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CORDATUS' CONTROVERSY WITH MELANCHTHON.

(Continued.)

The letter announcing Cordatus' intention to come to Wittenberg for a personal interview had barely reached Cruciger when Cordatus himself made his appearance (September 18th). He had arrived the day before and wasted no time by delay. It was still early in the morning—seven o'clock—when he knocked at Cruciger's door. The two men remained closeted in strict privacy for quite a while. There is no record of their discussion. The ancient chronicler sums up the affair with the summary statement: *diu litigatum est*. However, the interview yielded one result that is of almost dramatic effect, and this the chronicler has recorded, because it gave a new turn to the controversy. It appears that Cruciger, also in this personal interview, denied having spoken or dictated the words which Cordatus claimed he had. But Cordatus was able to place before him the exact statements as they had been taken down by the students in Cruciger's lecture on July 24th. The evidence was conclusive, and was met by Cruciger in a manner that is anything rather than manly. He replied that *the statements which he had dictated were the product of Dr. Philip*, that he had been Philip's pupil in this matter and had been misled by Philip, in a way that he could not explain. (C. R. 3, 161.) Thus Cruciger took shelter behind his greater colleague and left the latter to face the issue of Cordatus alone.

From this juncture Cruciger disappears as public actor in the controversy. Cruciger's startling revelation had been a vir-

tual acknowledgment of wrong—*sc ab eo in illam rem traductum*. Practically this meant that Cruciger cashiered the statement that in justification contrition, or *noster conatus*, is *conditio sine qua non*. Such a statement was, indeed, unusual in the evangelical Church. The necessity of contrition had been acknowledged as a part of repentance (*Apol.*, p. 181, 28), and contrition had been described as “the true terror of conscience, which feels that God is angry with sin, and which grieves that it has sinned” (*ibid.*, § 29). (*Comp.* p. 183, 44: “The ‘labor’ and the ‘burden’ [Matt. 11, 28] signify the contrition, anxiety, and terrors of sin and of death.” On p. 184, 46 contrition is called mortification, on the basis of Paul’s statement Col. 2, 11, and it is said: “Mortification signifies true terrors, such as those of the dying. . . . He names that as ‘the putting off of the body of sin,’ which we ordinarily call contrition.”) Moreover, contrition had been clearly shown to be an effect of the Law. “This contrition occurs when sins are censured from the Word of God.” (p. 181, 29.) “In these terrors, conscience feels the wrath of God against sin, which is unknown to secure men walking according to the flesh [as the sophists and their like]. It sees the turpitude of sin, and seriously grieves that it has sinned; meanwhile it also flees from the dreadful wrath of God, because human nature, unless sustained by the Word of God, cannot endure it. Thus Paul says (Gal. 2, 19): ‘I through the Law am dead to the Law.’ For the Law only accuses and terrifies consciences. In these terrors, our adversaries say nothing of faith; they present only the Word which convicts of sin. When this is taught alone, it is the doctrine of the Law, not of the Gospel. By these griefs and terrors, they say that men merit grace, if they still love God. But how will men love God when they feel the terrible and inexpressible wrath of God? What else than despair do those teach who, in these terrors, display only the Law?” (p. 182, 32 ff.) And the relation of contrition and faith, respectively, to sin is nicely exhibited p. 184, 48: “In Col. 2, 14 it is said that Christ blots out the handwriting which through the Law

is against us. Here also there are two parts, the handwriting and the blotting out of the handwriting. The handwriting, however, is conscience, convicting and condemning us. The Law, moreover, is the word which reproveth and condemns sins. Therefore, this utterance which says, 'I have sinned against the Lord,' as David says (2 Sam. 12, 13) is the handwriting. And wicked and secure men do not seriously give forth this utterance. For they do not see, they do not read the sentence of the Law written in the heart. In true griefs and terrors, this sentence is perceived. Therefore the handwriting which condemns us is contrition itself. To blot out the handwriting is to expunge this sentence, by which we declare that we are condemned, and to engross the sentence, according to which we know that we have been freed from this condemnation. But faith is the new sentence which reverses the former sentence, and gives peace and life to the heart."

