

Luther: The Marburg Colloquy
(Reformation Series: Lecture Five)

I. Introduction.

A. Review.

1. Last week, we saw the events leading up to the Diet of Worms.
 - a. At the Leipzig debate, Luther rejected the supremacy of the pope and the infallibility of councils.
 - b. After the debate, Eck went to the pope to have Luther excommunicated, while Luther continued to write.
 - c. Luther published three more works, one attacking the authority of the pope, one attacking the priesthood and the Roman system of sacraments, and one asserting the priesthood of all believers.
 - d. When the papal bull was issued, Luther burned it and a great number from Germany supported him.

2. When the pope saw that he couldn't stop him with ecclesiastical power, he turned to secular authority.
 - a. He called on the newly elected emperor of Germany to call a meeting of the princes in Worms, which he did in April of 1521.
 - b. It was here that Luther was called on to recant of his writings.
 - c. But it was also here that Luther uttered his famous words, "I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by the clearest reasoning, — unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, — and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the Word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience.' And then, looking round on this assembly before which he stood, and which held his life in its hands, he said: 'HERE I STAND, I CAN DO NO OTHER; MAY GOD HELP ME? AMEN!'"

- B. This evening, we will want to see what the outcome of that Diet was, and what happened afterwards, up to the time of his death.

II. Lecture.

- A. First, let's consider what happened after Luther had made his final statement at the Diet of Worms to his death. (Take mainly from B. K. Kuiper's book, *The Church in History*.)

1. Luther was ordered to leave Worms.
 - a. He was to return to Wittenberg, and he was forbidden to preach.
 - b. After Luther left, but before sentence was pronounced by the Diet, Frederick the Wise, the elector of Saxony and friend of Luther, also left, so that if the

- Diet did decide to outlaw Luther or declare him to be a heretic, he wouldn't hear it, so that he might safely say he didn't know (Godfrey Lecture).
- c. Luther was declared to be a heretic and was outlawed by the Diet. This meant that anyone finding him anywhere could kill him and take all of his possessions, no questions asked (Godfrey Lecture).
2. A few days after Luther left, a rumor began to spread that he had disappeared on the road to Wittenberg.
 - a. Luther's enemies rejoiced, while his friends were greatly concerned.
 - b. No one knew what had happened to him.
 - c. What actually happened was this:
 - (i) On April 28, he reached Frankfurt.
 - (ii) On May 1, he reached Hersfeld, where he preached, contrary to the Diet who commanded him not to. Christ tells us that we must obey God rather than men.
 - (iii) On May 2, he reached Eisenach, where he also preached the next day.
 - (iv) On May 3, he rode through the forests of Mohra, where he also preached the following day in the open air.
 - (v) Then after dinner, he rode on. But while in the heart of the forest, he was carried away by five masked riders back in the direction of Eisenach.
 - (vi) Frederick had planned this. He ordered his riders to take Luther to a safe place. But he also ordered his riders not to tell him (Frederick) where they had taken him, so that he might honestly say that he didn't know where Luther was, if he was asked (Godfrey Lecture).
 - (vii) Where they took him was to the Wartburg castle, where he stayed and continued to write for ten months.
 - (viii) The main work he accomplished here was a translation of the New Testament into the German language, from Erasmus' Greek New Testament (Carnes, 293).
 3. But eventually Luther returned to Wittenberg.
 - a. While he was at the Wartburg, he heard that some of his followers were introducing radical changes in Wittenberg, the most prominent being Carlstadt. He had been influenced by the ideas of Zwickau prophets who "taught that the kingdom of God would soon appear on earth and that their followers would have special revelations (Carnes, 294).
 - b. The changes were creating rebellion and rioting, so against the advice of Frederick and in spite of the fact that he could be killed, he returned.
 - c. He preached against the rebellion for eight days and restored order.
 4. Luther also introduced other reforms.
 - a. The papacy was entirely rejected.
 - b. The distinction between clergy and laity was discarded.
 - c. He affirmed only two sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper), instead of the seven of Rome, and taught that they were not "indispensable to salvation" (183).

- d. This brought an end to Rome's tyranny and established Christian liberty.
 - e. Praying to the saints and to Mary was done away with, the worship of images, veneration of relics, pilgrimages, religious processions, holy water, outward asceticism, monasticism, prayers for the dead, and belief in purgatory.
 - f. Practically, he adopted the idea that those things not forbidden in the Bible should be retained, so even though side altars and images were removed, the main altar with candles and a picture of Christ remained.
 - g. He rejected the sacrificial view of the Lord's Supper – affirming that Christ was offered only once for sin – that the cup should be withheld from the laity – believing that all believers should be given both the bread and wine; and he said there was no place in the church for priests.
 - h. Luther also denied transubstantiation, although he continued to affirm that the body and blood of the Lord are really present in the elements, since His body, like His divinity, is everywhere. We'll see this in the debate at Marburg.
 - i. Luther adopted a form of church government where the state is above the church, most likely because of his circumstances and the help he had received from Frederick. Reformed theologians believe that the state ought to protect the church, but should not intrude into her ordinances.
 - j. Luther also founded many schools, wrote his famous *Shorter Catechism*, so that children might be grounded in evangelical doctrine, and wrote a hymnbook, his most famous being "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."
 - k. Luther did not believe that he was founding a new church. He believed there was only one, true, visible church. The Romanists had departed from the truth. He was only reforming the church that had become deformed.
 - l. These beliefs were eventually formulated in an official statement of faith by Philip Melancthon, which were approved by Luther, and given to the Diet of Augsburg in 1530.
 - m. Charles V gave it to his theologian, John Eck, who wrote a reply to it.
 - n. Melancthon's confession and his reply to Eck's rebuttal were eventually accepted. The confession became known as the Augsburg Confession and is still widely used in the Lutheran Church today, along with Melancthon's reply.
 - o. On June 13, 1525, Luther married Catherine von Bora, a former nun. Thus ended a three hundred year law of the Roman Church that a priest must never marry. Many other monks and nuns followed his example and another step was taken away from Rome.
5. Final events in his life.
- a. Luther lost Erasmus' support in 1525, when Erasmus saw that Luther's reforms would lead to a break with Rome. He also disagreed with Luther's view that the will of man was so bound that God must initiate salvation. Erasmus emphasized the freedom of the will in his book by that title, while Luther wrote against him in his famous book *The Bondage of the Will* (Carnes, 294).

