

The Three Causes of Conversion in Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, and the "Formula of Concord"*

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Although the "Formula of Concord" is an official theological symbol of most of the Lutheran churches in the world, it has seldom been studied in depth. Particularly in recent years, theologians have tended to push it aside without the benefits of a scientific investigation that is commensurate with the advances of historical methodology of the past one hundred and fifty years.

An important case in point is Article II, "Concerning Free Will". The assumption is hardly questioned that Melanchthon taught synergism and unlimited free will, and that Article II of the "Solid Declaration" was aimed against the heart of his system. Yet, all assumptions should be questioned, and particularly this one, because the article which is before us was written by a pupil and friend of Melanchthon, David Chytraeus, who intended to show that the doctrine of his teacher was sound and orthodox. Furthermore, two other collaborators in the "Formula of Concord", Martin Chemnitz and Nikolaus Selnecker, were disciples of the same teacher. It is accordingly clear that before the role of Melanchthon and his followers in the late Reformation can be understood, new critical investigations are needed. An important beginning was made in the recently-published studies of Friedrich Hübner,¹ but in spite of his splendid historical criticism Hübner has not drawn all the consequences that are required.

Because of the great length of Article II, the complexity of the questions involved, and the need to draw parallels between the work of Melanchthon and his

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1 Friedrich HÜBNER: Über den freien Willen: Artikel II: "De libero arbitrio" der Formula Concordiae aus seinen historischen Grundlagen heraus interpretiert. In: Widerspruch, Dialog und Einigung: Studien zur Konkordienformel der Lutherischen Reformation/ hrsg. von Wenzel Lohff und Lewis W. Spitz. S 1977, 135-170.

pupils, on the one hand, and the task of comparing these private writings with the official statements of the "Formula of Concord", on the other hand, we shall concentrate our investigation upon the problem of the "three causes in conversion" in "Solid Declaration" II: 90. It will be necessary to trace the developments of the concepts that were used as well as the circumstances that led to their treatment in the "Solid Declaration".

I The Charge of Synergism Against Melanchthon

A perennial problem in the history of Christian theology has been the relationship between the working of God and the working of man in the salvation of the individual. It is clear that the apostle Paul insisted that the believer is saved by grace alone and that the individual contributes no meritorious action toward his salvation. But the emphasis upon divine grace has seemed to endanger human responsibility and thereby to have led to moral laxity. Accordingly, the teaching of redemption has continuously shifted between the poles of divine grace and human works. In the Ancient Church, the Pauline distinction of works and grace (compare Luther's distinction of Law and Gospel) was soon watered down in the concern to emphasize human responsibility. The notable apex was reached in Pelagius with his denial of original sin and his insistence that the individual actually can fulfil the requirements of the Law. His classical counterpart was the church-father Augustine with his emphasis upon divine grace.² These poles continued to oppose each other throughout the Middle Ages. They came into an unusually sharp focus in the controversy between Luther and Erasmus, with Luther's proclamation of the *sola gratia* and Erasmus' attention to human responsibility. Melanchthon and the writers of the "Formula of Concord" stood somewhere in-between. But in the language of the "Formula of Concord", "synergism" was the teaching that the unregenerate needed to cooperate toward his initial conversion, that is, that he had to contribute some action to the working of divine grace. Such a teaching was decisively renounced in Article II of the "Formula of Concord".

2 This falling away from New Testament teaching in the Ancient Church is amply illustrated in the dogma histories of Reinhold Seeberg and other writers. A convenient outline of the history of justification is given in Gerhard MÜLLER: *Die Rechtfertigungslehre: Geschichte und Probleme*. GÜ 1977, 12-36.

Now, how was it possible that Melanchthon, the great teacher of a forensic justification which excluded all works "before, during, or after" as the basis for a favorable verdict, might have fallen into synergism? It has often been said that Melanchthon taught that in "conversion" three causes concur, namely, the Word of God, the Holy Ghost, and the human will. No such statement is to be found in the second or third editions of the "*Loci communes rerum theologicarum*", except that these three causes concur in a "good action". The earliest possible documentation of three causes in "conversion" is this statement in the "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" from between 1547 and 1550: "These causes concur in conversion – the Holy Spirit moving the hearts by means of the Gospel, the voice of the Gospel as it is turned over in the mind (whether in the course of hearing, reading, or pious meditation), and the will of the man who does not oppose but amid trepidation as it were assents to the divine voice."³ Although the "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" was first edited by the unreliable Caspar Cruciger, it does not appear that its source-value has been seriously impaired by that association since he died before completing the task and Melanchthon himself was obliged to take over the work.⁴ The other relevant statement is in the Latin version of the "*Examen eorum, qui audiuntur ante ritum publicae ordinationis*", dating between 1554 and 1559: "Accordingly these causes concur in conversion: the Word of God, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father and the Son send in order that he may enkindle our hearts, and our will when it assents and does not oppose the Word of God."⁵ Before we proceed to investigate how Melanchthon utilized the terms, conversion and cause, let us take brief note of the strong criticisms which have been levelled against these statements.

Franz Hermann Reinhold Frank of Erlangen, writing in 1858 in his great work, "*Die Theologie der Concordienformel*", saw Melanchthon's view of the three causes as an unconscionable attack upon Luther's doctrine of the Gospel.⁶ Six-

3 "Concurrunt in conversione hae causae, Spiritus sanctus movens corda per Evangelium, et ipsa vox Evangelii cogitata, sive inter audiendum, sive in lectione, sive in pia meditatione, et voluntas hominis, quae non repugnat voci divinae, sed intertrepidationem utcumque adsentitur" (CR 23, 280).

4 CR 23, 193-196.

5 "Concurrunt igitur in conversione hae causae, verbum Dei, Spiritus sanctus, quem Pater et Filius mittunt, ut accendat nostra corda, et nostra voluntas assentiens, et non repugnans verbo Dei" (CR 23, 15).

6 Franz Hermann Reinhold FRANK: *Die Theologie der Concordienformel historisch-dogmatisch entwickelt und beleuchtet*. Bd. 1. Erlangen 1858, 113-240, especially 130-135.

ty-four years later, the great Missourian scholar, Gerhard Friedrich Bente, repeated Frank's charges in his "Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books" as published in the influential edition of the Lutheran Confessions, the "Concordia Triglotta" of 1921.⁷ In his 1950 monograph, "From Luther to Kierkegaard", Jaroslav Pelikan echoed these accusations of "the false and erroristic teachings of Philip Melanchthon"; with striking inaccuracy, he claimed that the work of the "cleansing of Lutheranism" in the "Formula of Concord" was done by Chemnitz,⁸ an assertion he neither substantiated nor could prove, in view of the circumstance that not Martin Chemnitz but David Chytraeus was the author of Article II. Pelikan added: "Melanchthon's humanism had led him to ascribe to the human will a more active part in conversion than Luther had believed to be in keeping with the monergism of divine grace, as taught in the New Testament. Melanchthon taught that the co-operating human will is a third factor in conversion in addition to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. ... The debate which ensued over Melanchthon's synergism issued in Article II of the Formula of Concord, in which Melanchthon's stand is repudiated."⁹ Charges like this have been raised since the sixteenth century without adequately testing their validity. Even Friedrich Hübner in his recent investigation has failed to test the transmitted accusations but instead has tended to accept them. Let us attempt to supply an obvious need.

II What Melanchthon Actually Taught Regarding Conversion

One of the reasons for accusing Melanchthon of synergism has been the failure to consider sympathetically his use of the terms "*conversio*" and "*causa*". Such consideration does not necessarily infer that we agree with his position; nevertheless, it is imperative that this task be undertaken.

Conversio. One of the reasons for the intense aversion for Melanchthon during the past hundred years has been the mistake of interpreting his teaching in

7 Gerhard Friedrich BENTE: Historical introductions to the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In: Concordia triglotta: ... Triglote Concordia; the symbolical books of the Ev. Lutheran church; German - Latin - English; .../ed. [Gerhard] F[riedrich] Bente; English tr. W. H. T. Dau and [Gerhard] F[riedrich] Bente. StL 1921, 3-266. Article II of the "Solid Declaration" is handled *ibid*, 124-143.

8 Jaroslav PELIKAN: From Luther to Kierkegaard: study in the history of theology. 2nd ed. StL 1963, 44.

9 *Ibid*.

the light of Pietism. The word "Bekehrung" or "conversion" has acquired such vivid associations from Pietism, Romanticism, and the Great Awakening that it is difficult not to superimpose the notions of a later time upon Melanchthon. The same error has often distorted the search after the meaning of Luther's so-called tower experience. Neither reformer should be interpreted in the light of August Hermann Francke's steps in conversion or John Wesley's methods.

