"Spitze Sophisterei." Bekenntnisschriften, p. 452.

<sup>10</sup>W. A., Tischreden, 6, No. 6770.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., No. 6775.

of the recipient.<sup>12</sup>

The Zwinglians answered the question of the objective presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist by affirming that there is no objective presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. They are only present subjectively to the faith of the believer. This doctrine is the logical corollary of the Zwinglian Christology which represented the ascended Christ as being locally (circumscriptive) present at the right hand of God the Father. Since the human nature of Christ is locally present at one certain place in heaven, and it cannot at the same time be present anywhere else in any other manner, His body and blood cannot be objectively present in the Holy Eucharist.<sup>13</sup>

The statement that perhaps no other dogma of the Christian faith has so fascinated the minds of theologians as that of the Holy Eucharist may well be applied to the theological investigations of Melancthon. In Article Thirteen of the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Melancthon had expressed the opinion that the use, the celebration, of the Holy

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<sup>12</sup>W. A., 1:286, 595. 6:24.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. Chapter IV, p. 63.



Eucharist is of paramount importance, but because of the historical situation in which he found himself, it became necessary for him to devote a great deal of time and writing to the discussion of the nature of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist and to related questions on the Eucharist as well.

In a letter to Veit Dietrich (1538), Melanchthon wrote: "For more than a decade no day or night has passed that I have not thought about this subject (the Holy Eucharist)." <sup>14</sup> Nine years before that, he had written to the pastors at Reutlingen: "Not without a great struggle have I been led to this belief, so that I conclude that the body of the Lord is truly present in the Supper, even as I have written to Oecolampad." <sup>15</sup> Actually, Melanchthon's thought and struggle on the subject of the Holy Eucharist had begun much earlier than 1528, ten years before the letter to Dietrich. As early as September of 1519, Melanchthon had rejected, as a consequence of his doctrine of justification by

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<sup>14</sup> *Amplius decennio nullum diem, nullam noctem abisse, quin hac de re cogitarim.* CR 1:1106-07.

<sup>15</sup> *Ego etiam non sine maximo certamine in hanc sententiam adductus sum, ut statuum, corpus Domini vere praesens in coena esse, sicut scripsi ad Oecolampadium.* CR 1:1106-07.

faith alone, the interpretation of the Holy Eucharist as an expiatory sacrifice.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps more important for the later development of his doctrine of the Eucharist was the principle which Melanchthon expressed in 1519 that the articles of faith are to be drawn from Scripture and not from the "imagination of vain sophistry:"

It would be more satisfactory to seek the basis of the doctrine of justification and similar doctrines from that of Scriptures, and therefore from the sources, than from the imaginations of vain sophistry.<sup>17</sup>

This thesis is more fully developed in a letter to John Hess of February, 1520, in which Melanchthon states: "The Catholic needs to believe no articles other than those which Scripture teaches."<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the authority of the Councils must yield to the authority of Scripture.<sup>19</sup> Having expressed his conviction that the Scripture is the authority in matters

<sup>16</sup>In his "Philippi Melanchthonis Themata circularia," 1519. CR. 1:126.

<sup>17</sup>Thesis 18. *Satius ergo erat, beatitudinis et similium locorum rationem a sacris literis adeoque e fontibus petere, quam ex indoctis vanissimi Sophistae nugis.* CR 1:127.

<sup>18</sup>*Quod Catholicum praeter articulos, quos scriptura probat, non sit necesse alios credere.* CR. 1:138. Cf. also CR 1:140.

<sup>19</sup>*Deinde conciliorum autoritatem scripturae autoritate vinci.* CR 1:138. Cf. also 1:140.

of faith, Melanchthon goes on to specific cases: "On the basis of these points, there should be no charge of heresy if one does not believe Transubstantiation, the Character and other similar teachings."<sup>20</sup>

In his "Opinion on the doctrine of Zwingli" (1530)<sup>21</sup> Melanchthon, in reply to Bucer, makes clear his position on the Roman theory of Transubstantiation as well as on the position of Bucer. He rejects Bucer's assertion that Christ is present in the Eucharist, "by the contemplation of faith" saying that this means nothing more to Bucer and his followers than "the remembrance of an absent Christ." Melanchthon wrote that the Lutherans required not merely a presence "of efficacy and the Holy Spirit" but a presence of the body.<sup>22</sup> While, according to Melanchthon's "Opinion," the Lutherans taught "that the body of Christ is objectively present with the bread or in the bread,"<sup>23</sup> they at the same time denied (negamus) "Transubstantiation

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<sup>20</sup>"E quibus fit citra haeresis crimen, non credi Transubstantiationem aut Characterem, aut similia." CR 1:138. Cf. also CR 1:145.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. Chapter VI, pp. 151ff. where this "Opinion" is quoted in full.

<sup>22</sup>CR 2:225. Cf. p. 152.

<sup>23</sup>CR 2:224. Cf. p. 152.

and that the body of Christ is locally in the bread."<sup>24</sup>  
 Melanchthon enlarges upon the meaning of this denial  
 when he continues: "We reject also the opinion of those  
 who say that the body is in the bread as wine is in a  
 goblet, or as fire in glowing iron."<sup>25</sup>

In 1532, Melanchthon referred to the Roman theory  
 of Transubstantiation as a metamorphosis, which the  
 Lutherans do not approve:

And our party does not approve that metamor-  
 phosis by which the Papists say that the  
 body is included in these species as wine in  
 a container. But they say that Christ is  
 truly in the Supper, which is not incorrect."<sup>26</sup>

At Ratisbon (1541), the Romanist theologians had  
 advanced several theses on the theory of Transubstantia-  
 tion in which they expressed their adherence to a real  
 corporeal presence of the body and blood of Christ in  
 the Holy Eucharist.<sup>27</sup> In these theses, they referred  
 to the change of the bread and wine with the term

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<sup>24</sup>CR 2:224. Cf. p. 153.

<sup>25</sup>CR 2:224. Cf. p. 153.

<sup>26</sup>Et nostri non probant illam metamorphosin, qua  
 Papistae dicunt corpus in species illas includi, quasi  
 vinum in lagenam. Sed adesse vere dicunt Christum in  
 coena, quod nihil habet incommodi. CR 2:620.

<sup>27</sup>CR 4:262-63.

"transmutation" (transmutatio).<sup>28</sup> This conversion (transmutatio) which takes place by the omnipotent Word of Christ may properly be referred to as Transubstantiation. After this conversion has taken place, the "true body and true blood of Christ" are administered and given (ministratur et exhibentur) under the form (species) of bread and wine.<sup>29</sup> The Romanists further drew the conclusion that the Eucharist, once consecrated, "even though it is reserved, remains the Eucharist and the body of Christ until it is consumed."<sup>30</sup>

Also, asserted the Romanists, "since the true body and blood of Christ are present in the Eucharist, Christ ought to be adored also in the Eucharist."<sup>31</sup>

The conclusion to these theses indicates that the Romanist theologians apparently took cognizance of the Lutheran position on the Holy Eucharist. They concluded that Transubstantiation is ultimately a divine mystery which can be believed, but cannot be scrutinized in

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<sup>28</sup> CR 4:262.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Item, cum semper conservetur Eucharistia in usum sumptionis, convenit, quod Eucharistia semel consecrata, etiamsi servetur, maneat Eucharistia et corpus Christi donec sumatur. CR 4:262.

<sup>31</sup> Item convenit, quod cum in Eucharistia sit verum corpus et verus sanguis Christi, in Eucharistia quoque Christum ipsum esse adorandum. CR 4:262.

detail. Furthermore, the mode or manner of the conversion should not be discussed among the general populace. Rather, it should simply be taught that after the consecration, the true body and blood of Christ are present.<sup>32</sup>

The Protestant reply to the Romanists dealt primarily with an approval of the first part of the Roman position which had expressed the doctrine of the real and corporeal presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and a request for clarification of the meaning of certain terms and phrases.<sup>33</sup> Finally, they stated that any use of the Sacrament outside the use for which it was instituted, such as procession, led to the abuse of trusting in the good work of beholding the blessed host. Such an abuse the Protestants could not approve.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Caeterum cum mysterium istud transmutationis plane divinum sit, quod credi potest, pervestigari non potest, et propterea quoque doctores, nedum veteres sed et recentiores iubeant abstinere a scrutatione, per quem modum fiat transsubstantiatio, videretur medium conciliationis esse, quod disputatio de proprio intellectu verbi transsubstantiationis, seu modo ejus, usque in finem colloqui differatur, et quod ad populum de modo mutationis seu conversionis et transsubstantiationis non disputetur, sed simpliciter doceatur, post consecrationem adesse verum corpus Christi et sanguinem, prout superius dictum est. CR 4:262.

<sup>33</sup>CR 2:263.

<sup>34</sup>Beside the Protestant reply to the Romanists at Ratisbon there is a set of theses extant which Fezel has ascribed to Melanchthon.



Melanchthon refers to Transubstantiation as the foremost of the "horrible errors" which has persisted in the world. In his words, this theory teaches that "in the form the body of Christ is included and retained, as if the presence were physical and not voluntary."<sup>35</sup> This theory has led to such abuses as the theophoric procession and adoration outside the instituted use, and to such disputes as to what a mouse consumes when it chews on the consecrated bread.<sup>36</sup>

Melanchthon considered Transubstantiation a recent speculation or an intellectual rationalization which is unknown to the ancient church.<sup>37</sup> More

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The editors of the CR comment: "Si verum est quod Pezelius dixit, haec a Melanthono Ratisbonae scripta esse, utique hoc fere tempore exarata videntur. An vero Pezelius in eo, quod Ratisbonae factum esse hoc scriptum arbitratus est, non ennaverit, definire nolo. Inscriptionem Pezelius praemisit hancce: 'Sequentia axiomata scripsit Philippus Lantgravio Philippo, Hassiae Princip. Ratisbonae.'" Because there is apparently some doubt as to the authenticity of these theses, we have not quoted from them. CR 4:264.

<sup>35</sup>In illa figura (panis) includi et retineri corpus Christi, quasi physica, et non voluntaria esset praesentia Christi. CR 7:887.

<sup>36</sup>Hinc circumstationem et adorationem extra usum excogitarunt. Postea disputant, quid comedat mus, rodens panem consecratum. CR 7:887.

<sup>37</sup>Primum transubstantiatio recens excogitata est, quod tantum accidentia panis maneant, non substantia. Haec imaginatio ignota est veteribus. CR 7:882.

important, however, than the testimony of the ancient church is the word of Paul who calls the bread bread even in the use of the Eucharist: "who eats of this bread." Thus, it is correctly said that the bread remains.<sup>38</sup>

In 1557, Melanchthon found it necessary to deny that Luther had taught Transubstantiation. He states that Luther had posited a synecdoche: "when the bread and wine are consumed, this is to truly consume the body and blood of Christ."<sup>39</sup> This synecdoche, says Melanchthon, agrees with the words of Paul: "The bread is the koinōnia of the body, i.e., that by which the body of Christ is communicated to us."<sup>40</sup>

When he discusses Melanchthon's conception of the mode of presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, Gollwitzer asserts that Melanchthon gradually gave up the formulation, "in the bread" (in pane) after

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<sup>38</sup> Nam Paulus appellat panem etiam in usu Eucharistiae: qui manducat de pane hoc. Itaque recte dicitur, quod panis moneat. CR 7:882.

<sup>39</sup> Videlicet, sumpta pane et vino vere sumi corpus et sanguinem Christi. CR 9:277.

<sup>40</sup> Panis est koinōnia corporis, id est, quo nobis communicatur corpus Christi. Note here the panis . . . quo construction. The bread is the means by which the body of Christ is communicated to us. The reception of the body is not merely an action temporally concomitant with the reception of the bread. The bread is the means by which the body is conferred. CR 9:277.

1530.<sup>41</sup> We have discovered a number of instances in which Melanchthon used this formula "in the bread" prior to 1534; we have not, however, discovered any uses of it after 1534. Yet the total number of occurrences of this formula is so small that we wonder whether we may rightly place on it the emphasis that Gollwitzer does.

We believe that Melanchthon gradually refrained from using the formula "in the bread" not because he believed Luther was in danger of losing sight of the distinction between an "in the bread" formulation and a "local inclusion,"<sup>42</sup> but that others were losing sight of that difference. We have previously seen that Melanchthon believed it necessary to defend Luther's view of the Sacrament as being understood as Transubstantiation or local inclusion.<sup>43</sup> In 1530, Melanchthon had written: "Although we say that the body of Christ is really present, Luther does not say that it is locally present, as it were massively or

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<sup>41</sup>Je mehr er Luther in der Gefahr sah, gegen eine localis inclusio des Leibes im Blut alle Moeglichkeit deutlicher Abgrenzung zu verlieren, und je mehr er selbst eine Moeglichkeit sah, die Wahrheit der Realpraesenz festzuhalten, ohne den Leib an das Brot zu binden, desto mehr musste er sich von dem in pane loesen. Helmut Gollwitzer, Coena Domini (Muenchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1937), p. 71.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. above Fn. 41.

<sup>43</sup>Cf. Supra p. 111.

circumscriptively."<sup>44</sup>

Melanchthon is very much concerned with defending what he refers to as a "real and substantial" presence of the body of Christ in the Holy Eucharist from being misunderstood as a conversion of the bread or a local inclusion of the body in the bread. For him, the presence of Christ is real; it is Sacramental; it is not an inclusion nor a "soldering together" (ferruminatio).<sup>45</sup>

In the tenth article of the Apology, Melanchthon cited Vulgarius in support of his argument on the Eucharist: "And Vulgarius, a writer who does not seem to us to be stupid, expressly says, the bread is not

<sup>44</sup>Quamquam dicimus, quod corpus Christi realiter adsit, tamen non dicit Lutherus adesse localiter, sicut in aliqua mole, circumscriptione. . . . Transubstantiationem et corpus localiter in pane esse negamus. CR 2:224.

<sup>45</sup>Etsi igitur vere et substantialiter adest filius Dei in sumptione faciens nos sibi membra, et testificans, nos esse sua membra, et nos consolans; tamen non ponatur conversio panis vel inclusio localis, ut Papisticae docent. CR 9:276.

De hac communicatione et sumptione loquitur Dominus; Accipite, manducate. Et de praesentia filii Dei in ministerio homines docendi sunt, et de applicatione: qua seipsum nobis applicat, et nos sibi membra facit, vere et substantialiter praesens. Nec fingitur Coena esse inane spectaculum. CR 9:431.

Ego vero, etsi, ut dixi, realem pono, tamen non pono inclusionem seu ferruminationem, sed sacramentalem (coniunctionem): hoc est, ut signis positis adsit vere Christus efficax. CR 3:514.

only a figure, but it is truly changed into flesh."<sup>46</sup> Melanchthon does not here pronounce any pejorative judgment on the term "changed" (mutari). In this article, however, the point at issue is not the mode of the presence, but the question of the corporeal (objective) presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. The article is an attempt to demonstrate that the churches of the Augsburg Confession believed and taught the real and corporeal presence as did the Roman and Eastern Church.<sup>47</sup>

The religious significance of the Holy Eucharist is very important to Melanchthon's whole doctrine of the Eucharist. It is in the Sacrament that Christ joins us to Himself as members.<sup>48</sup> This religious concern for the Eucharist together with his hope for peace in the church account to a large extent for his distaste for speculation on the nature of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Holy Eucharist.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Et Vulgarius scriptor ut nobis videtur non stultus, diserte inquit, panem non tantum figuram esse, sed vere in carnem mutari. Apology X, 2.

<sup>47</sup>Cf. Apology X, 2, 4.

<sup>48</sup>CR 9:1039.

<sup>49</sup>Iam multa disputantur hic de inclusione corporis in panem, vel de physica vel durabili coniunctione. Sed simplicissimum et verissimum est, quod dici solet:

sacramenta esse sacramenta in usu; quare conscientiae satis est, quod in usu, datis his rebus pane et vino, detur corpus et sanguis domini, atque ita Christus vere adsit in nobis et sit efficax. Haec coniunctio est sacramentalis: positis rebus ponitur praesentia Christi, nec video, cur plures quaestiones hic moveri debeant de physica et durabili coniunctione. CR 7:882.

De negotio eucharistias non aliud adhuc susceptum video, nisi ut hac occasione in intricatas, obscuras et profanas quaestiones ac rixas coniecti animi, a conspectu doctrinae necessariae, tanquam turbine quodam auferantur. CR 1:722. Sed ut praesentiam omnino ponendam esse sentio, ita de modo parousias non disputo. CR 3:511.

Sed hanc veram et simplicem doctrinam de fructu nominant quidam cothurnos et postulant dici, an sit corpus in pane aut speciebus panis. Quasi vero Sacramentum propter panem et illam Papisticam adorationem institutum sit. Studienausgabe, 6, 485.



## CHAPTER VI

### HISTORICAL CRISES IN MELANCHTHON'S DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

#### The Marburg Colloquy<sup>1</sup>

To a large extent, the controversy in the sixteenth century over the Holy Eucharist was begun by Carlstadt, a former friend and close associate of Luther,<sup>2</sup> began to diverge from Luther's interpretation of the Words of Institution, teaching that they must be interpreted symbolically rather than literally. The point of his argument was that when our Lord said, "This

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<sup>1</sup>The accounts of the various participants in the Marburg Colloquy have been printed as follows: Hedio's; A. Erichson, "Das Marburger Religionsgespräch ueber das Abendmahl im Jahr 1529 nach ungedruckten Strassburger Urkunden" in Schriften des protestantischen liberalen Vereins in Elsass-Lothringen (Strasbourg, 1880). Bucer's; T. Schiess, Briefwechsel der Brueder Ambrosius und Thomas Blaurer 1509-1568 (Freiburg i. Br., 1908). Melanchthon's; CR 1:1099ff. Jonas'; CR 1:1095. Luther's; DeWette, III, 513. Osiander's; Weimar Edition of Luther's Works, XXX, Part III, 149. Brenz's; Weimar Edition, XXX, Part III, 152. The sources are given in Weimar Edition, XXX, Part III, 99ff. The best secondary source is doubtless Walther Koehler, Zwingli und Luther, Vol. 1 (Leipzig: Vermittlungsverlag von M. Heinsius Nachfolger Eger & Sievers, 1924).

<sup>2</sup>Not only was Carlstadt Luther's close friend, colleague and associate, he was also Luther's "Doktor-Vater." Luther received his Doctorate at the hand of Carlstadt.

is My body," He was referring to His body seated at the table and not to the bread which He distributed to His disciples. The seeds of this symbolical interpretation of the Eucharist planted by Carlstadt began to bear fruit in southern Germany and especially in Strassburg. Bucer sought to clarify the problem presented by Carlstadt's interpretation by differing from that of Luther. About this time, Bucer received a book written by Christopher Honius who advanced an interpretation similar to that of Carlstadt. Apparently this book made a considerable impression on Bucer, and he soon concluded that only the symbolical interpretation of the Eucharist was scripturally tenable.<sup>3</sup> Soon Zwingli, Oecolampad and Capito came to the side of Bucer and joined forces with him in contending against the Lutheran view of the Eucharist.

The division between the Lutherans and the Zwinglians widened, and to a certain extent, the gap between them was personal as well as theological. Both sides issued a number of tracts and books filled with theological arguments as well as personal attacks

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<sup>3</sup>Hastings Fells, Martin Bucer (New Haven: Yale University Press, c. 1931), p. 72.

upon the character of their opponents.<sup>4</sup>

Bucer was very much impressed by Luther's tract, "Concerning the Lord's Supper, a Confession" and now began to see that Luther did not teach a local or physical presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, but that he believed Luther taught a Sacramental union.<sup>5</sup> Bucer subsequently published his Homilies in which he pointed out that Luther did not believe in a "bodily presence" but a "real presence," and in his tract, The Agreement of Dr. Luther and his Opponents, on Christ's Supper (1528), he indicated that the Lutherans and the Zwinglians were not nearly as far apart as might be supposed; in fact, that they agreed on all points in the Eucharist with the exception of the manducation of non-believers.<sup>6</sup>

Politics and religion soon became very closely intertwined in the discussions of the Holy Eucharist.

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<sup>4</sup>On the Lutheran side, Luther issued, "Against the Heavenly Prophets," (1525) "Concerning the Lord's Supper, a Confession," (1528) "That These Words, This is My Body, Still Firmly Stand Against the Schwaermer," (1527). On the Zwinglian side, Zwingli issued, "On the True and False Religion" (1525) and "A Friendly Exegesis" (1526). Oecolampad issued his tract, "True and Real Explanation of the Words of the Lord, This is My Body" (1525).

<sup>5</sup>Relig., op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

One of the chief Protestant promoters of a union between the Lutherans and the Zwinglians was Philip of Hesse. Philip was very much concerned about the division between the Zwinglians and Lutherans over the question of the Eucharist. It must be said, however, that Philip's motives for union were not purely a desire for religious unity. For him, a union of the Protestants would present a united front against the possibility of military attack by the Romanist Estates.

Philip of Hesse invited the two Protestant groups to send representatives to a conference in his province for purposes of discussing the doctrinal disagreements that had arisen between them. He wrote to Zwingli expressing an earnest desire for some scriptural agreement on the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist so that the two parties might live in harmony.<sup>7</sup>

Although a tentative alliance between the Landgrave of Hesse, the Elector of Saxony and the cities of Strassburg, Ulm and Nuernberg had already been concluded, Melanchthon wrote to the Elector indicating his objection to a meeting with the Swiss, that he had conferred on the matter with Luther, and that both of them were of the opinion that nothing worthwhile could come out of

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<sup>7</sup>Preserved Smith, Luther's Correspondence (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publications Society, 1918), II, 473.

the proposed colloquy.<sup>8</sup> Melanchthon indicated, however, that he was willing to undertake a conference with the Swiss should the Elector command him to do so. He also felt that sooner or later the question should have to be discussed in a conference. Yet, Melanchthon suggested that the Elector refuse to give his consent and postpone the forthcoming conference. A postponement rather than a direct refusal was in order, Melanchthon felt, so that the Landgrave might not be alienated from the Lutheran cause and be satisfied at least for the time being.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>For a discussion of Luther's reaction of the proposed colloquy, Cf. Herman Sasse, This Is My Body (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing Company, 1959), pp. 213ff. Also, Smith, op. cit., pp. 483ff.

