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I. PHILIP MELANCHTHON, SCHOLAR AND REFORMER.¹

OF the many brief descriptions of the Reformation, none is more striking than that which represents it as the return of Christendom to a book. Of course, so continental, profound and complex a movement cannot be described in a single sentence. But with a rough kind of truth it may be said, that when the hour of the great religious revolution struck, the various lines on which its historical causes had for centuries been moving converged and terminated in the Holy Bible. If we were limited to a single statement as to what the Reformation, in its inmost essence, was, and what, as it perpetuates itself in the Protestant churches, it still is; after all our study of the historical events which preceded it as coöperating agents—the papal schism, the reforming councils, the struggles between Gallicanism and Ultramontanism, the classical revival, the destructive and constructive forces which tore down the mediæval and built up the modern society, as the inventions of printing, of gunpowder and of the mariner's compass and the great voyages of discovery, the religious labors of local and national reformers like Wicliff and Huss and Savonarola—if, I say, after all this study, we were called to select a single sentence in which to embody the idea of the Reformation, we could find no better sentence for the purpose than that of Wil-

¹An address delivered in the chapel of Princeton Theological Seminary on the occasion of the celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Philip Melanchthon. The Rev. Dr. Green, Chairman of the Faculty, presided; and the Rev. Dr. Jacobs, Dean of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, took part in the services. The hymns sung were written by Melanchthon and Luther.

liam Chillingworth: "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." And because this is the Reformation in its essence, there is no other single line of events leading up to it so interesting or fruitful as a subject of investigation as the line of literary studies. Certainly, there is no other line which will bring us, by a route as direct or as charming, to the University of Wittenberg and to Philip Melanchthon, the preceptor of Germany.

It need not surprise us that the early Christian church rejected a literature whose charm was due, partly at least, to its association with a religion which the fathers of the church called the worship of demons. There is more reason for surprise in the fact that we can trace a line of Christian scholars, like St. Augustine, who extolled the study of heathen writers as introductory to the study of the divine revelation, or like Alcuin, who could write of his little collection of the classics in language as affectionate as if he were speaking of his best-beloved friends. But these were exceptions; and of these exceptions, Mr. Symonds tells us that "Augustine deplored his time spent in weeping over Dido's death by love, while all the while he was himself both morally and spiritually dead; and that Alcuin regretted that in his boyhood he had preferred Virgil to the legends of the saints, and stigmatized the eloquence of the classic Latin writers as wanton." The tardy penitence of the North-African theologian and of the Saxon teacher is mild, indeed, when compared with the vehement denunciations of most of those who contrasted their own writings with the classics. "I warn the reader," says one, "not to mind the mass of barbarisms in this work, but to seek the pearl within the dung-heap"; and Gregory the Great struggles after language equal to his contempt for the literary masters of his own Italy. "The places of prepositions and the cases of nouns," said he, "I utterly despise, since I deem it unfit to confine the words of the celestial oracles within the rules of Donatus."

Undoubtedly, the western church, during the Middle Ages after the Dark Age, enjoyed an active intellectual life and abounded in missionary work. The Teutonic peoples were christianized and civilized, and the great doctrines of Christianity were stated, defended, and organized in systems in which their relations to the

truths they presuppose were exhibited. But this intellectual activity was largely unfruitful, for the reason that both the facts of nature and the great literatures, whether Christian or classic, of the previous ages were neglected. The human intellect fed itself almost exclusively on its own speculations, and its only activity was excessive analysis. How this activity in analysis wearied and angered scholars like Erasmus appears in his *Colloquies* and his letters. "The schoolmen," he writes, "have been arguing for generations whether the proposition that Christ exists from eternity is correctly stated; whether he is compounded of two natures, or consists of two natures; whether he is *conflatus*, or *commixtus*, or *conglutinatus*, or *coaugmentatus*, or *geminatus*, or *copulatus*. The present opinion is that neither of these particles is correct; and we are to have a new word, *unitus*, which still is to explain nothing. And all this stuff, of which we know nothing, and are not required to know anything, they treat as the citadel of our faith."¹

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries this characteristic intellectual activity was employed in the defence and maintenance of an ecclesiastical system which had become tyrannical and corrupt. How, after the new learning had penetrated the Teutonic countries and had aroused the friends of good studies, the city of St. Peter and St. Paul was regarded, we know from the indignant and brutal satire by Ulrich von Hutten, called *The Roman Trinity*, each sentence of which falls like the stroke of a battle-axe. "Three things sustain the dignity of Rome: the reputation of the pope, the bones of the saints, and the traffic in indulgences. Three things are innumerable in Rome: harlots, priests, and scribblers. Three things are proscribed in Rome: simplicity, piety, and temperance. Three things are in universal demand at Rome: short masses, good money, and voluptuous living." And as they knew Rome corrupt, they held that its corruption had poisoned its intellectual defenders. It is of the theologians of his day—the "theogastrics," as he calls them—that Erasmus is writing when he says: "than whose brains there is nothing more rotten; than whose language, nothing more barbarous; than whose life, nothing more foul; than whose speech, nothing more virulent; than whose

¹Translated in Froude's *Life of Erasmus*, Lecture VII.

hearts, nothing more black." Of course, this is the violent language of a partisan. It is not truthful portraiture, but caricature; and yet caricature, if it does not convey, often suggests, the truth.