In earlier Reformational theology, the term "conversio" had at least two distinct meanings which were parallel to the dual usage of "repentance". The term could be applied to either the non renati, the unregenerate unbelievers, or to the renati, the regenerate Christians. In the case of the word "repentance", the "Formula of Concord" was to acknowledge both a narrow sense, the repentance of the unbeliever, and the broader usage, the Christian's life of repentance (sanctification).

Luther himself had utilized the parallel term of "repentance" in the broad sense when he wrote in the first of the Ninety-Five Theses that the whole life of the Christian is to be a continuous repentance: "... omnem vitam fidelium penitentiam esse ..." ¹⁰ Thus Melanchthon also described the life of the Christian as that of a continuous and ongoing conversion. This usage would end in the movement which took place in the framing of the final version of the "Formula of Concord" in April and May 1577, when "conversion" was restricted to the narrow sense, and the broader sense was assigned to the term of "sanctification" in distinction from "justification". ¹¹ This use of "conversion" to describe the regenerate, the renati, in contrast to the conversion of the unbeliever or non renati, was found not only in Melanchthon but also in Luther ¹², Selnecker ¹³,

¹⁰ WA I, 233, 11.

¹¹ SD III, 39 (BSLK, 927, 18-31).

¹² For parallels in Luther, see the following: "1. Dominus et magister noster Iesus Christus dicendo 'Penitentiam agite &c.' omnem vitam fidelium penitentiam esse voluit" (WA I, 233, 10f). In explanation of Thesis 6: "Nonne vides, quod pro poenitentia non nisi observantiam praeceptorum dei imposuit atque ideo poenitentiam non nisi conversionem et mutationem novae vitae intelligi voluit?" (WA I, 538, 11-14). On conversion as new life of love, "De servo arbitrio": "Non minus vero requiritur dilectio Dei, quam conversio nostri et omnium praeceptorum, cum dilectio Dei sit vera conversio nostri" (WA 18, 681, 16-18). A response of Luther during a disputation, 1543: "Necesse est, totum hominem renovari, prius mentem, ut possit assentiri, expelli debent tenebrae, ignorantia, dubitatio etc. Deinde accedit altera pars, videlicet voluntas assentiens promissioni, illum assensum postea sequitur externa iustitia, quae cum proximo agit. Illa dicitur effectus fidei" (WA 39 II, 243, 30-34; cf. WA I, 530, 24-26; 531, 14-16).

¹³ The twofold sense of conversion in Selnecker is discussed in Werner ELERT: Morphologie des

Chemnitz¹⁴, and Chytraeus¹⁵. Therefore, we cannot simplistically label Melanchthon a synergist on this basis alone.

The much-discussed passage in the "Loci communes ..." of Melanchthon is his treatment of freedom of the will, "De humanis viribus seu de libero arbitrio".¹⁶ He notes the distinction between the intellectual term, "mens" or "mind", and the affective term, "voluntas" or "will" (not "arbitrium"), a faculty which the mind is not always able to control; and then he states that in the term "liberum arbitrium", free choice, both the mind and the will are joined.¹⁷ During the ensuing discussion he finds that the unbeliever has free choice in worldly matters.¹⁸ The unregenerate has even the liberty to fulfill the natural

Luthertums. Bd. 1. M 1931, 130, note 1 = Werner ELERT: The structure of Lutheranism/ tr. Walter A. Hansen. StL 1962, 148, note 8. Elert cites ibid Nikolaus SELNECKER: Examen ordinariorum. 2nd ed. Vol. 3. L 1593, 161: "Poenitentia seu conversio ad Deum est contritio, id est verus pavor et dolor cordis propter peccata nostra, et fide in Christum accipere remissionem peccatorum, reconciliationem, justificationem et vivificationem et inchoare novam obedientiam."

14 Conversio in the sense of sanctification appears in Martin CHEMNITZ: Loci theologici ... quibus et loci communes D. Philippi Melanchthonis perspicue explicantur, & quasi integrum Christianae doctrinae corpus, Ecclesia DEI sincerè proponitur/ ed. Polycarp Leyser ... Frankofvrti & Wittebergae 1653, 184b: "Conversio seu renovatio, non est talis mutatio, quae uno momento statim omnibus suis partibus absolvitur & perficitur: Sed habet sua initia, suos progressus, quibus in magna infirmitate perficitur. Non ergò cogitandum est, secunda & otiosa voluntate expectabo, donec renovatio seu conversio, juxta gradus recensitos, operatione Spiritus sancti, sine meo motu absoluta fuerit. Neque enim in puncto aliquo mathematico ostendi potest, ubi voluntas liberata agere incipiat. Sed quando gratia praevieniens, id est, prima initia fidei & conversionis homini dantur, statim incipit lucta carnis & Spiritus, & manifestum est, illam luctam non fieri sine motu nostrae voluntatis."

15 Chytraeus uses conversion in the twofold sense in his "Catechesis" of 1554: "Iustificat ne sola fides tantum ratione principij, ut loquuntur, Deinde uero post primam conversionem seu iustificationem statuendum est nos partim fide, partim propter nostra opera, seu propter Fidem, Spem, et Charitatem iustos esse et Deo placere?" – I use the editions of the "Catechesis" in the series QUELLEN ZUR GESCHICHTE DES KIRCHLICHEN UNTERRICHTS IN DER EVANGELISCHEN KIRCHE DEUTSCHLANDS ZWISCHEN 1530 UND 1600/ eingeleitet, hrsg. und zusammenfassend dargestellt von Johann Michael Reu. 11 Bde. GÜ 1904–1935. On the citation of this set with its rather confused numbering system see my article in note 45; this quotation is from vol. 8: QUELLEN ZUR GESCHICHTE DES KATECHISMUS-UNTERRICHTS. Bd. 3: Ost-, Nord- und Westdeutsche Katechismen. 2. Abt.: Texte. 1. Hälfte. GÜ 1916, 305, 28–31.

16 CR 21, 652–665.

17 CR 21, 653.

18 CR 21, 653–655.

law of God in an external, unspiritual sense.¹⁹ However, when it comes to fulfilling the law of God in the heart, believing in God, and doing his will, the natural man is totally powerless and void of the possibility of making a God-pleasing choice.²⁰ Melanchthon now quotes a number of Scripture passages against synergism – I. Cor. 2, 14; John 3, 4; 6, 44; 13, 5 – to stress that the unregenerate person is spiritually powerless.²¹ At this point he is ready to move on to discuss those who have been taken by God into his saving covenant in accordance with Isaiah 59, 21: “This is my covenant with them, says the Lord. My Spirit which is in thee and my Word which I have placed in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, forever.” Melanchthon now comments: “These words contain the sweetest description of the Church, and teach what the Church be and where it be, as it possesses the rich gifts of God. This assemblage is the Church, which sounds forth the Gospel delivered by the prophets and apostles. There, there are the living members of the Church who have the Holy Spirit. And the Church has the rich gifts – the Word of God, the remission of sins, the Holy Ghost, and life eternal.”²² Accordingly, Melanchthon is no longer speaking of the non renati, the unregenerate, but those who have been born again (John 3, 5),²³ those who are living members of the Church and have the Word, the Spirit, forgiveness, and everlasting life.²⁴ He im-

19 CR 21, 654.

20 CR 21, 655 f.

21 CR 21, 657.

22 “Haec verba dulcissimam Ecclesiae descriptionem continent, ac docent, quae sit et ubi sit Ecclesia, et quae habeat propria beneficia Dei. Ille coetus est Ecclesia, qui sonat Evangelium traditum Prophetis et Apostolis, et ibi sunt viva membra Ecclesiae, habentia Spiritum sanctum, et haec habet propria beneficia, verbum Dei, remissionem peccatorum, Spiritum sanctum et vitam aeternam” (CR 21, 657 f).

23 CR 21, 657.

24 CR 21, 658. – Melanchthon himself expressly declared that this was his usage. “At the colloquy of Worms, 1557, Melanchthon, interpellated by Brenz, is reported to have said that the passage in his *Loci* of 1548 defining free will as the faculty of applying oneself to grace referred to the regenerated will [voluntas renata], as, he said, appeared from the context” (Bente: Historical introductions . . ., 130 b). This is also my conclusion after a careful study of the context. However, Bente adds: “As a matter of fact, however, the context clearly excludes this interpretation.” Actually, in the context Melanchthon was comparing two men in whom the Spirit was at work and whom he regarded as regenerate; Saul with his regenerate will decided to reject grace, and David decided to accept it. Bente is distorting Melanchthon when he objects “... that the dissimilar actions resulting from the different use of this *natural* ability accounts for the fact that some are saved while others are lost” [emphasis mine]. It seems that many scholars try very hard not to understand Melanchthon.

mediately proceeds to say that it is in these people that the Holy Ghost is efficacious through the “voice of the Gospel ... so that we may accept the promise of the Spirit through faith”.²⁵ However, God does not force anyone to believe; also the regenerate, the *renati*, have free will and the choice of rejecting the grace of God. If the Christian is to remain a child of God, therefore, and to be ordered by the divine Word, three powers must be involved – the Word of God and the Holy Ghost, which began that faith, and the continuous assent of the human will which does not reject that word, “*humana voluntas assentiens, nec repugnans verbo Dei*”.²⁶ What Melanchthon is here saying is perfectly obvious: after the individual has come to faith, he must not reject the Word of God, or else he will lose his salvation.²⁷ Through the gracious working of the Spirit, the believer has been given the power to assent to the Word. Therefore, such assent is one of the three “causes” of the continued spiritual life of the believer. We have reached the point where we must come to a more precise understanding of how Melanchthon used the key term, “*causa*”.