With statements like these before him it is hard to conceive how a Lutheran theologian could link contrition, which is by the Law, with justification, which occurs without the deeds of the Law; and how contrition could be named a cause of justification along with Christ, even though the latter was called the *causa propter quem*. Cordatus had remarked that if Cruciger had meant to say no more than that faith is not without repentance, he should have raised no objection; for he had said: *quod certissime verum est*. In the economy of grace faith is preceded by repentance whenever a sinner truly turns to Christ, and the *Apology* had declared: "The sum of the preaching of the Gospel—in the wide sense!—is this, *viz.*, to convict of sin and to offer for Christ's sake the remission of sins and righteousness." (p. 181, 29.) But this contrition is not an element which God considers when He declares a sinner righteous; these terrors of the soul, these agonies of conscience have no causative relation to that sentence of Not guilty! which God pronounces upon a sinner in justification. And if God does not consider them, the sinner must not consider them either. In justification God and the sinner, each in his way, look only upon the

merit of Christ. No other merit, no other work, no "conatus" of anybody else must be introduced to disturb this view. The entire business is spoiled as soon as an element that is not God's sovereign grace and Christ's merit is intruded into the *negotium justificationis*. We hold that Cordatus was amply justified in registering his dissent from the language, if not from the opinion, of Cruciger.

Nevertheless, there is something in the action of Cordatus that can hardly be justified by his zeal to correct an error in the teaching of a brother theologian. There is a current of bitterness in his charge against Cruciger. He plainly insinuates that a movement away from Luther and toward Rome has set in at the university. Witness in his first letter to Cruciger the blunt charge that Cruciger has been teaching "sophisticam sive papisticam aut philosophicam certe fidem;" the reminder that he himself had been taught a different faith at Wittenberg "superioribus annis;" and the poignant words about "irrisores theologiae, quorum Vitebergae non pauci sunt, inter peritos linguarum, qui Erasmus mortuum malunt legere, quam vivum audire et legere Lutherum." Witness in his second letter the repeated charge that Cruciger has employed papistic terminology (*contritio* — *terminus in papatu commissus*);¹⁾ the seeming disregard of scandals which might arise in consequence of his attack upon Cruciger; and the solemn adjuration at the close of the letter: "Memineris illius, a quo Theologiam Christi audivisti et didicisti, nempe a praeceptore nostro *Luthero*, qui est Doctor Doctorum Theologiae. Amen." (!) These charges are of such a serious character that they require a larger basis of fact than the one objectionable sentence in the lecture on July 24th. That sentence alone would not justify the strong animus which Cordatus had plainly revealed in his addresses to Cruciger. Now, we were never able to accept without a strong doubt the explanation which modern historians usually

1) This was urged despite the fact that the Apology, in the statements quoted above, had made use of the term *contritio*, — a fact that could not be unknown to Cordatus.

offer at this point, *viz.*, the narrow-minded, eristic character of Cordatus. Even a stickler for terms will not rush violently at a respected teacher of the Church, unless he can show that the opprobrious term represents a dangerous tendency. And Cruciger was held in high regard at the time. The chronicler says: "All students and the entire university entertained greater hopes regarding him than regarding any one else." The late researches of Kawerau may aid us in gaining the true perspective for Cordatus' action. But, in order to follow these, it will be necessary, before entering upon the second stage of the controversy, to go back a number of years and study certain strange doings of Melanchthon, who, after September 18, becomes the principal in the controversy.

It is a sad, we may even say a distressing, chapter that has had to be written in the history of the Lutheran Reformation, since Laemmer, Friedensburg, and Kupke have published *Monumenta Vaticana*, which contain the reports of the Roman Nuntii in Germany, and since Kawerau (*Versuche, Melanchthon zur katholischen Kirche zurueckzufuehren*) has grouped these reports with other documents, some of which were recently discovered, to show that Rome tried to bring Melanchthon over to her side, or to put him in a position where he could do no harm, and that Melanchthon did not indignantly spurn Rome's offers. The contents of these publications are extremely damaging to Melanchthon. Every lover of Melanchthon will feel, like Kawerau, the ungratefulness of exhibiting weaknesses in the character of Melanchthon that are all but disgusting. However, while acknowledging his worth to the Church, candor compels us also to note his deplorable defects.

We pass over the futile efforts of Campeggi and Nausea in 1524 to induce Melanchthon to forsake Luther. These efforts were defeated by Melanchthon in a manner that is very creditable to him. Less honorable was his conduct at the Diet of Augsburg. The champion of the Evangelical party exhibited at this time a weakness, timidity, and deference that was sickening to his constituents, and cost Melanchthon the respect of

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those who had come thither to support him. It was an open secret among the papists that as negotiations at the Diet dragged Melanchthon removed more and more from his own party, studiously sought connections in the Roman camp, engaged in secret negotiations with representatives of Rome, and in these negotiations allowed himself to be carried even to the point of servile, fawning devotion. (See Kawerau, *op. cit.*, p. 9, where Virek's elaborate treatise on this episode in *Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte* IX, 67 is also quoted.) After the Diet Melanchthon maintained the friendly relations there formed with certain papists. To the bishop of Kulm, Dantiscus, he writes in 1533, referring to the days of Augsburg:

When you embraced me with a very special benevolence, chiefly at that place where I lacked the support of men who were most nearly allied with me, it was easy for me to recognize your exceptional humanity, and I began to love you fervidly, not only for other excellent virtues which you possess, but, above all, on account of your humanity so worthy of a learned and wise man.