<sup>9</sup>Durchlauchtiger hochgeborner Fuerst und Herr. Ew. Fuerstl. Gnaden sind meine unterthaenige schuldige Dienst zuvor. Gnaediger Herr. Ew. Fuerstl. Gnaden wissen, wie sehr mein gnaediger Herr, der Landgraf, begehrt, dass sich Doctor Martinus mit Oecolampadio und Andern vom Sacrament unterrede. Nu gebuehrt uns in solcher grosser wichtiger Sach ohn meins gnaedigsten Herrn und Ew. F. G. Rath und Bewilligung nichts zu thun. Wo E. F. G. bedaechten, dass gut seyn solt, dass solche Unterrede wuerde vorgenommen, sollte an uns kein Mangel befunden werden; denn es muss doch einmal zum Reden kommen. Ich habe aber E. F. G. mein thoericht Bedenken zu Weimar gestallt, das hie beigelegt (ist), warum die Unterrede zwischen Doctor Martino, Oecolampadio und Andern nur diessmal nicht anzunehmen sey. Ich habe auch mit Doctor Martino davon geredt, der besorget auch, es werde unfruchtbar seyn, so sie sich allein unterreden wuerden. Zu dem sey keine Besserung bei den vornehmsten Widersachern zu hoffen. Ich weiss aber, wie diese Sach meinem gnaedigsten Herrn, dem Landgraven, angelegen, und besorg, wo Seine Fuerstl. Gnaden hoeren wuerden, dass D. Martinus abermals die Unterrede abgeschlagen, dass Seine F. Gn. mehr Willens zu dem Zwinglio gewinnen wuerde, und hab nicht geringe Ursach dieser meiner Sorg.

Melanchthon also addressed an opinion on the proposed forthcoming conference to the son of the Elector. In this opinion he again expressed his conviction that the conference would be futile. He wrote:

I have no fear to discuss the sacrament with Oecolampad and his kind. . . there is one thing which they do not yet realize, i.e., how difficult it is to stand before God without His Word. . . to discuss the question with Zwingli is useless.<sup>10</sup>

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Derhalben bitt ich unterthaeniglich, E. F. G. wollen bedenken, was hierin zu thun sey. Ich sehe fuer gut an, dass mein gnaedigster Herr, als waeren Seine Churfuerstl. Gnaden darum angesucht von mir, solches abschuffe, dass ich meinem gnaedigen Herrn, dem Landgraven, diese Antwort zuschreibe: mein gnaedigster Herr, der Churfuerst, wolle uns diessmal nicht erlauben, damit Seine Fuerstl. Gnaden mit glimpflicher Antwort gestillet wuerde. Ich bitt unterthaeniglich, E. F. G. wolle die Sach, die meines Beduenkens nicht zu verachten, bedenken, und mir gnaediglich antworten lassen, dass ich meinem gnaedigen Herrn, dem Landgraven, wie ich billig soll, wieder antworten moege. Gott bewahr Ew. F. G. durch seine Barmherzigkeit ewiglich. Datum zu Witeberg, Freitags nach Exaudi. CR 1:1064-65.

<sup>10</sup> Ich habe fuer meine Person keine Scheu mit Oecolampadio und seines Gleichen von dem Sacrament zue reden, dehalben ichs auch dem Landgraven nich abgeschlagen. Und wollte Gott, es moechte fueglich geschehen; denn dieser Handel ist nicht gering, und ihr Fuergeben hat einen Schein, hat auch einen grossen Anhang aller, so gelehrt geachtet im ganzen deutschen Land, aus Ursachen, die ich weiss; aber es fehlt ihnen an einem Stueck, dass sie noch nicht wissen, wie schwer ist, vor Gott zue stehen ohne Gottes Wort. Fuerwitz und Frevel kann nicht anders handeln, denn wie sie handeln.

Mit Zwingeln zu handeln ist ganz unfruchtbar. So ist auch gedacht, dass er nicht, sondern Oecolampadius sollte gefordert werden, und ob er schon gefordert, ist doch nicht zu hoffen, dass er kommen wuerde. Wenn nun die andern, so dem Zwingel zu Lieb diesen Tanz tanzen, schon genugsamen Unterricht haben, wuerden sie dennoch Scheu haben, sich mit uns zu vergleichen.



Melanchthon goes on to criticize the Landgrave for having more dealings with the Swiss than appropriate.<sup>10</sup>

Melanchthon concludes this opinion with a highly significant statement: "I rest on this, that I will not agree with the Strassburgers as long as I live, and I know that Zwingli and his companions do not teach correctly concerning the Sacrament."<sup>10</sup>

On May 19, the Elector replied to Melanchthon that he had taken note of his objection to a meeting with the Swiss, but he also reminded Melanchthon of his own

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Und so man zusammen kommen sollte, muessten nicht allein sie und die Unsern darbei seyn, sondern auch etliche von Papisten, gelehrte und vernuenftige Maenner, die unser beider Bewegten anhoerten; sonst wuerde es viel Reden machen: "die Lutherischen und Zwingler zoenen zu Haufen, Conspiraciones zu machen" etc. Auch wuerden die Zwingler, so niemand als unpartheisch dabei gewesen, vielleicht desto mehr ruehmen wollen. Derhalben habe ich dem Landgraven angezeigt, dass, so man zusammenkaeme, noth waere, dass Leute dabei waeren von Papistischen, als unpartheische. Ich kenne etliche, die ich hoffe zu bewegen waeren, dass sie von ihrem Irrthum abstuenden, als naemlich Hedio und Ambrosius Blarer, aber mit den andern wuerde es aerger, und moechte darnach mehr Unruhe daraus kommen, wie nach der Leipzigerischen Disputation geschehen. Item, es ist nicht gut, dass der Landgraf viel mit den Zwinglern zu thun habe; er hat sonst (i.e. ohnediess) mehr Lust zu ihnen, denn gut ist. Denn die Sache ist dermassen, dass sie spitzige Leute, dafuer ich den Landgraven auch halte, sehr ansicht, und faellet die Vernunft leichtlich auf das, das sie begreift, sonderlich wenn gelehrte Leute darzu stimmen, die der Sache aus der Schrift eine Gestalt machen als denn viel gelehrte Leute jetzund dem Zwingel anhangen. Aber mir ist diese Sache also angelegen, und habe mich, so viel moeglich, darum erkundet, und beruhe darauf, dass ichs mit den Strassburgern nicht halten will mein Leben lang, und weiss dass Zwingel und seine Gesellen unrecht vom Sacrament schreiben. CR 1:1066-67.

statement that sooner or later the question of the Eucharist would have to be taken up in a joint conference with the Zwinglians. The Elector gave his consent to the proposed colloquy and ordered Melanchthon, Luther and others to go to Nuernberg to discuss the Eucharist with the Zwinglians.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Unsern Gruss zuvor. Hochgelehrter, lieber getreuer. Der hochachtbare Fuerst, unser freundlich lieber Sohn, Herzog Johanns Friedrich zu Sachsen, hat uns eine Schrift, so ihr an seine Lieb gethan, zugestellt, die haben wir ihres Inhalts gelesen, und daraus befunden, dass es die Sache mit Unterredung des Sacraments belangen thut. Vermerken euer Bedenken, so ihr darinnen habt, gar gnaediglich, und haben eben bei uns die Besorg wie Ihr, wo von diesen Dingen soll disputirt und Unterredung gehalten werden, dass allerlei weitere Unrichtigkeit und Beschwerung daraus erfolgen moecht. Aber damit unser Ohem der Landgraf nicht ohne Antwort gelassen, so achten wir dafuer, Ihr haettet seiner Lieb ungefaerlich die Meinung anzuzeigen, dass ihr diese Sache and uns haettet gelangen lassen, aber ohne unsern Rath und Willen wuesstet ihr euch aus unsrer Universitaet, darinnen man euch dieser Zeit nicht entrathen moechte, nicht zu begeben. So ihr aber vermerktet, dass von uns den Dingen nach ihrer Wichtigkeit weiter sollte nachgedacht werden, und ihr doch dafuer hieltet, es wuerd uns nicht sonder entgegen seyn, dass Doctor Martinus, Ihr und Andere euch eineten, an einem gelegnen Ort mit Oecolampadio zusammen fuegtet, und von dieser Lahr des Sacraments euch nothduerftiglich mit einander unterreden thaetet, doch muesste solches zur Zeit beschehen, dass men bei unserer Universitaet und den Schuelern nichts versaeumte, wie ihr ein solches Lieb wohl mit mehrern Umstaenden werdet anzuzeigen wissen.

Und weil jetzt eben vorfaellet, dass wir unsern Canzler etlicher Sachen halben gen Nuernberg und etlichen andern Staedten bei uns gesucht werde, Doctor Martinum, Euch und andre dahin zu verordnen, damit von denselben des Sacraments halben geredt und gehandelt moecht werden, und zu Nuernberg Tag angesetzt, weil unserm Ohem, dem Landgrafen, gegen Nuernberg zu reisen

Philip of Hesse changed the meeting place from Nuernberg to Marburg and paid no attention to Melanchthon's suggestion that representatives of the Papists be included among those invited to participate.<sup>12</sup> The Elector had approved this later proposal of inviting "two honest Papists" to the proposed colloquy.<sup>13</sup> The Landgrave invited as participants in the forthcoming colloquy Zwingli, Oecolampad, Hedio, Bucer, Brentz, Regius, Schmekel, Melanchthon and Luther.

In a joint letter, Melanchthon and Luther accepted the Landgrave's invitation, reminding him that they were coming to Marburg only because he had insisted on it even after he had received their two letters containing their objections.<sup>14</sup> They further expressed the hope

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unsers Achtens ungelegen, so moechte die Sache in seinem Abreisen (Abwesen?) desto fruchtbarlicher gehandelt werden, und dass darauf gedacht wuerde, wie die Papisten dahin desto eher zu bewegen seyn moechten. Das haben wir eich gnaediger Meinung nicht verhalten wollen. Datum Weimar Mittwoch in der Pfingst Wochen, anno Domini 29. CR 1:1071-72.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Fn. 7 above.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. Fn. 11 above.

<sup>14</sup>Durchlauchtiger, Hochgeborner Fuerst und Herr. Ew. Fuerstl. Gnaden meine arme unterthaenige Dienst zuvor. Gnaediger Herr. Wiewohl ich vorgehabt habe in Kurtzem E. F. G. Doctoris Martini Bedenken der Unterrede halb mit Oecolampadio zuzuschreiben, so werden doch E. F. G. sein Gemueth jetzund aus seiner eignene Schrift vernehmen, von dass gedachter Dr. Martinus herzlich gern wollet, dass diess grosse Aergerniss des

that the colloquy might not be fruitless but that by the grace of the Holy Spirit, something of advantage might come of it.<sup>15</sup>

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Sacraments halb gestillet waere, zu dem, dass er E. F. G. unterthaeniglich zu dienen ganz willig ist. Jedoch besorget er, es werde zu dieser Unterrede nichts fruchtbarliches ausgericht. Denn Oecolampadius und etlich andere haben sich dermassen and den Tag gegeben, dass nichts zu hoffen, dass sie etwas zurueckziehen; so wisse er seine Lehre von Sacrament mit gutem Gewissen in keinem Weg zu strafen. Darum, acht ich, sollte demnach zu bedenken seyn, ob es gut waere, die Unterrede vorzunehmen. Wie nun E. F. G. darauf beschliessen werden, dass solche geschehen soll, bin ich willig, meine geringen Dienste auch dazu zu thun. Denn ich habe kein Scheu, mit Oecolampadio oder andern von dieser Sache zu handeln. Denn ich weiss, dass die Zwinglisch Lehr vom Sacrament des Leibes und Blutes Christi nicht wahr ist, und mag in keinem Weg vor Gott verantwortet werden, und ist mir herzlich leid, dass so viele Leut so eilen auf solchen Irrthum gefallen, dass man daran billig Gottes Zorn spueren mag. So kann wohl abnehmen, was Oecolampadium zu diesen Fall gebracht. Ich habe aber zu Speier E. F. G. gebethen, so die Unterrede solle vorgenommen werden, dass mehr Leute dazu gefordert werden denn wir, und hab dazu viele Ursach. Derhalben bitte ich E. F. G. unterthaeniglich, E. F. G. wolle aus hochfuerstl. und christliche Verstand diese Sache wohl bewegen, damit nichts vorgenommen werde, das zu groesserer Uneinigkeit, und dem Namen Christi zu Schmach gereichen moechte. Denn so Ew. F. G. darauf beruhen werden, dass wir zusammen kommen sollen, soll an mir kein Mangel gespueret werden, so mich E. F. G. neben andern fordern werden. Denn E. F. G. unterthaeniglich zu dienen bin ich allzeit bereit. Gott bewahr E. F. G. gnaediglich. Datum zu Wittenberg d. 22. Jun. anno XXIX. CR 1:1077-78.

<sup>15</sup>We believe that Manschreck has gone too far in stating that this joint note contains an expression of the hope that unanimity might be achieved, Clyde Manschreck, Melanchthon, The Quiet Reformer (New York: Abingdon Press, c. 1959), p. 167. Neither Luther or Melanchthon felt that this was possible.

Gnad und Friede in Christo. Durchleuchtiger, Hochgeborner Fuerst, gnaediger Herr.

The Swiss delegation arrived at Marburg on September 27. The Lutherans arrived on September 30.<sup>16</sup> In spite of the serious disagreements between the representatives of the Zwinglians and the Lutherans, a fairly friendly atmosphere prevailed during the entire time of the colloquy.

At the behest of the Landgrave, Friday, October 1, was given over to preliminary private discussions between Oecolampad and Luther on the one hand and Zwingli and Melanchthon on the other. In a letter to the Elector dated approximately October 5, Melanchthon gives us some information about these preliminary discussions. They concerned themselves first with several articles of faith of which the Lutherans charged that the Zwinglians taught incorrectly; i. e., original sin, the ministry and

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Dass E. F. G. unser beider Schrift empfangen und darauf fuerder bestehet, dass wir gen Marburg kommen sollen, guter Hoffnung, es solle Eintraechtigkeit daraus folgen, so wollen wir auch gerne und geneigtes Willens das unser dazu thuen, und nach Gottes Gnaden auf bedeute Zeit, so wir gesund und leben, zu Marburg erscheinen. Der Vater aller Barmherzigkeit und Einigkeit gebe seinen Geist, dass wir ja nicht umsonst, sondern zu Nutz und nicht zu Schaden zusammenkommen. Amen. Christus sey E. F. G. Regierer und Leiter. Amen. VIII. Iulii 1529.

CR 1:1080-81.

<sup>16</sup>The Swiss delegation was represented by Zwingli, Collin, Funk, Oecolampad and Frey. The Lutherans were represented by Melanchthon, Luther, Jonas, Cruciger, Roerer (Dietrich?), Myconius, Menius and Captain E. von der Thann. Osiander, Agricola and Brentz arrived on October 2 during the second session of the colloquy.



the use of the Sacraments, the Trinity and justification. Melanchthon was able to report to the Elector: "They yielded in all these points, although earlier they had openly written otherwise."<sup>17</sup>

The private discussion between Melanchthon and Zwingli then proceeded to the question of the Holy Eucharist. Here we see that Melanchthon was willing to part company with Augustine. Apparently Zwingli had quoted Augustine to the effect that the latter had said that the body of Christ could be in one place only. Melanchthon replied that even if Augustine had said this, he would not agree.<sup>18</sup>

Against the allegation of Zwingli that the John 6 passage, "The flesh profiteth nothing," refers only to the spiritual eating of Christ that is faith, and is opposed to a corporeal eating of His body, Melanchthon replied that Christ is here referring to a carnal understanding, carnal judgment etc., but that Christ did give His body to be eaten in a hidden way. Zwingli answered that this "hidden way" could not be proved from the Scripture. Melanchthon replied with the words of Christ, "This is My body." He added to this quotation

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<sup>17</sup>CR 1:1099.

<sup>18</sup>Walther Koehler, Zwingli und Luther Vol. 2 (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1953), p. 81.



his hermeneutical principle that we should not depart from the literal signification of the words of Scripture without the clear testimony of other passages of Scripture.

Melanchthon refused with considerable determination to accept the Zwinglian principle that the body of Christ cannot be simultaneously present in more than one place.<sup>19</sup>

In the afternoon session of October 1, Melanchthon admitted that most of the statements which Zwingli had quoted from Augustine seemed to be agreeable to Zwingli, but he also insisted that the quotations from the other Fathers supported the Lutheran position. The following morning, October 2, the colloquy proper began. The opening session was taken up by a discussion between Luther, Zwingli and Oecolampad. Luther held to the literal meaning of the words, "This is My body." Zwingli and Oecolampad held to the John 6 passage, "The flesh profiteth nothing," as meaning that a carnal eating is not necessary, but that it is only the spiritual eating of Christ in faith which is important.

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<sup>19</sup>Zwingli's argument was that the Hebrews passages which teach that Christ became "In all things. . . like unto his brethren (2:17). . . yet without sin (4:15)" refers to our human nature. Our human nature is finite. Christ's humanity is like ours. Therefore, Christ's humanity is finite.

In the course of the discussion, one senses an effort on Zwingli's part to divide the Lutheran forces. In arguing with Luther, he several times appealed to his prior discussion with Melanchthon, stating that they had agreed on this or that point. While Zwingli does not say that they had agreed on the question of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, yet this general appeal to a consensus of opinion between him and Melanchthon on some previously disputed points which may have been designed to make Luther suspicious of Melanchthon.<sup>20</sup>

In spite of at least two encouragements from the Lutherans that he take up the argument,<sup>21</sup> Melanchthon remained silent except for one very brief statement. This silence, however, cannot be construed as meaning that he was not of the same opinion as Luther. In his letter to Elector John of Saxony, Melanchthon indicates his full agreement with the position advanced by Luther:

At the end of the discussions, Zwingli and Oecolampad requested fervently that we should accept them as brethren.<sup>22</sup> This we were not

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<sup>20</sup>Cf. Sasse, *op. cit.*, p. 240, 241, 245, 246.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 245, 254.

<sup>22</sup>It is interesting that the oft-quoted remark by Luther, "You have another spirit than we," was addressed to Bucer, not to Zwingli.

willing to do in any way, and we spoke harshly saying to them that we wondered in what way they wanted to call us brethren since they were of the opinion that we teach falsely. How could they agree that our doctrine was taught, defended and preached along with their own?"<sup>23</sup>

As Melanchthon indicates in his letter to the Elector, a common confession in the other articles of faith was drawn up so that the colloquy might not be considered a complete failure and that, as much as possible, future bitterness might be prevented.<sup>24</sup> As we have previously noted, Melanchthon reported that the Zwinglians yielded to the Lutherans in the private conferences. They now also yielded their position in the public conferences with the single exception of the "presence of the body of Christ in the Eucharist."<sup>25</sup> Melanchthon goes on to express the hope that the

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For the history of the relationship between Luther and Bucer, Cf. Schwiebert, Luther and His Times (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), pp. 711ff. Hastings Eells, Martin Bucer (New Haven: Yale University Press, c. 1931), passim.

<sup>23</sup>Und zum Beschluss der Sachen haben Zwingel und Oecolampadius sehr begehrt, dass wir sie als Brueder annehmen moechten. Solches haben wir in keinem Wege willigen wollen, haben sie auch hart darum angeredet, dass uns Wunder nehme, mit welcehm Gewissen sie uns fuer Brueder halten wollen, wenn sie den, dass bei ihnen unsre Meinung gelehrt, gehalten und gepredigt wuerde neben ihrer Lehre? CR 1:1101.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

Zwinglians may yet upon further discussion "let their doctrine fall."<sup>26</sup>

From another report of colloquy which Melanchthon sent to Duke Henry of Saxony, we may gather some statements of considerable significance for evaluating Melanchthon's Eucharistic position over against the Swiss at Marburg.<sup>27</sup> He summarizes the three main arguments presented by the Swiss in support of their position that the body of Christ is and cannot be objectively present in the Eucharist. First, they used the John 6 passage, "The flesh profiteth nothing." They intended this passage as proof that the flesh (fleisch) is not present in the Sacrament since corporeal eating (fleischliche Niessung) is of no value. To this Luther replied that even if it were granted that Christ here refers to His flesh, this passage could not be successfully used to substantiate the Zwinglian position.

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<sup>26</sup>It is a question if Melanchthon may have felt that the Zwinglians refused to give up their position for no other reason than the sharp polemics advanced against them by Luther during the discussions. The phrase, "Ist auch zu hoffen, so man geschickte Wege vornacheme mit ihnen zu handeln, sie wuerden die Sache fallen lassen," (CR 1:1102) is significant. In view of Melanchthon's letter to the Elector in which he expresses Luther's position as being his own, we do not believe that it is indicative of any approach of Melanchthon to the Swiss. It may, however, indicate his gentle nature which preferred a quiet, peaceable discussion.

<sup>27</sup>CR 1:1102-06.

"These words do not say that the body of Christ is not present in the Sacrament." Their second argument was based on rational grounds; viz., "that a body cannot be in many places; Christ is now in heaven etc." This argument resulted in a protracted discussion (Langer Zaak). Luther's position was that human reason is not to sit in judgment upon the omnipotence of God. Zwingli's reply stated that God does not give us matters of faith which are beyond our comprehension. Melanchthon believes that this argument of Zwingli's is a ridiculous statement since there are many articles of the Christian faith which are beyond the capabilities of human reason; viz., the incarnation, that Christ, the Son of God, died etc. Zwingli further questioned how the presence of Christ in the Eucharist could be brought about by unbelieving priests. Luther replied that the presence of Christ is not accomplished by the merit or power of the priests, but by the institution of Christ. To this statement of Luther for which Zwingli had no answer, Melanchthon gives his approbation. Thirdly, Oecolampad stated that the Sacraments are signs, and we should understand them as representing something. From this basic statement, we should conclude that the body of Christ is merely represented in the Sacrament and is not actually present. Melanchthon indicates that Luther agreed that the Sacraments are signs (Zeichen), but we

should understand them as signs which represent the attached promises (Dass sacramenta zeichen sind, soll verstanden werden vornaemlich, dass sie die angehangenen Promissiones bedeuten.) The promise is of the essence; thus, if circumcision is regarded only as a mutilation of the body, it is worthless. One must consider the meaning of the promise connected with the circumcision. "Therefore, one should not deal frivolously with the significant, but should investigate what God's Word itself signifies."