- b. Luther also lost the support of the peasants in 1525, when he opposed what is called the Peasants' Revolt.
 - (i) The peasants had heard Luther "denounce the authority of the church and assert the authority of the Scripture and the right of the individual to come directly to God for salvation, and they applied these arguments to their social and economic problems."
 - (ii) At first, Luther admonished them to patience and the lords to redress their grievances, in his book, *Admonition to Peace*.
 - (iii) But when he saw that this movement might endanger the Reformation and subvert the government, "he urged the princes in violent language, in his pamphlet *Against the Plundering Murderous Hordes of Peasants*, to put down the disorder" (Carnes, 294).
 - (iv) The authorities really didn't need any urging by Luther and slaughtered about one hundred thousand peasants.
 - (v) "Southern German peasants remained in the Roman Catholic church partly because of this apparent betrayal of them by Luther" (Carnes, 294).

- b. In 1529, he met Zwingli at the Marburg Colloquy in an attempt by their friends to get them to agree and join forces. "They agreed on over fourteen out of fifteen propositions but disagreed on how Christ was present in the elements. Zwingli contended that Communion was a memorial Christ's death, but Luther argued that there was a real physical presence of Christ in the Communion although the substance of bread and wine did not change" (Carnes, 294). We'll come back to look at this in a few moments.
- c. In 1534, he finished his translation of the whole Bible and it was published (Carnes, 293).
- d. In 1537, his health began to decline, and he was burdened by what he perceived to be a resurgence of the papacy and what he perceived as an attempt by the Jews, during the time of confusion among Christians, to reopen the question regarding Jesus' messiahship. Believing that he was somewhat responsible, he wrote a violent polemic against the Jews, as well as against the papacy.
- e. Finally, in the winter of 1546, he went to the area of Mansfeld to resolve a conflict between two young counts, but being old and of poor health, he died, February 18, 1546, in Eisleben, at the age of 63. (Taken from Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2002. © 1993-2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.)

- B. Let's back up for a moment now to the event that took place in October, 1529 – a meeting between Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli – called the Marburg Colloquy or Conference.
 - 1. The event was an attempt by their friends to reconcile the two of them that they might unite the reformation efforts taking place in Germany and Switzerland.
 - a. The issue was mainly that of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper.
 - b. Sadly, they were not able to come to an agreement, which split the church.

- c. However, when Zwingli died two years later in battle in 1531, his followers were increasingly inclined to follow Calvin (Kuiper).
2. Now, let's consider this meeting that took place between these two Reformers in Marburg and see where their disagreement was that prevented their union. As I have done the last two times, I would like to read the account from Merle D'Aubigne's *The History of the 16th Century Reformation*. He writes,
 - a. Luther, on his side, accompanied by Melancthon, Cruciger, and Jonas, had stopped on the Hessian frontier, declaring that nothing should induce him to cross it without a safe-conduct from the landgrave. This document being obtained, Luther arrived at Alsfeld, where the scholars, kneeling under the reformer's windows, chanted their pious hymns. He entered Marburg on the 30th September, a day after the arrival of the Swiss. Both parties went to inns; but they had scarcely alighted, before the landgrave invited them to come and lodge in the castle, thinking by this means to bring the opposing bodies closer together. Philip entertained them in a manner truly royal. "Ah!" said the pious Jonas, as he wandered through the halls of the palace, "it is not in honor of the Muses, but in honor of God and of his Christ, that we are so munificently treated in these forests of Hesse!"
 - b. After dinner, on the first day, Oecolampadius, Hedio, and Bucer, desirous of entering into the prince's views, went and saluted Luther. The latter conversed affectionately with Oecolampadius in the castle-court; but Bucer, with whom he had once been very intimate, and who was now on Zwingle's side, having approached him, Luther said to him, smiling and making a sign with his hand: "As for you, you are a good-for-nothing fellow and a knave!"
 - c. The unhappy Carlstadt, who had begun this dispute, was at that time in Friesland, preaching the spiritual presence of Christ, and living in such destitution that he had been forced to sell his Hebrew Bible to procure bread. The trial had crushed his pride, and he wrote to the landgrave: "We are but one body, one house, one people, one sacerdotal race; we live and die by one and the same Savior. For this reason, I, poor and in exile, humbly pray your highness, by the blood of Jesus Christ, to allow me to be present at the disputation." But how bring Luther and Carlstadt face to face? and yet how repel the unhappy man? The landgrave, to extricate himself from this difficulty, referred him to the Saxon reformer. Carlstadt did not appear.
 - d. Philip of Hesse desired that, previously to the public conference, the theologians should have a private interview. It was however considered dangerous, says a contemporary, for Zwingle and Luther, who were both naturally violent, to contend with one another at the very beginning; and as Oecolampadius and Melancthon were the mildest, they were apportioned to the roughest champions.
 - e. On Friday, the 1st October, after divine service, Luther and Oecolampadius were conducted into one chamber, and Zwingle and Melancthon into another. The combatants were then left to struggle two and two. The principal contest took place in the room of Zwingle and Melancthon. "It is affirmed," said Melancthon to Zwingle, "that some among you speak of God after the