And he reminds this papal minion:

You know, of course, that I labored for nothing else than that our negotiations should be conducted on both sides with greater moderation.

Kawerau remarks (l. c., p. 9) that on this occasion two things were revealed as regards Melanchthon's character and confessional standpoint: 1. that characteristic propensity to yield and to compromise which Melanchthon himself has called his *ingenium servile*; 2. the fact that the idea of the organic unity of the Church was so enticing to Melanchthon that he was ready to pay almost any price in order to obtain it, and that the prospect of an acute conflict on religious issues with the Emperor Charles V was to him an unbearable reflection. We may safely hold that Melanchthon's conduct at Augsburg accounts sufficiently for the two contrary opinions which were held regarding him by papists during his lifetime: one side, represented by the ducal chaplain at Leipzig, Cochlaeus, regarded him as a double-dealing, cunning, treacherous man, the other side, represented by every notable humanist of the day

(Erasmus, Cricius, Sadoletus), considered him a man with a mistaken mission in life, or, rather, a man who was with them at heart and against them only through the force of circumstances or for opportune reasons.

Even before the Diet was convened Rome sought connection with Melanchthon. The Vienna Academy has published a letter of Melanchthon addressed to Andreas Cricius, Bishop of Plock on the Vistula, and dated March 25, 1530. The bishop had invited Melanchthon to come and make his home with him. Melanchthon replies:

The instructions, most reverend father, which you had given were delivered to me by Martinus (a Polish nobleman by the name of Martin Slap Dabrowski), a young man of singular amiability. Now, although I know well enough that my talents and my knowledge are mediocre, I feel great joy on account of your opinion of me. For in my whole life no greater honor could come to me than such testimonials regarding me from well-meaning men, and no one has shown me greater honor than you, most reverend father, for you invite me to come to you, and ask me to enjoy your society. Could there be anything more desirable to me? However, for the time being I am firmly held at this place and am implicated in many and great affairs. As soon as I shall be able to extricate myself I shall seek out a Maecenas who will procure for me leisure to pursue and to elucidate those studies for the cultivation of which I do not find as much leisure time, amid the burden of my present labors, as I could wish. What could I desire more than to find for my old age and for my studies a haven such as you point out to me? In regard to all other matters I shall write you more explicitly at another time. For, while writing this I am absent from home, loaded with most tedious business. Pardon, accordingly, most reverend father, this brief letter, etc. (l. c., p. 12.)

Where was Melanchthon at the time? At Torgau. And what were those *negotia molestissima* of which he complained? The draft for the Augsburg Confession! This work he feels as a burden, as a drawback, a hindrance that keeps him from his true life-calling, the pursuit of humanistic studies. And who had implicated him in this business? Luther. Thus thought, thus felt, thus wrote the chosen leader of the Evangelical party on the eve of that momentous twenty-fifth day of

June, 1530! He is utterly unable to rise to a true perception of the grandeur of the hour. A cozy study at a Polish bishop's mansion with ample leisure for linguistic studies, pursued at ease and amid material comforts, is worth more to him than the place at the head of men who have been called to voice the eternal truth of the Son of God in the presence of kings! With such sentiments he goes to Augsburg. Small wonder that his attitude and conduct there inspire his opponents with a reasonable hope that this man can be won back to the bosom of the "alone-saving church."

The humane Cricius renewed his overtures to Melanchthon two years later. In the fall of 1532 a letter from him reached Melanchthon at Wittenberg. This letter has not come to light as yet; Melanchthon has kept this part of his correspondence well concealed. But Melanchthon's answer, which for years had lain buried in the Petersburg library, has lately been published at Warschau by T. Wierzbowski. It is dated October 2, 1532. Melanchthon sends the bishop his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, which had just left the press, and accompanies his gift with the following words:

