

# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

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Matthias Flacius Illyricus  
HENRY W. REIMANN

The Pastor's Role in Social Action  
NORMAN TEMME

Brief Studies

Homiletics

Theological Observer

Book Review

VOL. XXXV

*February 1964*

No. 2

# Matthias Flacius Illyricus

## A Biographical Sketch

By HENRY W. REIMANN

(EDITORIAL NOTE: After the death of the Rev. Prof. Henry W. Reimann, S. T. M., on January 6, 1963, the manuscript which is herewith reproduced in a slightly abbreviated as well as amplified form was found among his papers. It was obviously a preliminary study for the biographical chapter which he proposed to include in his doctoral dissertation on Matthias Flacius Illyricus. For this initial sketch he had restricted himself to summarizing the essential data in Wilhelm Preger's German biography of Flacius, a standard work in its field even after a century, and the German digest of a 20th-century biography by Flacius' fellow-countryman, Mijo Mirkovic. Although this material represents an unfinished draft of the life of Flacius, it can well serve English-speaking readers by making available a capsuled summary in English of the standard European biographies of the second-generation Lutheran theologian who next to Luther and Melancthon was probably the most learned Lutheran scholar of the 16th century. In editing the manuscript for publication as an article in our journal, some sections were shortened or reworked. It was also supplemented in the footnotes with references to other recent studies with which Mr. Reimann had been working. Because of the preliminary nature of the study, it does not include a documented assessment of Flacius' character.

Flacius was frequently irascible, stubborn, and uncharitable in his polemics [as his opponents often were in theirs]. Although at one time or another in his life he had been associated with practically every major Lutheran leader, he had ultimately managed to alienate all but one or two of them. His one-sided zeal for Luther's position as he understood it finally betrayed him into heresy in the doctrine of original sin. Yet his formidable abilities, his indefatigable industry, his important contributions to the theological sciences of Biblical interpretation and church history, and his inflexible integrity combined to give him such an influence on the course of events that the history of the Lutheran movement in the 16th century is unintelligible without an appreciation of his role.)

### EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Matthias Vlačić, the son of Andreas Vlačić and his wife Jacobea Luciani, was born on March 3, 1520, in Albona,<sup>1</sup> a south Istrian town of 1,200 inhabitants. The Vlačićs, originally rural peasants, had lived in this Adriatic city as artisans and landlords for three generations. The Lucianis were a patrician family in town. Three families, the Vlačićs, Lucianis, and Lupetinas, were related, and from these families came the leading intellectuals of Albona. Nearby was the mining community of Podlabin, where a Franciscan monastery served as the village church. There lived the Albona prior Baldo Lupetina, who later languished twenty years in a Venetian dungeon for his Lutheranism and who was so influential in Flacius' life. A brother of Jacobea Vlačić was married to a sister of Baldo Lupetina. So Flacius' Luciani uncle was a brother-in-law of this famous Franciscan provincial.<sup>2</sup>

These families were all of Croatian stock, as is much of southeast Istria today. Ac-

<sup>1</sup> Albona is the present city of Labin, Yugoslavia, located about forty miles southeast of Trieste.

<sup>2</sup> Mijo Mirkovic, *Matija Vlačić Ilirik* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska Akademija, 1960), 3—33; 487—490. In this study pp. 487—549 are the German digest. This is followed by an index (pp. 551—562) and 44 beautifully printed photostatic reproductions of Flacius' correspondence and his interesting Slavic works. The author has evidently made a thorough study of the Flaciana at Regensburg, Weimar, and Strasbourg. Hereafter cited as M.

tually, however, Albona was bilingual. In the 15th century it had come under Venetian sovereignty, and while Croatian was the language of the home, Italian was the official and literary language. Indeed Istria, which Flacius called *mea dulcissima patria* in the *Clavis*, was trilingual with the Slovenes in the north. This was the stony, hilly, beautiful Illyrian coastland of which Flacius was always proud. (M., 438—455; 540—543)

After his father's early death, young Matthias was instructed by Franciscus Ascerius, a learned Milanese tutor.<sup>3</sup> When he was sixteen he was sent to Venice like many other Istrians for further humanistic studies. At this time many Croatians of Flacius' homeland moved to Venice to work as dock laborers, sailors, innkeepers, or to live as monks or scholars. Flacius studied there between 1536 and 1539. (M., 24, 489)