Finally, Zwingli and Oecolampad adduced patristic quotations in support of their Eucharist doctrine. Melanchthon observes that many of their quotations were beside the point and did not deal with the Eucharist at all. Against the Zwinglian quotations, the Lutherans produced many clearer passages from the Fathers which teach that the true body and blood of Christ are present in the Eucharist.

Melanchthon in this report again repeats the request of the Swiss that they be accepted as brethren by the Lutherans. This Luther was unwilling to do and expressed his amazement that they should make such a request in view of the difference in doctrine still so apparent. This request, concludes Melanchthon, is evidence that they do not regard very highly their own position. In the other articles of faith, Zwingli and Oecolampad



gladly adopted Luther's position; "only in the Sacrament they did not follow him, because the matter has been carried too far" (Allein vom Sacrement haben sie nicht folgen wollen, denn die Sache ist zu weit gefuehrt.)

#### Diet at Augsburg (1530)

Impelled by the threat of the Turk<sup>1</sup> to the Holy Roman Empire, Emperor Charles V, in an Imperial Summons,<sup>2</sup> ordered John, Duke of Saxony and an Imperial Elector, to the City of Augsburg to attend a general diet and assembly. In the Summons to the Diet, the Turkish danger takes precedence over the matters of faith. This indicates to a great extent the motivation for Charles' action and conduct. His primary concern was not for the unity of the church but for the political fortunes of the Spanish-Hapsburg Empire.

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<sup>1</sup>For a valuable discussion of the Turkish threat to the Holy Roman Empire, its effect on Imperial policies and its relation to the Reformation, Cf. Stephen A. Fisher-Galati, Ottoman Imperialism and German Protestantism 1521-1555 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).

<sup>2</sup>For the text of the Imperial Summons Cf. M. Reu, The Augsburg Confession; A Collection of Sources With an Historical Introduction (Chicago: Wartburg Press, 1930), Part II, 69ff. as quoted from Foerstemann, Urkundenbuch zu der Geschichte des Reichstags zu Augsburg im Jahre 1530 (Halle: Wacsen, 1835), I, 1ff.

The Imperial Summons (dated January 21, 1530) setting the date of the Diet for April 8, reached the Elector of Saxony on March 11. The Elector and his theologians were mildly surprised by the friendly tone of the Summons, which made no reference to the Edict of Worms, the Bull of Condemnation "Exsurge Domine" of June 20, 1520, the imperial ban nor the 1529 Decree of Speyer. The Elector received the Imperial Summons with unrestrained joy, and on the advice of his counsellors, he prepared in all possible haste to leave for Augsburg. Chancellor Brueck advised that since according to the Summons:

Everyone's opinion and ideas are to be heard, that those opinions and ideas on which our party has so far stood and remained, be brought together in an orderly way, in writing and thoroughly confirmed by the Divine Word so that if the estates are not permitted to present their opinions through their theologians, we may do this in writing.<sup>3</sup>

On March 14, the Elector, heeding Brueck's advice, sent a request to Luther, Melanchthon, Jonas and Bugenhagen that they deliberate on those articles on which there was contention and that they report to him personally on March 20. Although the deliberations were rushed as much as possible, a second request by the Elector on March 21 was necessary, and the Elector probably did not

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<sup>3</sup>Foerstemann, op. cit., I, 39-40.

see the results of his theologian's discussions until they were delivered to him by Melanchthon at Torgau on March 27.<sup>4</sup>

On April 3, Luther, Melanchthon, Dietrich and Jonas left Wittenberg for Torgau. The following day the Elector and his retinue departed from Torgau. Spalatin, Agricola and Caspar Aquila joined the Electoral party en route to Coburg. Since Luther was still under the imperial ban, he remained at Coburg while the Elector and his party moved on to Augsburg.

While yet in Coburg, Melanchthon began revising the "Torgau Articles" which were to be presented at the Diet, and he also began writing a preface.<sup>5</sup> Melanchthon continued working on the Articles while en route and after their arrival at Augsburg. He revised primarily the preface in which he had anxiously avoided the use of Luther's name. But now since Luther would remain at Coburg and not go to Augsburg, Melanchthon several times referred to him by name.

Shortly after he arrived at Augsburg, Melanchthon realized that more far-reaching changes than composing a rhetorical preface would be necessary. Melanchthon

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<sup>4</sup>On Melanchthon's presence in Torgau on this date Cf. CR 2:33ff.

<sup>5</sup>CR 2:39.

soon became acquainted with Eck's newly published "Four Hundred and Four Articles for the Diet at Augsburg." These articles created an entirely new situation with problems peculiar to it. In his "Articles," Eck had compiled statements without regard for context from the writings of Luther, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, Jonas, Lange, Strauss and Zimmermann, along with quotations from the Zwinglians, Anabaptists and fanatics. While Eck gave an appearance of reliability to his statements by listing not only the source reference but also the page, he did not distinguish between the quotations taken from Lutheran sources from the others. In many instances, he also called attention to the fact that the various statements contained ancient heresies which had long ago been condemned and anathematized by the church.<sup>6</sup>

Melanchthon realized that Eck's Articles had dramatically changed the situation by charging the Lutherans with heresy. In this new situation, the proposed Apology of Defense would no longer be sufficient

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<sup>6</sup>The text of Eck's "Four Hundred and Four Articles" is translated into English in: Samuel Macauley Jackson, editor. Second Series, Vol 2. Papers of the American Society of Church History (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), pp. 104ff.

Melanchthon, in his May 4 letter to Luther, refers Eck's Articles as diabolikotatas diabolus, and adds, "adversus hos volui remedium opponere." CR 2:45.

to counteract the charges made against the Lutherans. The Apology would now have to become a confession containing not only the articles on abuses but a summary of the articles of faith as well. The confession would have to present positively the connection of the Lutheran faith with that of the old Catholic faith and equally as emphatically delineate between the Lutherans on the one hand and the Sacramentarians, Anabaptists and fanatics on the other.<sup>7</sup>

Melanchthon worked rapidly on the new confession, and on May 11, the Elector sent it to Luther at Coburg with the request that he study it and revise it with additions, corrections or omissions as he deemed necessary.<sup>8</sup> Four days later, Luther returned the document to the Elector. In an enclosed note, he wrote to the Elector:

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<sup>7</sup>The impact of Eck's Articles can be seen in the various drafts of Melanchthon's Preface, which was later put aside in favor of Brueck's juristic Preface; also in Articles V, IX, XII, XVI, XVII in which Melanchthon sets apart the Lutherans from the Zwinglians and Anabaptists.

<sup>8</sup>Nachdem ihr und andre unsere Gelehrten zu Wittenberg, auf unser gnaediges Ansinnen und Begehren die Artikel, so der Religion haben streitig sind, in Verzeichniss bracht: als wollen wir euch nicht bergen, dass jetzt allhie Mag. Philippus Melanchthon dieselbigen weiter uebersehen und in eine Form gezogen hat, die wir euch hierbei uebersenden. Und ist unser gnaediges Begehren, ihr wollet Dieselben weiter zu uebersehen und zu bewegen unbeschwert seyn.

I have read the Apology of M. Philip. It pleases me right well, and I do not know what to improve or change in it; neither would it be proper for I cannot tread so lightly. Christ, our Lord, help that it bear<sup>9</sup> much and great fruit as we hope and pray. Amen.

The days following were given over to revising and polishing the confession or "Apology" as it was called.<sup>10</sup> Beside the change in content, the Apology was also changed from being a private Saxon confession to a confession in the name of all the Lutheran princes and estates. This latter change came about after the receipt of Charles' message of May 27 to the Elector. In this message, Charles accused the Elector of refusing to obey the Edict of Worms and commanded that the Elector stop his preachers from preaching.<sup>11</sup>

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Un wo es euch dermasse gefaellig, oder etwas davon oder dazu zu setzen bedachtet, dass wollet also daneben verzeichnen, damit man alsdann auf Kaiser. Majestaet Ankunft, der wir uns in Kuerze versehen, gefasst und geschickt seyn moege, und uns dieselbigen alsdann bei diesem Bothen wohl verwahrt und verpetschaft unverzuglich wiederum anher schicken. CR 2:47.

<sup>9</sup>On this statement by Luther Reu has commented, "In spite of the ironic reference to Melanchthon's ability to tread lightly, Luther's words are hardly anything else but his complete agreement with its contents." M. Reu, op. cit., p. 68. We do not believe that Luther's reference to Melanchthon's "leise-treten" is irony. We believe it is simply a recognition of Melanchthon's gift for deft phraseology.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Melanchthon's letter to Luther dated May 22, 1530. CR 2:59-61.

<sup>11</sup>Foerstemann, op. cit. I, p. 220ff.



The Elector replied with determination to the Emperor's charges and pleaded that Charles would not insist on his proscription of Lutheran preaching. He reminded the Emperor of the guarantee of the Imperial Summons that the evangelical doctrine would not be suppressed without a full hearing.<sup>12</sup> The Elector, however, did not receive a reply from the Emperor, and on June 15, the imperial party finally reached Augsburg. A letter from the Nuernberg delegates to the council of Nuernberg indicates that once again Melanchthon was involved in making the necessary changes in the Apology after the Elector's decision to present it not in his name alone, "but in the name of all the united Lutheran princes and estates."<sup>13</sup>

Shortly after the Emperor's arrival in Augsburg, we find Melanchthon involved in private negotiations with the imperial secretaries, Cornelius Schepper and Alfonso Valdes. Mercurinus Gattarina, the Lord high-chancellor and an ardent supporter of the Elector in the imperial court, had died on June 7. Schepper anxiously avoided all appearances of being friendly with Melanchthon. Valdes, however, was much more

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid. I, p. 224ff.

<sup>13</sup>CR 2:105.

approachable.<sup>14</sup> Melanchthon protested to Valdes against the misconception rampant in Spain that the Lutherans did not believe in God or the Trinity, that they had no regard for Christ or the Blessed Virgin Mary, etc. Melanchthon also impressed on Valdes that the doctrines of the Lutherans were not divergent from those of the church, and that the differences revolved in large measure around certain abuses which had come into the church. When Valdes reported to the Emperor that the Lutherans "did not believe anything contrary to the church,"<sup>15</sup> Charles V then requested, through Valdes, that Melanchthon prepare a brief confession of the Lutherans' faith. He further asked Valdes to confer

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<sup>14</sup>It has been a much-discussed question whether these private negotiations were initiated by Melanchthon or the Romanists. Kolde, on the basis of CR 2:118-19, charged Melanchthon with full responsibility for initiating the discussions. Kolde, Martin Luther (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1893), II, 592. Historians have quite generally followed Kolde's view-point: Bezold, Geschichte der Deutschen Reformation, p. 621; Kawerau, Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte, III, 2A, p. 97; K. Mueller, Kirchengeschichte II, 2, p. 372ff. Ellinger, Philip Melanchthon, p. 268ff. Reu, op. cit., generally follows Kolde's view, but he admits that all the historical questions surrounding the negotiations between Melanchthon and Valdes have not been solved. p. 95.

Theodor Brieger opposed Kolde's view; he believed that the negotiations were begun by the Romanists. Zur Geschichte d. Augsburger Reichstages von 1530.

<sup>15</sup>Schirmacher, Briefe u. Akten, zur Geschichte des Religionsgesprächs zu Marburg 1529 und des Reichstags zu Augsburg 1530 (Gotha: Perthes, 1876), p. 72.

with the Papal Legate Campegius. Campegius readily let himself be drawn into the discussion with Melanchthon.

According to the report of the Nuernberg delegates, the points at issue were the marriage of priests and monks, communion under both kinds, and the Mass.<sup>16</sup> These points have also been listed to include the property of the church. The report of the Nuernberg delegates indicates that Campegius received well the two points of marriage of the priests and communion under both kinds, but that he was not willing to grant the abolition of the private Mass.<sup>17</sup>

The reason why these negotiations broke down does not seem to be completely clear. It may have been due to the charges indirectly made against the Lutherans by Pimpenella in the opening service on June 20; or it may have been the oration delivered in the name of Charles V by Palsgrave Frederick, which contained some anti-Lutheran remarks.<sup>18</sup> Whatever the cause, on June 21, the princes and theologians were in conference to revise and

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<sup>16</sup>CR 2:123.

<sup>17</sup>CR 2:123. The report of the Nuernberg delegates further indicates that Melanchthon was to discuss the negotiations with Brueck and others to prepare a report for the Elector and if it was deemed advisable, submit it to Valdes.

<sup>18</sup>For the text of the oration Cf. Coelestin, Historia Comitiorum Anno 1530 Augustae Celebratourum (Frankfurt a. O.: Eichorn, 1597) I, 105ff.

prepare their common Confession for presentation.<sup>19</sup> On June 23, the Confession was ready, but since time was now short, the Confession was to have been presented to the Emperor on June 24, the Latin copy of the Confession had to be presented in Melanchthon's handwriting. The last few days of preparation had been devoted primarily to the German copy.

The Confession was finally presented to the Emperor on June 25, 1530 with Dr. Christian Beyer reading the German copy. The following day the Romanists began conferences with the intention of determining how they should reply to the Confession. The task of preparing a reply was finally turned over to a group of the leading Roman theologians present at Augsburg, headed by John Eck. The first draft of the reply, known as the Responsio Catholica, was ready by July 15. The Responsio was much too long and bitter to suit the Emperor, and he ordered it re-drafted. After several revisions, the Romanist answer to the Confession, known as the Confutatio Pontificia<sup>20</sup> to distinguish it from the earlier Responsio, was presented to all the Estates

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<sup>19</sup>CR 2:124.

<sup>20</sup>This is the Lutheran title of the refutation of the Augsburg Confession. Officially this refutation is called the Reply of His Imperial Majesty.

of the Empire in the same room in which the Lutheran Confession had been presented some six weeks earlier.

The intervening six-week period between the reading of the Confession and the Confutation again found Melanchthon busily engaged in negotiations with the Romanists. Melanchthon has been severely criticized for his part in the discussions because it is felt that he was willing to yield too much to the Romanists for the sake of peace. Perhaps he was. But we should also remember that his attitude was not always one which was willing to yield. The day following the presentation of the Confession, it is reported that in answer to Campegius' demands that he yield to the Romanists, Melanchthon took a stand which has been likened to that of Luther at Worms.<sup>21</sup>

Some of the letters written by Melanchthon during the days at Augsburg indicate the stress under which he labored. They also enunciate the principle which guided him in his negotiations. He indicated that there was already then considerable ill-will against

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<sup>21</sup>It is reported that Campegius in the midst of the assembled clergy "hurled thunderbolts like an angry Jupiter" and demanded of Melanchthon that he yield. Melanchthon replied: "We cannot yield, nor desert the truth. We pray for God's sake and Christ's our opponents will grant us that which we cannot surrender with a good conscience."

him on the part of some of the Lutheran representative.<sup>22</sup>

His guiding principle was, "Not by my fault shall peace be destroyed."<sup>23</sup>

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When the Cardinal replied, "I cannot, I cannot, the keys do not err," Melanchthon answered: "We will commit our cause and ourselves to God. If God be for us, who can be against us? We have forty thousand wives and children of pastors whose souls we cannot desert. We will work and fight and die, if God wills it, rather than betray so many souls." CR 10:198.

<sup>22</sup>In a letter to his brother, Melanchthon wrote: "I could almost believe that I was born under an unlucky star. For what distresses me most has come upon me. Poverty, hunger, contempt, and other misfortunes I could easily bear. But what utterly prostrates me is strife and controversy. I had to compose the Confession which was to be given to the Emperor and the Estates. In spirit I foresaw insults, wars, devastation, battles. And now does it depend upon me to divert such great calamity? Oh, God, in Whom I trust, help Thou me. Thou judgest us as we purpose in heart. Dear brother, I dare not drop the matter as long as I live. But not by my fault shall peace be destroyed. Other theologians wanted to compose the Confession. Would God they had had their way. Perhaps they could have done it better. Now they are dissatisfied with mine and want it changed. One cries out here, another there. But I must maintain my principle of omitting everything that increases the bitterness. God is my witness that my intentions have been good. My reward is that I shall be hated." Melanchthon, Paedagogica, p. 38 as quoted in Richard, op. cit., p. 205.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. Fn. 20. We believe Richard has an excellent comment: "Melanchthon may have made mistakes in some instances; he may have been inclined to yield too much to Rome for the sake of peace; but it is the verdict of history that no man ever acted with purer motives than he. His mild and conciliatory spirit made the Augsburg Confession a fact in history. While other men clamored for war, he pleaded for peace." Ibid., pp. 205-06.



During the days at Augsburg, Melanchthon was also busily engaged in the production of various opinions on the Holy Eucharist. These indicate that he was not willing to surrender the stand he had taken on the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. On about July 7, he wrote his "Opinion on the Mass" in which he carefully distinguished five opinions on the Mass. The first two of these he calls "profane" because they regard the Holy Eucharist as something which involves only a relationship or dealing among men. The second group of three opinions, in which there were, according to Melanchthon, great and obscure discussion on the use of the Mass, grant that the Holy Eucharist involves a relationship toward God:

The first opinion is: that the Holy Eucharist is a symposium, instituted among Christians to signify their good-will, because Symposia seem to bring about friendships. This is the teaching of the "fine and learned" men who liken this ceremony with gentile rites. These men do not believe that it pertains to the conscience and to the apprehension of the will of God. They simply use this symbol or example to bind together a society of men.

The second opinion is not much different from the first; that the Holy Eucharist was instituted to be a sign of profession by which Christians are distinguished from other people like the toga distinguished the Romans from other people or the cowl distinguishes the monks. The Zwinglian faction everywhere discusses the use of the Sacrament in this manner. They teach that it was instituted so that we should witness to our faith before men, that is, we should testify that we are Christians. These people vehemently diminish the dignity of the Sacrament, and because these

opinions discuss the Sacraments in non-religious fashion, it is easy to judge that they are merely elegant discussions. I believe these profane men delude themselves when they make religion into something which pertains only to human relationships and functions, and not to the consciences and the emotions (motus animi) and do not require any use beyond this.

The second group of three opinions on the Holy Eucharist as distinguished by Melanchthon deals with those who recognize that the Eucharist involves a relationship to God. These opinions Melanchthon calls "more religious" (religiosiores):

The first is that of Thomas and others who increase to infinity the number of private Masses in the church. He also insists that the Mass

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<sup>24</sup>Prima opinio est: quod coena Domini sit Symposium, institutum inter Christianos, ad significandam benevolentiam. Quia Symposia videntur maxime conciliare amicitias. Sic sentiunt homines belli et literati, qui hanc ceremoniam cum gentilibus ritibus conferunt. Hi non putant pertinere ad conscientiam, et ad apprehendendam voluntatem Dei; sed ad societatem hominum devinciendam hoc symbolo vel exemplo utuntur.

Secunda opinio non multo distat a superiore, quod coena sit instituta, ut sit nota professionis, qua Christiani discernantur a reliquis gentibus, sicut toga discernebat Romanos a caeteris, aut cucullus distinguit monachos. Sic de usu Sacramenti ubique loquitur Cingliana factio. Docet, esse institutum, ut coram hominibus ostendamus fidem, id est, testemur nos esse Christianos. Hi quoque valde extenuant dignitatem Sacramentorum. Et quia hae opiniones civiliter loquuntur de Sacramentis, et facile possunt intelligi, videntur mire concinnae. Ita blandiuntur iudicio homines profani, qui religionem tantum ad civilia officia et civilem vitae consuetudinem transfert, non ad conscientias et animi motus erga Deum ut nullum praeterea usum requirat. CR 2:208-9.

is a sacrifice for the living and the dead. . . .

Thomas writes: Christ's suffering made satisfaction for original sin and the Holy Eucharist was instituted so that this good work should make satisfaction for our daily sins and merit grace not only to the one who offers the Mass, but for the whole church and even beyond that, also for those for whom it is offered. This opinion places the merit in the work itself. Thus, it defines the Sacrament as a work which merits grace, or placates God over against the one who offers it and others. This is done ex opere operato even if they are not in grace and do not have the intention to refrain from sinning.<sup>25</sup>

In the discussing of this opinion, Melanchthon goes on to give Thomas' (pseudo-Thomas) "grades of merit" and shows that Luther successfully rejected the belief that the Mass is meritorious. This opinion of the meritorious character of the Mass is refuted, believes Melanchthon, when one knows the doctrine of righteousness

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<sup>25</sup>Prima est Thomae et similium, quae hactenus in Ecclesia et auxit numerum privatarum Missarum in infinitum, et disputat, Missam esse sacrificium pro vivis et mortuis. Nos propter ambiguitatem non utemur vocabulo, sed rem exponemus.

Thomas sic scribit: Christi passionem satisfacisse pro originali peccato, et coenam Domini seu Missam institutam esse, ut id opus satisfaciat pro quotidianis delictis nostris, et mereatur gratiam non modo facienti, sed toti Ecclesiae, et praesertim his, pro quibus factum fuerit. Haec opinio collocat meritum in ipso opere, et sic definit Sacramentum opus esse, quod meretur gratiam, seu placat Deum facienti et aliis, ex opere operato, hoc est, etiam si non sint in gratia, modo propositum peccandi non habeant. CR 2:209. This quotation is actually from pseudo-Thomas.

by faith.<sup>26</sup>

The second opinion in this group is one which defends private Masses and the vulgar custom of the church and contends that the Mass is a sacrifice. Melanchthon criticizes those who hold to this opinion for not defining what they mean by "sacrifice" and goes on with a lengthy discussion on the private Mass and the expiatory character of the sacrifice, concluding with this statement:

Thus now they imagine that the work of the Mass or Supper is meritorious of itself whether faith is added or not. Second, every sacrifice is something which we offer to God. In the Holy Eucharist, the body of Christ is offered to us and beyond this, grace is also offered to us; therefore, the Eucharist is not a sacrifice. For the words of the Eucharist themselves testify that we do not here offer the body of Christ to God, but that it is offered to us: Take, eat etc.<sup>27</sup>

The third opinion in this group is Luther's:

This opinion corresponds to scripture, that the Eucharist was instituted, not that we here offer the body of Christ, but that through the Eucharist, something is offered to us, i.e., it

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<sup>26</sup>Primum, Christus semel satisfecit pro omnibus peccatis, ut testatur scriptura: una oblatione consummavit sanctos. Nec ferenda blasphemia est in Ecclesia, quod Christi passio pro sola culpa originis satisfecerit. CR 2:209.