Although I have sufficiently learned your friendliness toward me ere this by the instructions which the young nobleman Martinus delivered to me, still I have received a wonderful impression of your kind regard for me from the letter which you wrote me recently, not only because it was full of marks of your benevolence toward me, which I value very highly, indeed, but still more on account of its style. I do not believe that a more graceful and elegant letter could have been written even in Italy, the cradle and nursery of these noble arts. Only a person whose mind is filled with grace and humanity can write such a letter. What great seriousness and what wisdom do you manifest by the fine manner in which you bewail our dissensions in the domain of religion! Accordingly, you could not have sent me anything more calculated to kindle love for you in my heart than this letter, which, though brief, contains an unmistakable testimony of your humanity, as well as of your wisdom. For methinks you have lent expression to the sentiment which Horace voices regarding the orator: Briefly but impressively! However, my failure to write to you since the letter which I addressed to you en route to Augsburg was caused by the sad state of the

times which have, as it were, torn obligations of this sort out of my hands. For while I had most studiously tempered the religious controversies, the conduct of our opponents was so unmannerly that they have conjured up this war in which I have become embroiled by my unhappy fate, notwithstanding my nature, my inclination, and, lastly, the character of my studies, which I love above all others, abhor these quarrels utterly. I noticed in the beginning that a few points were being urged which are necessary to godliness; these I did not push aside. For I will not disguise the fact that I have nothing in common with our Epicurean gentlemen who imagine that no religious issue concerns them. However, you may now ascertain from the commentary, a copy of which I send you, what I approve in the controversies of our men. A wise reader will easily observe that I am retrenching, in this book, many controverted points, and that my sole aim is to place in a clearer light certain doctrines which are necessary to godliness. So soon as these shall be truly understood, the points in controversy will, for the greater part, be adjusted. I am also striving to restore to its former dignity the great importance of the established system of the church (Kirchenverfassung). However, as you are a very wise man, I leave it to you to pass judgment not only on my book, but also on the aim which I have pursued and which you will readily discern, by your wisdom, from the manner of my discourse. If it is as you say, that there are people who would force the present tragedy to a point where the ecclesiastical state (das Kirchenwesen) would be ruined, I declare frankly that I am opposed to such people. However, the cruelty of our opponents aggravates this business. If they would yield to moderate counsels, the other party, too, could be more easily induced to make more equitable demands. I shall not speak now of my specific duty and of the action which it behooves me to take in such civil dissensions, when there is sinning both inside and outside of the walls of Ilion, as the poet says; at any rate, I have no more ardent wish than to be removed from such controversies. Still I do not consider it to be the part of a well-intentioned person to sanction and, still less, to admire the cruelty of our opponents. If you have a different and more acceptable proposition to make to me I shall obey you as I would a voice from God. Many signs of the times point to a turn not very distant in the turbulent state of Germany, and, though I little know what will become of me, I believe, nevertheless, that our opponents will not have everything their own way. Accordingly, I have always exhorted men of your position to formulate moderate plans. For I foresee the great calamity which a change in our public affairs will cause. These things I write you from a

sincere heart, and I ask you to pardon my loquacity and to embrace and kindly protect me because I take shelter in your humanity and wisdom. If you will show me a port of safety where I can teach and raise to distinction the sciences which we mutually love and which I have somewhat acquired, I shall obey your authority. A cordial farewell, my most respected bishop! (l. c., 13 f.)

With Kawerau we say: How much food for thought this letter furnishes! Melanchthon actually declares the demands which he had championed at Augsburg to be excessive. He bewails his sad fortune of being the general of an army that will fight rather than recede from its right. For himself, he is ready to compromise on the *credenda* of his faith if he can gain acceptance for the *facienda*. The so-called ethical issues of the Reformation, virtuous living, occupies a more exalted place in his mind than the material principle of the Reformation, justification by grace through faith without the deeds of the Law. And he would restore the hierarchy, the ancient polity of Rome, the episcopal jurisdiction as a *jus divinum*. The only reason why he declines to come over to the bishop's side is because there are people on that side, too, who are determined to fight, who brandish fagots and grind swords for the conflict that is impending. He is ready to strike a bargain so soon as counsels of moderation are advocated on the other side. Hence, for the time being he declines the bishop's "haven,"—and stays with Luther.

Cricius' answer to the above letter is not extant. However, a letter of this gentleman addressed to Peter Tomicki, bishop of Cracow, has been discovered. It is dated October 27, 1533. Cricius relates:

I have just completed the act of consecrating the bishop of Culm, which occupied eight days. When the bishop saw a letter of Melanchthon which I had received and in which Melanchthon holds out the hope that he will come to us, he was surprised and rejoiced greatly, although prior to seeing this letter he was accurately informed that Melanchthon is desirous of severing his connection with his party. He related that Alexander, the papal legate, had endeavored with much skill and great promises to induce Melanchthon either to come over to the pope or go to one of the universities of

Italy. But Melanchthon absolutely could not be persuaded to go to Italy. Jointly with his friend van den Campen, he urged me strongly not to desist from the work which I have undertaken, and assured me that nothing more useful and laudable could happen to our cause. I shall diligently do this, if only the heretics would not dissuade Melanchthon. (l. c., p. 18.)