Causa. When Melanchthon came to the University of Wittenberg in 1518, he came with the call of professor of Greek grammar; the following year he began formally to study theology as he completed the requirements for the degree of a Bachelor of Bible. A few years later his call was extended to include the teaching of theology as well as Greek literature. With his professional life divided between these two faculties, it should not surprise us when he utilized his knowledge of classical literature, rhetoric, and logic in expounding theological topics. Perhaps this practice was both his strength and his weakness. Not only did he want to subordinate philosophy to theology as its handmaid, but he also thought

25 “*Sciendum est autem, Spiritum sanctum efficacem esse per vocem Evangelii auditam, seu cogitatam, ut Gal. 3. [vs. 14.] dicitur: Ut promissionem Spiritus accipiamus per fidem*” (CR 21, 658).

26 CR 21, 658.

27 SD included statements which expressed this concern similarly to Melanchthon. It rejected: “*Item, wo diese Reden unerkläret gebraucht werden, daß des Menschen Wille vor, in und nach der Bekehrung dem heiligen Geist widerstrebe, und daß der heilige Geist werde gegeben denen, so ihm widerstreben*” (SD II, 82 [BSLK, 905, 40 - 906, 3]). The writer continued: “*Denn die Bekehrung ist eine solche Veränderung durch des heiligen Geistes Wirkung in des Menschen Verstande, Willen und Herzen, daß der Mensch durch ‘solliche’ Wirkung des Heiligen Geistes könnte die angebotene Gnade annehmen*” (SD II, 83 [BSLK, 906, 13-29]). Hübner asserts that SD II, 82-85 [BSLK, 905, 40 - 907, 18] was written by Chemnitz (Hübner: *Über dem freien Willen*, 158).

that a discipline such as rhetoric or logic could aid in the discovery of truth. He held that even divine revelation had taken place within the context of these arts. For example, the apostle Paul had written according to the Greeks' understanding of rhetoric, and therefore a knowledge of its principles was an important aid in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.²⁸

The concept of "cause" played an elaborate role in Melanchthon's world-view as it was based upon the logic of Aristotle. He wrote a textbook on dialectic, "*Erotemata dialectices*", which followed the Stagirite in listing four causes: the efficient, the material, the formal, and the final.²⁹ The *tres causae* that drew so much opposition from his opponents were an adaptation of this scheme. Understanding conversion as a term roughly equivalent to the later concept of sanctification in the renati, the Christian life consists of the interplay of the following three factors:

causa efficiens (the agent which acts) = the Holy Ghost;

causa instrumentalis (the means used by the agent) = the Word of God;

causa materialis (that which is acted upon) = the human will.³⁰

Hence, we see that when the Aristotelian term of "cause" is applied to the will, this does not imply that the unregenerate person is expected to cooperate toward his salvation, but rather that the will is the "material" upon which the first two "causes" operate, namely, the Spirit and the Word. This is, of course, an over-

28 Evidence for this is supplied in my article: Formgeschichtliche und inhaltliche Probleme in den Werken des jungen Melanchthon: ein neuer Zugang zu seinen Bibelarbeiten und Disputationsthesen. ZKG 84 (1973), 30-48. Melanchthon's concept of the Pauline epistles as having been written in the rhetoric of the antique world is discussed also by Ernst Bizer: Theologie der Verheißung: Studien zur theologischen Entwicklung des jungen Melanchthon 1519-1524. NK 1964, especially 129-143. See also his collection of early studies in Biblical books as a philologist, TEXTE AUS DER ANFANGSZEIT MELANCHTHONS. Heft 2. In: Texte zur Geschichte der evangelischen Theologie/ hrsg. von Ernst Bizer. NK 1966.

29 CR 13, 673-680; cf. CR 13, 307f ("Initia doctrinae physicae").

30 Tilemann Hesshus, a former friend and disciple of Melanchthon and later a strict Gnesio-Lutheran, explained "causa" in the same way in his comments on the "Formula of Concord": "Causa conuersionis rectè sentientium hae sunt: 1. Sp. sanctus est causa efficiens, autor vel dator fidei. 2. Verbum & Sacramenta sunt causa instrumentalis, vel organa ordinaria, per quae Sp. sanctus conuersionem hominis operatur. Mens & voluntas, sunt materia in qua, vel subiectum patiens, in operatione Sp. sancti" (CATALOGUS HAERETICORUM. Vol. 5: In quo synergistarvm argumenta recitantur & refutantur/ col. Conrad Schlüsselburg. Francofvrti 1597, 362f).

simplification; in individual cases, the meaning of *causa* in relation to *conversio* must be determined on the basis of careful analysis.

Klaus Haendler has intensively studied the term "*causa*" in the problem of an alleged synergism in Melancthon's concept of the three causes in conversion. He supplies references for some twenty-one passages which have been labelled synergistic. This writer agrees with Haendler that none of those so-called classic examples of synergism needs to be interpreted in such an unfavorable light.³¹ That our interpretation is possibly the most valid approach is affirmed when we turn to the studies in the theology of Melancthon that were carried out by Martin Chemnitz.

III Corroboration from Chemnitz

In the attempt to understand the intention of Article II in the "Solid Declaration", we are in the extraordinarily fortunate position of having comments on Melancthon's concept of the three causes in conversion from the hand of Chemnitz who was both his pupil and one of the writers of the "Solid Declaration". It is strange that great scholars such as Frank, Bente, and Pelikan did not compare carefully Chemnitz' commentary on the "*Loci theologici*", the third edition of Melancthon's systematic theology, which in the early editions had been entitled the "*Loci communes rerum theologicarum, seu hypotyposes theologicae*".

Extravagant praises have been heaped upon the name of Chemnitz. The old saying had it: "*Si Martinus non fuisset, Martinus vix stetisset*" (If Martin

31 Klaus HAENDLER: *Wort und Glaube bei Melancthon: eine Untersuchung über die Voraussetzungen und Grundlagen des melancthonischen Kirchenbegriffes*. GÜ 1968. The passages frequently criticized as synergistic include the following: "*Loci communes theologici* ..." of 1535 (CR 21, 376); "*Examen eorum, qui audiuntur ante ritum publicae ordinationis, ...*" (CR 23, 15); "*Enarratio in Evangelium Iohannis*" (CR 15, 143. 151); "*Elementorum rhetorices*" (CR 13, 426); "*Alia disputatio theologica: de Poenitentia, ...*" (CR 12, 554, th. 44); "*Doctrina de poenitentia ...*" (MELANCTHONS WERKE. Bd. 6: Bekenntnisse und kleine Lehrschriften/ hrsg. von Robert Stupperich. GÜ 1955, 434); "*Liber de anima*" (CR 13, 162); "*Postilla Melanthoniana*" (CR 24, 315. 425); "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni, ...*" (CR 23, 280. 288 f); "*Commentarii in Psalmos*" (CR 13, 1117, Ps 51, 14); "*Ethicae doctrinae elementorum*" (CR 16, 192); "*Epistolae Pauli scriptae ad Romanos Enarratio, edita a Phil. Melancthone A. 1556*" (CR 15, 808); "*Explicatio Symboli Niceni*" (CR 23, 435. 544); "*Responsiones ad articulos Bavaricae inquisitionis*" (Melancthons Werke 6, 315).