It was when scholasticism had exhausted its resources, and when the church was more corrupt than it had been since the pornocracy, that the literary movement began in Italy. We call it "the classical revival," because it was a return to classical ideas and forms, for inspiration, for instruction, for ultimate truth, and for loftiest ideals. But if we would give expression to the spirit which informed the movement, we must employ the term "humanism." "The essence of humanism," according to the English historian¹ who has given to the movement the severest study, "consists in a new perception of the dignity of man as a natural being, apart from theological determinations; and in the further perception that classical literature alone displayed human nature in the plenitude of intellectual and moral freedom. Hence the single-hearted devotion to the literature of Greece and Rome that marks the whole Renaissance era. Hence the watchword of that age, the *litteræ humaniores*. Hence the passion for antiquity possessing thoughtful men, and substituting a new authority for the traditions of the church." Certainly the movement, at the beginning, was directed toward noble ends. Of the enthusiasm of those whom it influenced, I have not time to tell the story; but even now it is impossible to read of Boccaccio's journey to the library of the Benedictine monastery on Monte Casino in search of manuscripts, or of the enthusiastic hearers of John of Ravenna and Emanuel Chrysoloras, without a quickened beating of the heart. What the general feeling was about the lectures of the Greek Chrysoloras may be inferred from the account of his own, written by Leonardo Bruni, the historian of Florence. "Letters," he says, "at this period grew mightily in Italy, seeing that the knowledge of Greek, intermitted for seven centuries, revived. Chrysoloras of Byzantium brought to us the Greek learning. I, at that time, was following the civil law, though not ill-versed in other studies, for by nature I loved with ardor, nor had I given slight pains to dialectic and rhetoric. Therefore, at the coming of Chrysoloras, I was

¹J. A. Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*.

made to halt in my choice of lives, seeing that I held it wrong to desert the law; and yet I reckoned it a crime to omit so great an occasion of learning the Greek literature; and oftentimes I reasoned with myself after this manner: Can it be that thou, when thou mayest gaze on Homer, Plato and Demosthenes, together with other poets, philosophers and orators, concerning whom so great and wonderful things are said, and mayest converse with them, and receive their admirable doctrine—can it be that thou wilt desert thyself, and neglect the opportunity divinely offered thee? Conquered at last by these reasonings, I delivered myself over to Chrysoloras with such passion, that what I had received from him by day in hours of waking occupied my mind by night in hours of sleep.”¹

Almost everywhere in Italy men were moved by the reasons which so powerfully influenced Leonardo Bruni. A new fine art, a new politics, a new learning resulted. Academies were founded to study antiquities, to inaugurate searches for manuscripts, to adopt classical customs. The new printing-press not only diffused the learning and intensified the general enthusiasm, but was itself conquered by the genius of classical beauty; as one may see in the Princeton University library, if one will look into the cases which, by the generosity of Mr. Morgan and Mr. Pyne, hold editions of the classics from the noble types of the great scholar and printer, Aldus Manutius.

Great as the humanistic movement was, its influence on Italy was such that we must regard it as a Nemesis, following with vengeance what, during the Captivity and the Schism, had become a corrupt and corrupting church. It both revived pagan vices and destroyed Christian faith. Platonism was the highway over which, centuries before, Augustine of Hippo moved to Christian belief; and there were some in Italy at this time for whom the classical learning proved a similar highway. Such it proved to the great Pico di Mirandola; and Laurentius Valla passed over it to fruitful New Testament studies. But it also fostered immorality and skepticism; as you may see if you will contrast Dante and Boccaccio, or if you will study the condition of the court

¹Quoted by Symonds.

of Rome during the revival of learning. Macaulay, in his essay on von Ranke's *History of the Popes*, has described it for us in his own vivid way: "Even its most respectable members were utterly unfit to be ministers of religion. They were men like Leo X., men who, with the latinity of the Augustan age, had acquired its atheistical and scoffing spirit. They regarded these Christian mysteries, of which they were the stewards, just as the Augur Cicero and the Pontifex Maximus Cæsar regarded the Sibylline books and the pecking of the sacred chickens. Their years glided by in a soft dream of sensual and intellectual voluptuousness. Choice cookery, delicious wines, lovely women, hounds, falcons, horses, newly-discovered manuscripts of the classics, sonnets and burlesque romances in the sweetest Tuscan—just as licentious as a fine sense of the graceful would permit—plates from the hands of a Benvenuto, designs for palaces by Michael Angelo, frescoes by Raphael, busts, mosaics, and gems just dug up from among the ruins of ancient temples and villas—these things were the delight, and even the serious business, of their lives." Surely, if this had been the last or the greatest result of the classical revival, it would have been like a noble river which fails to reach the great and wide sea, and loses itself in the sands of the desert.