manner of the Jews, as if Christ was not essentially God.” “I think on the Holy Trinity,” replied Zwingle, “with the Council of Nice and the Athanasian creed.” “Councils! creeds! What does that mean?” asked Melancthon. “Have you not continually repeated that you recognize no other authority than that of Scripture?” “We have never rejected the councils,” replied the Swiss reformer, “when they are based on the authority of the Word of God. The four first councils are truly sacred as regards doctrine, and none of the faithful have ever rejected them.” This important declaration, handed down to us by Oecolampadius, characterizes the reformed theology. “But you teach,” resumed Melancthon, “like Thomas Munster, that the Holy Ghost acts quite alone, independently of the sacraments and of the Word of God.” “The Holy Ghost,” replied Zwingle, “works in us justification by the Word, but by the Word preached and understood, by the soul and the marrow of the Word, by the mind and will of God clothed in human language.” “At least,” continued Melancthon, “you deny original sin, and make sin consist only in actual and external works, like the Pelagians, the philosophers, and the Papists.” This was the principal difficulty. “Since man naturally loves himself,” replied Zwingle, “instead of loving God; in that there is a crime, a sin that condemns him.” He had more than once before expressed the same opinion; and yet Melancthon exulted on hearing him: “Our adversaries,” said he afterwards, “have given way on all these points!”

- f. Luther had pursued the same method with Oecolampadius as Melancthon with Zwingle. The discussion had in particular turned on baptism. Luther complained that the Swiss would not acknowledge that by this simple sacrament a man became a member of the Church. “It is true,” said Oecolampadius, “that we require faith — either an actual or a future faith. Why should we deny it? Who is a Christian, if it be not he who believes in Christ? However, I should be unwilling to deny that the water of baptism is in a certain sense a water of regeneration; for by it he, whom the Church knew not, becomes its child.”
- g. These four theologians were in the very heat of their discussions, when domestics came to inform them that the prince’s dinner was on the table. They immediately arose, and Zwingle and Melancthon meeting Luther and Oecolampadius, who were also quitting their chamber, the latter approached Zwingle, and whispered mournfully in his ear: “I have fallen a second time into the hands of Dr. Eck.” In the language of the reformers nothing stronger could be said.
- h. It does not appear that the conference between Luther and Oecolampadius was resumed after dinner. Luther’s manner held out very little hope; but Melancthon and Zwingle returned to the discussion, and the Zurich doctor finding the Wittenberg professor escape him like an eel, as he said, and take “like Proteus a thousand different forms,” seized a pen in order to fix his antagonist. Zwingle committed to writing whatever Melancthon dictated, and then wrote his reply, giving it to the other to read. In this manner they spent six hours, three in the morning and three in the afternoon. They prepared for the general conference. Zwingle requested that it should be an open one; this

Luther resisted. It was eventually resolved that the princes, nobles, deputies, and theologians, should be admitted; but a great crowd of citizens, and even many scholars and gentlemen, who had come from Frankfort, from the Rhine districts, from Strasburg, from Basle and other Swiss towns, were excluded. Brentz speaks of fifty or sixty hearers; Zwingle of twenty-four only.

- i. On a gentle elevation, watered by the Lahn, is situated an old castle, overlooking the city of Marburg; in the distance may be seen the beautiful valley of the Lahn, and beyond, the mountain-tops rising one above another, until they are lost in the horizon. It was beneath the vaults and Gothic arches of an antique chamber in this castle, known as the Knights Hall, that the conference was to take place. On Saturday morning (2nd October) the landgrave took his seat in the hall, surrounded by his court, but in so plain a dress that no one would have taken him for a prince. He wished to avoid all appearance of acting the part of a Constantine in the affairs of the Church. Before him was a table which Luther, Zwingle, Melancthon, and Oecolampadius approached. Luther, taking a piece of chalk, bent over the velvet cloth which covered it, and steadily wrote four words in large characters. All eyes followed the movement of his hand, and soon they read Hoc Est Corpus Meum. Luther wished to have this declaration continually before him, that it might strengthen his own faith, and be a sign to his adversaries. Behind these four theologians were seated their friends, — Hedio, Sturm, Funck, Frey, Eberhard, Thane, Jonas, Cruciger, and others besides. Jonas cast an inquiring glance upon the Swiss: “Zwingle,” said he, “has a certain rusticity and arrogance; if he is well versed in letters, it is in spite of Minerva and of the muses. In Oecolampadius there is a natural goodness and admirable meekness. Hedio seems to have as much liberality as kindness; but Bucer possesses the cunning of a fox, that knows how to give himself an air of sense and prudence.” Men of moderate sentiments often meet with worse treatment than those of the extreme parties. Other feelings animated those who contemplated this assembly from a distance. The great men who had led the people in their footsteps on the plains of Saxony, on the banks of the Rhine, and in the lofty valleys of Switzerland, were there met face to face: the chiefs of Christendom who had separated from Rome, were come together to see if they could remain one. Accordingly, from all parts of Germany, prayers and anxious looks were directed towards Marburg.
- j. “Illustrious princes of the Word,” cried the evangelical Church through the mouth of the poet Cordus, “penetrating Luther, mild Oecolampadius, magnanimous Zwingle, pious Snepf, eloquent Melancthon, courageous Bucer, candid Hedio, excellent Osiander, valiant Brentz, amiable Jonas, fiery Craton, Maenus, whose soul is stronger than his body, great Dionysius, and you Myconius — all you whom Prince Philip, that illustrious hero, has summoned, ministers and bishops, whom the christian cities have sent to terminate the schism, and to show us the way of truth; the suppliant Church falls weeping at your feet, and begs you by the bowels of Jesus Christ to bring this matter to a happy issue, that the world may acknowledge in your resolution the work of the Holy Ghost himself.” The landgrave’s chancellor,

