

**SCHWENCKFELD'S
PARTICIPATION IN THE
EUCCHARISTIC CONTROVERSY
OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY**

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Schwenckfeld's Participation in the Eucharistic Controversy of the Sixteenth Century by
Frederick William Loetscher

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of the Sixteenth
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BY
FREDERICK WILLIAM LOETSCHER



A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty
of Princeton University for
the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy

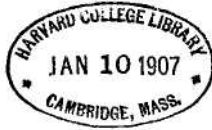


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PREFACE.

The dissenters of the Reformation in Germany, no less than in the other countries of Europe, had to wait a long time before the first attempts were made to accord them anything like a fair or adequate historical treatment. The political or secular historian lacked the desire and the fitness to do justice to the numerous religious sects in that age of bitter theological controversies, while at least the earliest of modern ecclesiastical historians betrayed a narrow confessional interest which was not only blind to many a virtue in the nobler heretics, but also quite incapable of estimating the salutary influence of some of the heresies themselves. It was not till the middle of the last century, therefore, that the first really meritorious efforts were made to study the so-called fanatics and sectarians of this period with the sober spirit of scientific investigation.

It is especially to be regretted that so little attention had been paid to the life and work of Caspar Schwenckfeld. To be sure, Arnold in his *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie* and Salig in his *Historie der Augspurgischen Confession* had succeeded to some extent in securing a more correct estimate of the much misunderstood reformer. But it still remains true, that when we regard his strong and beautiful character, his native ability and his acquired powers, the amount as well as the originality and suggestiveness of his literary output, the extent of his intercourse with the leading spirits of his age and his influence upon them, or the nature of his achievement as a polemic theologian and the founder of a sect which, though small, has added to the lustre of his name, we cannot but feel that here is 'a man who, in spite of his eminent significance for the history of the Reformation, has not as yet met with a proper appreciation.'*

The following dissertation, which is substantially a reprint from *The Princeton Theological Review* of this year,† endeavors to set forth Schwenckfeld's peculiar theory of the eucharist as related both to the teachings of his opponents and to his own system of theological speculations.

* Gerbert, *Geschichte der Strassburger Sectenbewegung zur Zeit der Reformation*, 1889, p. 132.

† See the July and October numbers of the *Review*, pp. 352-386, 454-500.

The difficulties of the task are due chiefly to the character of Schwenckfeld's works. His most important treatises, no less than his letters, are purely occasional writings, composed, at least in some instances, with incredible speed. The style is loose, repetitious, often Luther-like in its bold and energetic one-sidednesses, unconventional and inconsistent in theological terminology, and therefore often strangely confusing alike to his contemporaries and to modern interpreters, the uncertainty of the language being only increased by the desire of this deeply spiritual reformer to express his thoughts and feelings as much as possible in the very words of Scripture. Profoundly interested in the religious questions of the day, but never overcoming the layman's lack of training in theological science, he never, it must be confessed, succeeded, in spite of his undoubted dialectic gifts and his extensive acquaintance with the Bible and the greatest of the Church fathers, in bringing all the elements of his thought into a perfectly harmonious system.

These considerations, and above all his spiritualistic tendency, which in large part explains these phenomena, will serve as an apology, if one were needed, for the somewhat numerous quotations from the sources: a mystic must be allowed to speak his own dialect. It is at least hoped that these citations, selected from the great mass of possible references, are such characteristic utterances that they can fairly be regarded as furnishing an accurate and complete conception of Schwenckfeld's theory of the Supper.

I take this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to Charles S. Thayer, Ph.D., Librarian of Hartford Theological Seminary, for the loan of some of the sources, and especially to Prof. H. W. Kriebel, author of *The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania*, who kindly placed at my disposal his valuable collection of Schwenckfeldiana. Helpful suggestions concerning the treatment of the theme were received from the Rev. C. D. Hartranft, D.D., the editor-in-chief of the *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum*, now appearing, as well as from Dr. Joh. Ficker, Professor of Church History at Strassburg in Alsace.

PRINCETON, N. J.,
October, 1906.