Happily, the movement begun in Italy did not stop at its borders. In other countries it became both the greatest aid and the strongest stimulus to even far more beneficent studies. What it might have done for Spain, but for the Inquisition, may be inferred from the preparation and publication of the Complutensian Polyglott. But it was only when it passed the Alps and took possession of the serious and religious Teutonic mind that it performed its highest service for humanity.

We must not fall into the error of supposing that the revival of classical learning preceded the Reformation. We are accustomed to date the revival from its beginnings and the Reformation from what, in one sense, was its culminating act. So we date the former at the close of the fourteenth century, and the latter at a point in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. But Taine is right when he says, that "side by side with the Renaissance was born the Reformation." Both movements had the

same negative source, namely, a profound and widespread dissatisfaction with life, with society, and with the church. The religious reformation, as Taine says, was "also a new birth, one in harmony with the genius of the Germanic peoples. The distinction between this genius and others is its moral principles. For these peoples the ideal is not amidst forms made up of force and joy; but is transferred to sentiments made up of truth, law, attachment to duty, observance of order." While the classical revival was going forward in the ancient home of the Latin peoples, the religious revival was going forward in the homes of the Teutonic peoples. It only needed that the two movements meet and coalesce to make the Reformation, what at the beginning I called it, the return of Christendom to a book.

There were many points at which the two movements thus united. But certainly there is no more interesting point of union than the acquaintance between the Italian Pico di Mirandola, of whom I have already spoken, and John Reuchlin, the first in time and almost the greatest of the German humanists; who began among the Teutonic peoples the study of Hebrew, and who stimulated if he did not begin the study of Greek. It was not, indeed, from Pico that Reuchlin received his first impulse toward linguistic study. He had studied Hebrew at Paris under the great John Wessel; and years before his journey to Italy he had labored upon a Greek grammar and lexicon. But Italy was the *caput studiorum*; and when, in 1482, he made his first journey to Italy, he was brought into personal contact with the scholars of Rome, and with "the circle of learned men in Florence whom Lorenzo di Medici had gathered around him." The friendships he then made became permanent; they were cemented by correspondence; they contributed to his positive work in behalf of linguistic studies, and they sustained him in that long bitter conflict with Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans, to which conflict, as much as any single event, we owe the consolidation and the deepening enthusiasm of the German humanists. Reuchlin never shows better than he does in this conflict, pleading for the Jews and against the burning of the Talmud. Though his tracts are disfigured by horrid vituperation, as Martin Luther's, John Calvin's

and John Milton's afterwards were; though he calls Pfefferkorn "a venomous beast and a scarecrow," and the Dominicans "crafty dogs and hell-furies," we must not forget either that this was only in the way of customary reciprocity, or that his noble plea for the preservation of the Jewish books is urged on noble ground, that Christians should welcome all learning, that, to quote his words, "as the bee sucks honey from every flower, so should the Christian draw from all the books that which is best; he should pluck the rose out of the midst of thorns, wherever he finds it." This conflict of Reuchlin's united the German humanist party, and gave an added force and depth to the humanistic movement.

Meanwhile, a greater man even than John Reuchlin was doing his part in the literary preparation for the religious Reformation. The publication of Mr. Froude's lectures, with the title the *Life of Erasmus*, has lately re-awakened the public interest in this great man of letters, of whom, whatever were his faults, it must always be said, that as he himself is never dull, so the story of his life will never be stale. The brilliant satire, called the *Praise of Folly*, *The Colloquies*, written by him as a school-book, and, better than either, his letters have a vitality and perennial freshness like those which charm us in the prologues to the *Canterbury Tales*. Indeed, in the rapid, genial, spontaneous products of his pen there are character sketches, more quickly drawn certainly, but with a hand as true and as firm as that which gave us the Holy Clerk, the Franklin, and the Friar who "was a wanton and a merry." This kind of literary genius is not a good foundation on which to build up the reformer. The painter of character is for the purpose of reform usually too little a partisan. He too warmly loves all the characters, good or bad, that he portrays. Erasmus was, indeed, a partisan, and on the right side in the main. But he enjoyed too much the study even of the monk and the schoolman, whom he pillories, to hate them with a righteous indignation like Luther's. So Shakespearë, because his genius was literary, enjoyed the action of Macbeth or Iago quite as much as that of Hamlet or Portia. The impulse that dominated Shakespeare came near to dominating Erasmus. Hence he was

no reformer. But he did a great work for reform. More than any other man, north and west of the Alps, he promoted the study of the classics. He poured contempt upon the scholastic theology now run to seed. He lifted up his voice against the ignorance or the obscurantism of the monks. He turned the attention of the theological mind from the Schoolmen to the Fathers. Pelagian as he was, he prepared the way for the profound Augustinianism of Luther and Calvin. Above all, he gave to Europe again, in its original language, the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We call Reuchlin and Erasmus the greatest of the Teutonic humanists. But "humanism" is not the word by which their spirit or their work can be best characterized. "Humanism" describes the spirit of the revival in Italy; but beyond the Alps, and, above all, as employed by Reuchlin and Erasmus, the classical revival became the instrument of the new biblical study. If we would understand the mission of the man whom to-day we honor, and whose great work we are met to commemorate, we must hold in mind the fact that he nobly continued the work which Reuchlin and Erasmus began—linguistic study in the interest of biblical knowledge.