Chemnitz had not come, Martin Luther would not have stood]. And yet this pupil, whom many rank above Melanchthon as a theologian, had the highest praise for the teachings of his mentor. It is noteworthy that Chemnitz utilized the 1548 form of the third edition, called by Bente after an earlier writer "the worst of all". Yet when Chemnitz commented upon the controverted passages, he was able to find an acceptable meaning in them.³² Chemnitz began his lectures on the "Loci theologici" in 1554 while he was still at the University of Wittenberg; he continued them after he moved to Braunschweig later in the same year. In the "Sentences" 2 dist. 25 cap. 7 Peter Lombard had distinguished the four states of the human will before the fall, after the fall (the non renati), after regeneration (the renati), and in glory.³³ Chemnitz took over this distinction and used it to interpret Melanchthon,³⁴ just as the formulators at Bergen later appropriated it.³⁵ Melanchthon had taught that three causes concur when our lives are ordered by the Word: the Word, the Spirit, and our assent.³⁶ Chemnitz asked which kind of person was described in this statement. The first and fourth states, man before the fall and after glorification, were immediately excluded,

32 The 1548 version was called by Bente the one which contained "the boldest synergistic statements"; he quotes Bindseil: "This edition is famous on account of certain paragraphs inserted by the author in the article on Free Will. For these contain the Erasmian definition of free will (that it is the faculty of applying oneself to grace), on account of which Melanchthon was charged with synergism by the Flacians.... For this reason the edition is called by J. T. Mayer 'the worst of all (omnium pessima)'." Bente goes on to say that at the Weimar Colloquy of 1560, "even Strigel was not willing to identify himself openly with the Erasmian definition of free will (facultas applicanti se ad gratiam) as found in one of these sections" (Bente: Historical introductions . . . , 129f). It is important to note that it was this edition of 1548 which Martin Chemnitz, generally regarded as the most reliable Lutheran theologian after Luther, utilized in his lectures. See Chemnitz: *Loci theologici*, 163 a, where even the quotation from Erasmus is included: "Ideo veteres aliqui sic dixerunt: Liberum arbitrium in homine facultatem esse applicandi se ad gratiam, id est, audit promissionem, & assentiri conatur, & abjicit peccata contra conscientiam. Talia non fiunt in Diabolis."

33 Petrus LOMBARDUS: *Sententiae in IV libros distinctae* 2 dist. 25 cap. 6 (7) [3. Aufl. Vol. 1. Grottaferrata 1971, 464, 14 - 465, 3; *PATROLOGIAE CURSUS COMPLETUS: series latina*/ ed. J[acques]-P[aul] Migne. Vol. 192. P 1855, 707).

34 Chemnitz: *Loci theologici*, 184 ab, followed this mediaeval schematization. In Martin CHEMNITZ: *Examen Concilii Tridentini*/ ed. Ed[uard] Preuss. Berolini 1861, 134 a (p. 1 loc. 7 art. 2), of more than a decade later than the "Loci theologici", he explicitly cited the Lombard's scheme.

35 SD II, 2 (BSLK, 870, 4 - 871, 12).

36 CR 21, 658.

leaving the second and third states, either unregenerate or regenerate man. Whereas the critics of Melanchthon have invariably claimed that he was referring to man in the second state, Chemnitz insisted that he intended the third state, that is, the regenerate man (the *homo renatus*). Therefore the "conversion" for which this consent of the will is predicated is not the conversion of the ungodly but that of the believing Christian, that is, his sanctification. Chemnitz commented: "It is obvious that in this state, the will cannot be inactive",³⁷ and went on to affirm that Christ freed us in order that we might forsake the devil and sin, and live again.³⁸ He made his position unmistakably clear when, after discussing and dismissing various synergistic possibilities, he concluded: "Therefore the human will [*voluntas humana*] concurs to a good action. It is no longer captive and dead, as it had been of itself and by its own nature is described in Eph. 2, 1, but it has been liberated and restored to life by the Holy Spirit."³⁹

The commentary on the "*Loci theologici*" of Melanchthon came from the earlier years of Chemnitz. Ten years later he was deeply engrossed in his "*Examen Concilii Tridentini*" where he discussed some of the same problems. In this work he continued the Melanchthonian usage by which *conversio* has also the meaning of the new life of the regenerate. He insisted that the Scriptures were not rightly interpreted without noting the entire conversion of man (*Scriptura tradit de tota hominis conversione*) which included repentance, faith, new obedience, and the like.⁴⁰ Conversion has not taken place where understanding, assenting, desiring, and willing in regard to Law and Gospel are absent.⁴¹ He

37 Chemnitz: *Loci theologici*, 184 a: "... in hoc statu voluntatem non esse otiosam."

38 Ibid. See also the material cited from Chemnitz, *ibid*, 185 b f and compare the following justification of Melanchthon: "Spiritus praevenit, movet & impellit voluntatem in conversione, non sicut in generali actione, ...: sed per vocem Evangelii: ... Sed quia fides ex auditu, Romanor. 10. versu 17. Ergò efficax est Spiritus per vocem Evangelij auditam seu cogitatum, & gratia praeveniens orditur à verbo. Et rectè dicitur. Tres esse causas bonae actionis. 1. Verbum Dei. 2. Spiritum sanctum. 3. Voluntatem humanam: si modò rectè & commodè intelligatur." In the ensuing discussion, Chemnitz carefully differentiated this position from Pelagianism.

39 Ibid, 186 a: "Concurrit ergò ad bonam actionem etiam voluntas humana, sed non captiva & mortua, qualis per se & sua naturâ est, sicut describitur Ephes. 2. vers. 1. sed liberata & vivificata per Spiritum sanctum."

40 Chemnitz: *Examen Concilii Tridentini*, 129 b.

41 Ibid, 133 b: "Et in summa, in conversione oportet fieri et esse motus aliquos, et actiones, quibus incipiat fieri applicatio quaedam mentis intelligendo, voluntatis assentiendo, desiderando, volendo etc. et applicatio cordis seriis affectibus ad ea quae in lege et Evangelio nobis pronuntiantur."

found also in Augustine⁴² and even in Luther⁴³ this usage of conversion in the sense of renewal, *renovatio*. Chemnitz continued using and defending the concepts of Melanchthon during the writing of the "Formula of Concord" in the 1570s. It was only after the controversial rejection of his teacher in "Solid Declaration" II, if it was indeed a rejection of Melanchthon, that Chemnitz abandoned the effort.⁴⁴

IV Evidence from Chytraeus

At the age of thirteen and armed with the Tübingen master of arts, David Chytraeus came to Wittenberg in 1544. He lived in the home of Melanchthon and studied theology under Luther, Melanchthon, and Paul Eber. By 1548 he was lecturing on the "*Loci communes* ..." of Melanchthon. Out of these lectures grew his famous "*Catechesis*".⁴⁵ In the preface to its first edition (1554), Chytraeus mentioned as his teachers Luther, Melanchthon, Erhard Schnepf, and Viktorin

42 Ibid, 140 a.

43 Ibid, 144 a.

44 Like Chytraeus, Chemnitz resented the allegedly anti-Melanchthonian changes in SD II, 86. 90 (BSLK, 907, 21 - 909, 10; 910, 26 - 912, 23), and attempted to counteract the negative thinking; unlike Chytraeus, however, he finally abandoned the effort and rejected the three causes categorically when he joined Kirchner and Selnecker in publishing the "Apology" of the "Formula of Concord", discussed below.

45 The "Catechesis" was reprinted by Reu in his "Quellen"; due to the ambiguity in the numbering of this important work, I introduced a new manner of citation and also provided an author-index to the complete work in my article: Introduction and Index to the Quellen of J. M. Reu. Bulletin of the Library 6/7 (StL 1971/72). There I renumbered the work according to the eleven partial-volumes and their dates of publication. The introductions of the editions of the "Catechesis" appeared in vol. 4 (QUELLEN ZUR GESCHICHTE DES KATECHISMUS-UNTERRICHTS. 3. Teil: Ost-, Nord- und Westdeutsche Katechismen. 1. Abt.: Historisch-bibliographische Einleitung. 1. Hälfte. GÜ 1927), 385*-416* and the texts of a part of them appeared in vol. 8 (Quellen ... [see note 15]; when a third "Hälfte" appeared in 1924, Reu was obliged to renumber as 1. Teil, 3. Bd., 2. Abt., 3. Teil). The first edition, "Catechesis in Academia Rostochiana ex Praelectibvs Davidis Chytraei collecta" of 1554, is in Quellen ... 8, 289-314, with additional introductory material in Quellen ... 4, 389*. The edition of 1568: "Catechesis Davidis Chytraei recens recognita et mvltis definitionibus aucta"; a few excerpts in Quellen ... 4, 403* f. The 1575 is especially significant for us because of it appeared during the final stages of the work on the "Formula of Concord": "Catechesis Davidis Chytraei. Postremo nunc ab ipso Autore recognita, et multis in locis aucta", in Quellen ... 8, 314-348.