John Feige, having reminded them in the prince's name that the object of this colloquy was the re-establishment of union, "I protest," said Luther, "that I differ from my adversaries with regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and that I shall always differ from them. Christ has said, This is my body. Let them show me that a body is not a body. I reject reason, common sense, carnal arguments, and mathematical proofs. God is above mathematics. We have the Word of God; we must adore it and perform it!"

- k. "It cannot be denied," said Oecolampadius, "that there are figures of speech in the Word of God; as John is Elias, the rock was Christ, I am the vine. The expression This is my body, is a figure of the same kind." Luther granted that there were figures in the Bible, but denied that this last expression was figurative. All the various parties, however, of which the Christian Church is composed, see a figure in these words. In fact, the Romanists declare that This is my body signifies not only "my body," but also "my blood," "my soul," and even "my Divinity," and "Christ wholly." These words, therefore according to Rome, are a synecdoche, a figure by which a part is taken for the whole. And, as regards the Lutherans, the figure is still more evident. Whether it be synecdoche, metaphor, or metonymy, there is still a figure. In order to prove it, Oecolampadius employed this syllogism: — "What Christ rejected in the sixth chapter of St. John, he could not admit in the words of the Eucharist. "Now Christ, who said to the people of Capernaum, The flesh profiteth nothing, rejected by those very words the oral manducation of his body. "Therefore he did not establish it at the institution of his Supper."
- Luther* — "I deny the minor (the second of these propositions); Christ has not rejected all oral manducation, but only a material manducation, like that of the flesh of oxen or of swine." *Oecolampadius* — "There is danger in attributing too much to mere matter." *Luther* — "Everything that God commands becomes spirit and life. If we lift up a straw, by the Lord's order, in that very action we perform a spiritual work. We must pay attention to him who speaks, and not to what he says. God speaks: Men, worms, listen! — God commands: let the world obey! and let us all together fall down and humbly kiss the Word." *Oecolampadius* — "But since we have the spiritual eating, what need of the bodily one?" *Luther* — "I do not ask what need we have of it; but I see it written, Eat, this is my body. We must therefore believe and do. We must do — we must do! — If God should order me to eat dung, I would do it, with the assurance that it would be salutary."
- l. At this point Zwingle interfered in the discussion. "We must explain Scripture by Scripture," said he. "We cannot admit two kinds of corporeal manducation, as if Jesus had spoken of eating, and the Capernautes of tearing in pieces, for the same word is employed in both cases. Jesus says that to eat his flesh corporeally profiteth nothing (John 6:63); whence it would result that he had given us in the Supper a thing that would be useless to us. — Besides, there are certain words that seem to me rather childish, — the dung, for instance. The oracles of the demons were obscure, not so are those of Jesus Christ." *Luther* — "When Christ says the flesh profiteth nothing, he

speaks not of his own flesh, but of ours.” *Zwingle* — “The soul is fed with the Spirit and not with the Flesh.” *Luther* — “It is with the mouth that we eat the body; the soul does not eat it.” *Zwingle* — “Christ’s body is therefore a corporeal nourishment, and not a spiritual.” *Luther* — “You are captious.” *Zwingle* — “Not so; but you utter contradictory things.” *Luther* — “If God should present me wild apples, I should eat them spiritually. In the Eucharist, the mouth receives the body of Christ, and the soul believes in his words.” *Zwingle* then quoted a great number of passages from the Holy Scriptures, in which the sign is described by the very thing signified; and thence concluded that, considering our Lord’s declaration in St. John, The flesh profiteth nothing, we must explain the words of the Eucharist in a similar manner.