F. W. L.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

I. SOURCES.

Schwenckfeld's works have never been published in full. Four folio volumes appearing shortly after his death contain his most important literary remains. They bear the following titles:

- (A) *Epistolar Des Edlen von Gott hochbegnadeten theueren Manns Caspar Schwenckfeldts von Ossing, seliger gedächtnis, Christliche Lehrhafte Missiven oder Sendbrieff, die er in zeit seines Lebens vom XXV. Jare bis auff das LV. geschrieben, etc., etc.* DER ERSTE THEIL. 1566. Pp. XXVII, 880. Referred to in the text by the symbol A.
- (B) *Epistolar des Edlen von Gott hochbegnadeten Herren Caspar Schwenckfeldts von Ossing, Christliche leerhafte Sendbrieffe und schriften die er in Zeit seines lebens vom XXV. Jare an biss auff das LXI. geschrieben, etc.* DER ANDER THEIL, in vier Bücher unterscheiden. 1570, pp. 146 and 678.

This therefore is the first of the four books that were to have contained his correspondence in regard to the four great parties in the Church of his day, the Romanists, the Lutherans, the Zwinglians, and the Anabaptists. But the third and fourth volumes never appeared. The pages of this volume bear the caption, *Sendbrieff von der Bepetischen Leere und Glauben.* Cited as B.

- (C) *Das zweite Buch des andern theils des Epistolars. Darinn Herren Caspar Schwenckfeldts Sendbrieffe begriffen, die er auf der Lutherischen Glauben, Leere, Sacrament und Kirchen, zum theil an Lutherische, zum theil sonst an gutherzige Personen geschrieben.* 1570. Pp. 1022. Cited as C.
- (D) *Der Erste Theil Der Christlichen Orthodoxischen Bücher und schriften des Edlen, theuren. . . . Caspar Schwenckfeldts vom Hauss Ossing, etc., etc.* 1564. Pp. 974. The other parts of this series never appeared. Cited as D.

There are numerous smaller volumes containing additional treatises and letters, as well as later editions of some of the works collected in the four folio volumes. Of those to which I have had access the following writings, nearly all of which are printed with other works, are the most important bearing upon the subject in question:

- Von der Speise des Ewigen Lebens.* 1547.
- Ein Schöne und Herrliche Auslegung ober das ganze sechste Kapitel Johannis, von der Speise des Ewigen Lebens.* 1595, but written in 1550.
- Von den Wercken Christi und Wie die Evangelia noch dem geistlichen Sinn recht verstanden sollen werden.* Item, *Vom ampt des H. Geistes in der christlichen Kirchenn.*
- Ein Christlich Bedenken, Ob Judas unnd die ungläubigen falschen Christen den leib und das blut Jesu Christi im Nachmal des Herren empfangen, oder auch noch heute empfahen oder nissen mögen.*
- Antzeigung Zwayer Artickeln warumb dess Luthers Discipel farnemlich Herrn Caspar Schwenckfeldten und die Mitbekenner der glorien und rainen Leere dess Euangelii Christi hassen, verfolgen, und fälschlich beschrayen.*

- Von der Gantsheit Christi, beide im Leiden und in seiner Herrlichkeit.* 1593.
Auslegung dess Euangelii Marci VIII. 1547.
Auslegung dess Euangelii Luce XIII. 1547.
Verantwortung und Defension für Casparn Schwenckfelden deren puncten unnd Irrthumbe damit ihn Doctor Joachim von Wat . . . unrecht beschuldigt. 1542. 16mo, pp. 129.
Apologia: dass ist Verantwortung für Herrn Caspar Schwenckfelden und gründliche Erclerung, dass er die Menschheit Christi gar kains Wegs verlaucknet. 16no, pp. LXXXVII. (By some follower of Schwenckfeld.)
Ableinung D. Luthers Malodiction, so erst durch Flacium Illyricum wider mich im truck ist publiciert worden. Item, Vom rechten grund und verstande dess H. Sacraments des Herrn Nachtmals. 1555.
Apologia und Erclerung der Schlesier das sy den leyb und blut Christi im Nachtmal dess Herrn und im geheimnuss dess heiligen Sacraments nit verleugnen. 1529. (With other treatises.)
Ableynung und verantwortung der fünffzig Lügen oder Calumnien Flacii Illyrici, so er felschlich auss meinen Büchern gezogen, jüngst in Truck hat lassen aussgehen. 1550.
Auffdeckung des letzten schmach und grawliche Lügenbuchs so der grosse feind Jhesu Christi des eynigen lebendigen Worts Gottes Flacius Illyricus Anno 1557 wider Herrn Casp. Schwenckfelden in Truck gegeben hat. 1558. (By a follower.)

The less important works are cited in the appropriate places. As secondary sources the works of the leading reformers who came into contact with Schwenckfeld are to be consulted, especially those of Luther, Zwingli, and Melancthon.

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