The young scholar hoped that Baldo

Lupetino would have him received as a lay brother in one of the famous Franciscan monasteries at Padua or Bologna. He wanted to serve God and the church by studying theology. But Baldo was already a secret adherent of Luther's. He gave Matthias some of the Reformer's writings and advised his young friend not to enter a cloister but to go to Germany and there study theology. Ten years later Flacius wrote: "With great joy I accepted this advice." (P., I, 15)

In 1539 the young searcher left Venice for Augsburg. From there he went to Basel, where Oswald Myconius, Simon Grynaeus, and Johannes Oporinus were at work. Perhaps he made this side trip because his old Venetian teacher, the humanist Giambattista Cipelli, had friendly contacts at Basel. Perhaps it was the Zwinglian superintendent at Augsburg, Bonifatius Wolfhardt, who directed the young man to Switzerland. At any rate, now began a lifelong friendship with Oporinus, who later published Flacius' chief works. (M., 28, 35, 235, 490, 525; P., I, 16)

#### FLACIUS' "SOUL STRUGGLE"

While at Basel, Flacius lived in Grynaeus' house and pursued studies in Greek and Hebrew. Here began also the "soul struggle" which was not to be ended until he reached Wittenberg. Preger interprets the beginning of this three-year crisis as the first confrontation with the realities of religion as it affected Flacius personally.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Wilhelm Preger, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit*, 2 vols. (Erlangen: Theodor Bläsing, 1859, 1861.) Cf. I, 13 f. The first volume has 436 pages; the second, 581 pages including a 274-item list of books, pamphlets, tracts published by Flacius (II, 539—572) and an index to both volumes. Hereafter cited as P. — See also, particularly for more recent bibliographical references, the useful articles by Gustav Kawerau in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 3d ed., VI (1899), 82 to 92; Heinrich Bornkamm in *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, I (1955), 429—430; G. Buttler in *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon*, I (1956), 1298—1300; and Günther Moldaenke in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3d ed., II (1958), 971, as well as the bibliographical references in Hans Lietzmann (ed.), *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburger Konfession 1930*, 4th ed. by Ernst Wolf (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1959), pp. 843, 872, 873, 913 to 915, 937, 952, 1053—1055.

<sup>4</sup> Describing this struggle, Preger writes: "In Stunden, wo diese Heimsuchung ihn am heftigsten ergriff, wo er sich nicht für einen nur Versuchten, sondern für einen Verworfenen hielt, dachte er an Selbstmord. . . . Scheu wich er den Menschen aus. Niemandem offenbarte er sich. Und in diesem Zustande quälte er sich

Mirkovic regards this as a personality conflict (mental and spiritual) which Flacius later interpreted as religious (M., 46—53, 490). At any rate there is no gainsaying that the youth was very unhappy and uncertain.

After a year at Basel, Flacius spent a short time in Tübingen, where Grynaeus had friends. In 1534 he and Ambrosius Blaurer had reformed the university for Duke Ulrich. In Tübingen Flacius lived with a fellow Elavic Illyrian, Matthias Garbitius, a professor of Greek. On the faculty was Melanchthon's good friend Joachim Camerarius, a professor of classics.

In 1541, passing through Regensburg at the time of the Colloquy, he finally arrived in Wittenberg. Upon the recommendation of his Tübingen friends, Melanchthon received the sad young foreigner gladly. He provided for him and supplied him with students to tutor in Greek and Hebrew. The inner struggles continued.<sup>5</sup> Finally, in despair over this three-year conflict, he talked to chaplain Friedrich Backofen with whom he lived. The story passed to Bugenhagen and so to Luther. Luther, sensing the similarity to his own struggles, comforted the young tutor with the Gospel of justification by faith alone. Public prayer was made for Flacius, and he was cured. He was certain that the resolution of his problem was due to his

drei volle Jahre, bis seine Gestalt verfiel und er sich vor Schwachheit dem Tode nahe fühlte." (P., I, 18 f.)