In 1497, when Reuchlin, then forty-two years of age and a fugitive from Wurtemberg, was teaching Greek and Hebrew at Heidelberg, the year of Erasmus' first visit to England, Philip Schwartzerd—known to us as Philip Melanchthon—was born at Bretten, in the lower Palatinate. Reuchlin was his great-uncle. His father was an armorer, and a master of his art. The father became an engineer, or, as we might better say, an officer of ordnance, in the service of two successive Palatinate princes, and was known favorably to the Emperor Maximilian. He was a grave man, of high character, whose death, when it took place in 1508, was a great loss to the boy Philip, then eleven years old. His mother was Barbara Reuter, the daughter of the mayor of Bretten, a strict and faithful mother, who trained her son carefully in the duties of religion. Philip began his career of learning in the school of his native town, which he left to enjoy the teaching of a strict and faithful private tutor, of whom he after-

wards said, "He flogged me, yet with due moderation." It was while under this tutor that his gift of rapid acquisition and his gift in debate discovered themselves. His active mind incessantly put questions to his teacher, and after his lessons he was ready to dispute almost any question with his fellow-pupils. On the death of his father and his grandfather, the latter of whom had provided for him this private tuition, he was sent to a Latin school at Pforzheim, where one of his school-fellows was Simon Grynæus, so renowned afterwards as both a Greek linguist and a theologian, and where his teacher was George Simler, who had imbibed the spirit of the revival, and who must have enjoyed teaching pupils like the young Grynæus and young Schwartzerd. Here Philip made such progress as, even with Grynæus as his rival and companion, to earn the nickname of "the Grecian." While still at Pforzheim attending the Latin school of Simler and living at the house of his great-aunt, Philip met for the first time his great-uncle Reuchlin. We are told that "Reuchlin was attracted by the quickness and talent of the boy, and often talked with him about his studies"; that "soon, seeing the great promise given by his ability and attainments, his interest in him deepened"; and that "finally, he called him his son; placed his own doctor's cap upon his head; made him a present of some books then difficult to obtain, and with them a Greek lexicon and grammar; and changed his name from Schwartzerd to 'Melanchthon,' an act which he intended as his introduction into the republic of letters."¹

Melanchthon left Pforzheim for the University of Heidelberg, matriculating in 1509. Two years later, when fourteen years old, he was graduated bachelor of arts. The almost incredible statement is made that, more than once when he had to be absent, the professor of Greek in Heidelberg requested this boy of fourteen years to take his classes. When fifteen years old, he offered himself as a candidate for the master's degree; but the examination was not permitted, solely because of his youth. This refusal led him to enter the University of Tübingen in the autumn of 1512. He enlarged his course of study. To Greek and Latin he added jurisprudence, the higher mathematics, school divinity, and

¹Matthes, *Life of Melanchthon*.

even medicine. It would seem that his mind never employed itself upon a branch of study of which it did not become fond. His affections followed his intellect. If his interest had once been engaged by a study, it was never afterwards lost. Up to the close of his life, and amid all the distractions of the stormy times in which his lot was cast, he found time to extract enjoyment from studies in the higher mathematics. In January, 1514, when not yet seventeen years of age, he was not only admitted to the second degree in the arts, but was given the privileges of a *privat docent*. He thus began his great career as a teacher. He rose to eminence at once; for what less than eminence shall we name that which called from Erasmus, in 1515, a eulogy like the following, written in a letter addressed to Ecolampadius? "Of Melanchthon I have already the highest opinion, and cherish the most magnificent hopes; so much so that I am persuaded Christ designs this youth to excel us all. He will totally eclipse Erasmus." When Erasmus wrote this letter, the boy of eighteen years was not only teaching the classics, but was lecturing publicly on rhetoric, logic, ethics, mathematics, and theology. He found time also to prepare and publish an edition of Terence. During his life at Tübingen, the controversy between Reuchlin and the Dominicans took place over the proposed destruction of the Jewish writings. Reuchlin, as arbitrator in the quarrel between the Jews and the Dominicans, had decided that they should not be destroyed; and the Dominicans sought Reuchlin's excommunication. Melanchthon rushed to the defence of his great-uncle, helped him to obtain his vindication, and rejoiced in his acquittal.