<sup>27</sup>Ita nunc somniant opus Missae seu coenae valere per sese, sive accedat fides, sive non accedat. Secundo, omne sacrificium est res nostra, quam nos exhibemus Deo.

is a Sacrament by which grace is offered to us, and by which we are moved to faith, and by which we console despairing consciences.<sup>28</sup>

Melanchthon continues:

Christ calls the Eucharist a testament: a testament signifies a promise in which something is offered to us. This offer can be accepted only by faith. Therefore, the Eucharist is not something we offer to God; rather, in it, those who have guilty<sup>29</sup> consciences receive grace and consolation.

About July 25, Melanchthon issued his "Opinion on the Doctrine of Zwingli" in which he rejected Bucer's contention that the difference between the Zwinglian and Lutheran doctrine of the Eucharist was primarily one of terminology. Because of the importance of this Opinion in establishing the relationship of Melanchthon's doctrine of the Eucharist over against the Zwinglians,

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In coena Domini exhibetur nobis corpus Domini, et praeterea offertur gratia, igitur coena non est sacrificium. Nam ipsa verba coenae testantur, hic non offerri corpus Deo, sed nobis exhiberi: Accipite, comedite etc. CR 2:212.

<sup>28</sup>quam et ipse iudico maxime consentaneam esse scripturae, quod coena sit instituta, non ut nos offeramus ibi corpus Christi, sed quod per eam aliquid offeratur nobis, videlicet ut sit sacramentum, quo nobis offeratur gratia, et quo moveamur ad credendum, et quo pavidas conscientias consolemur. CR 2:212.

<sup>29</sup>Christus coenam vocat testamentum, porro testamentum significat promissionem, in qua nobis aliquid offertur, quod fide accipiendum est. Igitur coena non est res, quam nos offerimus Deo, sed potius in qua accipiunt gratiam et consolationem isti, qui habent conscientias perterrefactas. CR 2:213.



we are here quoting it in full:

1) The Zwinglians teach that the body of the Lord can be in only one place.

2) Again, the body of Christ cannot be anywhere other than locally, and they vigorously contend that it is contrary to the nature of a body to be anywhere except in a local mode. Again, that it is contrary to the nature of a body to be in various places at the same time.

3) Therefore, they teach that the body of Christ is circumscriptively in one certain place in heaven, and therefore, it cannot at the same time be anywhere else in any other manner, and that the body is truly and really separated from the bread, nor is it in the bread or with the bread.

4) Therefore, Bucer is obviously wrong when he contends that they teach the same as we do. For we do not say this: it is necessary that the body of Christ be in one place. Rather, we say that it can be in different places at the same time, whether this happens locally, or in a hidden way, in which all the parts of the person of Christ are present as at one point. Therefore, we teach the true and real presence of the body of Christ with the bread.

5) Bucer, if he wants to follow Zwingli and Oecolampad, does not dare say that the body of Christ is objectively, without an intervening distance, present with the bread.

6) We are not able to use these statements concerning the presence of the body, "I am in their midst," because we do not ingenuously bind the body of Christ so that it must be circumscriptively in only one place.

7) These words, "by the contemplation of faith," mean nothing to them except the recollection of an absent Christ.

8) Bucer himself produces only vapor when he comments on these words, "by the contemplation of faith:" This is said by some to have no more meaning than if someone remembers an absent friend; but the members of our party value very



highly the presence which by the very sure Word of God consists in the powerful cooperation of the Holy Spirit.

9) Here they want the presence understood only of efficacy and of the Holy Spirit.

10) We, however, require not only the presence of virtue, but of the body. This Bucer deliberately ignores.

11) We teach that the body of Christ is truly and really present with the bread or in the bread.

12) Yet they say that the body of Christ is objectively present, but by the contemplation of faith, i.e., by imagination.

13) This, very simply, is their doctrine. They practice deception in this that they say that the body is objectively present and then add, "by the contemplation of faith," i.e., by imagination. Thus, they again deny the objective presence.

14) We teach that the body of Christ is truly and really present with the bread or in the bread.

15) It seems to me that Bucer is constructing an artifice when he says that we now agree:

I. Because we deny transubstantiation and say that the bread remains.

II. Although we say that the body of Christ is objectively present, Luther does not say it is present locally, i.e., as a mass, by circumscription; but in that mode by which the person of Christ or the whole Christ is present to all creatures.

III. Here Bucer argues: If the body of Christ is present in that mode by which the whole Christ is present to all things, it follows that the body of Christ is deposited locally in a certain place, and that other things, because they have various locations, are present to the body, not objectively, but by ascription (adiective). So he argues that the presence is only an imagination.

Bucer, however, is deceived in this imagination because he does not concede an objective presence.

Again, we ought to say that we teach that there is an objective presence and there should be no dispute as to whether it is real, or of what kind it is.

We deny transubstantiation and that the body is locally present in the bread. We also reject the opinion of those who say that the body is in the bread as wine in a container or fire in a piece of glowing metal. But nevertheless, we confess that the body of Christ is truly present in the Eucharist. We teach that Christ distributes to us His present body and blood to be eaten and drunk. . . . Thus we believe that by the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ are offered and presented to us. . . . With Augustine we confess that Christ, on account of the manner of a true body, is in some one place in heaven, certainly not locally, but in that mode which is proper to this Sacrament. On both sides we confess that the Sacraments have the character of a Sacrament and are Sacraments only in their proper use. Also, the covenant (pactum), by which the body and blood of Christ are offered to us in the bread and wine, is present with these things, and we believe it is confirmed. . . . For the Sacraments of Christians are simply signs and testimonies of the present, not the absent Christ.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>1) Cingliani sentiunt corpus Domini tantum in uno loco esse posse.

2) Item corpus Christi non posse alicubi esse, nisi localiter, et valde contendunt, quod repugnet naturae corporis alicubi esse, non localiter. Item quod repugnet naturae corporis, simul in diversis locis esse.

3) Et propterea sentiunt, quod corpus Christi sit in loc certo circumscriptum in coelo, ita, quod simul nullo modo possit alibi esse, et quod vere acrealiter diste a pane, nec in pane nec cum pane sit.

4) Ergo manifeste fallit Bucerus, cum disputat, quod idem sentiant nobiscum. Nos enim dicimus, quod not sit necesse corpus Christ in ulo loco esse.

Unfortunately, only a part of Melanchthon's "On Both Species," dated August 20, is extant. In this Opinion, he expresses his belief that for the sake of their consciences, those people who have received the

Item nos dicimus, quod simul possit in locis diversis esse, quo diversa loca personae Christi simul, tanquam unum punctum, praesentia sunt. Ideo veram et realem corporis Christi praesentiam cum pane ponimus.

5) Bucerus nunquam audet dicere, si velit sententiam Cinglii aut Oecolampadii sequi, corpus Christi realiter esse cum pane, sine distantia geometrica.

6) Nos possumus has sententias allegare de praesentia corporis, ego sum in medio eorum. Quia non alligamus corpus Christi simpliciter, ita ut necesse sit in uno loco tantum esse circumscriptum.

7) Haec verba, contemplatione fidei, nihil significant ipsis, nisi absentis Christi recordationem.

8) Et Bucerus ipse effundit nebulas, cum dicit de his verbis, contemplatione fidei: Id a non nullis non maiorem emphasin habere dicitur, quam si quis absentis recordetur amici; sed nostri praesentiae illi multo plus tribuunt, ut quae per certissimum Deo verbum et potentem Spiritus sancti cooperationem consistat.

9) Hi praesentiam tantum intelligi volunt de efficacia et Spiritu Sancto.

10) Nos autem requirimus non solum praesentiam potentiae, sed corporis. Hoc de industria dissimulat Bucerus.

11) Ipsi simpliciter sic sentiunt, quod corpus Christi sit in coelo, et non sit vel cum pane, vel in pane realiter.

12) Et tamen dicunt, corpus Christi vere adesse, sed contemplatione fidei, hoc est, imaginatione.

13) Haec simpliciter est sententia istorum. Fucum faciunt hominibus per hoc, quod dicunt, vere adesse corpus, et tamen postea dicunt, contemplatione fidei, id est, imaginatione. Sic iterum negant praesentiam realem.

14) Nos docemus, quod corpus Christi vere et realiter adsit cum pane, vel in pane.

15) Videtur autem mihi Bucerus insidias struere, cum dicit, nos nunc convenire:

I) Quia negamus transsubstantiationem, et dicimus manere panem.

Sacrament under both kinds and have been instructed that this procedure is in accordance with God's institution, should not be denied the privilege of receiving Holy Communion in this manner lest their consciences become

II) Quamquam dicimus, quod corpus Christi realiter adsit; tamen non dicit Lutherus adesse localiter, scilicet in aliqua mole, circumscriptione; sed illo modo, quo Christi persona seu totus Christus praesens est omnibus creaturis.

III) Hinc argumentatur Bucerus: Si Christi corpus adest illo modo, quo totus Christus praesens est omnibus rebus, sequitur, quod corpus Christi in aliquo loco positum sit localiter, et quod aliae res, quid habent loca dissita, tamen praesentes sint corpori, non realiter, sed adiective. Ita disputat tantum imaginariam esse praesentiam.

Sed Bucerus decipitur hac imaginatione, quod nunquam concedit realem et veram praesentiam.

Item nobis est dicendum, quod dicimus veram et realem praesentiam esse, et non disputandum, utrum sit realis, vel qualis sit?

Transsubstantiationem et corpus localiter in pane esse negamus. Illorum etiam opinionem reiicimus, quo corpus in pane, ut vinum in cantharo, vel ignis in candenti ferro continetur, esse dicunt. Sed tamen Christi corpus in coena vere adesse fatemur, ad Christum praesentem corpus et sanguinem suum nobis manducandum et bibendum distribuere certo statuimus, eumque ad haec perficienda verbi Ministerio ac corporis et sanguinis sui sacramento uti adserimus. Ut enim per baptismum non regenerari fatemur: ita per sacramentum eucharistiae nobis corpus et sanguinem Christi porrigi et exhiberi credimus. Corpus vero et sanguinem Christi sola et inscrutabili fide percipi dicimus. . . . Cum Augustino etiam fatemur, Christum propter veri corporis modum, in uno quodam coeli loco esse, non quidem localiter, sed eo modo, qui huic sacramento proprie convenit. Nam utrinque fatemur, sacramenta tantum in vero usu sacramentorum rationem habere et sacramenta esse. Factum etiam, per quod in pane et vino corpus et sanguis Christi nobis exhibentur, ibi adesse et cum illis solis confirmari credimus, pro quibus corpus illud traditum et sanguis pretiosus effusus fuit, ut Evangelistae ipsi testantur. Sed nihil ominus fatemur, etiam credentes non ita sese erga hoc sacramentum gerere posse, ut

hardened and they stay away from the Sacrament completely. Melancthon believes that already too many people have begun to despise the Sacrament as a result of the influence of the Zwinglian doctrine. The Lutherans' attitude, he says, is that the people should be led to a proper and increasingly frequent use of the Sacrament.<sup>31</sup>

In "Opinion of Melancthon" dated about August 23, Melancthon rejected the application of the Mass on behalf of the living and the dead. He states the question: "Why do you not agree that private Masses should be celebrated?" His answer is: "Private Masses are celebrated in the belief that they are works which ex opere operato apply to others and merit grace; this belief is impious." He goes on to give three reasons for his statement that this belief is impious:

First, if the opus operatum merited anything, righteousness would be by works and not by faith. This is completely false.

The suffering of Christ is a sufficient sacrifice.

There is no work by applicable sacrifice: there is no application without faith.<sup>32</sup>

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ut corporis et sanguinis Christi, quae vere praesentia sunt et non absentia, non fiant rei. Nam Christianorum sacramenta simpliciter praesentis et non absentis Christi signa sunt atque testimonia. CR 2:222-25.

<sup>31</sup>CR 2:294-95

<sup>32</sup>quare non vultis assentiri, ut privatae Missae fiant.



In an opinion entitled "Melanchthon on Bucer's Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist," Melanchthon tried to distinguish the doctrine of Bucer from that of Zwingli. We believe this opinion indicates that Melanchthon believed that Bucer now holds to a doctrine which was much closer to the Lutheran position than he had held previously. This is particularly evident in the paragraph (six) in which Melanchthon indicates that Bucer did not hold to the Zwinglian doctrine that Christ is present in only one part of heaven:

Bucer denies transubstantiation. He also denies that the body of Christ is locally present in bread, as if anyone should imagine that the body is contained in the bread as wine in a beaker or a flame in glowing metal.

At the same time, he affirms that the body of Christ is objectively present and offered in the Eucharist. It is not present only virtually but really. He posits this mode: the bread and wine were instituted so that they should testify that the true body of Christ is present and offered. Where therefore these things are offered and consecrated by the ordinance of Christ, there is truly the body of Christ.

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Respondeo: Privatae Missae hac opinione dicuntur fieri, quod sint opera ex opere operato applicato pro aliis et meritoria gratiae, itaque opinio est impia.

1) Primum ideo, quia si opus operatum meretur ulli, Ergo iustitia est ex opere et non ex fide, quod est falsissimum.

2) Christi passio est sufficiens sacrificium . . .

3) Non est opus applicativo sacrificio, quia nulla est applicatio sine fide. CR 2:304.



In general, as we say, the Sacraments are covenantal causes (pactionales causas), i.e., effective covenants; thus, he teaches that it is a covenant so that when bread and wine are proffered, the body of Christ is present, is offered and given to us. The bread is not a dish containing the body of Christ. But it is a covenantal vehicle (pactionale vehiculum) or means by which the body is offered to us.

As we also speak of the Word and Baptism that it is certain that the Holy Spirit is present and operative when the ablution takes place so he teaches that the body is objectively present.

He also concedes that the body of Christ is in heaven and yet is present, certainly not locally, but in a hidden manner to the creatures and to the Sacraments. As Luther also says, that Christ does not need to be present locally in the Sacrament, but He can be present in that manner by which all creatures are present to Christ, i.e., in a hidden way.

It is seen that Zwingli teaches that the body of Christ is locally in one place and that He cannot be anywhere else in any other way than locally. Bucer does not approve this statement. He affirms that the body of Christ can be elsewhere in another manner than locally.

He teaches that the bread and the wine are signs of the body of Christ which is present and not absent. Nor is there here a metaphor, such as you have when I say of a gift which I give to a friend: "See, here you have my mind." Here the gift represents the absent mind (absentem animum). The Sacramental speech has figures which signify not absent things, but things which are present.

Christ is corporeally in the Eucharist. "Corporeally" should not be understood of dimensions but of that which is truly and essentially. Yet, only those who believe receive the body.

Those who do not believe receive only the bread, because the Sacrament was instituted for the use of believers. 33

33 Bucerus transsubstantiationem negat. Item, negat corpus Christi localiter esse in pane, ut si quis imaginetur, ita contineri in pane corpus, sicut vinum in vase, aut flamma in ferro candenti.

Interim tamen affirmat corpus Christi vere adesse, et exhiberi in coena Domini, non tantum adesse virtualiter sed realiter. Et ponit talem modum: panis et vinum instituta sunt, ut testentur adesse verum corpus et exhiberi. His igitur propositis et consecratis, iam ex ordinatione Christi, vere est ibi corpus Christi.

Sicut alioqui dicimus sacramenta esse pactionales causas, hoc est pacta efficientes, ita hic sentit pactum esse, ut pane et vino proposito sistatur nobis et adsit et porrigatur Christi (corpus). Non quod panis sit quasi vas continens corpus. Sed sit pactionale vehiculum, seu instrumentum cum quo exhibetur corpus.

Sicut etiam de verbo aut baptismo dicimus, quod certum sit, adesse Spiritum S. et operari, cum fit ablutio: ita hic sentit, corpus et vere et realiter adesse.

Interim concedit, corpus Christ in coelo localiter esse, et tamen praesens esse, non quidem localiter, sed abscondito modo creaturis et sacramentis. Sicut et Lutherus dicit, non oportere localiter esse in Sacramento Christum, sed posse illo modo adesse, quo omnes creaturae Christo praesentes sunt, arcano modo.

Cinglius videtur sic sentire, quod corpus Christ sit in uno loco localiter, nec possit usquam aliter esse nisi localiter. Sed hanc posteriorem sententiam non approbat Bucerus, qui affirmat, Christi corpus posse alicubi esse alio modo quam localiter.

Sentit igitur, panem et vinum signa praesentis corporis Christi esse, non absentis. Nec esse metaforan, qualis est cum dico de annulo donato amicae: ecce, hic habes animum meum, ubi annulus significat absentem animum. Sermo sacramentalis figuras habet non ad significandum res absentes, sed res praesentes.

Christus corporaliter est in coena, accipiendo corporaliter non de dimensionibus, sed pro eo, quod est vere et essentialiter. Sed tamen hi tantum accipiunt id corpus, qui credunt. Isti, qui non credunt, nihil accipiunt nisi panem, quia Sacramentum videtur institutum ad usum credentium. CR 2:315-16.

On September 5, Melanchthon issued an Opinion on the Eucharist in which he excuses those for whom it was not possible to receive the Eucharist under both kinds because it was not administered under both kinds wherever they may be. Melanchthon indicated that he did not want to give the appearance that he approved the administration of communion under one kind, but that he excuses those who must receive it in that way so that their consciences might not be disturbed.<sup>34</sup>

In the last part of this Opinion, Melanchthon takes up again the Mass. He takes the position that the Lutherans do not hold to any doctrine which is contrary to the faith. The Lutherans had submitted their conditions of peace. Beyond these they could not go for conscience' sake. If peace is not possible on the basis of these conditions submitted by the Lutherans, Melanchthon would still like to see the whole matter referred to a general council. Although in a letter written on the following day he seemingly realizes that the Romanists could not be placated by moderation, that the Lutherans were expecting a harsh edict to come out of the Diet and that "they (i.e. the Romanists) were utterly impudent," Melanchthon still seems to harbor the faint hope that in some way a council would settle

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<sup>34</sup>CR 2:345.

the issues at dispute between the Romanists and Lutherans. Furthermore, one senses that he expected this settlement of the council would be favorable to the Lutherans.

#### The Wittenberg Concord

With the death of Zwingli (11 October 1531) and Oecolampad (24 November 1531), the South Germans generally began to look to Bucer for leadership. Bucer was very anxious to reach agreement with the Lutherans on the doctrine of the Eucharist.<sup>1</sup>

The negotiations between Bucer and the Lutherans which eventually led to the formulation of the Wittenberg Concord (1536) were begun already during the Diet of Augsburg (1530). On July 23, 1530, Bucer sent to Brentz a statement on the Holy Eucharist.<sup>2</sup> Included with the statement was a request that Brentz intercede with Melanchthon and ask Melanchthon to undertake a discussion of the Eucharist with him. Melanchthon, in a letter of 25 July, wrote to Bucer that Brentz had shown him his articles and that he

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 129 for Bucer's request at the Marburg Colloquy that the Lutherans acknowledge the Zwinglians as brethren.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Coelestin, op. cit., II, pp. 294ff.

would not be reluctant to enter into a discussion of them. The closing statement of this letter is significant: "I desire greatly to be able to assuage the controversy over the Holy Supper, concerning which, if you will write to me, I will willingly reply."<sup>3</sup>

Melanchthon's attitude toward the Zwinglians remained the same,<sup>4</sup> but there seems to be a perceptible change in his attitude toward Bucer. In 1529, as we have seen previously, Melanchthon had approved Luther's refusal of Bucer's request that he and the Zwinglians be recognized as brethren. While at Augsburg, Melanchthon issued his opinion, "Melanchthon on Bucer's Doctrine of the Holy Supper"<sup>5</sup> in which he pointed out the difference between the doctrine of Bucer on the Holy Eucharist and that of Zwingli. Perhaps Bucer understood Oecolampad and Zwingli's position in the light of his own great desire for union, thus tending to lightly pass over the differences. This statement is suggested by Melanchthon's letter to Bucer dated 22 January 1531 in which he wrote:

Luther might be less reluctant to negotiate an

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<sup>3</sup>CR 2:221-22.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Melanchthon's letter to Bernhard Rothmann in CR 2:619-20.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. supra p. 157.

agreement if he would know thoroughly the mind of Zwingli and Oecolampad and were sure that they teach in their churches the things concerning the true presence which you write.

Bucer, however, apparently convinced Melanchthon that his change of heart was genuine.<sup>7</sup> The Elector, too, hoped that agreement would be possible and arranged for Bucer to meet Luther at Coburg. Luther, after asking Bucer directly if he was sincere; was also apparently convinced that he was,<sup>8</sup> and agreed to Bucer's plan to visit the Swiss leaders and formulate a basis of agreement.<sup>9</sup> After his visit with Luther, Bucer was not kindly received by Zwingli, and the Swiss continued their opposition to the Lutherans.

Zwingli's death soon followed in the battle of Kappel, and a month later, Oecolampad, who had now also begun to favor union with the Lutherans, also died. Bucer, far from being discouraged, now seemingly worked

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<sup>6</sup>Lutherus minus gravaretur pacisci de concordia, si Cinglii et Oecolampadii mentem prorsus nosset, et existimaret, illos in suis ecclesiis haec de vera praesentia docere, quae scribis. CR 2:471.

<sup>7</sup>Eells, op. cit., p. 103-108.

<sup>8</sup>H. Schmid, Der Kampf der Lutherischen Kirche um Luthers Lehre vom Abendmahl im Reformationszeitalter (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1873), p. 16 holds that Bucer's visit to Luther at Coburg made no great impression on Luther.

<sup>9</sup>Eells, op. cit., p. 109.



all the harder for union with the Lutherans.

