The Second Martin

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The Life and Theology of Martin Chemnitz

J. A. O. Preus

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To Delpha, my constant helper and companion, without whose love and support I could never have written this book or accomplished anything else in this world.

Contents

Abbreviations

AC	Augsburg Confession
AE	American Edition of *Luther's Works* (English. St. Louis: Concordia and Philadelphia: Fortress)
Apol.	Apology to the Augsburg Confession
CR	*Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. C. G. Bretschneider *etal*., Halle, 1834 ff., for works of Melanchthon in the original
CTM	*Concordia Theological Monthly*, St. Louis
ECT	*Examination of the Council of Trent*, 4 volumes (St. Louis: Concordia, 1971–1988)
Ench.	*The Enchiridion* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1981)
Ep.	Epitome of the Formula of Concord
FC	Formula of Concord
LC	Large Catechism
LT	*Loci Theologici* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1989)
LS	*The Lord's Supper* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1979)
SA	Smalcald Articles, including Tractate
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
TNC	*The Two Natures in Christ* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1971)
WA	Weimar Edition of *Luther's Works* (German)

Preface

About 30 years ago my uncle, Dr. Herman Preus, and a colleague of his, Dr. Edmund Smits, undertook to produce a volume that included long quotations from Martin Chemnitz (1522–86) and John Gerhard (1582–1637) showing how these two great Lutheran fathers dealt with the doctrine of anthropology. The result was a book entitled *The Doctrine of Man in Classical Lutheran Theology*, edited by the two men mentioned and translated by Mario Colacci et al., (Minneapolis, 1962). I had the honor to be one of the "et al.," having been selected to revise some material from Chemnitz' *Loci Theologici*, which had been first undertaken by a Ph.D. in Classics whose knowledge of theology was so limited that when he came to references to Peter Lombard (d. 1164), he called him Lombardi, perhaps out of a zealous but albeit mistaken identification of the "Master of the Sentences" with Vince Lombardi of the Green Bay Packers! At any rate, as the years went on, I was tagged to shore up a flagging translation of Luther's (1483–1546) *Lectures on Romans* which was first entrusted to a Roman priest who could not understand Luther and then to a Lutheran who unfortunately died before he finished the job. So the pinch hitter was called in again. This led to an assignment to translate Chemnitz' *The Two Natures in Christ*, which appeared in 1971, and his *Fundamenta sanae doctrinae de vera et substantiali praesentia, exhibitione et sumptione corporis et sanguinis Domini in Coena*, which came out in English in 1979 under the title *The Lord's Supper* And finally in 1986 I completed the translation of his commentary on Melanchthon's (1497–1560) *Loci Communes*. This work, the next to the longest of Chemnitz' writings, was published in English in 1989. (And since no one has ever found a good English translation for Melanchthon's work, we have left Chemnitz' title also in the original Latin. Both titles refer merely to the fact that the books are summaries of the main points *[Loci* or topics] of Christian doctrine.)

All of this adds up to the fact that for 30 years I have been reading and translating the writings of a little-known but extremely important Lutheran theologian who lived in an important period of our church's history and who made great contributions to Lutheranism, many of which have been forgotten and many others misunderstood. For over 20 years I used to get up an hour earlier to translate Chemnitz. I had some of his work photocopied, and I carried it on planes all over the world, not just because I enjoyed translating Latin, but more importantly because I enjoyed and was edified by spending an hour with a magnificent Lutheran theologian. I hope by means of this little book, which Chemnitz might call a *libellum*, to stimulate in the minds of its readers an appreciation for this modest and quiet man, who was so gifted, so competent, so retiring personally, and yet who made enormous contributions to the Gospel-centered theology of our church and to the actual survival of Lutheranism itself.

One of the most impressive features about Chemnitz was the fact that although he had excellent ecclesiastical connections and the backing of none less than the mighty Philip Melanchthon, yet he left a professorship at Wittenberg (something that very few ever did) and took a position as an assistant, a coadjutor, to a none-too-prominent superintendent in the city of Braunschweig (Brunswick). At that time Braunschweig was under the harassment of Duke

(Herzog) Henry the Younger (1514–68), the famous Hanswurst of Luther fame, who was trying to regain the city for Rome and for himself. Chemnitz' duties included serving as pastor to a congregation, educating young men for the ministry, supervising the work of the churches of the city in a way a modern bishop might, defending the faith throughout the entire Lutheran world, and continuing his lectures on Melanchthon's great and extremely popular *Loci Communes*. Being an assistant superintendent was not a particularly prestigious position, yet Chemnitz remained in this city for the rest of his life. After 13 years as coadjutor he became the general superintendent. During his entire career he was engaged in writing the theological treatises designed to uphold Lutheranism, and particularly through his important work on the Formula of Concord, he worked to unite the factionalized Lutherans of Germany—something that was accomplished to an amazing degree by his work. This required extensive travel, countless meetings, and many doctrinal papers and books. But it saved Lutheranism from the inroads of a virulent Calvinism and a revived Rome with its Counter Reformation. This man, as the theological genius of his age, operating from his base in northern Germany, is the chief author of the Formula of Concord, the father of orthodox Lutheranism, and the father of what we today, 400 years later, call normative Lutheran theology. He was a scriptural theologian, cautious and hesitant about innovation, and the greatest expert on the church fathers (patristics) that Lutheranism had produced up to that point.