The University of Wittenberg, in electoral Saxony, was founded in 1502. A papal bull sanctioned it. The Emperor Maximilian licensed it. The Elector did all that a royal patron could do to make it a great seat of learning. Martin Luther became a member of its faculty in 1508, and added to his duties as lecturer those of priest and preacher in the church of the city. On All Saints' day, in 1517, Luther made Wittenberg the most famous place in Germany by nailing on the door of his church the theses on grace and indulgences. It was just six months after the theses had been published, and while Germany was full of excitement over

Luther's boldness, that the Elector wrote to Reuchlin asking him to name two or three persons for the same number of chairs in the Wittenberg faculty. For the Greek chair Reuchlin named Melanchthon, and in doing so let the Elector know that in proposing him he was doing the young university a great service. Melanchthon wrote to Reuchlin that he was willing to go where Reuchlin thought best. In July, Reuchlin sent to Melanchthon the Elector's letter, in which the latter promised Melanchthon "his kindness and favor." Reuchlin urged Melanchthon's acceptance, quoting the words, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: . . . and I will bless thee, and will make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing." "So," said Reuchlin, "my mind presages; and thus I hope it will be with thee, my Philip, my care, my consolation."

Melanchthon accepted the invitation, and thus became Professor of Greek in Wittenberg, at the age of twenty-one. On the 29th of August, 1518, four days after reaching Wittenberg, he delivered in Latin his inaugural discourse on "The Reformation of the Studies of Youth." It is in part a narrative of the decline of classical studies, after the Gothic uprising and especially after the devastation of Italy by the Lombards, of the retirement of learning to England and Ireland, of the brief but glorious revival under Charlemagne and Alcuin, of the rise of scholastic studies, and of the revival of letters; and in part a plea in behalf of classical studies in view both of their value as disciplines and of their relation to higher studies, above all to theology. "Since theology," said the orator, "is partly Hebrew and partly Greek—for Latin scholars drink only the streams which flow from it—these foreign tongues ought to be mastered, lest we be blockheads when we discuss theology with the theologians. It is in the Greek and the Hebrew that the splendor and fitness of the words reveal themselves. It is there that, like flowers in beds beneath the southern sun, the true and inner meaning of the letter unfolds itself. At present a lot of silly interpretations, analogies, discrepancies and other hindrances drive us away from theological study. But whenever we shall bring our souls to the fountains,

we shall feed on Christ, his will will be clear to us, and we shall be satisfied with the blessed nectar of the divine wisdom." He points out the absolute necessity of the correct interpretation of the Scriptures; and asserts that while recognized evils might be tolerated elsewhere, here there are no *ineptiæ tolerabiles*.¹ Thus he began his work as professor, with the assertion of his sympathy with the friends of the new learning, and of his conviction of its high value and absolute necessity to theology.

When Melanchthon left Tübingen, "the whole city," wrote Simler, "lamented his departure"; and now that the inaugural discourse had been pronounced, all Wittenberg was rejoicing in his accession. Upon no one did the discourse make a profounder impression than upon Luther. "Melanchthon," Luther wrote to Spalatin, and the letter was no doubt intended to be read to the Elector, "Melanchthon delivered four days after his arrival so learned and so terse a discourse, and with such grace, as to call out the admiration of all, so that we no longer wondered why you recommended him to us. We forgot our prejudices and his stature and appearance, and praised and admired the oration itself." Luther at once seized upon Melanchthon, took possession of him, made him at first his ward, and then his teacher, and finally his nearest friend. From Melanchthon's arrival at Wittenberg until Luther died they were united in heart, in aim, and in labor.

How sorely Luther needed at this time a calm, wise, learned, faithful friend will be clear, if we recall his own situation. On the last day of October, in the previous year, he had nailed the theses to the church door and aroused Germany. Tetzl had denounced him. The Dominican general, who was also the Roman censor, had attacked the theses with violence; and Luther in his reply had affirmed his dependence on the canonical Scriptures as the prime and ultimate source of truth. Worse than this and more dangerous, his old friend Eck of Ingolstadt had pointed out the Hussite heresy, "the Bohemian poison," with which the theses were saturated. Luther had undergone the excitement and

¹ "*In aliis nota mala pro bonis ducantur, in hoc negotio diutius citra jacturam ineptire non licet.*"

fatigue of a public disputation at Heidelberg, had written to the Pope and had been summoned before the papal legate. The work and excitement of the past eight months had seriously diminished his strength. He had been ill, was just now despondent and was in the midst of his preparations to meet the Pope's representative. At this juncture Melanchthon came to Wittenberg. Luther was drawn to Melanchthon not more strongly than Melanchthon was drawn to Luther. "If there is any one," wrote Melanchthon, "whom I deeply love, and whom I embrace with my whole heart, it is Martin Luther." "If you will believe me," he says in another letter, "I find Martin a greater and more admirable friend than I can possibly describe. I admire him as one who, when I look at him again, seems still greater than himself. I only wish that you could see from how sincere a heart this eulogy proceeds." To Spalatin, at the court of the Elector, he writes, "Martin seems to me to be inspired. That he may be successful we must use our efforts in prayer. I value his safety higher than my very life, and know of nothing that could happen more disastrous than the loss of him. If you have any influence where you are, see that you preserve from being overwhelmed this man whom I boldly and sincerely place not only above all his contemporaries but above all men of every period, above the Augustins, the Gregories, the Jeromes of all ages."