- m. Many hearers were struck by these arguments. Among the Marburg professors sat the Frenchman Lambert; his tall and spare frame was violently agitated. He had been at first of Luther’s opinion, and was then hesitating between the two reformers. As he went to the conference, he said: “I desire to be a sheet of blank paper, on which the finger of God may write his truth.” Erelong he exclaimed, after hearing *Zwingle* and *Oecolampadius*: “Yes! the Spirit, ‘tis that which vivifies!” When this conversion was known, the *Wittenbergers*, shrugging their shoulders, called it “Gallic fickleness.” “What!” replied Lambert, “was St. Paul fickle because he was converted from Pharisaism? And have we ourselves been fickle in abandoning the lost sects of popery?” *Luther* was, however, by no means shaken. “This is my body,” repeated he, pointing with his finger to the words written before him. “This is my body. The devil himself shall not drive me from that. To seek to understand it, is to fall away from the faith.” “But, doctor,” said *Zwingle*, “St. John explains how Christ’s body is eaten, and you will be obliged at last to leave off singing always the same song.” “You make use of unmannerly expressions,” replied Luther. The *Wittenbergers* themselves called *Zwingle*’s argument “his old song.” *Zwingle* continued without being disconcerted: “I ask you, doctor, whether Christ in the sixth chapter of St. John did not wish to reply to the question that had been put to him?” *Luther* — “Master *Zwingle*, you wish to stop my mouth by the arrogancy of your language. That passage has nothing to do here.” *Zwingle*, hastily — “Pardon me, doctor, that passage breaks your neck.” *Luther* — “Do not boast so much! You are in Hesse, and not in Switzerland. In this country we do not break people’s necks.” Then turning towards his friends, Luther complained bitterly of *Zwingle*; as if the latter had really wished to break his neck. “He makes use of camp terms and blood-stained words,” said he. Luther forgot that he had employed a similar expression in speaking of *Carlstadt*. *Zwingle* resumed: “In Switzerland also there is strict justice, and we break no man’s neck without trial. That expression signifies merely that your cause is lost and hopeless.”
- n. Great agitation prevailed in the Knight’s Hall. The roughness of the Swiss and the obstinacy of the Saxon had come into collision. The landgrave,

fearing to behold the failure of his project of conciliation, nodded assent to Zwingle's explanation. "Doctor," said he to Luther, "you should not be offended at such common expressions." It was in vain: the agitated sea could not again be calmed. The prince therefore arose, and they all repaired to the banqueting hall. After dinner they resumed their tasks. "I believe," said **Luther**, "that Christ's body is in heaven, but I also believe that it is in the sacrament. It concerns me little whether it be against nature, provided that it be not against faith. Christ is substantially in the sacrament, such as he was born of the Virgin." **Oecolampadius**, quoting a passage from St. Paul: "We know not Jesus Christ after the flesh." **Luther** — "After the flesh means, in this passage, after our carnal affections." **Oecolampadius** — "You will not allow that there is a metaphor in these words, This is my body, and yet you admit a synecdoche." **Luther** — "Metaphor permits the existence of a sign only; but it is not so with synecdoche. If a man says he wishes to drink a bottle, we understand that he means the beer in the bottle. Christ's body is in the bread, as a sword in the scabbard, or as the Holy Ghost in the dove."

- o. The discussion was proceeding in this manner, when Osiander, pastor of Nuremberg, Stephen Agricola, pastor of Augsburg, and Brentz, pastor of Halle in Swabia, author of the famous Syngramma, entered the hall. These also had been invited by the landgrave. But Brentz, to whom Luther had written that he should take care not to appear had no doubt by his indecision retarded his own departure as well as that of his friends. Places were assigned them near Luther and Melancthon. "Listen, and speak if necessary," they were told. They took but little advantage of this permission. "All of us, except Luther," said Melancthon, "were silent personages." The struggle continued. When Zwingle saw that exegesis was not sufficient for Luther, he added dogmatical theology to it, and, subsidiarily, natural philosophy. "I oppose you," said he, "with this article of our faith: Ascendit in coelum — he ascended into heaven. If Christ is in heaven as regards his body, how can he be in the bread? The Word of God teaches us that he was like his brethren in all things (Hebrews 2:17). He therefore cannot be in several places at once." **Luther** — "Were I desirous of reasoning thus, I would undertake to prove that Jesus Christ had a wife; that he had black eyes, and lived in our good country of Germany. I care little about mathematics." "There is no question of mathematics here," said **Zwingle**, "but of St. Paul, who writes to the Philippians, morphe doulou labon." **Luther**, interrupting him — "Read it to us in Latin or in German, not in Greek." **Zwingle** (in Latin) — "Pardon me: for twelve years past I have made use of the Greek Testament only." Then continuing to read the passage, he concluded from it that Christ's humanity is of a finite nature like our own. **Luther**, pointing to the words written before him — "Most dear sirs, since my Lord Jesus Christ says, Hoc est corpus meum, I believe that his body is really there." Here the scene grew animated. Zwingle started from his chair, sprung towards Luther, and said, striking the table before him: "You maintain then, doctor, that Christ's body is locally in

the Eucharist; for you say Christ's body is really there — there — there," repeated Zwingle. "There is an adverb of place. Christ's body is then of such a nature as to exist in a place. If it is in a place, it is in heaven, whence it follows that it is not in the bread." *Luther* — "I repeat that I have nothing to do with mathematical proofs. As soon as the words of consecration are pronounced over the bread, the body is there, however wicked be the priest who pronounces them." *Zwingle* — "You are thus re-establishing Popery." *Luther* — "This is not done through the priest's merits, but because of Christ's ordinance. I will not, when Christ's body is in question, hear speak of a particular place. I absolutely will not." *Zwingle* — "Must every thing, then, exist precisely as you will it?"