It is interesting to speculate on what might have happened had Chemnitz stayed at Wittenberg. Theoretically he might have succumbed to the capriciousness and weakness of Melanchthon and his dishonest supporters, in which case Lutheranism would have lost its staunchest bulwark. Or he might have been able to stop Melanchthon's drift toward Calvinism (something that Luther himself recognized but was not able to stop completely). But Chemnitz went to Braunschweig and Melanchthon continued to drift.

Along with his supervisory duties, Chemnitz remained a parish pastor, thinking and speaking in nonphilosophical and nonscholastic categories, living and working at the cutting edge of church life, not in the cloister of academia or at the heady level of the full-time church administrator. The audiences for his lectures on Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* were parish pastors and theological students. He held meetings similar to our Bible classes, where both men and women were invited to participate. He developed guidelines for the financial support of the widows and orphans of pastors. He supervised the work of almoners who took care of the city's poor. And he developed organizations like our modern young people's societies.

At the same time, Chemnitz was a remarkable student of Scripture and the early fathers of the church and a devoted disciple of Luther. He was instrumental in bringing the Reformation to areas that up to that time had been Roman Catholic. He served as a theological advisor to many churches and princes and as a leader in peace efforts among the warring Lutherans. He was a man who refused to indulge in personal attacks against his opponents in his public writings, yet he was constantly on the attack against the errors of John Calvin (1509–64) regarding the Lord's Supper and the doctrine of Christology, as well as against those within Lutheranism who supported these and other vagaries. At the same time he was the most effective opponent the Romanists had from within the Protestant ranks. The Romanists called him the "second Martin/' saying that if the second Martin had not come, the first would not have prevailed.

Dr. Charles Porterfield Krauth (1823–83), one of the truly great theologians of what is today the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), makes the following significant statement:

> The controversies which followed Luther's death arrested the internal development of the church and brought the processes of its more perfect constitutional organizing almost to a close. The great living doctrines which made the Reformation were in danger of losing all their practical power in the absorption of men's minds in controversies…. The church was threatened with schism. Her glory was obscured. Her enemies mocked at her. Her children were confused and saddened. Weak ones were turned from her communion, sometimes to Zurich, or Geneva, sometimes to Rome…. There was the danger that the age which the Conservative Reformation has glorified should see that groundwork lost in the endless dissension of embittered factions. Hence … the Formula [of Concord], if not exclusively, yet in the main, was occupied in stating the truth, and defending it over against the errors which had crept into many and corrupted some of her children.[1]

Here is where Chemnitz, together with the other authors of the Formula came to the fore. Of him Krauth says specifically,

> The learning of Chemnitz was something colossal, but it had no tinge of pedantry. His judgment was of the highest order. His modesty and simplicity, his clearness of thought, and his luminous style, his firmness in principle, and his gentleness in tone, the richness of his learning, and the vigor of his thinking have revealed themselves in such measure in his Loci, his Books on the Two Natures of our Lord, and on the True Presence, in his Examen of the Council of Trent, his Defense of the Formula of Concord, and his Harmony of the Gospels, as to render each a classic in its kind, and to make their author as the greatest theologian of his time—one of the greatest theologians of all time.[2]

The modern German historian, Inge Mager, writing a century later asserts that "Chemnitz continued to be the most consulted theologian and advisor for the establishment of Reformation church-life in the land."[3] Of no theologian of Lutheranism of that era, except for Luther himself, are such wonderful words spoken—and so justly.

Yet few have ever heard of Chemnitz, and even fewer know much or anything about him. In this age of searching for closer harmony among Lutherans, Martin Chemnitz stands out like a beacon. He succeeded in uniting over two-thirds of German Lutheranism, and when everything was over and a few important funerals had taken place, nearly every territorial church in Germany subscribed to his Formula of Concord. The Church of Sweden did the same. Denmark (which at the time also ruled Norway and Iceland) gradually withdrew its objections, which had arisen mainly out of the irascibility of the Danish king, and the theology of Chemnitz and the Formula of Concord became the standard for normative Lutheran theology and remains such for large portions of 20th-century Lutheranism. Robert Preus in his *Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* says,