In 1533, Bucer prepared a formula for union in which he confessed that Christ is objectively present in the Holy Eucharist. According to Melanchthon's letter to Erhard Schnepf of September 16, 1534, Luther approved Bucer's formula, "if he means what he says."<sup>10</sup>

Melanchthon, however, did not believe that Bucer's formula was the answer to the problem of union between the two parties. On September 16, 1534, he wrote to Philip of Hesse:

I will gladly do everything possible that this matter may be brought to Christian unity, and nothing on earth would please me more than this. May God grant His grace to this end. Bucer's concord is a good beginning for this discussion.<sup>11</sup>  
[Emphasis ours]

Melanchthon overcame his former suspicion of Bucer and came to have a good deal of personal affection for him as is indicated by his October 10, 1533 letter to Bucer in which he wrote: "I love you sincerely and

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<sup>10</sup>Hodie egi cum Luthero de formula Concordiae, quam scis propositam esse a Bucero. Ait se eam probare, modo ut sic sentiat. Scis autem qualis illa formula fuerit. Confitetur datis rebus illis Pane et Vino, vere et substantialiter adesse Christum. Ego quidem nihil requirerem amplius. CR 2:787. Cf. also Melanchthon's letter to Philip of Hesse. CR 2:788.

<sup>11</sup>Alles auch, das mir moeglich ist, will ich von Herzen gern thun, dass diese Sach zu christilicher Einigkeit gebracht werde, und wollt auf Erden nit lieber sehen; Gott gebe Gnaad dazu. Es gibet auch Buceri Concordia dem Handel ein guten Anfang. CR 2:789.

wholeheartedly."<sup>12</sup>

A meeting between Melanchthon and Bucer was finally arranged for December, 1534 by Philip of Hesse. Before leaving for Cassel, the site of the meeting, Melanchthon requested an Instruction from Luther. In his Instruction, Luther wrote:

Our doctrine is that in the bread or with the bread, the body of Christ is really eaten, so that all the motions and actions that are attributed to the bread, are attributed also to the body of Christ, so that the body is truly broken, eaten, and torn with the teeth.<sup>13</sup>

Many commentators have seen in Melanchthon's letter to Camerarius of 10 January 1535 Melanchthon's opinion of and rejection of Luther's doctrine as contained in the Instruction. Melanchthon wrote: "For I was the messenger of an alien (doctrine)."<sup>14</sup> There is, however,

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<sup>12</sup>Nunc tamen de meo animo persuasissimum tibi esse volo, to a me vere ac plurimum amari. CR 2:675.

<sup>13</sup>Dewette, IV, p. 570 as quoted in Richard, *op. cit.*, p. 251. It is significant to note that the Formula of Concord rejected this formulation "that the body is torn with the teeth" in the Latin version of Epitome, Article VII, 42:

Frorsus etiam reiicimus atque damnamus Capernaiticam manducationem corporis Christi, quam nobis Sacramentarii contra suae conscientiae testimonium post tot nostras protestationes malitiose affingunt, ut doctrinam nostram apud auditores suos in odium adducant, quasi videlicet doceamus corpus Christi dentibus laniari et instar alterius cuiusdam cibi in corpore humano digeri. Bekennnisschriften, p. 803.

<sup>14</sup>CR 2:822.

rather strong contextual evidence that this statement by Melanchthon is to be understood of his relationship to the doctrine of Bucer rather than of the doctrine of Luther.<sup>15</sup>

On about 12 December 1534, Melanchthon arrived at Cassel where Bucer had been waiting for about five weeks. In a letter to Elector John Frederick (?), Melanchthon reported on Bucer's position:

Of the objective (wahrhaftig) presence, he teaches that they confess that the body of Christ is truly and essentially received when we receive the Sacrament; that bread and wine are signs, signa exhibitiva, and that when they are offered and received, the body of Christ is offered and received conjointly with them. They also teach that the bread and the body are together with one another (dass das Brod und der Leib also bei ein (einander) sind) not by mixture of their essence, but as

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<sup>15</sup>The letter reads: *Heri primum, hoc est, die nono Ianuarii domum reversus sum ex Cattis, quo me et Bucorum vocarat o Makedon, ut ego nostrorum, ille suorum sententias afferet peri tes diallages in illa pervulgata caussa. Meam sententiam noli nunc requirere, fui enim nuncius alienae, etsi profecto non dissimulabo quid sentiam, ubi audiero, quid respondeant nostri. CR 2:822.*

We are indebted to this insight to Ritschl, who here follows Loescher. Ritschl wrote: "Auch habe ich mich durch Loescher II, 32 davon ueberzeugen lassen, dass Melanchthons Angabe (CR 2:822), er sei 1535 nuncius alienae sententiae gewesen, nicht auf Luthers, sondern nur auf Bucers Ansicht richtig bezogen werden kann. Denn es kam ihm, also er dies schrieb, zunaechst vor allem darauf an zu hoeren, quid respondeant nostri. Vlt. auch CR 2:823: *Tantum sententias Buceri huc pertuli.*" Otto Ritschl, Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1927), IV, 18, Fn. 75.

a Sacrament, and that the body is given together with the Sacrament, by which when it is given something else is given (quo posito aliud ponitur). And since both parties agree that the bread and wine remain (bread and wine), they hold to a Sacramental union.<sup>16</sup>

In reference to the statement made by Melanchthon to Camerarius,<sup>17</sup> we might here observe that this letter is not an agreement on doctrine between Melanchthon and Bucer.<sup>18</sup> It is Melanchthon's statement of what he believes is Bucer's doctrine. The letter was written by Melanchthon and signed by Bucer, apparently to indicate that Melanchthon had correctly understood him.

Luther announced that he was pleased with the statement of Bucer's doctrine reported by Melanchthon, and that if Bucer meant what he said, it might well

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<sup>16</sup>Von der wahrhaftigen Gegenwaertigkeit bericht er, dass sie bekennen, dass der Leib Christi wesentlich und wahrhaftiglich empfangen werde, so wir das Sacrament empfaehen, und das Brod und Wein Zeichen sind, signa exhibitiva, welche so man reichet und empfaehet, werde zugleich gereicht und empfangen der Leib Christi, und halten also, dass das Brod und der Leib also bei ein (einander) sind, nicht mit Vermischung ihres Wesens, sondern als Sacrament, und dasjenige so sampt dem Sacrament gegeben wird, quo posito aliud ponitur. Denn dieweil man auf beiden Theilen haelt, dass Brod und Wein bleiben, halten sie solche sacramentalem coniunctionem. CR 2:808.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Fn. 15.

<sup>18</sup>Melanchthon's position here is that he is presenting to the Elector the alienae sententiae of Bucer. With the exception of the last statement in which Melanchthon indicates the agreement of the two parties on the Sacramental union, this letter is a report of Bucer's position, not of his own.

serve as the basis for an agreement between the two parties.<sup>19</sup>

At Bucer's suggestion, a meeting of the Oberlanders and the Wittenbergers was arranged for 14 May 1536. Because of Luther's indisposition, the site of the colloquy was changed from Eisenach to Grimma. When the Oberlanders arrived at Grimma, they learned that Luther was still indisposed. They decided to travel on to Wittenberg, where they arrived on 21 May 1536.

The following day the colloquy opened. Luther insisted that Bucer and his associates renounce their former teaching and now confess that there is an objective presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and that the body and blood of Christ are received by both the worthy and impious communicants. Bucer and his party agreed to the statement that the body and blood are received by the worthy and unworthy communicants; they, however, made a distinction between the unworthy and the impious, asserting that the former received the body and blood of Christ but denying that the latter received them. Luther indicated that he was satisfied and would not press the issue any further. Luther now declared:

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<sup>19</sup> Wilhelm DeWette, Dr. Martin Luthers Briefe (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1825) IV, 508-9.

We have now heard your answer and confession, viz., that you believe and teach, that in the Holy Eucharist, the true body and true blood of Christ are given and received, and not alone bread and wine: also, that this giving and receiving take place truly and not in imagination. Although you take offense in regard to the wicked, yet you confess with St. Paul that the unworthy receive the Lord's body, where the institution and word of the Lord are not perverted: - about this we will not contend. Hence, as you are thus minded, we are one, and we acknowledge and receive you as our dear brethren in the Lord.<sup>20</sup>

Melanchthon was now commissioned to draw up the formal document while the others continued the discussion on the articles of Baptism, Private Confession and Absolution. Satisfactory agreements were also reached on these articles.

On May 26, Friday morning, Melanchthon presented the Articles of Concord to the Oberlanders. On the following Monday, May 29, the Articles were signed by twenty-one representatives of the Oberlanders and Lutherans. The Article on the Holy Eucharist reads:

We have heard Dr. Bucer explaining his opinion, and that of others who have been with him, concerning the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, in this way:

I.

We confess that, according to the words of Irenaeus, the Eucharist consists of two things, an earthly and a heavenly. They hold and teach,

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<sup>20</sup>Koestlin, Martin Luther, II, 349 as quoted in Richard, op. cit., p. 253.



therefore, that with the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, offered and received.

## II.

And although they deny that transubstantiation occurs, and do not hold that a local inclusion in the bread occurs, or any lasting connection without the use of the Sacrament, yet they concede that, by the sacramental union, the bread is the body of Christ; i.e. they hold that when the bread is held out the body of Christ is at the same time present and truly tendered. For, apart from use, when it is laid by in the pyx or displayed in processions, as occurs among the Papists, they hold that the body of Christ is not present.

## III.

Then, too, they hold that this institution of the Sacrament is efficacious in the Church, and depends upon the worth neither of minister nor communicant. Wherefore, as Paul says that the unworthy also eat, so they hold that the body and blood of the Lord are truly extended also to the unworthy, and that the unworthy receive, where the words and institution of Christ are retained. But these partake for judgment, as Paul says, because they abuse the Sacrament when they use it without repentance and faith. For it has been set forth for the purpose of witnessing that the benefits of Christ are applied to those, and that they become members of Christ and are washed by the blood of Christ, who repent and sustain themselves by faith in Christ.

Since, however, only a few of us have met, and it is necessary on both sides to refer this matter to other preachers and superiors, it is not yet allowable for us to come to terms concerning an agreement before we have referred it to the rest.

Since, however, all profess that in all articles they want to hold and teach according to the Confession and Apology of the princes professing the Gospel, we are especially anxious that harmony be sanctioned and established. And

we have the hope that if the rest, on both sides, would so agree, there would be thorough harmony.

<sup>21</sup>Confitentur iuxta verba Irenaei, constare Eucharistiam duabus rebus, terrena et coelesti. Itaque sentiunt et docent, cum pane et vino vere et substantialiter adesse, exhiberi et sumi corpus Christi et sanguinem.

Et quanquam negant fieri transsubstantiationem, nec sentiunt fieri localem inclusionem in pane aut durabilem aliquam coniunctionem extra usum Sacramenti: tamen concedunt sacramentali unione panem esse corpus Christi, hoc est, sentiunt porrecto pane simul adesse et vere exhiberi corpus Christi. Nam extra usum, cum asservatur in pixide aut ostenditur in processionibus, ut fit a Papistis, sentiunt non adesse corpus Christi.

Deinde hanc institutionem Sacramenti sentiunt valere in Ecclesia, nec pendere ex dignitate ministri aut sumentis. Quare sicut Paulus ait, etiam indignos manducare, ita sentiunt porrigi vere corpus et sanguinem Domini etiam indignis et indignos sumere, ubi servantur verba et institutio Christi. Sed tales sumunt ad iudicium, ut Paulus ait, quia abutuntur Sacramento, cum sine poenitentia et sine fide eo utuntur. Ideo enim propositum est, ut testetur illis applicare beneficia Christi et fieri eos membra Christi, et abluere sanguine Christi, qui agunt poenitentiam et erigunt se fide in Christum. CR 3:75.

It is still a question whether the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VII, 12-16, indicates a subscription by the Lutheran Church to the Wittenberg Concord. The Formula of Concord indicates that this Wittenberg Concord "was approved by subscription" by Luther and other theologians; but apparently it is the intention of the authors of the Formula of Concord to indicate that this is not specifically a Lutheran Symbol in that they repeat Melancthon's opening statement, "We have heard Dr. Bucer etc. . . ."

## Melanchthon and Calvin

Melanchthon and Calvin became personally acquainted in 1539 at the Diet of Frankfurt. This meeting was the beginning of a close personal friendship between these two men, which endured through the years in spite of their profound theological differences on such issues as predestination, freedom of the will, liturgical usages etc. Even prior to the 1539 meeting, Calvin had made overtures to Melanchthon in the form of brief articles in which he expressed his views on the Eucharist. He sent these articles to Melanchthon with the request that he study them and indicate if, and to what extent, he found himself in agreement with them.<sup>1</sup> We may assume, however, that even before receiving Calvin's articles, Melanchthon was reasonably well acquainted with Calvin's doctrine of the Holy Eucharist through the medium of his Institutes which were first issued in 1534.

Prior to 1539, Bullinger, an adherent of the Zwinglian position, regarded Calvin as a follower of Luther's Eucharistic position because of Calvin's strong emphasis on the operative presence of Christ in

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Diestelmann, Die letzte Unterredung Luther's mit Melanchthon ueber den Abendmahlsstreit (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht's Verlag, 1874), p. 224, Fn. 1.

the Holy Eucharist.<sup>2</sup>

Apparently Calvin received Melanchthon's verbal opinion on his articles at the Diet of Frankfurt. After the Diet, Calvin reported that he and Melanchthon had agreed on the doctrine of the Eucharist. He wrote: "I met him (Melanchthon) at Frankfurt where he told me that he did not teach otherwise than what I had expressed in my words."<sup>3</sup>

In March, 1539, Calvin wrote to Farel:

In these articles, he certainly assented without discussion: but he confessed that in that party there are some who require something more crass, and with such obstinacy, yes with tyranny, so that he has for a long time been in danger because they saw that he is not at one with their understanding. He does not believe that there is a firm consensus, yet he hopes that this Concord, of whatever quality it is, may be cherished until the Lord leads both parties into a unity of the truth. I do not doubt that he teaches in full agreement with us.<sup>4</sup>

According to Jakob Sturm, the friendship between Melanchthon and Calvin was further strengthened at their second meeting at Worms (1540),<sup>5</sup> although Calvin indicated that he felt Melanchthon did not always express the doctrine to which he himself held, so that at times

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 234, Fn. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 234, Fn. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 234, Fn. 2.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 235, Fn. 2.

it was difficult for him to understand Melanchthon's precise meaning.<sup>6</sup> From Worms (1541), Calvin wrote that he could not accept the statement on Transubstantiation which Melanchthon and Bucer had drawn up. He further expressed his opinion that Melanchthon and Bucer were not properly afraid of formulating ambiguous statements, and that these two men were deliberately trying to avoid the difficulties involved in the differences of doctrine.<sup>7</sup>

Melanchthon and Calvin met personally for the third time at Ratisbon (1541). By this time, Melanchthon had published the 1540 edition of the Augsburg Confession, commonly referred to as the Variata. In this edition, article ten, Melanchthon now wrote:

Of the Holy Eucharist they teach that with the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ are truly offered (exhibeantur) to those who partake in the Holy Eucharist.<sup>8</sup>

The Variata is generally regarded as an indication of the change in Melanchthon's Eucharistic doctrine, and as teaching a real, albeit spiritual, presence to which Calvin could subscribe.

In this edition, the condemnatory phrase, "and they condemn those who teach otherwise" which had

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 236.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 236.

<sup>8</sup>Bekenntnisschriften, p. 65.

appeared in the tenth article of the Augustana is lacking.<sup>9</sup>

According to his letter to Myconius, Melanchthon's intention in preparing the new edition of the Augustana was to make it clearer. He wrote: "I am revising the Apology (Augsburg Confession) and am making it almost completely new so that it may have less sophistry."<sup>10</sup>

In evaluating the Variata edition of 1540, we believe that it is also of considerable importance to observe that Melanchthon later on frequently appealed to the 1530 Augustana which had been presented to the Emperor at Augsburg, although we have discovered no instance in which Melanchthon appeals specifically to article ten of the Augsburg Confession.<sup>11</sup>

Another question remains, and we feel it is vital to a proper understanding of Melanchthon's Eucharistic doctrine: "How was the 1540 edition accepted by the Lutherans?" We have not been able to find any evidence that they took exception to it prior to the 1560 Weimar Disputation between Strigel and Flacius.<sup>12</sup> Richard

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<sup>9</sup>Bekenntnisschriften, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup>CR 2:871. Cf. also CR 2:861.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. p. 211.

<sup>12</sup>No one found an error in the varied edition so long as Luther and Melanchthon lived. Only after the death of Melanchthon did the uproar about it begin.



quotes the theologians at the Altenburg Colloquy of 1568-69 as asserting that the 1540 edition was prepared at the request of and with the assistance and advice of Luther.<sup>13</sup> Among the authors of the Formula of Concord (1577), David Chytraeus,<sup>14</sup> Nicholas Selnecker<sup>15</sup> and

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If anyone can show me a valid proof that prior to 1560 exception was taken to Melanchthon by any Evangelical on account of the changes of the Confession, I shall welcome it. This change was undoubtedly known, but it was considered objectionable by no Evangelical, so long as Melanchthon lived. At least I have found no proof of it, though I have been at great pains, and have examined many books with that end in view. Strobel, Philip Melanchthon, quoted in J. W. Richard, "Melanchthon and the Augsburg Confession," The Lutheran Quarterly, XXVIII (October, 1898), p. 575. A careful survey by the present writer compels him to agree with Strobel's opinion.

<sup>13</sup>Altenburg Colloquy (1568): It is well known to us that Philip's emendation was made and published, not only with Luther's approval, but by his assistance and command. Because of the adversaries of the pure doctrine of the Gospel, and because of their cavils, a clearer and plainer statement had to be made, so that opportunity for caviling might be removed.

They (the opposing party) reject also the Corpus Doctrinae as wholly reprehensible; and they most vehemently blame the Augsburg Confession which was enlarged by Master Philip, and revised and approved by Luther. Quoted in J. W. Richard, op. cit., p. 570.

<sup>14</sup>Chytraeus: In the lifetime of Luther, the Confession and Apology were enlarged and improved; and beyond doubt they were laid before the adversaries at the councils of Worms and Regensburg with the knowledge of and by the request of Luther. . . .

As regards doctrine and substance, there is almost complete and absolute agreement. J. W. Richard, op. cit., p. 511.

Jewel aber in etlichn Exemplarn der Augspurgischen Confession so hernach vielmals wider gedruckt und aussgangen eine ungleichheit ist:

Denn auch bey Leben Lutheri de Confessio und Apologia vermehret und gebessert und one zweiffel mit vorwiessen und willen Lutheri auff den Colloquiis zu Wormbs und Regensburg von den Evangelischen Stenden den Widersaechern fuergelegt ist: So wil ich doch allhie das erste Exemplar setzen welches von wort zu wort auss dem Original in dess Ertzbischoffs zu Mentz Reichs Cantzley abgeschrieben und collationiret ist: Mit welchem die folgenden drueck der Confession ob sie wol etlich Artickel etwas deutlicher und aussfuehrlicher widerholen und erkleren dennoch so viel die Lehre und Sachen an ir selbs belanged beynahe gantz und gar obereyn stimmen.

David Chytraeus, Historia der Augspurgischen Confession (Frankfurt am Mayn: no publisher given, 1577), p. 46.

<sup>15</sup> Nicolaus Selnecker, Historica Narratio et Oratio de Martino Lutero (Leipzig: Berwaldt, 1575). They (Surius and others) claim that it (The Augsburg Confession) was frequently changed and became a cloak for many sects. I would say, God rebuke thee, Satan, did I not have a milder answer, which ought to satisfy all honest men. They vociferate that a public writing present in the name of the Elector and Princes ought not be changed even in the least, as regards substance of doctrine and the meaning of the articles on doctrine. That some things were elucidated and some things more fully explained we do not deny; but this was done not as the private undertaking of an individual, but in the name of the teachers. Quoted by J. W. Richard, The Lutheran Quarterly, p. 571.

Catalogus brevis praecipuorum conciliorum, oecumenicorum et nationalium, a tempore apostolorum usque ad nostram aetatem . . . ab autore recognitus . . . hoc tempore ob doctrinam cum de communione idiomatum tum de coena Domini aliisque pluribus . . . lectu utilis et necessarius (Frankfurt: Corvinus, 1571)

At Worms, John Eck and Philip Melanchthon argued for three days on doctrine until the Colloquy was dissolved by a letter from the Emperor, and adjourned to Ratisben where it was held the following year, since the knowledged and approbation of Luther, as witnesses still living affirm, the later Augsburg Confession, that is, that of 1538, had been revised. Hence, absolutely no credence can be given to those who complain that the copies do not agree.

Martin Chemnitz<sup>16</sup> testified that this edition was presented to the Diets of Worms and Ratisbon. This edition

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We need only a little common sense to discover that the difference consists in copiousness of subjects, and not in sense, since at the Colloquy of Worms, Philip, in reply to Eck's objection about the difference in copies said: "The meaning of the subjects is the same, though here and there in the later edition, some things are either rendered plainer, on account of the adversaries, or are given less harshly." It is also known that Eck acquiesced in this reply. J. W. Richard, op. cit., p. 571.

Selnecker: Preface to the Commentary on Genesis: 1560. Away with the ungrateful cuckoos, apes and foxes that abuse the name of Luther, calumniators and defamers of Philip, hornets and bumble-bees! Let them arrange their Corpora, rather, their Cadavera, as they best may. Let them not complain that the Augsburg Confession and the Loci have been corrupted -- a charge which, though they should burst, they cannot sustain. Those writings have been revised, elucidated and more fully explained in many parts. We need only common sense to perceive that they have not been changed in meaning; but only in words have they been more clearly and fully presented. Hellebore and an iron rake ought to be applied to these calumniators as an instrument for clearing out their heads. Richard, op. cit., p. 570.

Abeant igitur ingrati cuculi, oithēkalōpēkes Lutheri and Philippo magistes, crabrones and fuci, fabricentque alia, quae possunt, si modo possunt, corpora, vel potius cadavera, aut obiciant confessionis Augustanae, Locorumque non depravationem (hanc enim obicere, vel si rumpantur, minime possunt) sed recognitionem, sed illustrationem, sed uberiolem mulatrum rerum explicationem. Limnisco nobis opus est, & fasciola sola, notante non sententia, sed verbis tantummodo aliter, & dilucidius ac copiosius relata. Itsit autem calumniatoribus helleboro opus est, kai sidera aptage, qua cerebrum suum ipsi uerrant.

Richard has inaccurately written that this quotation is from the Preface to Selnecker's Commentary on Genesis; it is from the Epistola Dedicatoria.