- p. The landgrave perceived that the discussion was growing hot; and as the repast was waiting, he broke off the contest. The conference was continued on the next day Sunday, the 3rd October, perhaps because of an epidemic (the Sweating Sickness) that had just broken out at Marburg, and which did not allow any great prolongation of the colloquy. Luther, returning to the discussion of the previous evening, said: "Christ's body is in the sacrament, but it is not there as in a place." *Zwingle* — "Then it is not there at all." *Luther* — "Sophists say, that a body may very well be in several places at once. The universe is a body, and yet we cannot assert that it is in a particular place." *Zwingle* — "Ah! you speak of sophists, doctor; are you really after all obliged to return to the onions and fleshpots of Egypt? As for what you say, that the universe is in no particular place, I beg all intelligent men to weigh this proof." Then Zwingle, who, whatever Luther may have said, had more than one arrow in his quiver, after establishing his proposition by exegesis and philosophy, resolved on confirming it by the testimony of the Fathers of the Church. "Listen," said he, "to what Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspa in Numidia, said, in the fifth century, to Trasamond, king of the Vandals: "The Son of God took the attributes of true humanity, and did not lose those of true divinity. Born in time, according to his mother, he lives in eternity according to the divinity that he holds from the Father: coming from man, he is man, and consequently in a place; proceeding from the Father, he is God, and consequently present in every place. According to his human nature, he was absent from heaven while he was upon earth, and quitted the earth when he ascended into heaven; but, according to his divine nature, he remained in heaven, when he came down thence, and did not abandon the earth when he returned thither." But *Luther* still replied: "It is written, This is my body." *Zwingle*, becoming impatient, said, "All that is idle wrangling. An obstinate disputant might also maintain this expression of our Savior to his mother, Behold thy son, pointing to St. John. Vain would be every explanation, he would continue crying No, no! He said Ecce filius tuus, Behold thy son, behold thy son! Listen to a new testimony; it is from the great Augustine: 'Let us not think,' says he, 'that Christ, according to his human form, is present in every place; let us beware, in our endeavor to establish his divinity, of taking away his truth from his body. Christ is now

everywhere present, like God; and yet, in consequence of his real body, he is in a definite part of heaven.” “St. Augustine,” replied *Luther*, “is not here speaking of the Eucharist. Christ’s body is not in the Eucharist, as in a place.” *Oecolampadius* saw that he might take advantage of this assertion of Luther’s. “The body of Christ,” said he, “is not locally in the Eucharist, therefore no real body is there; for every one knows that the essence of a body is its existence in a place.”

- q. Here finished the morning’s discussion. Oecolampadius, upon reflection, felt convinced that Luther’s assertion might be looked upon as an approximation. “I remember,” said he after dinner, “that the doctor conceded this morning that Christ’s body was not in the sacrament as in a place. Let us therefore inquire amicably what is the nature of Christ’s bodily presence.” “You will not make me take a step further,” exclaimed Luther, who saw where they wished to drag him; “you have Fulgentius and Augustine on your side, but all the other Fathers are on ours.” Oecolampadius, who seemed to the Wittenbergers to be vexatiously precise, then said, “Name these doctors. We will take upon ourselves to prove that they are of our opinion.” “We will not name them to you,” said Luther. “It was in his youth,” added he, “that Augustine wrote what you have quoted; and, besides, he is an obscure author.” Then, retreating to the ground which he had resolved never to quit, he was no longer content to point his finger at the inscription, *Hoc est corpus meum*, but seized the velvet cover on which the words were written, tore it off the table, held it up in front of Zwingle and Oecolampadius, and placing it before their eyes, “See!” said he, “see! This is our text: you have not yet driven us from it, as you had boasted, and we care for no other proofs.” “If this be the case,” said Oecolampadius, “we had better leave off the discussion. But I will first declare, that, if we quote the Fathers, it is only to free our doctrine from the reproach of novelty, and not to support our cause by their authority.” No better definition can be given of the legitimate use of the doctors of the Church.
- r. There was no reason, in fact, for prolonging the conference. “As Luther was of an intractable and imperious disposition,” says one of those papists who Melancthon wished to be judges, “He did not cease from calling upon the Swiss to submit simply to his opinion.” The chancellor, alarmed at such a termination of the colloquy, exhorted the theologians to come to some understanding. “I know but one means for that,” said Luther; “and this it is: Let our adversaries believe as we do.” “We cannot,” answered the Swiss. “Well then,” rejoined Luther, “I abandon you to God’s judgment, and pray that he will enlighten you.” “We will do the same,” added Oecolampadius. While these words were passing, Zwingle sat silent, motionless, and deeply moved; and the liveliness of his affections, of which he had given more than one proof during the conference, was then manifested in a very different manner. He burst into tears in the presence of all.
- s. The conference was ended. It had been in reality more tranquil than the documents seem to show, or perhaps the chroniclers appreciated such matters differently from ourselves. “With the exception of a few sallies, all had

passed off quietly, in a courteous manner, and with very great gentleness,” says an eye-witness. “During the colloquy no other words than these were heard: ‘Sir, and very dear friend, your charity,’ or other similar expressions. Not a word of schism or of heresy. It might have been said that Luther and Zwingli were brothers, and not adversaries.” This is the testimony of Brentz. But these flowers concealed an abyss, and Jonas, also an eye-witness, styles the conference “a very sharp contest.”

¶3003

The contagion that had suddenly broken out in Marburg was creating frightful ravages, and filled everybody with alarm. ¶3004 All were anxious to leave the city. “Sirs,” remarked the landgrave, “you cannot separate thus.” And desirous of giving the doctors an opportunity of meeting one another

1278

with minds unoccupied by theological debates, he invited them to his table. This was Sunday night.