> While attending some of the unpleasant conferences between the Philippists and the Gnesio-Lutherans, Chemnitz came to recognize the importance of Lutheran unity especially against the threat of the Counter Reformation, and he determined to do his utmost to unite the Lutherans doctrinally. In this he was eminently successful. He strengthened the theology of Jacob Andreae and was perhaps responsible for rescuing Selnecker from the compromising spirit of Melanchthonianism. He was the leading spirit in the writing of the Formula of Concord…. His fruitful literary output and his beneficial activity in the church made Chemnitz, after Luther, the most important theologian in the history of the Lutheran Church.[4]

And few have ever heard of him! Is not this amazing in our ecumenical age, when many Lutherans talk about nothing but ecumenism, Lutheran union, and getting Lutherans together? And yet who has ever heard of the man who was more successful in this enterprise than anyone in history? To this day many theologians and church historians, at least in North America, have very little good to say about the Formula of Concord or its authors. Yet who has ever equaled the work done by this document and its authors?

Very few have heard of Melanchthon either. What little work has been done on him in North America has been done largely by Reformed scholars.[5] But it might be worth the career of at least one scholar, especially in American Lutheranism—swimming as we are in a sea of liberal, fundamentalistic, ecumenical, Reformed, Calvinistic, Arminian confusion, well seasoned with liberal Catholicism, humanism, and secularism—to tell the story of Melanchthon and some of the other fathers of our Lutheran churches with our great heritage of Luther himself, the confessional writings of Lutheranism, and the struggles of countless pastors, professors, and lay people down through the centuries. History and the Lutheran church have not treated Melanchthon very well, and most of what he got he deserved, but the fact is that for a generation he was the ecclesiastical, theological, and political successor of Martin Luther and the leader of a Lutheranism that was divided theologically, politically, in language and in goals, and that was confused over almost every problem that arose in that fast-moving and revolutionary age. And there was no other universally recognized leader. On many issues he was wrong, but on many others he was correct and helpful. The divided and confused Lutherans all over central Europe looked to him. He had wide-ranging contacts with secular rulers as well as Calvinists, Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and all kinds of Lutherans. When the uproar arose over Servetus (1511–53), it was the Lutheran Melanchthon who wrote to the Senate of Venice in their murky Catholicism, warning them against harboring this dangerous Unitarian heretic. The Venetian Senate very obligingly took Melanchthon's advice and expelled Servetus who then made his way to Geneva, where the senate of that city at the advice of another friend of Melanchthon, John Calvin, proceeded to burn the poor man at the stake.

Chemnitz, because he had been a co-worker of Melanchthon and had been recommended by him for a position on the Wittenberg faculty and because he spent all the years of his public ministry studying Luther and the church fathers and also lecturing on Melanchthon's great *Loci Communes* and because of his rather mild and patient disposition, was the most qualified of all the so-called third-generation Lutheran leaders to be a kind of bridge or connecting link to hand down to the Lutheran churches of his age the best of Luther, the best of Melanchthon, and the best of the theology of the period 50 years after the presentation of the Augsburg Confession. And this is exactly what he did, veering neither to the left in the direction of non-Lutheran Protestants, such as the followers of Zwingli (1484–1531) and Calvin who had such a fascination for Melanchthon, nor to the right in the direction of a return to Rome, for which Melanchthon also, strangely, had a hankering. Melanchthon was a natural ecclesiastical wheeler-dealer, but Chemnitz, like Luther, was much more theological and had much more integrity.

Related to his integrity was his courage. Chemnitz did not hesitate in the defense of the truth and of Lutheran theology to enter into theological dialogs and controversies with anyone. One of Chemnitz' first encounters, several years before his ordination or any study of theology, was with Andrew Osiander (1498–1552), a notable Lutheran who had signed the Smalcald Articles and brought the Reformation to Prussia, but who fell into error on the doctrine of justification. Chemnitz also took on the Lutheran leader in Bremen, Albert Hardenberg (1510–

74), regarding the Lord's Supper. Later in his most famous work he attacked the Roman Catholic Church in what is still regarded as the most trenchant analysis ever made of Roman Catholic theology after the Council of Trent. He also carried on constant battles in defense of the scriptural and Lutheran doctrine of Christology and the Lord's Supper with Calvin and other leaders of the Reformed church and against errors on the same points within Lutheranism.

Chemnitz was a devoted father and husband, a dutiful citizen, a man of unimpeachable character (which may be one reason he is not well known). Not one breath of scandal is attached to him. He does not talk with the earthiness of Luther, nor does he possess the arrogance and petulance of Melanchthon. He remains the common man who as a boy had to scratch for money for his education. His writings breathe a pious and sincere Christian faith, devoid of pomposity. His congregation and the city council of Braunschweig loved him and would never release him to take another call. His pastors imitated him. Duke Julius (1528–89) loved and honored him, but when the two met head to head on a matter of principle, Chemnitz stood by his confession at great cost to his honor and his social and ecclesiastical position and that of his children. He was not a "court theologian."