Nicolaus Selnecker, In Genesin, Primum Librum Moysi, Commentarius Ita Scriptus, Ut Docentibus Et Discipulis Coelestem Doctrinam Magno Usui Esse Possit, Hoc Praesertim tempore, in quo vera doctrina de S. Trinitate, divinitateque Filii & Spiritus sancti contra Arianos:

was regarded and appealed to by the Lutherans as the confession they had presented to the Emperor in 1530. The

& de Peccato, atque Iustificatione, Libero arbitrio, Praedestinatione, bonis Operibus, & qui his cohaerent, Articulis & Locis, cum contra adversarios, tum contra hypocritas & piarum Ecclesiarum & Scholarum calumniatores, Juventuti & Pils omnibus, maxime opus est (Leipzig: Johannes Khamba, 1569), Epistola Dedicatoria, folio B 3 recto.

16 Martin Chemnitz, Iudicium de controversiis quibusdam quae . . . circa quosdam Augustanae Confessionis Articulos . . . agitatae sunt editum per Polycarpum Lyserum (Wittenberg: no publisher given, 1594). The edition of the year 1531 neither can or ought to be rejected, for this is the real Augsburg Confession, as it was presented to the Emperor Charles V in the year 1530. In this form it has always been the custom to quote it. This edition was subscribed at Schmalkald by all our churches in the year '37. But I do not see how the edition of the year '40 can be profitably and justly rejected. For when the Colloquy of Hagenau had been appointed in the year '40 and it was decided that it would be useful to present the corpus and form of the doctrine of our churches as the subject of the Colloquy, it (the Confession) was published that year at Wittenberg in a somewhat ampler declaration. That edition the same year was presented at Worms under the name of the Augsburg Confession. The same was presented at the Colloquy of Ratisbon to the adversaries as the form of doctrine of our churches. And that was done in accordance with the advice of Luther and with his approbation and consent. Likewise in the year '46 and afterward at all the diets and in the negotiations about religion, ours appealed to this edition and called it the Augsburg Confession etc. Yea, Cochlaeus at Worms (he means Eck) and Pighius at Ratisbon were displeased that in many articles light was added by means of the ampler declaration, for they saw that thereby the true doctrines were more clearly set forth, and that the lewdness of the Babylonian Thais was more manifestly exposed. Their preference was simply to retain the edition of the year '31. So their writings declare. But since the edition of the year '40 is in everybody's hands (and the first edition of '31 is unknown to and has scarcely ever been seen by most people) and contains no error, but only some necessary explanations, I do not see how it can be utterly or simply rejected and condemned without disturbing the churches.



1540 edition was referred to and subscribed to by nearly all the princes present at Naumburg in 1561, where it was regarded as a fuller and more thorough explanation of the original Augsburg Confession.<sup>17</sup> John Brentz praised it.<sup>18</sup>

The first attack upon the 1540 edition of the Augustana came in January 1541 at the Diet of Worms. It was, however, Eck, and not a Lutheran, who took exception to the alterations in the text, referring specifically to the tenth article on the Holy Eucharist. Melancthon replied to Eck's charge: "I answer, the

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Therefore, it seems very proper to restore the edition of the year '31 to the churches and to commend it as of plenary and primary authority. Also, let the edition of '40 be retained as a declaration which is not in conflict, but in every way harmonizes with the first edition. J. W. Richard, op. cit., p. 572.

<sup>17</sup>Magdeburg Bedenken: Semler, op. cit., p. 31. As regards the later edition of the Augsburg Confession, it is a fact that this improvement did not proceed from a rash purpose, but it was revised by the command of the Elector and the Princes, with the knowledge, goodwill counsel and assistance of Herr Luther and other distinguished theologians in these lands; nor did it remain a private writing, but in the states of the Augsburg Confession, it was subscribed and approved the same as the first. J. W. Richard, op. cit., p. 573.

<sup>18</sup>Brentz: I am in the habit of comparing this later edition of the Apology (Augsburg Confession) with the earlier edition to see what changes have been made. I find that much has been changed. But I know that Philip changes nothing rashly and injudiciously. When I consider and inquire into the reasons for the changes, I am greatly profited by the reading. CR IV, 737.

essence of the meaning is the same although in the later edition, certain things have been either softened or made more clear." Although Eck maintained that some of the articles, including the tenth to which he had referred, had been changed not only in words but in meaning; nevertheless, he proceeded with the debate. In spite of Eck's objection, the Lutherans continued to use the 1540 edition, nor is there any evidence that they objected to the change in wording in the article on the Eucharist.

The real attack on the Variata of 1540 came twenty years later when Flacius objected to Strigel's use of this edition.<sup>19</sup> Then significantly enough, Flacius' attack was on the alleged synergism exhibited in this edition, and not on the article on the Holy Eucharist. The basis on which Flacius attacked the Variata is enlightening. He stated that Balthasar Winter, now deceased, had said that he heard George Rorer had heard

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<sup>19</sup>Strigel-Flacius: Testatur M. Balthaser Superintendens Jenensis, M. Rorarium saepe dixisse, se indicasse Luthero, cum Philippus augetur Confessionem, ac Lutherum aegre tilisse: verum cum editio peract esset, non potuisse impedire.

Magister Balthaser (Winter), Superintendent at Jena, testifies that Magister Rorer often said that he had informed Luther when Melancthon was enlarging the Confession, and that Luther was displeased, but when the edition had been completed, he was powerless to hinder it. J. W. Richard, op. cit., p. 574.



Luther say that he was not pleased that Melanchthon had changed the Augsburg Confession. Strigel replied to Flacius that Eck's charge at Worms in 1541 had been nothing more than a Papistic subterfuge. With that the debate between Strigel and Flacius passed on to the next point.

That the tenth article of the 1540 edition of the Augustana can be understood in Calvinistic, possibly even a Zwinglian, sense is granted. We wonder though, whether this is any more a legitimate criticism of Melanchthon's intention in the formulation of the Variata than this, that the tenth article of the Augsburg Confession can be understood in a Roman sense since it did not explicitly exclude Transubstantiation.<sup>20</sup>

The criticism of the Variata that it exhibits a deliberate change on the part of Melanchthon intended to be sufficiently ambiguous so that the Lutherans and the Calvinists could both find their respective doctrines expressed in it presents somewhat of a problem: it seems to us, that in this case, we must likewise charge those men who used the 1540 Variata in their religious discussion and indicated their acceptance of it with being guilty of the same sin as was Melanchthon. The

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<sup>20</sup>Cf. The Romanist Confutation, CR 27:81ff.

second possibility is that Luther, Westphal, Brentz, Chytraeus, Selnecker, Chemnitz and the others were the dupes of Melanchthon's deliberate deception. The third possibility is that the Lutherans, although they realized that Melanchthon had seriously "watered down" the Lutheran doctrine of the Holy Eucharist in the Variata, for some reason, were unwilling to openly reject Melanchthon's position as expressed in this edition; this would indicate that they, too, for the sake of unity, did not openly participate in his deception, but participated in it only indirectly by their silence and non-condemnation of Melanchthon. We do not believe that any of these three explanations is fully satisfactory.

#### Luther and Melanchthon

In 1518, Melanchthon found conditions at the University of Tuebingen so uncondusive to study and teaching that it became necessary for him to prepare to leave for another post.<sup>1</sup> The first position offered him was at Ingolstadt. On the advice of his uncle, John Reuchlin, Melanchthon declined the offer. About this time the Elector of Saxony requested Reuchlin to nominate suitable professors for two chairs in

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<sup>1</sup>CR 1:25.

language; one in Hebrew and one in Greek. For the chair of Greek, Reuchlin suggested his nephew, Melanchthon. Luther and Spalatin would have preferred Peter Mosellanus, an experienced Greek teacher and scholar. For a while, the Elector was not able to decide between the two men, but finally he issued the formal call to Melanchthon through Reuchlin. Reuchlin jubilantly relayed this to his nephew with an enclosed note:

Behold, the letter of the most pious Prince has arrived, signed by his own hand. In it he promises you a salary and to be kind to you. Therefore, I will not speak to you poetically, but using the true promise of God spoken to faithful Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country. . . ." Thus my mind tells me, thus I hope for the future for you, my Philip, my labor and my solace.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time Reuchlin sang the praises of Melanchthon in a letter to the Elector: "For I know no one among the Germans who excels him, except Erasmus of Rotterdam who is a Hollander. Melanchthon also excels all of us in Latin."<sup>3</sup>

Melanchthon's first few days at the University of Wittenberg were singularly inauspicious. His slight appearance, his hesitating, stammering speech and his youth did not favorably impress his colleagues. It was even suggested that it had been the uncle in Reuchlin

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<sup>2</sup>CR 1:32-33.

<sup>3</sup>CR 1:34.

and not the scholar who had recommended Melanchthon for the post as professor of Greek.

His colleagues' opinion of Melanchthon was soon to be changed, however. On the fourth day after his arrival, he delivered his inaugural oration in the presence of the faculty. His subject was: "On Improving the Studies of the Adolescent."<sup>4</sup> This oration was received with thunderous applause and the high praise of Luther. In a letter to Spalatin, Luther wrote:

As regards our Philip Melanchthon, everything which you write and suggest will be done. On the fourth day after his arrival, he delivered a most learned and chaste oration to the delight and admiration of all. It is not now necessary for you to commend him. We quickly retracted the opinion which we had formed when we first saw him. Now we laud and admire the reality in him, and thank the most illustrious Prince and your kindness. Be at pains to commend him most heartily to the Prince. I desire no other Greek teacher so long as we have him. But I fear that his delicate constitution may not bear the mode of life in this country. Also, I hear that because of the smallness of his salary, the boastful Leipzig professors hope soon to take him from us. They solicited him before he came here.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>For the text of this inaugural oration, "De corrigendis adolescentiae studiis," Cf. CR 11:15-25.

<sup>5</sup>Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette, Dr. Martin Luthers Briefe, Sendschreiben und Bedenken, vollstaendig aus de verschiedenen Ausgaben seiner Werke und Briefe, aus andern Buechern und noch unbenutzten Handschriften gesammelt, kritisch und historisch bearbeitet. G. Reimer, Berlin. 1825. Vol. I, p. 134-5.

This work is hereinafter referred to as DeWette, followed by the volume number and page reference. 31 August 1518, W. A. Br. I, 191f.

Two days after the above letter, Luther sent another letter to Spalatin in which he praised Melanchthon with a number of superlatives:

Hold Philip, the master Greek, the most learned, the most erudite, in highest esteem. He has an auditorium filled with hearers. In the first place he makes all theologians, the highest, the middle and the lowest, into students of Greek.<sup>6</sup>

By October of 1518, the friendship between Melanchthon and Luther had ripened to such a degree that Luther wrote to him that if he (Luther) should be killed as a result of his reformatory activities, his greatest sorrow was that he would lose the pleasant association of Melanchthon.<sup>7</sup>

The Leipzig Debate of 1519 thrust Melanchthon into the foreground of the Reformation movement. Melanchthon considered himself a spectator at the debate, although he did take part by supplying Luther and Carlstadt with a steady stream of information to the consternation of Eck, who resented Melanchthon's indirect participation. Eck tried to discredit Melanchthon by referring to him as the "very proud nephew of Reuchlin."<sup>8</sup> Luther had only the highest praise for Melanchthon, of whom he

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<sup>6</sup>DeWette, I, 140. 2 September 1518. W. A. Br. I, 195f.

<sup>7</sup>DeWette, I, 146. 14 October 1518. W. A. Br. I, 213ff.

<sup>8</sup>CR 1:cxlix, 82, 84.

wrote to Spalatin:

I return to Philip, whom no Eck can make me dislike, since in all my teaching I know of nothing better than his approval. His opinion and authority have more weight with me than many thousand miserable Ecks. Though a Master of Arts, Philosophy and of Theology, and adorned with nearly all of Eck's titles, I should not hesitate to yield my opinion to that of this Grammarian, should he dissent from me. This I have often done, and I do it daily on account of the divine gift which God with His bountiful blessing has deposited in this frail vessel, though it be contemptible to Eck. I do not praise Philip. He is a creature of God. I revere in him the work of my God.

When Melanchthon received his Baccalaureate in theology, the only theological degree he ever accepted, he had already lectured on Romans and Matthew and was about to finish his commentary on Matthew. Luther now wrote to Lange that he regretted that it was not possible to send all of his students to the six a.m. lectures Melanchthon was giving on Matthew. Then added the statement: "This Greek excels me in theology itself."<sup>10</sup>

That Melanchthon's admiration of Luther was equally great is brought out in his placing Luther on the level of Isaiah, John the Baptist, Paul and Augustine.<sup>11</sup> In 1520, Melanchthon wrote to Spalatin

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<sup>9</sup>DeWette I, 305. CR 1:85.

<sup>10</sup>DeWette, I, 380. W. A. Br. I, 596f.

<sup>11</sup>CR 11:78.



that he would rather die than be separated from Luther.<sup>12</sup>

Luther recognized that he and Melanchthon were of different temperaments and that each had been endowed with distinctive gifts. He beautifully expressed the juxtaposition of their talents in the Preface to Melanchthon's Commentary on Colossians:

I am rough, stormy, boisterous and altogether warlike. I am born to fight against innumerable monsters and devils. I must remove stumps and stones, cut away thistles and thorns and clear the wild forests; but Master Philip comes along softly and gently, sowing and watering with joy, according to the gifts which God has abundantly bestowed upon him.<sup>13</sup>

Melanchthon's success in his theological lectures was described by Spalatin, who remarked that he saw as many as six hundred students in some of his classes, and that at times, he had nearly two thousand hearers in his audience among whom were not only students but members of the titled nobility as well. Spalatin also remarked that in the wide range of subjects he taught, Melanchthon accomplished as much in all of them as the other professors did in only one subject.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>CR 1:269.

<sup>13</sup>Preface to Commentary on Colossians. W. A., XXX, 2, 68-69. As translated by J. W. Richard, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>14</sup>CR 10:301.

About this time, Luther again wrote of the very high honor in which he held "the Grecian:"

Whoever does not recognize Philip as his instructor is a stolid, stupid donkey, carried away by his own vanity and self-conceit. Whatever we know in the arts and in true philosophy, Philip has taught us. He has only the humble title of Master, but he excels all the doctors. There is no one living adorned with such gifts. He must be held in honor. Whoever despises this man, him will God despise.<sup>15</sup>

Of Melanchthon's Baccalaureate thesis, Luther wrote to Staupitz:

You have seen, or will see, Philip's theses. They are bold, but they certainly are true. He defended them in such a way that he seemed to all of us, as he really is, a miracle. If Christ be willing, he will surpass many Martins as a most powerful enemy of the devil and scholastic theology. He knows their deceptions and at the same time Christ, the rock. Therefore, he will be powerful.<sup>16</sup>

In 1521 when he left for Worms to appear before the Diet called by Charles V, Luther had questions in his mind about the outcome of the Diet. He bade farewell to Melanchthon, placing on him the added responsibility of doing Luther's work in addition to his own and adding the significant statement: "You can do it better than I can."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>CR 10:302.

<sup>16</sup>DeWette, I, 341-42. W. A. Br. I, 513f.

<sup>17</sup>CR 1:472.

After Luther's departure for Worms, Melanchthon was not to see him for nearly a year, for after the Diet ended, the Elector, fearing for Luther's life, arranged to have him kidnapped by his own men and taken to the Wartburg where he would be safe. Even Melanchthon, Luther's closest associate, did not know that Luther was alive but believed the rumors that Luther had been murdered.

The Edict of Worms made harsh provision for the punishment of anyone who had any friendly dealings with Luther. All subjects of the Empire were commanded to surrender Luther, dead or alive, to the Imperial authorities. The Edict further provided that anyone who defended Luther would have his properties confiscated and be made liable to the death penalty. This threat, however, did not prevent Melanchthon from defending Luther and his doctrine when the opportunity presented itself.

That opportunity came when the University of Paris faculty, one of the judges of the Leipzig Debate, finally handed down its decision about the time Luther was arriving at Worms. The Sorbonne forthrightly denounced Luther as a heretic, classing him in the company of such illustrious arch-heretics as the Manichaeans, the Hussites, the Wycliffites, the Arians, the Bohemians

and others.<sup>18</sup>

Eck was irked because the Sorbonne decision, although it had condemned Luther as a heretic, had not proclaimed a victor in the debate. Eck quickly gathered fifty-four statements of Luther which the Paris theologians had condemned, and claimed the victory for himself. Disregarding the Edict of Worms, Melanchthon now published his answer to Eck entitled, "Against the Raging Decree of the Parisian Theologians, an Apology on Behalf of Martin Luther by Philip Melanchthon."<sup>19</sup>

From the opening statement, Melanchthon's Apology was a satiric, albeit scholarly and polished, denunciation of the Sorbonne decision. In this Apology, he insisted on the authority of Scripture over the authority of the church. He referred to the quotations of Luther as "annotated," taken out of context, and "sinisterly distorted." He asked the pointed question: "Since there are no articles of faith outside of those written in the Scriptures, why is it impious to dissent from the Councils, the Universities, or from the sacred fathers?" He very neatly defends Luther on the basis of the Sorbonne's own decision: "But Luther does not dissent

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<sup>18</sup>For the text of the Sorbonne theologians' opinion Cf. CR 1:366ff.

<sup>19</sup>CR 1:399-416.

from Scripture, even in your own opinion! Why then is he accused of impiety?"

Luther, still in concealment at the Wartburg, read Melanchthon's Apology, translated it into German and added an Introduction and Conclusion. The Introduction and Conclusion added his own "axe blows" so that they might know that they had been hurt.<sup>20</sup>

On May 8, 1521, Luther addressed a letter to Melanchthon from the Wartburg Castle informing his beloved co-worker that he was still alive.<sup>21</sup> Melanchthon, in a letter to Link, expressed his joy that "Our beloved father lives."<sup>22</sup> On May 12, Luther addressed another letter to Melanchthon warning him that he would be next to be persecuted:

Wherefore, minister of the Word, be steadfast and strengthen the walls and towers of Jerusalem against the day when they attack you, too. Be mindful of your calling and of your gifts. I pray for you as for no other, if my prayer can do anything, which I doubt not. Do you render me like service, and let us bear this burden together. So far, we stand alone in the battle; they seek you after me.<sup>23</sup>

Luther's absence from Wittenberg had caused a great deal of disturbance in that his firm guidance was

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<sup>20</sup> W. A. Br. II, 356, 365.

<sup>21</sup> W. A. Br. II, 330.

<sup>22</sup> CR 1:389-90.

<sup>23</sup> W. A. Br. II, 333.

needed to restrain those fanatic reformers whose shibboleth now became "Away with Rome." Carlstadt had assumed leadership and control of the movement in Wittenberg. While still at the Wartburg, Luther urged Spalatin to intercede with the town council of Wittenberg so that they might officially ask Melanchthon to take up active preaching.<sup>24</sup> On September 29, 1521, Melanchthon and his followers received the Holy Eucharist under both kinds at the University.<sup>25</sup>

When the Augustinian monks, under the leadership of Gabriel Zwilling advocated the abolition of the private Masses and the restoration of the cup to the laity, the Elector appointed a committee to draft an opinion on these questions. The committee, composed of Melanchthon, Jonas, Carlstadt, Tileman Pletner, Amsdorf, John Doeltsk and Jerome Schurf, sent its report to the Elector on October 20, 1521.<sup>26</sup> The committee members reported that they were in favor of abolishing the abuses connected with the Masses and appealed to the Elector to take the

<sup>24</sup>W. A. Br. II, 387ff.

<sup>25</sup>N. Mueller, Der Wittenberger Bewegung, p. 16-17. Mueller states that Melanchthon and his disciples received the Holy Eucharist (communicavit) under both kinds, and not that he administered it as Manschreck alleges. Manschreck, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>26</sup>CR 1:465-70.



necessary steps in this direction, even at the risk of being called a Bohemian and a heretic. They reminded the Elector that all those who obey God's Word are called upon to bear reproach lest they, like Capernaum, be cast off by Christ in the Final Judgment. The Augustinian canons, jointly and severally, appealed to the Elector not to change the Mass in the churches and cloisters. Their appeal was based primarily on the lack of instruction among the laity and their fear that the change in the Masses might lead to further disorder and strife.<sup>27</sup>

The Elector, already before the receipt of the appeal from the canons, had replied to the opinion of the theologians via a letter to Chancellor Beyer. He urged moderation in the practical reforms and asked that the theologians continue to discuss the matter and instruct the people at length before making the proposed changes.<sup>28</sup>

When Luther finally returned to Wittenberg (March 6, 1522), he was still disguised as a knight. He studied the situation in Wittenberg for several days, and on the following Sunday, preached the first of a series of eight sermons. On the question of administering the Holy Eucharist under both kinds, he urged that in the name of Christian charity, restraint be exercised. Love, not

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<sup>27</sup>CR 1:503.

<sup>28</sup>CR 1:470.

public disturbance, should be the result of the Eucharist.

Carlstadt, thoroughly disgusted and discredited, now left Wittenberg. He was temporarily silenced but unrepentant. Assuming the life of a peasant, he renounced his academic degrees, and soon engaged Luther in a dispute on the Holy Eucharist. Carlstadt was finally ordered out of Saxony and eventually became an outcast in most of northern Europe.

While Luther was still at the Wartburg, Melanchthon issued the first edition of the Loci Communes (1521). These "Theological Commonplaces" represented the fruit of his study of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. At the insistence of Luther, Melanchthon had begun lecturing on Romans in 1519. Luther had the highest praise for Melanchthon's Loci, asserting that they were worthy not only of immortality but of being placed into the canon.<sup>29</sup>

While Luther and Melanchthon were busily engaged in revising the draft of the translation of the New Testament into German, the first draft of which Luther had completed at the Wartburg, Luther urged Melanchthon to publish his lectures on Romans and First Corinthians.

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<sup>29</sup>Luther here refers to the canon of books which were required reading for all theological students, and not, as some have apparently believed, to the canon of Sacred Scripture. CR 10:293-313.

When he was unable to persuade Melanchthon, he obtained a copy of the lectures and published them in 1522 with a Preface in the form of a letter to Melanchthon:

Grace and Peace in Christ.