This letter mentions a certain van den Campen, known in history as Johann Campensis. This party was a friend of Dan-tiscus, the bishop of Culm. In 1534 he writes to Aleander:

While I was at Marienburg in Prussia the commentary on the Epistle to the Romans by the highly learned and noble-minded Philip Melanchthon fell into my hands. No doubt, this epistle is the most difficult of all, and at the same time contains the sum of the mysteries of Christ, so that, without it, we should hardly be able to obtain information regarding them from other sources. Now, when I perceived that this excellent man is laboring painfully and twists and turns in this commentary—may he pardon this remark!—without great success, a desire seized me to come to his relief in this distress and to call his attention to particular passages in this letter which he has heeded far too little. Accordingly, I tarried in Prussia five months. For it was believed that he would come to Poland on the invitation of certain dignitaries.

Melanchthon did not come, and Campensis wrote and published his own *Commentariolus*, which he dedicated to Aleander. But the letter shows how people to the east of Wittenberg about this time were on the *qui vive* for an event that would, indeed, have startled the world.

We must turn our eyes westward for a few moments. While the waves beat high at Augsburg, a learned gentleman was quietly pursuing his studies at Freiburg. He was the acknowledged head of the humanist party throughout Europe. He should have been at Augsburg with the other representatives of Rome, but age and illness prevented him. Erasmus had been in friendly correspondence with Melanchthon since 1524. Luther's mighty treatise On the Bondage of the Will had temporarily clouded their friendship, but friendly relations were never entirely broken off between them while Erasmus lived. Two days after the Augsburg Confession had been publicly presented to Charles V, Melanchthon wrote to Erasmus, stating

that he had rejoiced to learn that Erasmus had written to the emperor, dissuading him from violent measures against the Evangelical party. Melanchthon urged Erasmus to continue his good offices with the emperor and to bring the whole weight of his illustrious name to bear on the latter, in order to induce him to adopt moderation. Erasmus replied that Melanchthon had been misinformed; he had not written to the emperor, but to Campeggi, the papal legate, and to the bishop of Augsburg. He reminded Melanchthon, with slight sarcasm, to break the stubbornness and bridle the violence of his own partisans. He concluded with the amiable remark: "May God preserve you for us safe and sound!" (l. c., p. 30.) But in a letter to Julius v. Pflug in 1531 Erasmus says:

Melanchthon has untiringly labored at Augsburg in the same direction in which you offer your advice. If my illness had permitted, I should have been ever so glad at that time to unite my labors, to the limit of my strength, with his own. However, how little he has accomplished is plain to everybody. For there were people in those days who would slander as heretics men of unsullied reputation and great influence only because they had conversed with Melanchthon a few times. (l. c., p. 30.)

When his *Commentary on Romans* was published, Melanchthon sent a copy of the work to Erasmus, just as he had done to Cricius. The accompanying letter, dated October 25, 1532, contains the following sentiment:

During the last two years, while I was incessantly engaged in quarrels and controversies, nothing had such a soothing effect upon me as the receipt of your amiable letter. . . . I would gladly write you concerning other matters which have partly been undertaken, partly are about to be undertaken, if only *our* deliberations would be of the least benefit to the common weal. However, since *neither* side takes pleasure in any moderate measure, *our* counsels are declined. Still I beg you with all my heart, wherever opportunity is offered you, to stake *your* influence *also* in the interest of peace, and to admonish those who wield power not to disrupt the churches still further by a civil war. (l. c., p. 17.)

Italics in the above letter are by Kawerau, who thus brings out the significance of this letter. Melanchthon assumes a unity

of sentiment between Erasmus and himself. What Erasmus had gathered from this letter he stated November 7, 1533 to a friend at Loewen:

Melanchthon himself shows plainly in his *Commentary on Romans* and in a private letter to me that he is disgusted with his own people.

In this same letter Erasmus remarks:

Melanchthon has been called to Poland. I have this from the bishop of Plock, who has called him. (l. c., pp. 17. 19.)