While he was not a court theologian in the ordinary sense of that term (although he served princes), he was also not a Melanchthonian in any theological sense of that term. He was not a strident polemicist nor a compromising church politician. He was a scriptural, confessional, Lutheran theologian with the highest regard for the ancient, orthodox church and a very thorough understanding of Luther, his theology, and his place in the history of the church; a church leader; and perhaps above all a man with a pastoral heart who believed his message and his calling. For those who practice speed-reading, this is the sum and substance of this book.

It is with all of the above in mind that I, fully aware of my limitations and inadequacies, undertake to tell pastors and students, lay people, and perhaps even a few professors a few things that they might not know and that I hope some of them might appreciate knowing about "the second Martin" and his significance for Lutheranism today. Chemnitz in his will mentioned several books as his legacy to the Lutheran churches of his day, and I believe that the greatest legacy I can leave to our beloved Lutheran church is the translation of some of the writings of this great man and this *libellum* about his life and work.

Acknowledgments

Prefaces of this kind always give credits, and this book, more than most, must do the same. First there is the unending gratitude I have toward my beloved, talented, and dedicated wife, Delpha, whose help and inspiration have kept me going for over 40 years. Then to CPH, Mr. John Gerber, president, and the wonderful editorial department; to Dr. Everette Meier for his great help in deciphering German which I never truly mastered and yet without which one can never understand Chemnitz or for that matter Lutheranism; to Dr. Robert Kolb for his careful criticism; to Pastor Wolfgang Junke of Braunschweig, Germany, whose help in the weeks we spent at Wolfenbüttel was beyond calculation, as was that of the staff and administration of the Herzog August Bibliothek of Wolfenbüttel, particularly Herr Ulric Kopp; to my brother, Dr. Robert Preus, whose lifelong interest in the period of Orthodoxy and Post-Reformation Lutheranism constantly kept my interests alive; to Drs. Fred Kramer and Eugene Klug, my old and valued colleagues, of Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, and to countless more—a sincere thanks.

A very special and sincere thanks is due to Dr. Charles Arand of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, who gave untiringly of his time and talent, helping me with the final stages of this opus, preparing the manuscript for publication, checking footnotes, bibliography, historical and theological points, and countless other details. I am deeply and eternally grateful to this fine, young scholar and student of our beloved Lutheran Confessions.

A special word of thanks also goes to certain men whom I have never met, but whose influence is reflected in this volume. In the past generation a new interest has developed in the later Luther in contradistinction to the preceding century or more in which the young Luther figured so prominently. A brief study of the Formula of Concord and the other writings of Chemnitz reveals that he and those of his age were very attached to the writings of the "old," or perhaps we should say "mature," Luther (as well as to the young Luther). They looked upon themselves as part of an unbroken continuum of Lutheran teaching and confession that began with Luther himself, starting with his Ninety-five Theses of 1517 and continuing up to the time of his death, and that continued on, with some ruffles, through the period of Melanchthon, and then resumed in full flower during their own era. To them the Formula of Concord did not represent a "new dogma" but merely the continuation of Luther's teaching and the theology of the Augsburg Confession. It appears that this same understanding entered into the thinking of some very fine young historians, such as James Kittelson in his excellent *Luther the Reformer* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986). Also, I want to mention Mark Edwards' excellent *Luther's Last Battles* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), in which among many other important points, he shows that Luther's fruitful and seminal theological thinking continued to the end of his life. Books such as these show the progress and continuity of Luther's theology through his entire career and on into the late Reformation period. The same interests seem to be present in the thinking of many in Europe also, in such writers as Gensichen, Inge Mager, Theodore Mahl-

mann, Jobst Ebel, and many others, including Peter Barton who has popularized the term "late Reformation" in contradistinction to the earlier "post-Reformation."[1] I hope that this little effort of mine will contribute to this trend.

Viewed from this perspective we have a span of only eight years from the death of Luther in 1546 to the beginning in 1554 of Chemnitz' professional career at Braunschweig, where, as also in other places in Germany, efforts had been going on all the time to stem the influence and effort of Melanchthon and his cohorts to water down Lutheranism. The witness to the great truths of the Reformation never really stopped until it culminated in the adoption of the Formula of Concord in 1580, which was a reaffirmation of the best of Luther, a repudiation of all of his opponents, and the dawn of a new beginning for Lutheranism on the foundations so strongly laid by Luther and continued by Chemnitz and the authors of the Formula of Concord, yet always recognizing and giving credit to Melanchthon for his many contributions. I recognize full well that there is a school of thought within and outside of Lutheranism that the Augsburg Confession is a Melanchthonian document and that both the Smalcald Articles and the Formula of Concord, and perhaps even the catechisms, are in a sense deviations from or perversions of a more correct interpretation of the Christian faith as enunciated by the young Luther and even Melanchthon. Chemnitz did not believe this, nor did the men who worked so valiantly for both Lutheran unity and solidarity in those days of the late Reformation.