Strigel – a statement which he retained in the edition of 1568 but finally removed in the “Catechesis” of 1575.⁴⁶

In the first edition, Chytraeus followed his treatment of justification with a discussion on good works. He named three causes (*causae efficientes*) behind good works: the Word of God and true knowledge of Christ, the Holy Ghost who brings faith and obedience, and the mind and will of the believer which are obedient to the Spirit.⁴⁷ In the edition of 1575, he characterized free will in the believer as follows: “Free will in those who have been regenerated by water and the Spirit is the faculty by which the mind and will, which have been liberated from the servitude of sin by the Son of God, are assisted by the Holy Spirit. By his effort and diligence, they not only carry out upright external morals and avoid outwardly wicked deeds, but above all they carry out internal and spiritual movements of the soul. These are such things as the true knowledge of God, prayer, patience, etc., which they arouse, cherish, and make to increase. Also, they either resist or else indulge in evil inclinations and are able to forsake God.”⁴⁸ It is characteristic of Chytraeus that when the “Weimar Confutation” (1559) appeared with its censures of the synergists, he approved the doctrine but disapproved of the attacks upon “certain persons”, including Melanchthon, which it contained.⁴⁹ In later years he deplored the polarization of German

46 Ibid 8, 289, 34f; cf. 314f.

47 Ibid 8, 306, 28-34: “Quae sunt causae Efficientes, seu Quomodo fieri possunt bona opera? Tres causae concurrunt: I. Verbum Dei et uera agnitio Christi. II. Spiritus sanctus, accendens in mente agnitionem Christi, et fidem et cogitationem praeceptorum diuinorum. Deinde impellens uoluntatem, ut obtemperet praeceptis diuinis, et iuxta ea regat actiones externorum membrorum. III. Mens et Voluntas humana spiritui sancto obediens, et regens externa membra.”

48 Ibid 8, 324, 44-50: “LIBERVm ARBITRIVm in renatis ex aqua et spiritu, est facultas, qua mens et voluntas per Filium Dei a seruitute peccati liberata, et adiuta per Spiritum Sanctum, suo etiam conatu et diligentia, non modo externos mores honeste regere, et externa scelera vitare, verumetiam interiores et spirituales animi motus, vt veram agnitionem Dei, inuocationem, patientiam, etc. excusitare, fouere et augere, et vitiosis inclinationibus resistere vel indulgere, et rursum a DEO deficere potest.”

49 Illustrissimi principis et Domini, D. Joannis Friderici secundi cet. suo ac fratrum D. Joannis Wilhelmi et D. Joannis Friderici natu iunioris nomine solida et ex verbo Dei sumta CONFUTATIO ET CONDEMNATIO PRAECIPUARUM CORRUPTELARUM, SECTARUM ET ERRORUM, hoc tempore ad instaurationem et propagationem regni Anti-Christi Rom. Pontificis aliarumque fanaticarum opinionum ingruentium et grassantium, . . . Jenae [1559].

The principal biography of Chytraeus, with a substantial collection of sources, is still that by Otto Friedrich SCHÜTZ: *De Vita Davidis Chytraei/ Theologi Historici et Polyhistoris Ros-*

Lutherans into the Gnesio-Lutheran and Philippist parties. He regarded some of the "Philippists" as not authentic and rejected their intended defenses of Melancthon as missing the mark.⁵⁰

Chytraeus was one of the most important writers in the drafting of the "Formula of Concord" and the documents which preceded it; he himself wrote Articles II and VII. It is necessary to trace the evolution of Article II through the preceding documents in order to determine the role played in its formation by the disciples of Melancthon.⁵¹ The earliest forerunner was the "Sechs Christlicher Predig", published by Jakob Andreae in 1573;⁵² out of these he extracted the "Schwäbische Konkordie" of 1574,⁵³ sending it to the churchmen of Lower Saxony. In 1575 the documents were sent to Chytraeus and his circle at Rostock. In regard to the confusion of the texts, this writer supports the conjecture of Georg

tochiensis *Commentariorvm Libri Qvatro ex editis et ineditis Monvmentis ita concinnati vt sint Annalivm instar et Svpplementorvm Historiae Ecclesiasticae Secvli XVI speciatim Rervm in Lvtherana Ecclesia et Academia Rostochiensi Gestarvm.* 4 Vol. Hamburg 1720-1728. It is cited here *ibid* 1, 305 f.

50 *Ibid* 2, 492 f. Chytraeus objected to the way that some wrote Melancthon's understanding of causa: "... & Philippistae ad vindicandam Magistri auctoritatem nunqvam non regerent, Philippum agere de homine converto voluntatemque intelligere ut causam, non efficientem, sed tantum ut materialem, h. e. ut subjectum convertendum" (*ibid* 2, 493).

51 The unprinted and printed sources of the "Formula of Concord" need to be edited according to current standards of historical science. These sources were listed and described in my small book: *The Formula of Concord: an historiographical and bibliographical guide.* = *Sixteenth century bibliography* 11. StL 1977, 20-30.

52 The "Sechs Christlicher Predig, Von den Spaltungen, so sich zwischen den Theologen Augspurgerischer Confession, von Anno 1548. biß auff diß 1573. Jahr, nach vnnd nach erhaben, Wie sich ein einfältiger Pfarrer vnd gemeiner Christlicher Leye, so dardurch möcht vererget sein worden, auß seinem Catechismo darein schicken soll." are given in Heinrich HEPPE: *Geschichte des deutschen Protestantismus in den Jahren 1555-1581.* Bd. 3: *Die Geschichte des deutschen Protestantismus von 1574-1577* enthaltend. Marburg 1857; Beilagen, 3-75. An excellent English translation is given by Robert KOLB: *Andreae and the Formula of Concord: six sermons on the way to Lutheran unity.* StL 1977, 61-120.

53 The first reliable, modern edition of the "Schwäbische Konkordie" was published by Hermann HACHFELD: *Die schwäbische Confession (liber Tübingensis): nach einer wolffenbüttler Handschrift zum ersten Male veröffentlicht.* *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie* 30 (1866), 234-301; reprint in mimeograph by George J. FRITSCHER: *Die Schwaebische Concordie: schwaebischer Kirchenbegriff zu einer heilsamen Union in Kirchensachen.* Dubuque, Ia. s. a.

J. Fritschel⁵⁴ that the text given in Heinrich Heppe⁵⁵ 3 B: 75-166 is an early form of the "Schwäbisch-Sächsische Konkordie", that is, I, as a revision of "Schwäbische Konkordie" by Chemnitz and he adds to Fritschel's the conjecture that the text in Heppe 3 B: 166-325 represents the revision of "Schwäbisch-Sächsische Konkordie I" by Chytraeus and his group, that is "Schwäbisch-Sächsische Konkordie II". Accordingly, we trace the "three causes of conversion" in the following steps:

1. In the "Sechs Christlicher Predig", Andreae modified the three causes to consist of the decision of the unbeliever to hear the saving word – the will, the preaching of the Word as the means of grace, and the Holy Ghost working the miracle of conversion.⁵⁶ It is noteworthy that, unlike Melancthon, he did not restrict the three causes to the good works of the regenerate.

2. In the "Schwäbisch Konkordie", Andreae still wrote of the will (coming to hear the sermon – laufen), the Word, and the Spirit as parts of a conversion⁵⁷ which was apparently the experience of the unregenerate.⁵⁸

3. In "Schwäbisch-Sächsische Konkordie I", we find the distinction between the "conversion" of the unregenerate and the regenerate, with the three causes applied only to the latter: "When one has to do with the good works or actions of the regenerate, then it is rightly said: There are three causes – the Holy Spirit, the Word, and the reborn will. But when [speaking] of the causes which effect true conversion, the will of unregenerate is not numbered with those [causes]."⁵⁹

4. The emphasis upon the three causes in the conversion of regenerate was greatly increased in "Schwäbisch-Sächsische Konkordie II", a fact consistent with Chytraeus' verbosity. The expanded statement reads:

54 Fritschel, v; see also George J. FRITSCHER: *The Formula of Concord: its origin and contents; a contribution to symbolics*. Phil 1916, 97-104. It is a pity that Fritschel's detailed source study, resulting in his "Polychrome edition of the Formula of Concord", has never been published but exists only in manuscripts in the archives at Dubuque, Ia.

55 Cf. note 52.

56 Heppe 3 (Beilage), 38 = Kolb: Andreae ..., 89.

57 Hachfeld, 25-27 = Fritschel: *Die schwäbische Concordie*, 18 f.

58 Hachfeld, 23 = Fritschel: *ibid*, 17.

59 Heppe 3 (Beilage), 103: "Ita etiam quando de bonis renatorum operibus seu actionibus agitur, Recte dicitur: Tres esse causas, spiritum sanctum, verbum et voluntatem renatam. Sed quando de causis quae veram Conuersionem efficiunt, quaeritur, illis non annumeratur Voluntas non renata."

"Therefore three causes come together to work in this new, inward obedience in the converted person. The first and chief is God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who through his Word is powerful and active within us. Without him we can do nothing.

The second is God's command, threats, and promises, as they are presented to us in God's Word, which we must hear, read, and ponder with all diligence.