This shows that Cricius was in communication with Erasmus while he was crooning his siren's song into the pleased ear of Melanchthon. And Erasmus was not usually an idle spectator in affairs of moment. He would act and cooperate, though discreetly and in a masked manner, always keeping an eye on his own interest, and varying his judgment to suit the need of the hour. Accordingly, the adverse opinion which he uttered four months later in a letter of March 5, 1534, expressing surprise at the invitation which Cricius had sent Melanchthon, and stating: "True, Melanchthon's style is less violent than Luther's, but in no point does he deviate even a hair's breadth from the Lutheran dogmas, but I might say he is even out-Luthering Luther" (l. c., p. 21), need not surprise one very much. Any one of the hypotheses which Kawerau suggests to explain this sudden change of Erasmus' opinion about Melanchthon is plausible: either his vanity had been offended in some manner which we cannot explain now; or he wrote in a crabbed temper such as seizes old men occasionally; or he wanted to frighten his young admirer Laski and nip the latter's budding intention to enter into friendly relations with Melanchthon.

Melanchthon was ever anxious to keep the good will of Erasmus. He was pained,—and expressed himself to that effect,—when Luther, in the spring of 1534, once more attacked Erasmus. (Corp. Ref. 2, 713.) He assumed an air of suffering resignation, and wailed about these "necessary evils." He was shocked to learn that Erasmus had been offended by a certain

passage in a new edition of Melanchthon's *Loci* in 1535. Melanchthon had depicted a new and dangerous kind of opponents, cunning men, who pander to the fancies of persons in power, palliate the old rites with the aid of new tricks by feigning a plausible and more accommodating interpretation for them, however, in such a manner as to retain at the same time the essential points of the old superstitious doctrines. I fear these sirens no less than the sophistry of the monks (scholastic theology) who opposed us first. For our new opponents have humanistic learning at their disposal; they are in favor with persons of power and knowledge who attach great importance to the stately arguments and the reasonable conversation of these men. Whenever we dissent from these men, we are termed morose and insipid, and it is said that we are defending our dreams and have no regard for the public peace.

Continuing, Melanchthon had said:

Let every one be certain of his faith! Accordingly, the manner which academicians and skeptics have adopted must be far from us. They discountenance every claim of certainty (jede gewisse Behauptung), and demand either that you must remain a doubter in every issue, or you must at least suspend your own decision. A person who will teach others to doubt the will of God, as far as it has been revealed in Scripture, utterly destroys religion. (l. c., p. 31 f.)

Noble sentiments these! But when Erasmus read them, he addressed a letter to Melanchthon which unmistakably betrayed irritation. Erasmus had felt that the term skeptic was leveled at him, and inquired whether Melanchthon had meant it for him. Forthwith Melanchthon assures his "much revered patron" that in no place in his book he had intended to attack Erasmus, "for whose opinion I care so very much and whose goodwill I esteem so very highly." He proceeds:

And you observe, no doubt, that I have borrowed a few things from you, especially in my critique of the dogmas. . . . I could cite many trustworthy witnesses to prove my high esteem for you. For I reverence you not only for your powerful mind, your extraordinary learning and your excellent virtues, but I also follow your opinion in formulating my judgment of most controverted questions. Accordingly, I pray you to dismiss your hostile suspicion and be persuaded that I value both your authority and your friendship most highly. As regards my opinion of the writings which our people here (at

Wittenberg) have published against you, I shall say nothing about that matter at present; for they have displeased me not only because of my personal relation to you, but also because such publications do not serve the public welfare. I have never hesitated to express this as my opinion. (*Italics by Kawerau. l. c., p. 32.*)

Continuing, Melanchthon talks about his difficult position in the Evangelical camp; he states that he takes no pleasure at all in the blunt and paradoxical speech of the Wittenbergers, and that he is laboring, "not without danger," to invent "more euphonious" (*wohllautendere*) formulas in reducing dogmas to their proper terms. He says that he is now so far advanced in years that it would be unpardonable in him, if he had not learned to treat matters of faith more circumspectly than he had formerly done. (*l. c., p. 32' f.*) Kawerau calls these remarks of Melanchthon a recantation. They are; they introduce to Erasmus a different kind of Melanchthon from the one whom Erasmus had observed fifteen years ago. The young professor of Greek who had come to Wittenberg at that time had spoken a different language regarding matters of faith, and had known of no difference between himself and his colleagues. He is now fairly making love to Erasmus, and the latter generously replies under date of June 6th, that he is pleased to note that the little cloud of suspicion had speedily been dispersed by Melanchthon's letter, and that he craves Melanchthon's pardon for having harbored such a suspicion. He claims that at the time he wrote to Melanchthon he had been irritated by Luther's writings, and had also suspected Melanchthon of being angry at him, because in a former letter he, Erasmus, had made disagreeable remarks about Luther's friendly relations with Amsdorf. (*l. c., p. 33.*) As far as we know, this letter closes the correspondence between these two men. Erasmus died five weeks later, July 11th.