J. A. O. Preus

The Baptism Day of Martin Chemnitz
11 November 1992

So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings
we passed on to you,
whether by word of mouth or by letter.

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father,
who loved us and by his grace
gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,
encourage your hearts and strengthen you
in every good deed and word.

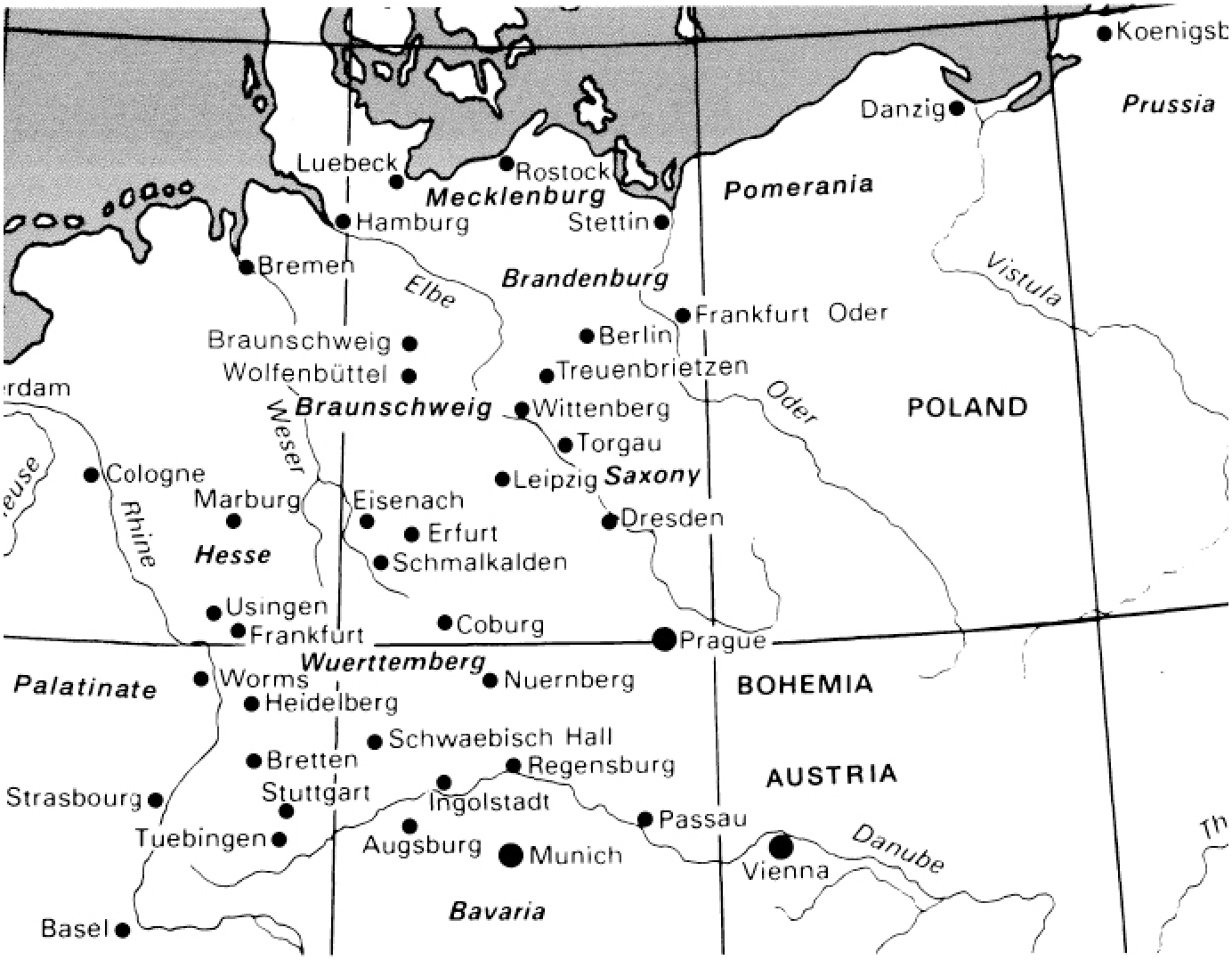
2 Thess. 2:15–17

Luther: "Histories are, therefore, a very precious thing…
There one finds both
how those who were pious and wise acted,
refrained from acting, and lived,
how they fared and how they were rewarded."