The third is the human understanding, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, which considers and understands God's command, and our new or regenerate will which is ruled by the Holy Ghost, and which now gladly and willingly, although in great weakness, desires God's Word and will and wants to be obedient."⁶⁰

5. Meanwhile, stricter theologians were preparing a new document which would ultimately suppress the three causes as taught by Melancthon, Chemnitz, and Chytraeus. A conference of some Swabian and Thuringian churchmen led to the "Maulbronner Formel" written in January 1576. That failed to take note of the two-fold usage of "conversion"; in place of the three causes, it insisted that there were only two causes in conversion, God the Holy Ghost and the Word.⁶¹

6. In view of the rather deep differences between the "Schwäbisch-Sächsische Konkordie" and the "Maulbronner Formel", supporters of both documents met at Torgau in May 1576 to work out an agreement. Consensus was reached in a new composite confession, the "Torgisches Buch". Here, nearly all of the "Maulbronner Formel" was accepted and interwoven with the "Schwäbisch-Sächsische Konkordie". Chytraeus wrote the new article on "Freedom of the Will", in which he ingeniously combined the positions of "Schwäbisch-Sächsische Konkordie" and "Maulbronner Formel" by distinguishing between the

60 Heppe 3 (Beilage), 210: "Also komen in diesem innerlichen neuen gehorsam in den bekerten, zw wircken drey vrsachen zwsamen, Die erste vnd vornemeste godt vater, son vnd h. geist, welcher dorch seyn wordt in vns krefftigk vnd thetigk ist, ohn den wir nichts thun können, Die Ander gottes befehl, drauwungen vnd verheissungen, so vns in gottes wort vorgehalten werden, welches wir mit allem vleiß horen, lesen und betrachten sollen, Die Dritte des menschen verstandt, so durch den h. geist erleuchtet, welcher gottes befehl betrachtet vnd verstehet, vnd vnser newer oder widergeborner wille, der vom h. geiste regieret wirt, vnd nun hertzlich gern vnd willig, wiewol in großer schwachheit begert gottes wordt vnd willen vntertenig vnd gehorsam zw sein."

61 DIE MAULBRONNER FORMEL/ ed. George J. Fritschel. Dubuque, Ia. 1910, 62 f. 66 f. 70 f. Fritschel's edition was a reprint of Theodor PRESSEL: Zwei Aktenstücke zur Genesis der Concordienformel. Jahrbuch für deutsche Theologie 11/1 (1866), 640-711.

two kinds of conversion: 1. In man before his first regeneration, the will is completely impotent – there are only two causes of the first conversion, the Word and the Spirit; 2. after his rebirth, man must lead the life of sanctification which God wills to give him, and here three causes or forces concur – the Spirit, the Word, and the cooperation of the newly-regenerated will of the believer.⁶² It appeared that in this synthesis, justice had been done to all sides concerned. However, powerful forces were at work to remove all traces of Melanchthon's thought. Chemnitz, Chytraeus, and other disciples of Melanchthon who wanted to be true Lutherans were about to face one of the most difficult decisions of their lives.

V The Synergistic Controversy in Its Consequences for Article II

As Klaus Schwarzwäller has pointed out, Lutheran thinkers have seldom followed Luther's views in "De servo arbitrio".⁶³ Melanchthon was no exception to this. He regarded Luther's position as deterministic, and shied away from his comparison of the unregenerate man to a stone or a block of wood. Unfortunately, Melanchthon had included such a rejection in the controversial "Leipziger Interim";⁶⁴ this laid him open to attacks from the Gnesio-Lutherans during the ensuing decade. Although some of these realized that his teaching was not really synergistic, he was commonly blamed for such a position after 1548. This might have been partly due to guilt by association, since two of his pupils and supporters, Johannes Pfeffinger⁶⁵ and Viktorin Strigel⁶⁶, were probably real synergists. At any rate, Melanchthon was treated by his opponents as a synergist.

62 The article on free will in "Torgisches Buch" is given in Apparatus A of BSLK, 907. 910f. Chytraeus' position was in accord with an action of the theological faculty of the University of Rostock. See AD SEREN. ULRICUM DUC. MEKLEMB. DMN. THEOLOGORUM ROSTOCHIENSIIUM DECLARATIO DE D. JACOBI ANDREAE NEGOTIO. Rostock 8. Jan. 1570, reprinted in Johann Georg BERTRAM: Das Evangelische Lüneburg: Oder Reformationen- Und Kirchen-Historie, Der Altberühmten Stadt Lüneburg ..., Beylagen, Nr. V. Braunschweig 1719, 105.

63 Schwarzwäller has given a useful historiography of the interpretation of Luther's "De servo arbitrio", even if one cannot always share his conclusions. See Klaus SCHWARZWÄLLER: Sibboleth: die Interpretation von Luthers Schrift De servo arbitrio seit Theodosius Harnack. M 1969.

64 CR 7, 51.

65 For a calm and reasonable approach to Pfeffinger see Robert KOLB: Nikolaus von Amsdorf, knight of God and exile of Christ: piety and polemic in the wake of Luther. Madison, Wis. 1973. – University of Wisconsin, Ph. D. Diss. in History, 1973, 366–384. See also Robert KOLB: Nikolaus

It was therefore not surprising when theologians from the tiny principality of Reuß attacked Melanchthon in the "Reußische Confessionsschrift" of 1567. They acknowledged that the first edition of his "Loc communes ..." had been doctrinally sound, but complained that in the later editions he had drifted into error in the doctrines of original sin, the distinction of Law and Gospel, and the freedom of the will.⁶⁷ When Strigel deserted the Lutheran cause and became an open Calvinist in 1567,⁶⁸ the reputation of Melanchthon suffered an additional blow. The search for clarity was further clouded by the extreme statements of several Gnesio-Lutherans such as Matthias Flacius (also a former disciple of Melanchthon) with his claim that the very substance of man had become sin, a claim which had to be rejected by the "Formula of Concord".

Three of the six architects of the "Formula of Concord" were disciples of Melanchthon – Chemnitz, Chytraeus, and Selnecker. Of the other three, the role of Christoph Körner is scarcely known, Andreas Musculus tended to be hos-

von Amsdorf (1483-1565): popular polemics in the Preservation of Luther's legacy. Nieuwkoop, 1978, 188-201. 214-224 (on Strigel).

66 It seems doubtful to me that we are able, at this stage of scholarship, to speak with certainty on what Strigel really taught. Salig presented the following account of Strigel's remarks at the Weimar Colloquy based on Simon Musaeus, which Strigel however claimed was turned against him by the editor. – "Ich bejahe, daß der Mensch durch natürliche Kräfte, ohne Christum, der unsere Wunden durchs Evangelium heylet, und den heiligen Geist giebt, seine wahre und heilsame Bekehrung zu GOTT nicht einmal anfangen könne. Ebr. XII. 1. 2. Ob nun wohl es ein wahres Wort des Sohnes GOTTES ist; ohne mich könnt ihr nichts thun, so ist er doch nicht so würckend in uns, daß er den Menschen wider seinen Willen zwingt; sondern daß er ihn begierig der Unterwerffung mache nicht daß er ihn wider sein Wissen ziehe, sondern daß er vor ihn als einen Verstehenden und Folgenden vorher gehe. Denn so lange der Wille widerstrebt, kan keine Bekehrung vorgehen, kommen also bey der Bekehrung diese 3. Stück zusammen. 1. Der heilige Geist, der durchs Wort GOTTES die Hertzen rühret. 2. Das göttliche Wort, so mans entweder betrachtet, oder höret, oder lieset, oder meditiret. 3. Der Wille des Menschen, so dem Wort GOTTES unter Furcht und Zittern einigermassen beypflichtet, und zugleich Hülffe von demjenigen begehret, der da gesaget: kommt her zu mir alle etc. Joh. VI. 29. Rom. I. 16. X. 17. 12. Luc. VIII. 18. Ebr. IV. 2. Apoc. III. 20. Luc. XI. 13. Mark IX. 23. 24. I. Thess. II. 13. Jac. I. 18. 21." Christian August SALIG: Vollständige Historie Der Augspurgischen Confession und derselben zugethanen Kirchen. Bd. 3. Halle 1735, 588.

67 See "Reußische Confessionsschrift" of 1567 Heinrich HEPPE: Die Entstehung und Fortbildung des Luthertums und die kirchlichen Bekenntnisschriften desselben von 1548-1576. Cassel 1863, 76-78.

68 [Gustav] KAWERAU: Strigel, Victorinus. In: Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche. 3. Aufl. Bd. 19. L 1907, 101, 27-29.

tile toward Melanchthon, and Andreae, formerly sympathetic, moved increasingly closer to the position of the Gnesio-Lutherans. The Zerbst convention of May 1570 had convinced Andreae that the Philippists of Wittenberg could not be trusted; if his goal of peace and unity among Lutherans was to be achieved, he must turn from the Philippists to the Gnesio-Lutherans. We have seen that in the "Sechs Christlicher Predig" and in the "Schwäbische Konkordie", Andreae had retained a form of the three causes of conversion which stood closer to synergism than Melanchthon's. However, the confession of Reuß as well as the "Maulbronner Formel" had clearly demonstrated that stricter theologians frowned upon these formulations. Although Chytraeus managed to restore the three causes in the "Torgisches Buch" of 1576, his victory was not to endure.