<sup>5</sup> Preger writes: "Sein niedergedrückter Geist schien neue Schwungkraft erhalten zu sollen. . . . Doch schnell war auch dieser Reiz des Neuen, Ungewöhnlichen dahin, die Kräfte seiner Seele sanken in sich zusammen, Stürme der Verzweiflung und trübsinnige Erschlaffung wechselten miteinander und schienen den Erschöpferten dem Tode nah zu bringen." (P., I, 21)

laying hold on this doctrine. This conviction, secured so dramatically about 1543, Matthias Flacius Illyricus never lost.<sup>6</sup>

Mirkovic correctly points out other events which may have helped terminate the crisis. He emphasizes especially the role that Baldo Lupetina's imprisonment on November 4, 1542, and his heroic steadfastness must have played in the thinking of Flacius. With such a demonstration of evangelical faith by his countryman, benefactor, friend, adviser, and near relative, there must be no more uncertainty for him! There now could be no turning back to Rome! (M., 53—55, 491)

Furthermore, from now on Flacius came into closer contact with Martin Luther. The great man made use of Flacius by having him travel to Venice in the summer of 1543 with a letter to the Doge, Pietro Lando, from Elector John Frederick and the other princes of the Smalcaldic League on behalf of Lupetina. This activity on behalf of Luther and the personal witness of the Franciscan's faith (for he visited Baldo in his dungeon) combined to bring Flacius new evangelical certainty and zeal.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Here Twesten and Preger find the key for Flacius' entire life, especially his intense zeal to guard Lutheran doctrine. Cf. A. Twesten, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus, eine Vorlesung* (Berlin: G. Bethke, 1844), p. 5 ff. Cf. P., I, 23 n. Twesten's sketch is actually only 31 pages long. The book also includes Flacius' 1549 *Apologia* against the Wittenberg charges, his 1568 *Narratio* of all the controversies, composed for the Strasbourg theologians, and his 1572 report to the Strasbourg council, all in German translations (pp. 1—107). Hermann Rossel's critical essay "Melanchthon und das Interim" (pp. 111 to 143) concludes the volume.

<sup>7</sup> Luther received an appeal for help from the evangelicals of Venice in Vicenza and Treviso, written on Nov. 26, 1542 (WA Briefe, 10, 197—208, No. 3817); his reply is dated

Scholarly productivity followed the new certainty. Soon Flacius became a master of liberal arts, and in 1544, at 24 years of age, he was appointed professor of Hebrew in the philosophical faculty of the university. In the fall of 1545 he married the daughter of Michael Faustus, venerable pastor at Dabrun. Flacius prided himself that the ailing Luther, just four months before his death, attended the wedding festivities. Besides his work in Hebrew, Flacius lectured on Psalms, Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, and Galatians, as well as on Aristotle. His first work, indicative of the grammatical-theological concerns which engaged him all his life, was *De voce et re fidei*, published in 1549 with Melanchthon's preface addressed to Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. But meanwhile the Smalcaldic War, the Interims, and Flacius' own tragic break with Wittenberg had occurred (P., I, 23—29; II, 232).<sup>8</sup>

#### BREAK WITH WITTENBERG

The turning point in the Smalcaldic War was the disastrous battle of Mühlberg, April 24, 1547. Wittenberg capitulated on May 19, and the professors scattered. Flacius, his lectures on Aristotle interrupted, found asylum with Nicolaus Medler in Brunswick until the fall of 1547, when he returned to Wittenberg. It was also

June 13 (ibid., 328—333, No. 3885). The reply of the Smalcaldic League, which Flacius took with him, was dated June 26. In Luther's second letter to the Venetian evangelicals (Nov. 12, 1544) he speaks of *Matthias Illyricus, vestri studiosissimus* (ibid., p. 681, No. 4041, line 22).

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of Flacius at Wittenberg cf. Walter Friedensburg, "Die Anstellung des Flacius Illyricus an der Universität Wittenberg," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, XI, 1914.

at this time that Baldo Lupetina was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Venice authorities. (M., 70—72, 492)

During the following year the Augsburg Interim was the center of discussion. Although the secret meetings and negotiations leading up to the Leipzig Interim had already begun, it was the Augsburg Interim and the plight of the church in south Germany that called forth Flacius' early pseudonymous tracts. Three of these were published in Magdeburg in 1548 and early 1549 while Flacius was still at Wittenberg. The zealous young defender of the faith used the pseudonyms Johannes Waremundus, Theodor Henetus, and Christian Lauterwar. "Waremundus" attacked the emperor who without the agreement of the evangelicals determined their faith. Opposition to the death was encouraged. "Henetus" criticized the Interim itself, especially the article on the mass. "Lauterwar" bitterly attacked the canon of the mass and Johann Agricola, the Augsburg Interim's chief evangelical author. (P., I, 58—62; M., 90—92, 496 f.)