Philip of Hesse had all along shown the most constant attention, and each one imagined him to be on his side. “I would rather place my trust in the simple words of Christ, than in the subtle thoughts of man,” was a remark he made, according to Jonas; ¶3005 but Zwingli affirmed that this prince entertained the same opinions as himself, although with regard to certain persons he dissembled the change. Luther, sensible of the weakness of his defense as to the declarations of the Fathers, transmitted a note to Philip, in which several passages were pointed out from Hilary, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Irenaeus, and Ambrose, which he thought were in his favor. The time of departure drew near, and nothing had been done. The landgrave toiled earnestly at the union, as Luther wrote to his wife. ¶3006 He invited the theologians one after another into his closet; ¶3007 he pressed, entreated, warned, exhorted, and conjured them. “Think,” said he, “of the salvation of the christian republic, and remove all discord from its bosom.” ¶3008 Never had general at the head of an army taken such pains to win a battle.

A final meeting took place, and undoubtedly the Church has seldom witnessed one of greater solemnity. Luther and Zwingli, Saxony and Switzerland, met for the last time. The sweating sickness was carrying off men around them by thousands; ¶3009 Charles the Fifth and the pope were uniting in Italy; Ferdinand and the Roman-catholic princes were preparing to tear in pieces the Protest of Spires; the thunder-cloud became more threatening every day; union alone seemed capable of saving the Protestants, and the hour of departure was about to strike — an hour that would separate them perhaps for ever.

“Let us confess our union in all things in which we agree,” said Zwingli; “and as for the rest, let us remember that we are brothers. There will never be peace between the churches if, while we maintain the grand doctrine of salvation by faith, we cannot differ on secondary points.” ¶3010 Such is, in fact, the true principle of christian union. The sixteenth century was still too deeply sunk in scholasticism to understand this: let us hope that the nineteenth century will comprehend it better.

1279

“Yes, yes!” exclaimed the landgrave; “you agree! Give then a testimony of your unity, and recognize one another as brothers.” — “There is no one upon earth with whom I more desire to be united, than with you,” said Zwingle, approaching the Wittenberg doctors. ¶3011 Oecolampadius, Bucer, and Hedio said the same.

“Acknowledge them! acknowledge them as brothers!” continued the landgrave. ¶3012 Their hearts were moved; they were on the eve of unity: Zwingle, bursting into tears, in the presence of the prince, the courtiers, and divines (it is Luther himself who records this), ¶3013 approached Luther, and held out his hand. The two families of the Reformation were about to be united: long quarrels were about to be stifled in their cradle; but Luther rejected the hand that was offered him: “You have a different spirit from ours,” said he. These words communicated to the Swiss, as it were, an electric shock. Their hearts sunk each time Luther repeated them, and he did so frequently. He himself is our informant.

A brief consultation took place among the Wittenberg doctors. Luther, Melancthon, Agricola, Brentz, Jonas, and Osiander, conferred together. Convinced that their peculiar doctrine on the eucharist, was essential to salvation, they considered all those who rejected it as without the pale of the faith. “What folly!” ¶3014 said Melancthon, who afterwards nearly coincided with Zwingle’s sentiments: “they condemn us, and yet they desire we should consider them as our brothers!” “What versatility!” added Brentz: “they accused us but lately of worshipping a bread-god, and they now ask for communion with us!” ¶3015 Then, turning towards Zwingle and his friends, the Wittenbergers said: “You do not belong to the communion of the Christian Church; we cannot acknowledge you as brethren!” ¶3016

The Swiss were far from partaking of this sectarian spirit. “We think,” said Bucer, “that your doctrine strikes at the glory of Jesus Christ, who now reigns at the right hand of the Father. But seeing that in all things you acknowledge your dependence on the Lord, we look at your conscience, which compels you to receive the doctrine you profess, and we do not doubt that you belong to Christ.”

1280

“And we,” said Luther — “we declare to you once more that our conscience opposes our receiving you as brethren.” — “If such is the case,” replied Bucer, “it would be folly to ask it.”

“I am exceedingly astonished that you wish to consider me as your brother,” pursued Luther. “It shows clearly that you do not attach much importance to your own doctrine.”

“Take your choice,” said Bucer, proposing a dilemma to the reformer: “either you should not acknowledge as brethren those who differ from you in any point — and if so, you will not find a single brother in your own ranks ¶3017 — or else you will receive some of those who differ from you, and then you ought to receive

us.”

The Swiss had exhausted their solicitations. “We are conscious,” said they, “of having acted as if in the presence of God. Posterity will be our witness.” f3018 They were on the point of retiring:

Luther remained like a rock, to the landgrave’s great indignation.

f3019 The Hessian divines, Kraft, Lambert, Snepf, Lonicer, and Melander, united their exertions to those of the prince.

Luther was staggered, and conferred anew with his colleagues. “Let us beware,” said he to his friends, “of wiping our noses too roughly, lest blood should come.” f3020

Then turning to Zwingle and Oecolampadius, they said: “We acknowledge you as friends; we do not consider you as brothers and members of Christ’s Church. f3021 But we do not exclude you from that universal charity which we owe even to our enemies.”

f3022

The hearts of Zwingle, Oecolampadius, and Bucer, were ready to burst, f3023 for this concession was almost a new insult. “Let us carefully avoid all harsh and violent words and writings,” said they; “and let each one defend himself without railing.” f3024

Luther then advanced towards the Swiss, and said: “We consent, and I offer you the hand of peace and charity.” The Swiss rushed in great emotion towards the Wittenbergers, and all shook hands. f3025

1281

Luther himself was softened: christian charity resumed her rights in his heart. “Assuredly,” said he, “a great portion of the scandal is taken away by the suppression of our fierce debates; we could not have hoped for so much. May Christ’s hand remove the last obstacle that separates us. f3026 There is now a friendly concord between us, and if we persevere in prayer, brotherhood will come.”