The "Torgisches Buch" was circulated among the various Lutheran groups in Germany for their comments and approval. It won widespread approval in moderate circles, but it was severely criticized by some of the Philippists as well as by the stricter Gnesio-Lutherans and Flacians. Accordingly, Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Chemnitz's area, as well as Mecklenburg, under Chytraeus' guidance, approved the "Torgisches Buch". But the theologians of Pommern, Hessen, Holstein, Anhalt, and the Pfalz, were displeased with the lack of recognition of Melanchthon, and the Gnesio-Lutherans Wigand and Hesshus in Prussia rejected the "Torgisches Buch" for not having denounced Melanchthon by name.⁶⁹ It is significant to notice how the Hanseatic League cities lined up: Rostock, Greifswald, and Braunschweig supported the position of Chemnitz and Chytraeus, while Lübeck, Hamburg, and Lüneburg wanted to break completely with Melanchthon's theology.⁷⁰ One might ponder whether older social and

69 See Robert A. KOLB: Historical background of the Formula of Concord. In: A contemporary look at the Formula of Concord/ ed. Robert D. Preus and Wilbert H. Rosin. StL 1978, especially 80-82. This is the best current historical introduction to the "Formula of Concord".

70 This is evident from the following memorandum of Andreae, Chemnitz, and Selnecker: "... Dagegen aber Hamburg/ Lünenburg vnd Lübeck anzeigen/ daß es viel zu mild/ vnnd an statt solcher Wort zu setzten/ daß von etlichen hohen vnd fürnehmen Artickeln fast sehr vnnd viel abgewichen. Weil offenbar/ daß von der Person Christi/ vom H. Abendmal/ von der Erbsünde/ vom freyen Willen/ von der Gerechtigkeit des Glaubens/ etc. so die vornembste Artickel/ nicht schlechte/ sondern offenbarliche Irrthumb eingeführet/ ist vnsers vnterthänigen erachtens nichts bessers die *calumnien* zu fürkommen/ denn gerade zugangen/ vnnd rund bekennet/ was offenbar/ vnd nicht kan bementelt/ noch geläugnet werden." Given in Leonhard HUTTER: *Concordia concors: de origine et progressu Formulae Concordiae*. 2nd ed. Witebergae 1614, 118^v (cap. 13).

commercial rivalries might have been involved. Actually, those who demanded and implemented a stronger attack upon synergism were right, for synergism damaged the basic Reformational insights on justification by grace and the proper distinction of Law and Gospel. Melancthon, Chytraeus, and Chemnitz may have been right in thinking that their formulation excluded synergism, but their teaching had been misunderstood as saying that there was a *causa efficiens* among three causes in the "conversion" of the unregenerate. When the "Torgisches Buch" was rewritten at Cloister Bergen in the spring of 1577, "Solid Declaration" Article II was changed accordingly. The concept of the *tres causae* was accused of having "violently led astray the youth in the schools," and the concept was categorically condemned, without any consideration of the difference between the *renati* and the *non renati*. Which were those schools, and who were those false teachers? This writer has been unable to find parallels which would identify them. The editor of the notes on the "Formula of Concord" in the Göttingen edition of "Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche" was Ernst Wolf; certainly he was wrong when he conjectured that Melancthon and Chytraeus were meant.⁷¹

Such a conclusion fails not only because 1. this was not the form in which they had taught the three causes, and 2. Wolf presents no supporting evidence, but also because 3. such an attack upon Chytraeus during those delicate negotiations would have been unthinkable, and 4. Chytraeus would not subsequently have subscribed the completed "Formula of Concord", however grudgingly. Instead, we must say that these teachers are not positively identified. It is difficult even to prove that Pfeffinger and Strigel were the culprits. A more likely conjecture might point to the Philippists who had remained at Wittenberg and had fostered Crypto-Calvinistic thinking in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

Nevertheless, the revision of the "Torgisches Buch" at Bergen did intentionally reject two other formulations of Melancthon: 1. the statement out of Origen and Erasmus that the convert must apply himself to grace⁷² and 2. the quotation from Basil and Chrysostom that God draws him who is willing, since the will must not be idle "in conversione".⁷³ Both formulations had been meant by Melancthon to apply to the regenerate, but they were subject to misinterpreta-

71 BSLK, 910-912.

72 SD II, 77 (BSLK, 903, 24 - 904, 18).

73 SD II, 86 (BSLK, 907, 21 - 909, 11).

tion and offense. The "Bergisches Buch", the "Solid Declaration" rejected them and thereby did away with their ambiguity. The conclusion of many scholars has been that the thought of Melanchthon was thereby removed from the "Formula of Concord". This is not at all true. Actually, most of the theologians of the sixteenth century had been educated at least in part by Melanchthon. The stamp of his scholarship was plainly visible in such widely differing men as Major and Flacius, Strigel and Hesshus, Eber and Chemnitz, or Peucer and Chytraeus. The "Formula of Concord" was a successful attempt to unite the best from the thought of Luther, Melanchthon, and their disciples. It thereby saved the Evangelical Lutheran Church from internal struggles which had threatened her very existence. It also prepared the way for the subsequent age of Orthodoxy in theology, devotion, and practice.

VI The Aftermath of the Modifications

The apparent rejection of Melanchthon pleased the Gnesio-Lutherans and helped with additional support for the peace-making endeavors. However, it offended many who cherished the memory of Melanchthon, or who were committed to a more moderate line of theology. Places such as Anhalt, Hessen, Frankfurt am Main, Magdeburg, Holstein, Norway-Denmark,⁷⁴ Nürnberg, and Pommern rejected the "Formula of Concord" largely for this reason. An important correspondence exists between the friend of Melanchthon, Jakob Runge of Pommern, and Martin Chemnitz, in which the Braunschweig superintendent, although disappointed with the outcome of "Solid Declaration" Article II, tried to induce Runge to accept the "Formula of Concord".⁷⁵ It was in vain. But a few

74 The story of how the "Formula of Concord" was suppressed in Norway-Denmark and Iceland, making it a capital offense to import, sell, or own a copy of the "Liber Concordiae", is recounted by Trygve R. SKARSTEN: *The Reaction in Scandinavia*. In: *Discord, dialogue, and concord: studies in the Lutheran reformation's Formula of Concord*/ ed. Lewis W. Spitz and Wenzel Lohff. Phil 1977, 138-141. This was a tragic example of political interference in religious matters.

75 Runge's dissatisfaction with the change to SD II, 86. 90 [BSLK, 907, 21 - 909, 10; 910, 26 - 912, 23] is discussed by G[ottlieb] J[acob] PLANCK: *Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie von Luthers Tode bis zu der Einführung der Konkordienformel*. Bd. 6. L 1800, 581 f. The sources including the correspondence between Chemnitz and Runge are given in Jacob Heinrich BALTHASAR: *Andere Sammlung einiger zur Pommerischen Kirchen-Historie gehörigen Schriften. Welche zur Erläuterung und Vermehrung der gedruckten Pommerischen Chronicken, mit möglichstem Fleiß und Treue nebst beygefügtten Anmerkungen*. Greifswald 1725, especially 181 f.

years later, after Crypto-Calvinism had made its inroads in the Church of Pommern, Runge reversed himself and introduced the "Formula of Concord" in order to safeguard the Lutheranism of his church.

After the defeat at Bergen, Chemnitz accepted the "Formula of Concord", but he did not withdraw his earlier writings in which he had supported the *tres causae*. But when the "Formula of Concord" was attacked by the "Neuburg Admonition" (1581) of the Reformed opponents, the name of Chemnitz joined those of Selnecker and Timotheus Kirchner as joint authors of the "Apologie des Concordienbuches" of 1583.