It is granted, of course, that the overtures which Rome made to Melanchthon, and Melanchthon's attitude towards them, could have had no bearing on the controversy of Cordatus, unless they were known at the time. The correspondence which we have cited has, for the greater part, been brought to light

only recently. It is not probable that it was known to Cordatus. There is sufficient evidence, however, to show that Melanchthon ever since the days of Augsburg had placed himself under a cloud to his comrades in the Evangelical party. (See p. 6 of this essay.) But his relations to Rome were placed in a strong light when Cochlaeus published his "Skirmish" in 1534. (*Velitatio Joh. Cochlaei in Apologiam Phil. Mel.*) The Dresden court-preacher aimed at breaking down the solid arguments of the Apology. Cochlaeus seems to have felt the weakness of his effort, and for that reason to have called his brochure a *velitatio*, a light, desultory engagement, to be followed by a powerful attack of more formidable combatants. It is interesting chiefly because of its Epistle Dedicatory, which was addressed to Cricius and dated June 2. It reads as follows:

My much revered father in Christ: Sir,—Since I am well aware that you have acquired great authority with all prelates and gentlemen of rank in the far-famed Kingdom of Poland, by your literary mind, your eloquence, and the achievements of a well-spent life, I have good reason to admonish you reverently, since you are the foremost paladin of your realm, and the confessor and defender of catholic truth, to be on your guard unremittingly against the tricks of heretics, lest our Christian commonwealth and our religion suffer harm in your midst. For it is not by chance or by good fortune, but by the gracious providence of God that you have risen to such eminence by your literary studies, that it becomes your duty to remember the words which we read in the Prophet Ezekiel (33, 2 ff.): 'When the watchman seeth the sword coming and bloweth not the trumpet and warneth not the people, and if the sword come and take away a soul from among them, that soul shall, indeed, be taken away in his sin, but his blood shall be required at the hand of the watchman.' Likewise those words which the Apostle Paul at Ephesus (Miletus!) addressed to the elders of the Church: 'Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing ravening wolves shall come that will not spare the flock. And of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.' (Acts 20, 28—30.) Accordingly, I exhort you most earnestly, most reverend father and sir, to show yourself, especially at this time, as a vigilant and sagacious watch-

man worthy of your great erudition and your high rank in the Church and the pastoral office committed to you, lest apostates who speak perverse things enter among the flock, and lest your students, who hear men like Luther and Philip Melanchthon, import pernicious books into your country. I know, indeed, most reverend sir, that you have long since become an enemy of Luther on account of his impious doctrines which have often been condemned, already by the ancient Church. However, as far as I know, you have never declared your mind publicly about Luther's protagonist, Philip. This makes me fear that through one of his pupils he may have insinuated himself in the garb of piety into your friendship, and may at the same time try to smuggle his Lutheran teachings into your kingdom. Just as he did a year ago, when he had won over the Scotsman Alesius, under whose name he addressed a very vicious letter—so many have reported to me, and the style of the letter itself betrays him—to the Scotch king against the bishops of Scotland,²⁾ in order to recommend the Lutheran, falsely called the evangelical, doctrine. Accordingly, beware, most honored bishop, lest this fox dupe you with his treacherous cunning, for like a siren he knows how to get the ear of people by his charming flattery; he practices lies and hypocrisy; he schemes all manner of artifices to incline the hearts of men to himself, and fools them with his insincere words. So soon as he has enticed them, he relies on their love for him to pervert their sound judgment, and ultimately he is able to impose on them anything he likes. Therefore you must not believe him in the least, if he should write you, (as he probably does,) that he is not pleased with all that Luther teaches; for he is not sincere when he writes such things; his aim is to deceive unwary men who suspect no malice. For in his heart he esteems Luther very highly; for he is miserably bewitched by this apostate monk. I obtained plain evidence of this fact from private conversations which I had with him at Augsburg. Hence, although I regret that this intelligent and learned man has become obsessed and taken such complete possession of by this renegade,—for this reason I have hitherto suppressed the greater portion of what I have written a long time ago against several of his books!—still I hold that I dare not keep silence and practice reserve any longer,—my conscience urges me!—because I observe at present that he is trying to find ways

2) The reference is to Alesius' *Epistola contra decretum quorundam episcop. in Scotia*. Alesius was a convert of Patrick Hamilton whom he had been detailed to persuade to abjure his faith. He died as professor at Leipsic March 17, 1565.

and means, by various arts, to introduce and to spread his Lutheranism also in foreign countries. Accordingly, I pray and adjure you, most reverend sir, graciously to read the accompanying "Skirmish," in order that you may know that no confidence can be placed in the feigned affection and devotion of this Philip, especially by bishops. (l. c., pp. 22 ff.)