Be angry and sin not. Speak upon thy bed, and be silent. It is I who publish these annotations of yours, and send you to yourself. If you do not please yourself, very good; it is enough that you please me. The sin is on your side, if there be any sin here. Why did not you yourself publish? Why did you suffer me to ask, command, and urge you so often to publish? This is my defence against you: I am willing to be, and to be called, a thief, fearing neither your complaints nor accusation. But to those who, you think, will turn up their noses, or will not be satisfied, I shall say: Publish something better. What the impious Thomists falsely claim for their Thomas, viz., that no one has written better on St. Paul, that I truthfully assign to you. Satan persuades them to boast thus of their Thomas, that his impious and poisonous doctrines may be the more widely propagated. I know with what spirit and judgment I declare this of you. What is it to you if those famous mighty men turn up their noses at this opinion of mine? Mine is the peril. That I may the more provoke these fastidious gentlemen. I say further that the commentaries of Jerome and Origen are mere trifles and absurdities as compared with your annotations. Wherefore, you will say, provoke the ill will of men of the highest talents? Be modest. Let me be proud of you. Who prohibits the men of highest talents from publishing something better and exposing the rashness of my judgment? Would that there were those who could do better. Finally, I threaten you, that I will steal and publish what you have written on Genesis, Matthew and Job, unless you shall anticipate me. The Scripture, you say, must be read without commentaries. You say this correctly about Jerome, Origen, Thomas and the like. They wrote commentaries in which they give their own teaching, not that of Paul and of Christ. Nobody should call your annotations a commentary, but a guide to reading the Scripture and learning Christ--something which no commentary

hitherto presented. When you plead that your notes are not in all respects satisfactory to you, I am forced to believe you; but behold, I believe you will not satisfy yourself. This is neither asked nor sought from you without regard for the honor of Paul; nor will anyone boast that Philip is superior or equal to Paul. It is enough that he is next to Paul. We envy no one if he should come nearer. We know you are nothing. Christ is all in all. If he speaks by the mouth of an ass we shall be satisfied. Why should we be dissatisfied if he speaks by the mouth of a man? Art thou not a man? Art thou not of Christ? Is not his mind in you? But if you wish to adorn the book with a more polished diction, and with ample learning, and to increase its size, all right; and it will also be agreeable that we have the matter and the mind of Paul through your assistance. I do not beg your pardon, if I offend you in this. Cease to be offended, that you may not rather offend us, and have need of our pardon. The Lord enlarge and keep thee forever.<sup>30</sup>

The following year, true to his threat, Luther again "stole" a set of Melanchthon's lecture notes or annotations, this time the notes on the Gospel of John, and sent them to the printer at Basel.<sup>31</sup>

In 1522, Melanchthon wrote to Spalatin that he would like to give up teaching in theology and concentrate on the Classics. Luther, however, had urged that Melanchthon give up teaching in the Classics and devote all of his time to theology. Melanchthon's reason, as given to Spalatin, was simply that he held only the

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<sup>30</sup>DeWette, 2, 238. W. A. 10, II, 309ff. The translation is that of Richard, op. cit., p. 104-06.

<sup>31</sup>CR 14:1043.

Baccalaureate degree in theology and that he had lectured in theology only as a substitute while Luther was gone from the University or otherwise engaged.<sup>32</sup> Another obvious reason was that lecturing in both departments had doubled his work load without additional financial compensation. Luther interceded with the Elector, appealing for a raise in salary for Melanchthon, first through Spalatin,<sup>33</sup> then directly to the Elector.<sup>34</sup>

That others did not hold Melanchthon in the high esteem Luther did has already been shown.<sup>35</sup> By 1536, the time of the Wittenberg Concord, some of Melanchthon's unnamed enemies charged that Melanchthon had fallen prey to the Sacramentarians. The rumors reached Melanchthon at Nuernberg while he was on his way to visit his brother and Camerarius. According to Melanchthon's indignant letter addressed to Luther, Jonas, Bugenhagen and Cruciger, we learn that he had been charged primarily with defecting from the Luther doctrine of justification.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>CR 1:575.

<sup>33</sup>DeWette, 2, 217. W. A. Br. II, 573ff.

<sup>34</sup>DeWette, 2, 490. W. A. Br. III, 258ff.

<sup>35</sup>CR 9:990. Cf. also the letter by Amsdorf to Luther on p.

<sup>36</sup>CR 3:179ff., 183. The letter of Melanchthon does not concern itself with the Eucharist as Manschreck has indicated. Manschreck, op. cit., p. 238ff.

To add to the suspicion of Melanchthon, Jacob Schenk, a Freiburg preacher, revealed to the Elector John Frederick that Melanchthon had granted, in a private letter written to him, that under conditions of tyranny, one might receive the Holy Eucharist under only one kind. Schenk sent a copy of the letter to the Elector John Frederick. On May 5, 1537, showing his concern over the alleged deviations of Melanchthon from Luther in the doctrines of justification and the Holy Eucharist, the Elector addressed a letter to Chancellor Brueck (Pontanus).<sup>37</sup> In his letter, John Frederick requested Brueck to confer with Luther and Bugenhagen to determine whether Melanchthon's doctrine actually differed from that of Luther and Bugenhagen or not. Having completed his investigation, Chancellor Brueck was to make a full report to the Elector, concealing nothing.

According to Melanchthon's letter to Veit Dietrich of October 12, 1537, it seems that Schenk's action had consisted in more than merely sending Melanchthon's letter to the Elector. He writes: "The Freiburger does not hesitate to make a serious accusation against me to the Elector."<sup>38</sup> Melanchthon also reports the

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<sup>37</sup>CR 3:365.

<sup>38</sup>CR 3:427.



presence of Brueck at Wittenberg, but he does not yet know whether they will discuss the questions with him.<sup>39</sup>

On about October 13, 1537, Brueck had completed his investigation and submitted the following report to the Elector:

Gracious Prince and Lord etc. Doctor Martin states and asserts that he has not been of the opinion that Philip was still so deeply stuck in the Phantasies. From this I gathered that Philip had concealed your Grace's letter to Doctor Jacob from him. He then confessed that he had numerous concerns, and was not able to determine what Philip held in regard to the Sacrament. For he (Melanchthon) called the Sacrament, and held it to be a mere ceremony, and Luther said he had not seen Melanchthon partake of the Holy Eucharist for a long time. Melanchthon had also brought some arguments after the time he had been at Cassel, from which Luther had determined that Melanchthon was firmly of the Zwinglian opinion. Yet, Luther did not know what Melanchthon's real opinion was. The secret letter and advice, "that under tyrants one may receive the Sacrament under one kind," gave Luther strange thoughts. But Luther wanted to share his heart with Philip, and desired greatly that Philip, as a great man, would not remove himself from him and from the School; for he is doing a great work. Were he, however, to remain of the opinion which he expressed in the letter to Dr. Jacob, God's truth would have to take precedence. Luther will pray for him. If only one kind (in the Eucharist) is received because of the command of tyrants and for the sake of preserving peace, then one would have to concede the correctness of their command. On the same basis, one would also have to teach that good works contribute to righteousness. Luther says, in brief, it would no longer be a weakness. He added

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<sup>39</sup>CR 3:427.

to this many other things, but they are too many to write now. . . . In my opinion, it would do no harm if Dr. Martin would earnestly and from his heart talk to Philip. There is a bond which holds them together in these matters. may the Almighty grant a good end. Amen.

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<sup>40</sup>Gnaedigster Churfuerst und Herr u. Doctor Martinus sagt und bekennt, dass er nimmermehr gemeint haette, dass Philippus noch in den Phantaseyen so steif steckte. Daraus ich verstunde, dass ihme Philippus das Schreiben Ew. Chf. G. an Doctor Jacob verborgen gehabt. Er zeigte darneben an, er haette wohl allerlei Vorsorge, und koennte nicht wissen, wie Philippus am Sacrament waere. Denn er nannte es nicht anders, hielete es auch nur fuer eine schlechte Ceremonien, haette ihn auch lange Zeit nicht sehen das heilige Abendmahl empfaen. Er haette auch Argumenta gebracht nach der Zeit als er zu Cassel gewest, daraus er vernommen, wie er fast Zwinglischer Meinung waere. Doch, wie es in seinem Herzen stuende, wisse er noch nicht. Aber die heimlichen Schreiben und Raethe, "dass unter den Tyrannen einer das Sacrament moege in einerlei Gestalt empfaen," gaeben ihm seltsame Gedanken. Aber er wollte sein Herz mit Philippo theilen, und wollte ganz gern, dass sich Philippus als ein hoher Mann nicht moechte von ihnen und von der Schul allhier thun; denn er thaet je grosse Arbeit. Wuerde er aber auf der Meinung verharren, wie er aus dem Schreiben an D. Jakob vermerkt, so muesste die Wahrheit Gottes vorgehen. Er wollte fuer ihn beten. Denn sollte un der Tyrannen Verbot willen und zu Erhaltung Friedens eine Gestalt moegen genommen werden, so muesste man ihrem Gebote recht geben, und aus derselben Ursach muesste man auch lehren, dass die Werke zu der Rechtfertigung thaeten. Es waere, sagt er, kurzum nun keine Schwachheit mehr; und fuehret darneben viel gutes Dings bei mir darwider ein, davon zu lang zu schreiben.

Ich sagte ihm, wofuer E. Chf. G. des Philippi Meinung ansehen, und dafuer hielten, wie von E. Ch. G. ich naechst zur Lochaw vermerkt haette, dass er drueckte, bis er seine Zeit und Bequemlichkeit ersehe, und sonderlich, so er des Doctors Tod erleben wuerde. Und wahrlich, gnaedigster Herr, ich besorge, es werde etwas daran seyn, wie E. Chf. G. gedenken. D. Martinus meinet, thue er es, so werde er ein elender Mensch werden, und seines Gewissens halben keinen Fried haben.

Another circumstance combined with Schenk's charges to create further suspicion of Melanchthon in the mind of Luther. On June 17, 1537, Cardinal Sadolet wrote a letter to Melanchthon praising his mildness and moderation.<sup>41</sup> Shortly afterward, Sadolet published a letter in Wittenberg complaining of Luther's violent polemics. These two letters seemingly increased Luther's suspicions of Melanchthon. When Luther learned, however, that Melanchthon had not answered Sadolet's letter, he became convinced that the Romanists were only trying to win Melanchthon over to their side.<sup>42</sup>

In 1536, Melanchthon had become involved in a dispute with Osiander on the subjects of Private Absolution and Original Sin. Although there was no open controversy, Osiander became a bitter enemy of Melanchthon.

The following year Luther became involved in a

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Ich achte, es schade nicht, dass D. Martinus fortdrucke, und mit Philippo ernstlich und von Herzen rede. Es ist allda ein Ketten, die in diesen Dingen etwas an einander haengt. Der Allmaechtige schicke es zum Guten. Amen. etc. CR 3:427-28.

<sup>41</sup>CR 3:379.

<sup>42</sup>Georg Ellinger, Philipp Melanchthon, Ein Lebensbild (R. Gaertners Verlagsbuchhandlung, Berlin. 1902), p. 355-65.

controversy with Agricola, whom Luther called an Antinomian. Melanchthon succeeded in restoring a temporary peace between Agricola and Luther, but the former remained hostile to the Wittenberg theologians, particularly to Melanchthon. Cruciger reports that Agricola often stood in the way of frank and open discussions between Melanchthon and Luther.<sup>43</sup>

Herrlinger has asserted that "after the Eucharistic Controversy," the rapport between Melanchthon and Luther disappeared: The only contrary evidence, according to Herrlinger, is Melanchthon's letter to Osiander's son-in-law (1551).<sup>44</sup> We believe that this charge must be investigated further.

Osiander had stated that, "Philip and his followers have been misled by rationalism and philosophy and have fallen away from Luther's doctrine."<sup>45</sup>

The editors of the Corpus Reformatorum quote from Osiander's letter as follows:

I believe that Philip with all of his adherents are nothing but indentured slaves of Satan . . . under such deception he retains the appearance of the true doctrine, denied by his church, so that I believe there has not been a more pestilential person in the Church from the time

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<sup>43</sup>CR 3:398.

<sup>44</sup>Herrlinger, op. cit., p. 426.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

of the Apostles.<sup>46</sup>

In reply to Osiander's charge, Melanchthon wrote to Jerome Besold, Osiander's son-in-law, on 22 January 1551, that he had always thought and spoken respectfully of Osiander and that he wondered why Osiander was now such a burning flame against him:

But I commend this matter to God, and I pray daily to Him with my whole heart that He would make me a worthy vessel. Your father-in-law calls us apes. I assert that I have not accepted any other doctrine, nor have I ever desired to teach anything else than the common doctrine of our churches, and I have often in an intimate way discussed this matter with Luther.<sup>47</sup>

As the rest of this letter indicates, the subject under discussion is not the question of the Holy Eucharist but the doctrine of justification and imputation.<sup>48</sup>

Against Herrlinger's assertion that this letter is the only evidence of a rapport between the doctrines of Luther and Melanchthon, we must point out that there is considerably more evidence of this rapport, also during Luther's lifetime. That there was considerable tension between Luther and Melanchthon must be granted. On 8 August 1544, Melanchthon wrote to Dietrich: "If our

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<sup>46</sup>CR 7:726.

<sup>47</sup>CR 7:726.

<sup>48</sup>CR 7:727.

Pericles begins to speak abusively on the same subject, I will leave."<sup>49</sup>

About this same time, the rumor began circulating in Wittenberg that Luther was planning a severe criticism of Melanchthon and Bucer in the book he was preparing for print.<sup>50</sup> Yet, 11 August, Luther and Melanchthon signed a joint "Testimony" which dealt with the arrival of Bartholomew Georgewitz at the University of Wittenberg and with the Turks.<sup>51</sup> Melanchthon, in a letter of 28 August 1544 addressed to Camerarius, takes note of the rumors concerning the forthcoming book: "I hear that a harsh book has been written, which I have not seen."<sup>52</sup> The same day Melanchthon expressed his concern over this same book in a letter to Bucer:

I have written to you through Milich concerning our Pericles, who has again begun to thunder most vehemently concerning the Holy Eucharist. He has written a harsh book, not yet published, in which you and I are beaten black and blue. Luther has for the past few days been with Amsdorf, whom he consulted in this matter. Amsdorf is praising the attack. I hear that he (Luther) will summon Cruciger and me to him tomorrow. I pray God that He would grant a good result to us and the church. Perhaps it is by divine Providence that this matter is taken up again for it must be explained

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<sup>49</sup>CR 5:459.

<sup>50</sup>CR 5:461.

<sup>51</sup>CR 5:463.

<sup>52</sup>CR 5:473.



further. I am a calm bird, and I will willingly leave this cage if he makes an attack on me.<sup>53</sup>

When Luther's book, A Short Confession on the Holy Sacrament, Against the Fanatics, appeared two months later, Melanchthon discovered that his name was not even mentioned in the book, much less was he "beaten black and blue." Very significant for evaluating the factual basis of the rumors concerning the supposed attack on Melanchthon in Luther's book, and for the whole relation of Luther and Melanchthon at this time is the statement which Luther made in a letter to Balthasar Alterius on 12 November 1544:

Therefore, if perchance you should hear that Philip or Luther conceded to their (Bullinger, Bucer et al) madness, for God's sake do not believe it. For I hear that they or others have spread the rumor that their pestilential error has the approval and authority of our name. Do not believe it; they are false prophets, who seek to subvert the Galatians.<sup>54</sup>

Bullinger replied to Luther's "Short Confession." Philip of Hesse, fearing that a new pamphlet warfare was about to break out wrote to Brueck asking him to use his influence to stop further outbreaks. He felt that only the Romanists would profit by a renewal of the controversy with the Sacramentarians.<sup>55</sup> The

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<sup>53</sup>CR 5:474.

<sup>54</sup>DeWette, 5, 697. W. A. Br. X, 679ff.

<sup>55</sup>CR 5:501-2.

Elector sent Brueck to confer with Luther and Melanchthon.<sup>56</sup>

On 6 November 1544, Brueck reported to the Elector concerning the "split" between Luther and Melanchthon: "Concerning Philip, I notice nothing other than that he and Martin are good friends."<sup>57</sup>

Apparently, in spite of Brueck's report that Luther and Melanchthon were now good friends, conditions seemed to have remained unsettled at the University of Wittenberg. Rumors reached the Elector that Luther was planning an attack on the Sacramentarians. This, said the Elector, pleased him. His concern, however, was that in this attack on the Sacramentarians, Luther would also attack Melanchthon by name. He wrote to Brueck that if Luther should attack Melanchthon by name, the consequences would be serious, resulting not only in renewed bitterness, but also very possibly tend to destroy the University of Wittenberg. The Elector went on to say that if Luther was in doubt about Melanchthon's position on the Holy Eucharist, or if he felt that he held a Sacramentarian position, he should speak to Melanchthon about his concerns in

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<sup>56</sup>CR 5:515.

<sup>57</sup>CR 5:522.

private. The Elector felt that in the case of such a distinguished person as Melanchthon, Luther, in his admonition, should exercise patient consideration. If his admonition failed to accomplish anything, wrote the Elector, then such steps as Luther would consider necessary might be taken. The general effect of the letter was that the Elector, in very diplomatic terms, forbade Luther to attack Melanchthon by name.<sup>58</sup>

Luther now began to feel that he was no longer wanted at Wittenberg and left the city at the end of July, 1545.<sup>59</sup> On August 2, Melanchthon left Wittenberg, at the request of the Elector, in the attempt to persuade Luther to return to the University.<sup>60</sup> Melanchthon found Luther at Merseburg, and succeeded in persuading Luther to return to Wittenberg. Apparently their differences were reconciled. On 4 August, Melanchthon wrote a "Testimony" for the ordination of George Anhalt, which was signed by Melanchthon, Luther, Jonas and Pfeffinger.<sup>61</sup> Luther was present at the ordination and participated in it.<sup>62</sup> On August 16,

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<sup>58</sup>CR 5:746-48.

<sup>59</sup>CR 5:xii, 798, 801.

<sup>60</sup>CR 5:816.

<sup>61</sup>CR 5:825.

<sup>62</sup>CR 5:830.

1545, Luther returned to Wittenberg.<sup>63</sup> The tension between Melanchthon and Luther was healed. When Luther celebrated his sixty-second birthday, Melanchthon was among those invited and was present for the occasion.<sup>64</sup>

Luther's death came while he was at Mansfeld trying to settle a controversy. Melanchthon was supposed to have accompanied Luther, but remained at Wittenberg because of his own illness. On 9 February 1546, Melanchthon received a letter from Jonas informing him of Luther's death. That same day, Melanchthon paid a moving tribute to Luther before the students to whom he was to have lectured on Romans.<sup>65</sup>

On February 22, Luther's body was brought to Wittenberg for burial. At the funeral services, Eugenhausen preached the sermon and Melanchthon gave a Latin oration.<sup>66</sup> In his oration, Melanchthon praised Luther as "a minister of the Gospel raised up by God" and placed him in the succession of Moses, David, Elijah, the Apostles, Augustine and others. Melanchthon's oration was a praise of God who had

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<sup>63</sup>CR 5:834.

<sup>64</sup>CR 5:887.

<sup>65</sup>CR 6:57.

<sup>66</sup>CR 6:58-9.

wrought so much through the person of Luther, to whom Melanchthon owed a great deal. Perhaps Melanchthon's earlier expression of his indebtedness to Luther was in his mind: "I thank Dr. Martin Luther, first, because I learned the Gospel from him; then for his singular kindness to me."<sup>67</sup>

#### Melanchthon after Luther's Death

The last fourteen years of Melanchthon's life, following Luther's death in 1546 till his own death in 1560, were years of bitter conflict, charges and countercharges. The Smalcald War (1546-47) by Charles V, causing the temporary dissolution of the University of Wittenberg, the Interims, the charges and attacks of Matthias Flacius Illyricus and those of Joachim Westphal, all served to make the last years of Melanchthon's life most difficult. It is ironical that Melanchthon, who so dearly loved peace, was, for the greater part of his life, forced into participating in some very bitter theological conflicts.

In this concluding section of our discussion, we shall not attempt to give a history of the controversies of the last years of Melanchthon's life, nor are

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<sup>67</sup>CR 3:827.

we attempting to delineate his role in them. We will confine our discussion to his major writings on the Holy Eucharist during this time, considering them in chronological order and summarizing the pertinent sections of each of these works. We will deal with the following works: "The Saxon Confession" of 1551; "The Examination of the Ordinands" of 1553; "The Reply to the Articles of the Bavarian Inquisition" of 1558; the Loci of 1559.

#### The Saxon Confession

When on 15 January 1551 Pope Julius III announced the re-convocation of the Council of Trent, he expressed the hope that the Evangelicals would not remain aloof from the Council but would take part in it. At the end of April, Melanchthon received a request from Maurice of Saxony, instructing him to rework the Augsburg Confession into a form which could be presented to the Council. This revision of the Augustana was to be presented in the name of the theologians, not the princes.<sup>1</sup> With Camerarius, Melanchthon traveled to Dessau where he could work undisturbed. Here he received a further request from the Elector that he add a section on the form of the ancient Collegium

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<sup>1</sup>CR 7:788.



Episcoporum.<sup>2</sup> The professors from the University of Leipzig and the Saxon superintendents assembled in Wittenberg where they signed the Confession.<sup>3</sup>

In December of 1551, Melanchthon began his journey to Trent. The plan was that he would wait in Nuernberg for instructions from the Elector. While at Nuernberg, Melanchthon waited in vain for replies to his letters asking whether he was to continue on to Trent or return.<sup>4</sup> The advent of war now was responsible for the Council being prorogued.

In the Preface to the Saxon Confession, Melanchthon refers to the Confession as the "summary of the doctrine which is taught in all the churches which embrace the Confession of Reverend Dr. Luther." It is Melanchthon's expressed intention simply and faithfully to repeat the Confession originally presented to Charles V at Augsburg in 1530.<sup>5</sup>

In reworking the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon greatly expanded the section on the Holy Eucharist. Significantly, in the paragraph "On the Sacraments,"

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<sup>2</sup>CR 7:796.

<sup>3</sup>CR 7:806.

<sup>4</sup>CR 7:929. 955.