Luther's Works, American Edition 34:275

PART 1

THE TIMES AND CAST OF CHARACTERS



Germany at the Time of Chemnitz

1

The Political and Ecclesiastical Situation

In order to understand the life and significance of Martin Chemnitz and his theology, it is necessary to have a picture of the world in which he lived, particularly the political, ecclesiastical, and theological forces at work in the years preceding and during his lifetime.

EMPEROR CHARLES V

Charles V (1500–58, reigned 1519–56) is not of direct significance in the life and work of Chemnitz, but he laid the foundations for the world in which Chemnitz worked. He was both emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and King of Spain (as Charles I). He was the son of Philip of Burgundy, thus giving him French connections, and Joanna (known as La Loca), the mad daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. He was born at Ghent, now in Belgium, at that time a part of the Lowlands, of which his father shortly after Charles' birth became ruler. In 1516, at the death of Ferdinand, Charles also became king of Castile and in 1518 Aragon was added to his domains. In 1519, as a Hapsburg, he succeeded to the possessions of his grandfather Maximillian and finally in 1520 he was elected emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The Holy Roman Empire was basically a federation of several small German states together with Austria, usually under the rule of a Hapsburg with that family's wide-ranging possessions. Also included were the vast possessions of Spain in the western hemisphere.

Charles, who sometimes has been called more Catholic than the pope, was totally committed, as were nearly all rulers of his age, to the concept that there should be unanimity of religious and political beliefs in his realm. Thus it was a matter both of faith and political theory that he must bring the Germans back into the fold of the Roman Church. The empire was actually in decline and impossible to control, but Charles did not realize this when he first became emperor. Perhaps his early retirement in 1556 signalled his realization of this fact. In regard to this determination, his career is divided into three periods. From 1520 to 1529 he did nothing, disregarded the Lutheran development, and devoted his efforts to the defeat of his other enemies, using the Lutheran princes and armies to assist him. From 1530 to 1545 he tried to defeat the Lutheran movement by diplomacy and negotiation, holding the pope at bay pending the calling of a council, all the while watching the growth of Lutheranism. From 1546 to 1555 he tried war.

As early as the Diet of Worms Charles had determined to remain Catholic and that the empire should remain Catholic. It was there that Charles and the great heretic Luther first met and Luther was told to recant and get back in line. But nothing happened because the elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise (reigned 1486–1525), protected Luther—and Charles needed the elector's help. Again, at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 this stern monarch met the heretical princely followers of the heretic Luther, and again, despite the favorable terms of this diet,

Lutheranism was still only tolerated—not considered equal or legal and was still under the strictures of the Diet of Worms of 1521. Pluralism had no part in Charles' thinking. The only thing that saved the Lutherans was that Charles was so busy with his other enemies and so needed the support of the Lutheran princes that he could not deal with them.

During this time, the Turks were on the march, particularly under Suleiman, called the Magnificent (reigned 1520–66), the sultan of the Turkish Empire. They reached their high-water mark during Chemnitz' lifetime. They could well be called the allies of the Reformation because they kept both Charles and the pope at bay, and at one point the Turks and the pope were actually de facto allies against Charles and in indirect support of the Lutherans.

In the meantime in France, King Francis I (1494–1547, reigned from 1515) did everything possible to thwart Charles, including entering into a treaty with Suleiman. For the same reason Francis was supportive of German Protestants, while persecuting French ones. In 1545 he even asked Melanchthon to draw up a formula for reconciliation between Lutherans and Catholics, thereby to produce an alliance between France and Germany against Charles. After the death of Francis I, the sympathies in France began to swing in favor of Catholicism. Chemnitz lived during the St. Bartholomew's Massacre in August of 1572, under Francis' morally degenerate grandson, Charles IX (1550–74), in which about 50,000 Protestants were slaughtered.

Because of his desire to be at peace with the Germans, Charles had tried to force the unwilling pope to call a council to settle the religious quarrels. The pope was unwilling to comply for fear that this council might do to him what the Councils of Constance and Basel had done to his predecessors, namely, strip him of much of his power. The council finally did begin to meet on Dec. 13, 1545 at Trent, but it was evident that it was going nowhere. When Charles saw this, he began the Smalcald War in 1546, shortly after the death of Luther. His purpose was to reunite the church. He used the bigamy of Philip of Hesse as one excuse to wage war upon the Lutherans. The Lutherans were defeated in the Battle of Muhlberg in 1547. The end result of the war was the Peace of Passau of August 1552, favorable to the Lutherans, which paved the way for the Peace of Augsburg of 1555. This gave them peace until the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618. The Peace of Augsburg of 1555 laid the political basis for the whole period of Chemnitz' professional career.