In his brochure Cochlaeus relates reminiscences of the days of the Augsburg Diet, all to the effect that Melanchthon cannot be trusted. The papist and the zealot speak in every line of his treatise. His estimate of Melanchthon's character is utterly wrong. But, though he had misinterpreted Melanchthon's aim, his brochure is valuable evidence to show that he had closely observed Melanchthon. He must have had an inkling of what was passing between Wittenberg and Plock. His publication was an effort to thwart the threatened alliance between Melanchthon and Cricius, for which he assumed only base motives on the part of the former. The literary world of the day was thus informed, and the curious part of this revelation is, that even after Cochlaeus' publication Melanchthon, as we have seen, continued his correspondence with Cricius.

When Cordatus left Cruciger's house, his next visit, we imagine, should have been to Melanchthon, with whom he had discussed Cruciger's lecture on July 24.³⁾ But Melanchthon had obtained leave of absence from the Elector to visit his former home at Bretten in Suabia. He had started on his journey August 23, accompanied by Prof. Milich, who wanted to visit his home at Freiburg, where Erasmus had lived until the summer of 1535. Their departure had been planned earlier, but deliberations concerning an ecumenical council which the Pope (Paul III) was about to convene at Mantua May 23, 1537, had delayed them.⁴⁾ When Cordatus came to Wittenberg to confer with Cruciger, Melanchthon probably had just reached Bretten, and was preparing to visit his friend Joachim Camerarius who had been appointed a year ago to a professorship

3) See THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY XI, 203.

4) Ledderhose, *Phil. Mel.*, p. 122.

at the university of Tuebingen. While there, Duke Ulrich of Wuerttemberg was very insistent that Melanchthon should accept a position at the university of Tuebingen. The offer was extremely flattering, and many things might have inclined Melanchthon to consider it favorably, particularly since by his removal to Tuebingen he would have quitted the seat of many of the controversies of those days, and would have been in daily communion and fellowship with his much-beloved Camerarius. But — to his honor be it recorded! — he resisted the temptation, stating to the Duke: "I do not see how I can separate (mich losreissen) from the people with whom I have lived hitherto." (Ledderhose, p. 124.) An action like this might palliate the faults aforementioned and reconcile one to Melanchthon. There is in this man a strange mixture of high-mindedness and smallness, firmness and vacillation. He could kindle both admiration and contempt. He could win most affectionate friends and he could make bitter enemies. His wavering and shifting as a theologian was probably not understood as to its true motive by the men of his time. We shall revert to this matter when we have reached the end of the controversy. As regards his connection with Romanists and his suspected leaning towards Rome, that was probably overestimated by the Roman party and may have been exaggerated by the Evangelical party. Nevertheless, making due allowances, it was a deplorable, injudicious course which Melanchthon had adopted, and the bitter fruits which he reaped from it were of his own sowing.

Magister Philip is about to start on a journey to his home, together with Rector Milichius and a few other magisters. On this journey he intends to pay a visit to Erasmus, who has expressed a strong desire to see him and have an interview with him. But there are people here who say that Erasmus is dead. (Kawerau, l. c., p. 33.)

—this letter of a Wittenberg student, dated July 29, 1536, and found in the *Album Witeberg.*, may be mere gossip with which student circles not unfrequently are rife. The invitation of Erasmus may be entirely imaginary. And the further rumors which were circulating at the time, *viz.*, Melanchthon

would not return at all; he had had a disagreement with Luther and the other professors (C. R. 3, 193); he was striving for a cardinal's hat (C. R. 6, 881) — all this may be small talk of small people. But that rumors of this nature could arise at all is significant. Melanchthon's conduct, as we have seen, was such as to invite and foster suspicion. On the other hand, Cordatus may have been of an impetuous mind, inclined to look at the dark side of affairs, easily roused to suspicion, and not sufficiently judicious in the choice of his terms. Taking all this into account, still that remark in Cordatus' letter of September 8 about "irrisores theologiae" at Wittenberg, about "papistic terminology" in the presentation of doctrine by professors is too real, definite, concrete, and, withal, comprehensive to be the mere vapping of a pessimist. Kawerau inquires: "War es so ganz aus der Luft gegriffen?" And we cannot imagine men like Kawerau to be kindly affectioned toward men of the doctrinal position which Cordatus occupied.

(To be continued.)