<sup>5</sup>Studienausgabe, VI, 82.

which is introductory to the discussion of the individual Sacraments, he lists only two, Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. These Sacraments are signs of grace. They are "guarantees and testimonies, which bear witness that the benefits promised in the Gospel pertain to individuals."<sup>6</sup>

In his discussion of the Sacrament of the Eucharist,<sup>7</sup> Melanchthon refers to it as the "nerve-center (nervus) of the public congregation," citing four reasons why this Sacrament was instituted:

- 1) The Son of God desires that the word of the Gospel be proclaimed in the public congregation.
- 2) The Son of God desires that preaching and this rite conserve and propagate the remembrance of His suffering, death and resurrection.
- 3) Christ wants the Holy Eucharist to be the personal assurance which assures the user that the benefits of the Gospel pertain to him. Thus, for Melanchthon, the Eucharist is here the individual application of the promise of grace, while, as he says, "the sermon is general."<sup>8</sup>
- 4) Christ wants the Holy Eucharist to be a public confession of the doctrine to

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 127-135.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

which one holds. In this Sacrament, there is to be public and private thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity for the wonderful blessing of salvation and redemption. In addition, the Eucharist is to be a bond of mutual love between the members of the Church.

Melanchthon rejects what he calls "the portentous error of the monks," who have written that the participation merits the forgiveness of sins ex opere operato sine bono motu utentis.<sup>9</sup> This belief, he holds, is in conflict with the scriptural doctrine of justification by faith. Since it is by faith that a man is justified and this is confirmed by the participation in the Sacrament, and since no one should partake without faith and repentance, Melanchthon writes that it was the practice in the Lutheran Church to admit no one to the Holy Eucharist unless he has made confession to the pastor or his colleague, and has been absolved.<sup>10</sup>

Against the Roman position, Melanchthon asserts that there is, strictly speaking, only one expiatory sacrifice, viz., that of Christ. Therefore, the "Gentile and Pharisaic opinion" that the Mass is a

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

sacrifice for the living and the dead is rejected as a "profanation of the Holy Eucharist."<sup>11</sup> According to Melanchthon, the doctrine that the Mass is an expiatory sacrifice for the dead is contrary to the Words of Institution which state, "Take, Eat." "How can this apply to the dead or those who are absent?"<sup>12</sup>

On the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament, he asserts:

Our people are taught that the Sacraments are divinely instituted actions, and that outside the instituted use, the elements themselves do not have the character of a Sacrament. In its instituted use, in the communion, Christ is objectively (vere et essentialiter) present and the body and blood of<sup>13</sup> Christ are truly offered to the communicants.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>13</sup> Docentur etiam homines Sacramenta esse actiones divinitus institutas, et extra usum institutum res ipsas non habere rationem Sacramenti, sed in usu instituto in hac communione vere et substantialiter adesse Christum et vere exhiberi sumentibus corpus et sanguinem Christi. . . . Ibid., p. 130.

## The Examination of the Candidates for Ordination

When Duke John Albrecht of Mecklenburg desired a new Church Order, which should include the questions addressed to the candidates for ordination, he assigned the task of composing it to John Aurifaber of Rostock. Having completed the draft of the Church Order, Aurifaber took it to Wittenberg in April of 1552 for Melanchthon's approval. Melanchthon revised the draft, enlarging it considerably.<sup>1</sup>

When Melanchthon had finished the work on the Examination, he sent it to David Chytraeus in Rostock, asking his opinion of it.<sup>2</sup> He also sent it to Aurifaber and Schnepf for review.<sup>3</sup>

In the Introduction, Melanchthon appealed to the Augsburg Confession of 1530 and Luther's Catechism, both of which, he says, agree with the Apostolic, the Nicene and Athanasian Symbols.<sup>4</sup>

Those who contend that Melanchthon changed his Eucharistic position after 1530 or 1534 will find no

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<sup>1</sup>CR 7:1059.

<sup>2</sup>CR 7:1034.

<sup>3</sup>CR 7:1036f.

<sup>4</sup>Studienausgabe, VI, 171.

support for this charge in the "Examination." In the section which deals with the Holy Eucharist, the first question to be addressed to the candidate reads:

"What is distributed and received in the Holy Supper of the Lord Christ?" The answer is: "The true body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>5</sup>

Melanchthon holds that the participation in the Holy Eucharist is intended to strengthen the faith of those who have been converted (Bekerten). The visible signs are to serve as a witness that the individual may apply the promises of the Gospel to himself. The visible signs are "testimonies of the promises and of application (testimonia promissionum et applicationis)."<sup>6</sup>

According to Melanchthon, the Papistic Masses are celebrated in the belief that they merit the forgiveness of sins and remission of punishment in purgatory. Therefore, they must be rejected. He demonstrates that

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<sup>5</sup>Was Wird im Abendmal des Herrn Christi ausgeteilet und empfangen? Antwort. Warer Leib und Blut des Herrn Jhesu Christ. Der hat diese niessung eingesetzt, das er bezeuget, das er wahrhaftiglich und wesentlich bey uns und in uns sein wil und wil in den bekerten wonen, inen seine gueter mitteilen und in inen krefftig sein. Wie er spricht John 15. "Bleibet in mir und ich in Euch." Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 203.



the Romanist opinion here cited is false; first because the forgiveness of sins is received only by faith; second, the Eucharist was instituted for the benefit of the living, not the dead.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

## The Reply to the Articles of the Bavarian Inquisition

Duke Albert V (1550-79) had been forced to grant concessions to his nobles and townsmen. These concessions consisted of communion under both kinds, marriage of the clergy, abolition of the fast days and some minor doctrinal reforms. After the conclusion of the Council of Trent, however, he felt strong enough to oppose the Lutheranism which was making gains in his territory. Supported by the Pope, who freed Albert from financial worries by giving him one-tenth of all the ecclesiastical lands; by the Jesuits, who had gained control of the cultural and spiritual life of Bavaria; and by his Chancellor Simon Eck (d. 1574), who helped him strengthen his political power, Albert began stamping out Protestantism in his territory. The methods of Albert and his Chancellor became models for the Counter-Reformation in the rest of Europe. As a part of Inquisition, the Jesuits composed thirty-one questions which were to be asked the Evangelicals. If they did not give answers to them satisfactory to the Jesuits, they were to be punished or denied the right to live in Bavaria.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Harold J. Grimm, The Reformation Era (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), pp. 492-93.

By October 9, 1558, Melanchthon began a discussion of these Articles of Inquisition in his lectures,<sup>2</sup> and by December, 1558, had completed a full discussion of them in writing. He sent his reply to the Articles to Aurifaber with the request for an opinion of them.<sup>3</sup>

Fifteen months later, on the day before his death, Melanchthon appealed to his Reply as his confession "against the Papists, Anabaptists and Flacians."<sup>4</sup>

In the Articles of Inquisition, questions eight through eighteen dealt with the Holy Eucharist.<sup>5</sup> Melanchthon answers them in a very direct, to-the-point, almost blunt, manner.

Question Eight: "Whether they believe that in the holy catholic church there are seven Sacraments, and whether they believe that these are true and efficacious signs of grace?"<sup>6</sup>

Melanchthon replies:

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<sup>2</sup>Studienausgabe, VI, 278.

<sup>3</sup>CR 9:810.

<sup>4</sup>CR 9:1099.

<sup>5</sup>Studienausgabe, VI, 282ff.

<sup>6</sup>An credant, in sancta catholica Ecclesia septem sacramenta esse, et an credant, ea esse efficacia et certa signa gratiae? Ibid., 282.

I deny that there are these seven (sacraments) which the Papists number. The Papistic rite of unction, which is now in use, is obviously impious. The consecrations of oil, which are now practised, is of similar superstition. Also the invocation of the saints is added. This invocation we expressly condemn. . . . The rite of confirmation, which the Papists retain, is again a mere show, which has neither the command of God nor the promise of grace added to it.<sup>7</sup>

He goes on to list only two Sacraments, Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. If anyone, however, wishes to call Absolution a Sacrament, Melanchthon says that he would not object.

This Reply, the last of the specifically anti-Roman writings from the pen of Melanchthon, is not soft in its condemnation of what he considers Romanist errors. He condemns, with a "damno," the "Pharisaic madness" which teaches "that grace is conferred by the Sacraments ex opere operato sine bono motu utentis."<sup>8</sup>

Melanchthon groups together questions nine through twelve, giving the answers to them at the same time.

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<sup>7</sup>Nego esse septem illa, quae Papistae numerant. Nam ritus Papisticus unctionis, qui nunc in usu est, est manifesta impietas. Consecrationes olei quae nunc fiunt, sunt similes magicis. Additur item invocatio hominum mortuorum. Haec expresse damnamus. . . . Ritus Confirmationis, quem retinent pontificii, prorsus inane spectaculum est, nec mandatum Dei nec promissionem gratiae adiunctam habet. Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>8</sup>Expresse autem deliramentum Pharisaicum damno, quod dicit, per Sacramenta ex opere operato, sine bono motu utentis, dari gratiam. Ibid., p. 298.

## Question Nine:

Do they believe that by the power of consecration or the recitation of the divine word a transubstantiation of the bread and the wine into the true body and true blood of Christ takes place in the Mass, in this manner, so that immediately after the consecration the true and living flesh and the true and living blood of Christ, before and after the reception, are truly, wholly and substantially present with the one presence of the divinity or of the divine nature of the Son of God, so that only the external appearance of the symbols of bread and wine remain?<sup>9</sup>

## Question ten:

Do they believe that the Sacrament of the Altar, which is put aside and reserved for the use of the sick and other believers in Christ is only a mystery signifying the benefits of Christ and that they do not, however, assert that these things are the very body and blood of Christ?<sup>10</sup>

## Question Eleven:

Do they believe that the truly present Christ should be prayerfully adored whenever the host is elevated in the hand of the priest, or

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<sup>9</sup>An credant, quod vi consecrationis seu recitationis verbi divini fiat in missa transsubstantiatio panis et vini in verum corpus et veram sanguinem Christi, hoc modo, ut mox post consecrationem vera ac vivifica caro, verus item et vivificus sanguis Christi una cum praesentia divinitatis seu divinae naturae filii Dei, tantum manente externa specie symbolorum panis et vini, ante et post sumtionem, vere, integre ac substantialiter assit? Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>10</sup>An sacramentum altaris, quod ad usum aegrotorum et aliorum Christo credentium reponitur ac reservatur, credant tantum esse mysterium significans beneficia Christi, non autem statuunt esse revera ipsum corpus et sanguinem Christi? Ibid., p. 282.

when it is displayed or offered?<sup>11</sup>

Question Twelve:

Do they disavow the adoration of the Sacrament of the Altar in the repository or in the theatrical pomp of the procession, as an idolatrous rite?<sup>12</sup>

Melanchthon replies that since the Sacraments are divinely instituted actions, and since no creature can institute an action to which the promise of grace is added, it is apparent that nothing has the character of a Sacrament outside the instituted use. The Papistical practice of the adoration of the bread, outside the instituted use, as in the theophoric procession, the oblation and reservation, is idolatry.<sup>13</sup>

The words, "This do in remembrance of Me"<sup>14</sup> mean

<sup>11</sup>An credant Christum in sacramento altaris vere praesentem suppliciter adorandum esse, quandocumque manu sacerdotis hostia elevatur, ostenditur aut porrigitur? Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>12</sup>An detestantur, ut idolatricum ritum, adorationem sacramenti altaris in repositoio aut in theatrica pompa circumgestionis? Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>13</sup>Eodem modo dico expresse de Papistica adoratione panis, quam exercent extra usum, in sua oblatione, repositione et circumgestionem. Et adfirmo hanc manifestam idolatriam causam esse necessariam, relinquendae et fugiendae sint ipsorum congregationes, iuxta dictum: "Fugite idola." Studienausgabe, VI, 298.

<sup>14</sup>This is apparently a reference to question sixteen: "Quomodo intelligant haec verba? Hoc facite ad mei recordationem." Et an haec vox Christi mandatis universaliter ad omnes Christianos pertineat? Ibid., p. 299.



simply that Christ commands us to do what He has ordained, i.e., "Take, drink ye all of it." Melanchthon goes on to say that in Christ's institution,

There is not a syllable concerning the oblation or other spectacle, but the reception (sumtio) (emphasis ours) is instituted and it is thus instituted that it should be a remembrance of the death, resurrection and benefits of Christ.<sup>15</sup>

In the brief answer Melanchthon gives to these involved questions, there is ample evidence that Melanchthon intends to base his doctrine of the Eucharist solely on Scripture. Not only does he frequently refer to Christ's institution and quote Scripture in support of his position, but he also concludes with this statement rejecting the authority of councils when they go against Scripture:

Neither a council nor any man is able to forbid the second part of the Holy Eucharist, according to the statement, "It is not permitted to change the testament of a man, so much less the testament of God."<sup>16</sup>

Question Seventeen: "Whether a sacrifice for the

<sup>15</sup>Nulla syllaba ibi legitur de oblatione et aliis spectaculis, sed sumtio instituitur, et ita instituitur, ut fiat recordatio mortis et resurrectionis Christi et beneficiorum eius. . . . Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>16</sup>Ex istis fundamentis respondeo et ad sequentes articulos. Ad quintumdecimum dico: Nec Synodum nec ullum hominem posse prohibere alteram partem Coenae Domini, iuxta dictum: Testamentum hominis mutare non licet, quanto minus Testamentum Dei. Ibid., p. 300.

living and the dead ought to be made in the Mass?"<sup>17</sup>

Melanchthon's reply to this question is that there is no instituted oblation of the body and blood of Christ which is to be made by the priest on behalf of the living and the dead. "It is obviously a profanation to imagine that there is a sacrifice for the dead."<sup>18</sup> Invocation and thanksgiving, says Melanchthon, ought to be a part of the participation. There is no doubt that these may properly be called sacrifices.

Question Eighteen: "Whether a consecration of the Sacrament performed by those not ordained by the bishops is valid?"<sup>19</sup>

Melanchthon asserts that the Church of God is to be found wherever the Word of the Gospel is retained uncorrupted. The Papists horribly distort the doctrine of the Gospel, "But our Churches retain the pure doctrine of the Gospel and instituted use of the Sacrament."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>An in missa sit facienda oblatio pro vivis et mortuis? Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>18</sup>Ideo profanatio est, fingere oblationem pro mortuis. Ibid., p. 301.

<sup>19</sup>An consecratio sacramenti valeat facta per non ordinatos ab episcopis? Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>20</sup>Sed doctrinam Evangelii incorruptam et usum Sacramenti institutum Ecclesiae nostrae retinent. Ibid., p. 302.

He continues:

I know, however, that the Papists atrociously claim that there is no consecration on the part of those who have not been ordained by the bishops. Then, that there are no bishops except those who are ordained by the Roman Bishop. This false zeal of the Papists is refuted by the example of the Eastern Churches of which there is a letter in the fifth book of Theodoret, in which they write: "Confirmation (of ordination) ought not to be sought from the Roman Bishop, but it is enough that the election takes place at his location in consultation with the neighboring bishop, whether one or many, according to the decree of the Council of Nicea."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Scio autem, atrociter declamare Pontificios, non fieri consecrationem ab iis, qui non sunt ordinati ab Episcopis. Deinde non esse Episcopos, nisi confirmatos a Romano Episcopo. Haec kakodzelia Papistica refutatur etiam exemplo Orientalium Ecclesiarum, quarum extat Epistola in 5. libro Theodoreti, in qua scribunt, Non oportere peti confirmationem a Romano Episcopo, sed satis esse, electionem fieri ab Ecclesia eius loci, adhibito vicino Episcopo uno vel pluribus, iuxta Synodi Nicenae decretum.

The 1559 Loci

The locus on the Holy Eucharist in the 1559 edition of the Loci is divided into two parts: "Of the Holy Eucharist" and "Of the Eucharistic Sacrifice." In his section on the Holy Eucharist, Melancthon cites three reasons why the external rites, i.e., the Sacramental signs, were added to the promise of forgiveness:

- 1) They are to admonish the users of the Sacraments of the promise and will of God, and that thus "through them faith toward God should be aroused and confirmed."<sup>1</sup>
- 2) They are to serve as more sure means of handing down the promise of God's forgiveness to posterity. Here he likens the New Testament signs to the Old Testament Covenant of circumcision made by God with Abraham.<sup>2</sup>
- 3) They are to be the nervi of the public congregations, i.e., they are to be public testimonies so that the faith might be propagated in the whole world. By the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the Church shows that it worships this God who gave us the Gospel and thus sets itself apart from the Gentiles. In the Holy Eucharist, the Church also receives God's promise that

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<sup>1</sup>Studienausgabe, 2,2, pp. 519-20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 520.

the Church will be preserved, for our Lord commanded that the Holy Eucharist is to show forth His death "until He comes."<sup>3</sup>

Melanchthon then proceeds to the discussion proper. He treats the Eucharist under four sub-headings: In what manner the Holy Eucharist was instituted; To whom the manducation is beneficial; Who is to be admitted to the Sacrament; On the abuse and profanation of the Sacrament.

In the discussion of the first of these sub-headings, Melanchthon refers to the Eucharist as a "ministry" by which Christ is present and gives his body and blood to communicants: "Nor is it a mere show, but Christ is present, giving His body and blood to him who eats and drinks, as also the ancient writers state."<sup>4</sup>

In the second section on the benefit of the participation in the Eucharist, Melanchthon decries the practice of infrequent attendance at the Holy Eucharist, which he links closely with the vices which have arisen in the Church. By these vices, he is apparently referring to what he considers false teachings on the Holy Eucharist. Melanchthon remarks that in the early Church, the attendance at Holy Communion was a much more

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 521.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 522.

frequent occurrence.<sup>5</sup>

We find that Melanchthon places a great deal of stress on his belief that the unworthy communicants receive no benefit from their participation in the Communion since they do not partake with repentance, "but persevere in their sins against their conscience."<sup>6</sup>

The reception of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist without repentance involves the impenitent, and therefore unworthy, communicant in a double punishment; first, for his previous sins of which he does not repent; second, for this sin of unworthy reception which abuses the body of Christ.

It is interesting to observe that in this edition of the Loci, Melanchthon's pastoral concern is very prominent, perhaps more so than in the previous editions. He reminds the readers of the punishments which he believes God has visited upon the people because of their sins, particularly the sins against the Holy Eucharist.<sup>7</sup>

The Holy Eucharist, in this section, is for Melanchthon, a means whereby the communicant receives

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 523.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 524.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 524-25.



the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit:

To this end the participation is beneficial to the person who is repentant, namely, for the confirming of faith, by which the communicant truly receives the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

Although the principal purpose of the Sacrament is the confirmation of faith, Melanchthon also lists several secondary purposes (finis): 1) Thanksgiving; to God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, by whose great mercy Christ became a sacrifice on the cross for our sins; to God, that He rules and governs the world, preserving the ministry of the Gospel and the Sacraments; to the Son that He became a sacrifice and has placated the wrath of God over against our sins.<sup>9</sup> 2) Example; The example of the communicant serves to preserve the Church. Without the frequent attendance of the faithful believers at the Sacrament, Melanchthon believes that a general disregard for preaching and the Sacraments sets in even as this has already happened, he says, in those areas where the priests only read the Mass. There the people stay away from the churches, do not hear sermons and do not understand the use of

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 525.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 526-27.

the Sacrament.<sup>10</sup> 3) Confession of doctrine; "When you partake of the Sacrament, you witness that you approve the doctrine of His church and that you want to be a member of this group with which you eat the lamb."<sup>11</sup> 4) The participation is the bond of mutual love, as St. Paul reminds us.<sup>12</sup>

In his discussion of the question of who is to be admitted to the Holy Eucharist, Melanchthon again stresses the importance of faith in the communicant, the faith which believes the promise of God. Melanchthon also places the burden of examination of the communicant upon the pastor to determine the status of the person's faith and the doctrine to which he holds. It is the duty of the pastor, says Melanchthon, to examine the people individually as to their faith and doctrine, to instruct them in the doctrine and to encourage them to partake in faith and repentance. In this section, there is a significant statement apropos to this examination and participation in faith:

Those who in truth are penitent and are earnestly sorry for their sins will not stay away from the participation in the Sacrament

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 528.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 528.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 529.

because of their lapses. They know that this guarantee is given to them so that faith in the forgiveness of sins may be aroused and confirmed and so that the reconciled mind again invokes God and serves Him in good conscience.<sup>13</sup>

In the final section on the abuse and profanation of the Mass, Melanchthon repeats his objection to the Romanist practices connected with the Mass outside the instituted use. These practices or beliefs are the theophoric procession of the blessed host, the belief that the Mass is an expiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead which merits forgiveness.<sup>14</sup> Melanchthon likens the latter opinion to the misguided belief of the Pharisees who believed that they received forgiveness by their slaughtering of animals.<sup>15</sup> Against this opinion, Melanchthon insists that according to Hebrews 10, there is only one meritorious sacrifice, "The death of Christ alone was a sacrifice for all our sins. . . ."<sup>16</sup>

On the Eucharistic sacrifice, Melanchthon insists that such "sacrifices" as "the preaching of the Gospel, faith, thanksgiving, invocation, the afflictions of the

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 529.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 530.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 531.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 532.

saints, all the good works of the saints" are not expiatory sacrifices which merit ex opere operato the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation. They are sacrifices of praise. This opinion is not only in accord with the Scriptures, but also in accordance with the practice and usage of the Ancient Church.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 535.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

1. Melanchthon consistently rejected the conception of the Holy Eucharist as an expiatory sacrifice applicable on behalf of the living and the dead.

2. Prior to the 1540 Variata, Melanchthon's formulations are explicit in affirming the objective presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Beginning with the issuance of the 1540 Variata, Melanchthon's statements are somewhat ambiguous. Yet, at the same time, it was Melanchthon's avowed intention to express more clearly the formulations of the Augsburg Confession. We do not believe that the Variata of 1540 is evidence of a change in Melanchthon's doctrine, but it is evidence of a change of emphasis in his formulations of the nature of the presence of Christ's body and blood. We do not believe that the 1540 Variata is a deliberate deception on his part; it is, however, sufficiently ambiguous to make it suspect. In the later period of his life the references to the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist are again quite explicit.

We must reject the allegation that after 1530, 1534 or 1540 Melanchthon's doctrine of the Eucharist underwent a profound change.

3. Melanchthon consistently adheres to the "in usu" or "extra usum" formula, of which he is the author.

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