It was desirable to confirm this important result by a report. “We must let the christian world know,” said the landgrave, “that, except the manner of the presence of the body and blood in the eucharist, you are agreed in all the articles of faith.” f3027 This was resolved on; but who should be charged with drawing up the paper? All eyes were turned upon Luther. The Swiss themselves appealed to his impartiality.

Luther retired to his closet, lost in thought, uneasy, and finding the task very difficult. “On the one hand,” said he, “I should like to spare their weakness, f3028 but, on the other, I would not in the least degree strike at the holy doctrine of Christ.” He did not know how to set about it, and his anguish increased. He got free at last. “I will draw up the articles,” said he, “in the most accurate manner. Do I not know that whatever I may write, they will never sign them?” f3029 Ere long fifteen articles were committed to paper, and Luther, holding them in his hand, repaired to the theologians of the two parties.

These articles are of importance. The two doctrines that were evolved in Switzerland and in Saxony, independently of each other, were brought together and compared. If they were of man, there would be found in them

a servile uniformity, or a remarkable opposition. This was not the case. A great unity was found between the German and the Swiss Reformations, for they both proceeded from the same Divine teaching; and a diversity on secondary points, for it was by man's instrumentality that God had effected them.

Luther took his paper, and reading the first article, said:

"First, we believe that there is one sole, true, and natural God, creator of heaven and earth and of all creatures; and that this same God, one in essence and in nature, is three-fold in person, that is to
1282

say, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as was declared in the Nicene Council, and as all the Christian Church professes."

To this the Swiss gave their assent.

They were agreed also on the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ; on his death and resurrection, on original sin, justification by faith, the operation of the Holy Ghost and of the Word of God, baptism, good works, confession, civil order, and tradition.

Thus far all were united. The Wittenbergers could not recover from their astonishment. ^{f3030} The two parties had rejected, on the one hand, the errors of the papists, who make religion little more than an outward form; and, on the other, those of the Enthusiasts, who speak exclusively of internal feelings; and they were found drawn up under the same banners between these two camps. But the moment was come that would separate them. Luther had kept till the last the article on the Eucharist.

The reformer resumed:

"We all believe with regard to the Lord's Supper, that it ought to be celebrated in both kinds, according to the primitive institution; that the mass is not a work by which a Christian obtains pardon for another man, whether dead or alive; that the sacrament of the altar is the sacrament of the very body and very blood of Jesus Christ; and that the spiritual manducation of this body and blood is specially necessary to every true Christian." ^{f3031}

It was now the turn of the Swiss to be astonished. Luther continued:

"In like manner, as to the use of the sacrament, we are agreed that, like the Word, it was ordained of Almighty God, in order that weak consciences might be excited by the Holy Ghost to faith and charity."

The joy of the Swiss was redoubled. Luther continued:

"And although at present we are not agreed on the question whether the real body and blood of Christ are corporeally present in the bread and wine, yet both the interested parties shall cherish more and more a truly christian charity for one another, so far as
1283

conscience permits; and we will all earnestly implore the Lord to condescend by his Spirit to confirm us in the sound doctrine." ^{f3032}

The Swiss obtained what they had asked: unity in diversity. It was immediately resolved to hold a solemn meeting for the signature of the

articles.

They were read over again. Oecolampadius, Zwingle, Bucer, and Hedio, signed them first on one copy; while Luther, Melancthon, Jonas, Osiander, Brentz, and Agricola, wrote their names on the other; both parties then subscribed the copy of their adversaries, and this important document was sent to the press. ^{f3033}

Thus the Reformation had made a sensible step at Marburg. The opinion of Zwingle on the spiritual presence, and of Luther on the bodily presence, are both found in christian antiquity; but both the extreme doctrines have been always rejected: that of the Rationalists, on the one hand, who behold in the Eucharist nothing but a simple commemoration; and of the Papists, on the other, who adore in it a transubstantiation. These are both errors; while the doctrines of Luther and Zwingle, and the medium taken by Calvin, already maintained by some of the Fathers, were considered in ancient times as different views of the same truth. If Luther had yielded, it might have been feared that the Church would fall into the extreme of rationalism; if Zwingle, that it would rush into the extreme of popery. It is a salutary thing for the Church that these different views should be entertained; but it is a pernicious thing for individuals to attach themselves to one of them in such a manner as to anathematize the other. "There is only this little stumbling-block," wrote Melancthon, "that embarrasses the Church of our Lord." ^{f3034}

All, — Romanists and Evangelicals, Saxons and Swiss, — admitted the presence, and even the real presence of Christ; but here was the essential point of separation: Is this presence effected by the faith of the communicant, or by the opus operatum of the priest? The germs of Popery, Sacerdotalism, Puseyism, are inevitably contained in this latter thesis. If it is maintained that a wicked priest (as has been said) operates this real presence of Christ by three words, we enter the church of the pope. Luther appeared sometimes to admit this doctrine, but he has often spoken in a more spiritual manner; and taking this great man in his best
1284

moments, we behold merely an essential unity and a secondary diversity in the two parties of the Reformation. Undoubtedly the Lord has left to his Church outward ordinances; but he has not attached salvation to them. The essential point is the connection of the faithful with the Word, with the Holy Ghost, with the Head of the Church. This is the great truth which the Swiss Reform proclaims, and which Lutheranism itself recognizes.