Wittenberg henceforth, until his death, was Melanchthon's, as it was Luther's, home. They worked in harmony, not only because they were agreed in belief, but because each finely supplemented the other. That Luther's was the more commanding personality, the greater genius, the more profound religious life, the more rapid and more exact insight in all affairs demanding action, is the unanimous verdict of history. Indeed, we may almost say that, had Luther died at any time prior to the Augsburg Diet of 1530, and had the responsibility of leadership been devolved on Melanchthon, the German Reformation would have been, if not an absolute failure, a comparatively narrow, feeble, and temporary movement. How much Melanchthon owed to Luther may be inferred from the conduct of the former in great crises during Luther's absence. I have time to refer to but one instance. It

is Melanchthon's attitude toward the claims of the Zuickan prophets, who infected Wittenberg with their fanaticism, and started Carlstadt upon the movement which almost wrecked the Reformation. Melanchthon conversed with the prophets, and was strongly influenced by them. "I have heard their statements," he writes to the Elector, "and it is astonishing what they relate of themselves: as commissioned from heaven to teach; as having a familiar intercourse with God, and able to foresee future events; in a word, as having the authority of prophets and apostles. How much I am struck with this language it is not easy to say; but, certainly, I see great reason not to despise them; for they have many arguments to adduce, and something of an extraordinary spirit about them." Wittenberg was in a ferment, and Melanchthon confessed that, "for his own part, he could not possibly pronounce upon the merits of the case." The Elector was troubled, for he did not yet dare to permit Luther to leave the Wartburg for Wittenberg. But Luther could write; and there came a letter from Luther to Melanchthon, clear, wise, and decided: "In regard to these prophets, I cannot approve of your timidity, though you are my superior both in capacity and in learning. I would have you examine whether they can produce a proof of their commission; for God never sent any one, not even his own Son, who was not either properly called to the office, or authorized by miracles. So much for their public character. You should also examine their private spirit: whether they have experienced spiritual distress, and conflicts with death and hell, and the power of regeneration. If you hear smooth, tranquil, and what they call devout and religious, raptures, though they speak of being caught up to the third heavens, do not regard them while the sign of the Son of man is wanting—the cross, the only touchstone of Christians, and the sure discoverer of spirits." These two letters bring before us strikingly Melanchthon's defect and Luther's greatness. As a reformer, Melanchthon does not belong to the class to which Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and John Knox, and no others, belong. His force in the Reformation was not original, but derived. So long as he and Luther labored together, the ultimate aim of their labors, not only as a whole, but consid-

ered severally, was determined by the wise, the sagacious, the heroic Luther. Luther is the great commander. The objective of every battle and the large lines of its conduct are his alone.

How quickly Luther saw and seized upon Melanchthon's special genius, how thoroughly he subordinated it to the purposes of the Reform, how wisely he directed it, with what diplomatic skill he called it out, and turned it to this and that employ, and with what parental affection he cared for him, watching over his health, even selecting (and with uncommon wisdom) a wife for him—the time at my command does not allow me to tell. And never did a really great man more thoroughly enjoy being in leading-strings than Melanchthon enjoyed being led by Martin Luther. No one could have been better aware than himself of his limitations. It is proof of his self-knowledge and quick perception that, without the slightest delay, he accepted Luther as his leader. So far as I know, the relations of the two were never changed. Both of them were made more powerful by these relations, as well as by a mutual affection as tender and as strong as that between David and Jonathan. We shall not understand Melanchthon's services to the Reformation unless we recognize this subordination of Melanchthon to Luther. It is of these services that I must now speak.

Other great services were rendered by Melanchthon to Germany and to the cause of the higher education, on which it were grateful to dwell at length. Living, as we do, in a university town, and in close friendship with a great institution of liberal learning, it is impossible not to remember that we are commemorating a great student and one of the greatest teachers of the humanities. What unexampled fertility in production! As one has said, "New editions of the classics, grammars, glossaries, chronicles, treatises on rhetoric, logic, ethics, and the elements of physical science, attest his unwearied pains." Erasmus was not more cultivated; John Colet was not more enthusiastic in his praise of the *litteræ humaniores*; and in order to come upon a teacher as stimulating and as popular we should have to go back to Abelard. Of his orations, there is thought to be none in which he is more eloquent or enthusiastic than that in which, when in-

augurating a learned academy at Nuremburg, he glorifies the classical revival, and calls upon the citizens of Nuremburg to emulate the greatness of Florence in the day when Florence was "the harbor into which shipwrecked literature was received and secured."

But it is Melanchthon's services to the Reformation that we most appropriately commemorate. Opportunity to begin them was offered soon after he came to Wittenberg. The theses had aroused the enthusiasm of Germany; but they had also awakened among the theologians the most determined opposition. Luther had announced himself ready to defend them against the world; but "the conduct of the war is not always up to the high-sounding phrase of the manifesto." He had easily beaten Tetzl; but it was not so certain that he could maintain himself against Eck, at Leipzig. I cannot dwell on the Leipzig discussion, at the close of which, as always, both sides claimed the victory. Luther was the protagonist; but from first to last Melanchthon was in charge of the literary and theological missiles, and so thorough was his possession of these weapons, that Luther was able to deliver them with a rapidity which prevented defeat, if it did not gain the victory. It was due to Melanchthon that Luther and Carlstadt, if they did not convince the court of Duke George, at least retired with honor. If the anger of one's opponent is to be regarded as a tribute, it was to Melanchthon that Eck awarded the honors of the discussion. So violent a letter did he write about Melanchthon that a new debate between Eck and Melanchthon was begun.