THE PAPACY

The most potent political as well as ecclesiastical force affecting Lutheranism during this entire period was the papacy itself. The popular historian, Barbara Tuchman, in her *The March of Folly*, goes so far as to suggest that there never would have been a Reformation had it not been for the six notorious Renaissance popes, with their corruption, their nepotism, and their venality, all of which both offended and impoverished the Germans, among others.[1] Recall the famous statement of Leo X, which was typical of the age, "Let us enjoy the papacy, since God has given it to us." Whether Tuchman is correct in every detail or not, it is certain that attacks had been made on the papacy for several centuries. Luther's were particularly effective both because of the times and because he hit at the very core of the Catholic religion, not only the papal corruptions of it. Erasmus, Valla, and the other humanists had been gadflies, but they had not done great harm. Luther did.[2]

By the time of Chemnitz, however, the morals and general atmosphere of the papacy had improved, making Chemnitz' job, in this respect, more difficult than Luther's. In some instances the Romanists in their indecisiveness simply handed over large pieces of real estate to the Reformation. For example, Pope Clement VII (1523–34) got caught between Charles V and Francis I of France. He bet on the wrong horse, namely, France, and was captured by the Spaniards. As long as the quarrel between Charles and the papacy continued, the Lutherans made headway. Clement VII could never decide to call a council, and during this period of indecision large portions of Germany, England, Switzerland, and Scandinavia were lost forever to the papacy.

To capsulize the situation that developed at the time of Luther's death: Under Paul III (1534–49) the immediate successor of the feckless Clement, things began to improve for Rome. Paul's pontificate is regarded as the beginning of the Counter-Reformation. The rise of the Jesuits to prominence may also be traced to this period. Pope Paul cooperated with Charles, and during his pontificate the Council of Trent began, the inquisition was reinstituted, the Smalcald War with its victories for the Catholics took place, the Interims were forced down the throats of the helpless German Lutherans, the mantle of leadership fell on the pusillanimous Melanchthon, and quarrels broke out among the Lutherans.

Again, under Julius III (1550–55) a man utterly unlike his notorious predecessor of the same name, the fortunes of the papacy waned. With the defeat of Charles V at the hands of Maurice of Saxony in March of 1552 and the signing of the religious Peace of Augsburg in 1555, Protestantism again forged ahead.

Then a trend set in under Paul IV (1555–59) that was never again reversed. Paul hated the Hapsburgs, the family to which Charles V belonged, but he also hated Protestantism, which he eradicated in Italy. Often the fortunes of the papacy and of the Protestants rose together over against the Hapsburgs, but when the Hapsburgs and the papacy were on the same side, Protestantism did not fare well. This was the case under Paul IV. The papacy prospered, the Council of Trent proceeded, and due to the complexion of the council as well as the general political situation, the breach between Rome and Protestantism became final and unbridgeable. The Catholic-Lutheran 1557 Colloquy at Worms only revealed the divisions among the Lutherans, and the Catholics took advantage of this to walk out, since many of them had not wanted to be there in the first place.

The next popes, Pius IV (1559–65), Pius V (1566–72), Gregory XIII (1572–85), and Sixtus V (1585–90), all contemporaries of Chemnitz, finished the job. All continued the work of internal reform in the Catholic Church, purging the church of the rank corruption that had been manifest in Luther's time. They made positive changes in the organizational or institutional and moral aspects of church life. At the same time, they worked at the task of shoring up the power and influence of the papacy itself. During this period, for example, the papacy gave aid and comfort to Mary Queen of Scots in her illfated efforts to regain Great Britain and supported the persecution of the Huguenots and Calvinists in France. They rejoiced at the great naval victory at Lepanto in 1571 in which Don Juan of Austria, the illegitimate and talented son of Charles V, defeated the Turks, using Catholic sailors. They also used the victory for Roman propaganda. They encouraged great mission expansion in the New World, the imposition of the inquisition wherever possible, the passage of stricter rules governing the marriage of priests, and the purification of monastic life. This spirit continued dominant among Catholics for at least 150 years, ultimately leading to a virulent Catholic triumphalism and almost a total

forgetfulness that there ever had been a Reformation or the need for one. Witness the great work of the Dominican and Jesuit missionaries in Canada, the forced conversion of the Indians in Latin America, and the energy with which the successive popes and their secular royal partners prosecuted the Thirty Years' War. This was a war to the death of Protestantism—and Protestantism barely survived.

COUNTER-REFORMATION AND TRENT

The true theological and spiritual spearhead of the Counter-Reformation was the Council of Trent itself. The reforms in the papacy, the mission expansion, the moral and intellectual reforms of the church at large were important and played a major role in the revival of Catholicism, but the council—which had been so long demanded by Luther and the secular rulers and the Protestants in general, and so long denied by the popes—turned out to be the guiding principle for generations to come of a renewed and in many ways reformed Roman Church. This is strange in view of the pusillanimity of the series of popes who had refused to call the council, the overbearing and warlike attitude of the Catholic princes who demanded it, the dashed hopes and ultimate virtual exclusion of the Lutherans who had so long clamored for it. Yet this council, dominated by right-wing clerics, apparently was just what the Roman Church needed to give it unity, direction, and an attitude that either Rome would have to get its house in order or it would disappear. It got its house in order.