This book unequivocally rejected any dual usage of the term "conversion", and laid to rest the three causes in any context whatsoever.⁷⁶ Selnecker, another Melancthon pupil, rejected his previous position in another book which he au-

76 Melancthon's former pupils, although they did not actually condemn his Lehrintention, were certainly abandoning his formulations in the following lines. "Daher auch dieses verursacht/ das vmb so viel desto mehr *Chrysostomi* vnd *Basilij* Namen dem Christlichen Concordien Buch (die liebe Jugendt vnd jedermenniglich zu verwarnen/ wie gemelt/ inseriert. Als dann auch in *Locis Communibus D. Philippi* Melancht. die Lehre *de viribus humanis* nicht richtig/ noch *formae sanorum sermonum* ehlich/ So ist eine Notdurfft gewesen/ das wir die Jugendt dessen erinnerten/ vnd im Concordi Buch für falscher Lehr warneten. Es ist vnuerneinlich/ das *D. Philippus Melancthon* vnser aller *Praeceptor*, ein hoher fürtrefflicher Mann gewesen/ der sich vmb die Gemein Christi sehr wol verdient hat/ die hohen Artickel des Christlichen Glaubens fein *Methodicè* tractiert/ Darumb seine Schrifften mit sonderm fleiß zu lesen sein/ Aber was gleichwol mit Gottes wort nicht vberlein kompt/ müssen wir *pace tanti viri* beseits setzten/ vnd die studierende Jugendt vnd einfaltige Christen dafür warnen." Timotheus KIRCHNER, Nikolaus SELNECKER, Martin CHEMNITZ: *Apologia, Oder Verantwortung deß Christlichen Concordien Buchs*, In welcher die ware Christliche Lehre, so im Concordi Buch verfaßet, mit gutem Grunde heiliger Göttlicher Schrifft vertheydiget: Die Verkerung aber vnd Calumnien, so von vnruhigen Leuten wider gedachtes Christlich Buch im Druck ausgesprenget, widerlegt werden ... Dresden 1584, 200^o.

Regarding the three causes, little was said: "Weil auch in vielen *libellis Methodicis* vnd sonderlich in *Rhetorica Domini Philippi* *tres causae efficientes conuersionis*, neben *Chrysostomi* vnd *Basilij* Sprüchen gesetzt/ So hat man im Concordi Buch deutlich angezeigt/ daß/ wan in der bekehrung des Menschen zu Gott geredt wird/ diese Art zu reden nicht kan passiert/ sondern billich müsse ausgesetzt werden. Da aber jemand also redet/ *Voluntatem hominis, quatenus sanata seu renata est, esse comitem Spiritus sancti. Item voluntatem hominis accepto iam Spiritu sancto non esse otiosam*, wie solche Reden auch im Concordi Buch erklaret/ mit dem achten wir/ solle nicht zu streiten sein/ er wolte es dann darzu gebrauchen/ das die albereit in specie ausgesetzte Bücher vnd Lehrer dardurch entschuldiget werden solten" (ibid, 201^r).

thored alone, the "Declaratio Articulorum ..." of 1583.⁷⁷ But Chytraeus refused to make any concessions to what he evidently regarded as Gnesio-Lutheran extremism or obscurantism. He came home from Bergen a disappointed man. With a statesman-like bearing he supported the "Formula of Concord" as a means for church unity for the rest of his life. But in a private letter to Aegidius Hunnius he expressed his inner disappointment and frustration: "Of all the things which were spoken, done, or written by me, not a thing was approved of by our autocrat, Jakob Andreae. Thus not a single word written by me is contained in the book of Concord. I am therefore not among its authors, but can rightly be numbered among its accusers. And yet I am not [one of its accusers]. That which I have once subscribed I have at no time ever retracted."⁷⁸ Here, we find the famous scholar at his greatest. He felt duped by his fellow-Swabian, Andreae, but he acknowledged the overall validity of the "Formula of Concord",

77 Selnecker: "Weil auch in den Schulen die Jugent/ de tribus causis efficientibus, concurrentibus in conuersione hominis non renatis [!], Daß ist/ mit der lere von den dreyen wircklichen vrsachen der bekerung des vnwidergebornen Menschen zu Gott/ hefftig irre gemacht worden/ welcher gestalt dieselbige [nemlich/ das gepredigte vnd gehörte wort Gottes/ der heilig Geist/ vnd des Menschen wille] zusammen kommen/ ist abermals aus hiebeuor gesetzter erklerung offenbar/ das die bekerung zu Gott allein Gottes des heiligen Geistes werck sey/ welcher der rechte Meister ist/ der allein solches in vns wircket ..." Cf. the following criticism of Melancthon's citation of Chrysostom and Basil (God draws him only who is willing): "Welche reden zur bestetigung des natürlichen freyen Willens/ in der Bekehrung des Menschen/ wider die Lere von der gnade Gottes eingeführet/ Ist aus hiebeuor gesetzter erklerung offenbar/ das sie der form gesunder Lehre nicht ehnlich/ sondern derselben zu wider/ vnd demnach/ wenn von der bekerung zu Gott geredet/ billich zu meiden." From Nikolaus SELNECKER: AUs der Christlichen Concordia, erklerung etlicher streitigen Artickel: Deudsch vnd Lateinisch/ gegen einander vber/ in druck verfertigt/ der studirenden Jugent/ vnd andern Christen/ denen die warheit lieb ist/ zu gut/ vnd zur einfeltigen richtigkeit. Ex forma Christianae Concordiae: Declaratio ARTICVLORVM, QVI POST D. LVTHERI OBITVM IN CONTROVERSIAM IN ECclesijs & Academijs Augustanae Confessionis addictis, venerunt ... L 1583, 207.

78 "Nihil omnium, quae à me dicta, acta aut scripta essent, Jacobus Andreae Aristarchus noster probabat, ita ut ne verbum quidem à me scriptum libro Concordiae insit; ideoque non inter auctores illius, sed subscriptores recenseri merito possim; nec tamen, quod semel subscripsi, unquam retractavi" (Schütz: AaO 2, 536). I used the set in Newberry Library, Chicago, to which thanks is hereby acknowledged. This letter may also be found in Johann Heinrich BALTHASAR: Erste Sammlung Einiger zur Pommerischen Kirchen-Historie gehörigen Schriften: Welche zur Erläuterung und Vermehrung der gedruckten Pommerischen Chronicken, mit möglichstem Fleiß und Treue nebst beygefügen Anmerkungen. Greifswald 1723, 19 (§ 18).

and therefore he kept his personal hurt to himself and urged others to accept the new confession.

One can understand Chytraeus' feelings. Andreae was often lacking in tact, and he bore most of the responsibility for the changes. But after four hundred years, it appears that he was right in categorically rejecting the dual understanding of *conversio* as well as the *tres causae*. This does not imply that Melanchthon, Chytraeus, or the earlier Chemnitz or Selnecker had been tainted by synergism. But the terms were confusing and they could no longer serve a useful purpose. Now it was more important to safeguard justification by grace alone. For this reason, the "Formula of Concord" also followed Melanchthon in carefully distinguishing between justification and sanctification.

We have seen that a crucial defense of Melanchthon's doctrine of the three causes was that the inclusion of the will applied only to the regenerate. But who, really, were the non *renati*, and who were the *renati*? Even after the Gnesio-Lutherans had succeeded in implementing their wished-for changes, the "Formula of Concord" still granted that all who had been baptized belonged to the *renati*.⁷⁹ Within the context of the Lutheran state church where all infants were baptized, how many people did this leave as unregenerate? Or, if one of the *renati* fell from grace, did he become a non *renati*? Could there then be a re-conversion, and, if so, did the person undergoing conversion come under the second or third state of "Solid Declaration" Article II: 2? The "Formula of Concord" was not entirely clear on such problems.

Nevertheless, the formulators possessed more foresight than they knew, for Lutheranism was destined to be transplanted in other countries where not the state-church or the folk-church but the free-church would prevail. In a country such as the United States, Canada, or Australia, where persons not baptized in their youth frequently became as adults the concern of the congregation, the teaching on conversion as developed in "Formula of Concord" Article II has manifested its validity and wisdom. Here, more clearly than in sixteenth-century Lutheran Germany, one is dealing with men who have never before experienced the operation of the Holy Ghost, and the lines between the unregenerate and the regenerate are especially real and meaningful. To assure the struggling sinner undergoing conversion that his salvation rests solely in the gracious hands of God becomes an important form of evangelical "Seelsorge". This might

79 SD II, 67. 72. 77 (BSLK, 898, 34-36; 901, 32-42; 904, 4-18).

possibly be the reason why the Lutheran Confessions, often spurned in the land of Luther, have become matters of life and death in the Lutheran Church's struggle in other countries. It would be gratifying to Lutheran churchmen in other countries if they could be instrumental in bringing their fellow Lutherans in the old "Vaterland" to a fuller appreciation of the rich resources of the "Book of Concord".

Abkürzungen

- BSLK DIE BEKENNTNISSCHRIFTEN DER EVANGELISCH-LUTHERISCHEN KIRCHE/ hrsg. vom Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchenausschuß im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgischen Konfession 1930. 2 Bde. GÖ 1930.
- CR CORPUS REFORMATURUM. Vol 1-28: Philippi Melanthonis opera, quae supersunt omnia/ ed. Carolus Gottlieb Bretschneider, Henricus Ernestus Bindseil. Halis Saxonum, Brunsvigae 1834-1860.
- SD Solida declaratio