The Leipzig disputation must be regarded as having driven him to the composition of a great work, for which the Reformed as well as the Lutheran churches should be profoundly thankful to God. That discussion made a profound impression on both Luther and Melanchthon, and drove each to characteristic literary labor. It led Luther to write his stirring address to the "German Nobility" and his vigorous tract on the *Babylonish Captivity of the Church*. It led Melanchthon, deeply impressed with the absolute necessity of a positive statement and defence of what we may call the Wittenberg beliefs, to write the *Loci Communes*.

He thus became the author of the earliest Protestant Body of Divinity. In its first form it was published at Wittenberg in 1521. If I must say what I think was Melancthon's greatest service to the great cause to which he had given himself, I know none which is better entitled to this designation than his *System of Theology*, published less than four years after the nailing of the theses. In the lecture-room the *Loci Communes* must be subjected to criticism, and the points at which it seems to us to depart from the teaching of Holy Scripture must be indicated. But to-day it is our high privilege to commemorate without criticism the greatness of the work he did, who thus lifted the Reformation above the level of a negative protest, and gave to it the dignity and the strength which belong to every movement supported by a great and positive system of truth, based on the word of God and the Fathers. "The continuity of Christian thought thus testified to is," as President Warfield has well said, "one of the most important services of Melancthon's life, and it was this which gave the Reformation its hold upon the educated and thoughtful men of Germany."¹

Of course, we must agree with the statement, so often made, that Luther's was the great creative mind. But for the impulse given by Luther, the *Loci Communes* would never have been written. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that while, "in reference to some single doctrines," and these the most important, as the rule of faith and justification by faith, "Luther had great insight, acuteness, and logical strength," he had not the constructive and systematizing gift. As Dr. Shedd well says, "His power as a theologian did not lie in systematizing, but rather in penetrating and deep views of particular truths. He was inferior to Melancthon and to Calvin in the ability to combine doctrines into a scientific whole."² We have a right, therefore, in estimating the value of the *Loci Communes*, to add to its absolute necessity at the juncture at which it appeared the fact that it was a work for which Luther was unfitted. It required a larger culture, a severer discipline, and a calmer temperament than he possessed.

¹ *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, January, 1897.

² Symposium on Luther, Union Theological Seminary.

It is to be remembered, too, to its praise, that it was the first systematic construction of Christian doctrine for centuries, that rested on, as it sprang directly out of, careful exegetical study. Dr. Farrar goes so far as to say that it is the development of his exegetical lectures on the Epistle to the Romans.

It is easy for those who have not examined them to make light of the great *Summæ Theologiæ* of the mediæval schoolmen; but I do not believe that any candid man can study the greatest of them, that of Thomas Aquinas, without admiration for his logical and constructive genius. That the system which they embody is capable of being synthesized in loftiest literary forms, the *Divine Comedy* is the abundant demonstration. It is when we test them by Holy Scripture, when we note their crudities in exegesis, when we mark the employment of any one of the fourfold senses which the Bible is made to bear, that we sympathize with Erasmus in his attacks upon their *hæccitates* and *quidditates*, and understand how great a boon to the church of God was this first of the scriptural systems of theology produced by the Reformation.

As Melanchthon was the author of the Reformation's first body of divinity, so he wrote the first of its great creeds. The Augsburg *Confession* does not express the faith of united Protestantism. It was composed and presented to the Imperial Diet after the sacramentarian controversy had divided the forces opposed to Rome. But, with the exception of the articles in which it is polemic against the Reformed doctrine of the Lord's supper, it has been signed by Farel and Beza and Calvin. Luther could not be present at the Imperial Diet. The ban which had been put upon him ten years before had not been removed. Upon Melanchthon, therefore, was devolved the duty of formulating the *Confession* and the *Apology of the Protestant Princes*. In the performance of this great and critical duty he rose above himself. Its emphasis of what is positive, its restraint in what is negative and polemical, the dignity of its style, the careful marshalling of the scriptural proofs, and the deep religious feeling which underlies and informs the document, give to this earliest Reformation symbol the first place, on the whole, among the creeds of an era more fruitful in creed-statements than any other in the church's history.