The council began in December of 1545, about two months before Luther's death, and it finally came to an end in December of 1563. It was never attended by any significant number of church leaders or by the pope himself. It was almost totally under the domination of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese theologians and was never formally adopted in France (or, obviously, the Protestant parts of Germany). Still the council had an influence far beyond the caliber of people who attended and prepared its decrees and canons. It was obvious that its authors attempted to keep their language as irenic as the situation, in their eyes, permitted, avoiding the names of such arch heretics as Luther.

The council followed the historic pattern of previous councils, building on the foundations of the six ancient ecumenical councils, opening by the confession and quotation of the Nicene Creed, "the symbol of faith which the holy Roman Church makes use of as being that principle wherein all who profess the faith of Christ necessarily agree." It also described itself as "assembled in the Holy Spirit … with the Holy Spirit dictating … following the example of the orthodox fathers." It is obvious that the council looked upon itself, as did previous councils, as confessing the faith. Thus in this age of competing and conflicting confessions, the Roman Church, which had replied to the Augsburg Confession only with a hastily drawn Confutation, now, 15 years after Augsburg, decides to enter the confessional arena itself. Two points become manifest here.

The first is that Martin Chemnitz—who during his years of working on his *Examination of the Council of Trent* (1566–73) had been involved in the preparation of confessional statements for his Lutheran confreres—also developed his *Examination of the Council of Trent* as a confessional statement. Thus, while no one ever suggested that Chemnitz' *Examination* be treated as a confessional document, it is manifest that he writes it in a spirit of producing a confessional document to answer a confession, much as Melanchthon did with his Apology

over against the Roman Confutation, and as Luther did in preparing the Smalcald Articles as a confession of the Lutheran party for the forthcoming council (which actually occurred, however, eight years later and after Luther's death).

The second point to emphasize regarding the canons and decrees of Trent is that the Romanists apparently felt that, perhaps after the difficulty of getting the council to meet, they might as well cover the entire waterfront. Thus, under 29 topics they cover not only the errors of their principal target, Martin Luther, but nearly every one else as well, and they undertake to defend nearly every tradition and practice that had arisen over the centuries and which various or all Protestants had opposed. The topics are first those dealing with the formal principle of theology, Scripture and tradition, followed by the most important material principle of theology, the doctrines of original sin and justification. They direct themselves to the remnants of original sin after Baptism, the immaculate conception of Mary (who was thus born without original sin), the works of the unregenerate, free will, and finally justification itself, faith, and good works. These points make up the entire first volume of Chemnitz' *Examination*. The council continues with material on the sacraments, Communion in both kinds, the mass, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, and matrimony. Thus volume 2 of Chemnitz. In volume 3 he deals with chastity, celibacy, and virginity, the celibacy of priests, purgatory, and the invocation and veneration of the saints. And in volume 4 the list gets even murkier: relics, images, indulgences, fasting, and festivals. The substance of Roman Catholicism all remained, but the council introduced a number of changes in the forms and general practices of many points in Roman theology and praxis.

Trent evoked Chemnitz' longest and most significant theological work, which established him for all succeeding generations as a first-class theologian, not only of Lutheranism but of Protestantism in general.

THE ROLE OF THE RULERS IN CHURCH AFFAIRS

As more and more the quarrels about religion became matters of political and even military action, more and more the princes, both Catholic and Lutheran, began to enter into religious and even theological matters. As a result, the dominant role previously played by the pope and his bishops in both religious and secular matters was now played by the secular rulers. European monarchies were going through a period of change, from the "medieval monarchy" of the period up to the 15th century, through the "Renaissance monarchy" of the late 15th and 16th centuries, into the "absolutist monarchy" of the 17th and 18th centuries. The Reformation coincides with the rise of absolutism. The Renaissance monarchs were determined to strengthen central government, and that included strengthening the control over the church which princes had tried to exercise throughout the Middle Ages. For example, we see such rulers as Henry VIII of England during his Catholic period and Duke Henry the Younger (Hanswurst) of Braunschweig working in defense of the Catholic position, engaging in personal literary attacks against Luther. Henry the Younger even followed the very good Lutheran practice of instituting "visitations" to restore Catholicism in his territories after they had joined the Reformation. Meanwhile, on the Lutheran side, the authorities of both church and state conducted visitations to determine not only the state of religion among the people but such matters as property ownership, salaries of pastors, and the like. In effect, the state became the partner of the church leaders and reformers in introducing the Reformation into previously Catholic areas. Thus