No doubt the substance of the *Confession* can be found in earlier documents, of which Luther was the chief author; but, as Dr. Schaff has well said, "Melanchthon's scholarly and methodical mind freely reproduced and elaborated it into its final shape and form, and his gentle, peaceful spirit breathed into it a moderate, conservative tone." And these, when the circumstances of its promulgation are considered, are qualities of the highest value. The Reformation had gained tremendously since the Diet of Worms; but after the first Diet of Spire, in 1526, when the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio* was announced, the forces in the empire opposed to Protestantism began to organize against the Reformation. A year before the Augsburg Diet, it had been ordered that the Lutheran forward movement cease, and that the *status quo* be maintained. The protest of the Lutherans had been offered, and now, in the face of a Diet overwhelmingly Roman, the Protestants were summoned to define their faith. It needed a calm temper, a discriminating mind, and a fine and firm hand, to compose a document which would be true to truth, on the one hand, and would give no occasion to frenzy, on the other. And it was the composition of just such a document that Melanchthon achieved in the Augsburg *Confession*. "The Romanists," says d'Aubigné, "expected nothing like it. Instead of a hateful controversy, they heard a striking confession of Jesus Christ." It united the German Protestants, and it divided the forces of Rome. We need not wonder that a document with such a passage in its history should be deeply venerated by the great communion out of which it sprang, and that the cry, "Back to the unchanged Augsburg *Confession!*" should rally so many of its ablest theologians.

The relation of Melanchthon to the translation of the Scriptures into German was intimate and important. He was Luther's closest and most highly valued coadjutor. He was Luther's preceptor in both Hebrew and Greek. To Luther is due the great literary merit of the translation, especially the qualities which make it the book of the German people. To him German scholars, doubtless with justice, attribute the high service of giving firmness and consistency to their tongue through this priceless version. But though, in all this work, Melanchthon is in the background, the

support and the encouragement which he gave to Luther at its inception, and through all the work until its completion, entitle him to be remembered, next to Luther himself, as the man who gave to Germany in her own tongue the Holy Scriptures.

I cannot speak of Melanchthon's Commentaries except at second hand. It must be said that modern commentators do not quote him with the frequency or mention him with the respect with which, for example, they quote or mention Chrysostom among the Fathers, or John Calvin among the Reformers. Dean Farrar, in his *History of Interpretation*, devotes to him only two or three lines. Perhaps, as Dean Farrar thinks, his dogmatic views too thoroughly dominated him as an interpreter. Perhaps his labors were too various to enable him to give sufficient reflection to the work. Haste—and haste to Melanchthon was a necessity—must greatly mar the work of the exegete. Close study, where so many things must be considered and compared, is not more needed than prolonged reflection. Perhaps, with all his other gifts, he lacked the peculiar genius of the exegete. Perhaps he began to publish too early, at a time, when, though his powers of acquisition were exceptional, his judgment was not matured. But whatever is thought of his Commentaries to-day, Luther valued them most highly; and they did a great work for the Reformation. Melanchthon's *Romans* Luther recommended as a text-book for all students.

But the greatest of the special services Melanchthon rendered to the Reformation I take to have been his daily lectures in the University. His great learning, his various culture, his engaging personality, his lucid speech, his deep religious life, his fine simplicity of character, made him through all his life the most popular of teachers. He lectured often to fifteen hundred or two thousand educated men, and on the highest themes. He was the most learned German of his day, he employed his learning to advance the cause of the evangelical faith. His works are published in twenty-eight quarto volumes;¹ and the works of no man are more thoroughly unified by a single purpose, or more thoroughly pervaded by the same abiding spirit. When I think of

¹ *Corpus Reformatorum.*

him, day after day for more than forty years, directing, inspiring, informing, edifying these educated minds, from the principalities of Germany, from the Cantons of Switzerland, from France and from Great Britain; when I add to these daily lectures the thousands of letters, in which he cheered and informed and consoled the minds of those whom he had taught, I do not wonder that he gained the high title of Preceptor of Germany. I only wonder whether we have the right to say that even Luther's influence was greater than was his.

Even if I had the time to do so, I am in no mood to-day to dwell upon his weaknesses and mistakes. There were times when he came, to say the least, perilously near to yielding truth in the interest of a merely external unity. Certainly I could not defend the Leipzig Interim. But even his failings leaned to virtue's side. Greatly as it is to be deplored, in his case at least, it must be said that the tendency to compromise sprang, not from lack of belief in the value of the truth, but from love of the whole body of Christ.

But the man was greater than his activities. Those who were brought into personal contact with him were more profoundly impressed by his goodness than by his learning. The Christianity he taught he lived; and in its faith he died. His trust in his Redeemer never faltered through the painful and prolonged sickness by which he was brought to the grave. It is interesting to learn that the words which during his illness he repeated oftenest were the words: "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Just before he died he gave expression to his confidence that, through the merits of his Lord, he would be admitted to heaven.

How often, on occasions like the one by which we are assembled, have been repeated the eloquent words of Pericles, in the great funeral oration at Athens: "The whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men. Not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions in their own country, but in foreign lands there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not on stone but in the hearts of men." Never were they more appropriately repeated than now. Graven deep in the hearts of men,

the world over, is the name of Philip Melanchthon. It stands a symbol for simplicity and godly sincerity, for faith in the word of God, for brotherly kindness and charity, for learning consecrated to the service of the highest truth. But a higher name is his to-day: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name."

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