As the negotiations that finally led to the Leipzig Interim became more and more known, the mask of anonymity began to slip. Flacius attacked opinions drafted by the Wittenberg theologians concerning the proposals of the electoral court. He collected Luther's correspondence from the Coburg to Melanchthon at Augsburg; these letters exhort firmness in dealing with the papalists and bitterly criticize an improper use of philosophy and diplomacy in theological matters. In November 1548 Flacius wrote to Melanchthon that surrender of any part of the truth would have very serious consequences. He distributed

among his friends an anonymous tract *Das man nichts verändern soll*. (P., I, 51, 64 f. and 73; cf. M., 93—95, 494)

After the Leipzig Interim came out, but before any changes had been made in ceremonies, Flacius, under the pseudonym Carolus Azarias published his vehement *Wider den schnöden Teufel*. Here he attacked the form and the alleged ambiguity of the Leipzig Interim, as well as its silence over against papalistic doctrine. He held that an interim forced by the adversaries could not be tolerated and he maintained that the "apostles" (i.e., the Wittenbergers) had been used by the "Ahiathophels" (court politicians) to bring Christians into trouble. (P., I, 67)

At Easter 1549, as some of the interim ceremonies were about to be introduced, Flacius left Wittenberg. He did this, he later explained, so that he would not have to witness this corruption of truth and because of his increasingly dangerous position. He left with Melanchthon's permission, after giving as reasons for his sudden decision both his health and his unwillingness to have to witness the "innovations." Because his wife was soon to give birth to a child, he left her behind. From Wittenberg he traveled to Magdeburg, where Nicolaus von Amsdorf received him cordially. Desiring a safer place for his family, he traveled through Lüneburg to Hamburg. There the ministerium under Johannes Aepinus encouraged him to continue the fight. But Magdeburg, *Gottes Kanzlei*, became his ultimate asylum because there alone he was free enough to publish. Flacius had left Wittenberg for good, and everyone knew it. (P., I, 74; M., 68, 69, 492)

### THE INTERIMIST CONTROVERSY

Now the Interimist or Adiaphorist controversy began in earnest. Flacius next published his *Apologia ad scholam Wittenbergensem*, which Mirkovic calls the most splendid of his writings because of its significant moral, literary, and scholarly virtues (M., 93, 94, 495, 496). Flacius claims that he is not Melanchthon's opponent but that of the godless, deceptive Interim. To see divine things forsaken so reprehensibly was a sword in his body. All of these "adiaphoristic" changes were nothing else than Romanizing, a most certain reintroduction of the papacy that he hated. For Flacius ceremonies constituted the nerve of papalistic religion. He maintained that he had published private conversations only to disclose the truth, not to sow discord. But where truth is defended, hatred arises, and that is unavoidable. (P., I, 84—90, 176, 185)

Flacius, to be sure, found specific doctrinal aberrations in the Leipzig Interim, and these were particularly emphasized later as the Adiaphoristic controversy spawned litter after litter of strife and dissension.<sup>9</sup> Flacius insisted that the controversy was not just over wearing a white surplice, but was doctrinal. Confirmation, he claimed, had been made a means of grace. By the mention of satisfaction in the doctrine of repentance, he said, faith had been ignored. He held that the reintroduc-

<sup>9</sup> Karl Heussi, *Geschichte der theologischen Fakultät zu Jena* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1954), especially "Die Epigonen Luthers und Melanchthons," pp. 13—99. — On Flacius' role in the controversy see also H. C. von Hase, *Die Gestalt der Kirche Luthers: Der casus confessionis im Kampf des Matthias Flacius gegen das Interim* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1940).

tion of extreme unction would tempt men to try to perform apostolic miracles. He called for a distinction between Mass and Communion and argued that to have a Corpus Christi celebration is to agree to transubstantiation. In answer to Melanchthon's plea for love, Flacius replied: What is more appropriate for love than to hinder errors which may destroy the salvation of the neighbor as well as God's honor? (P., I, 89, 187—189, 193—201)

Flacius and the other Magdeburg "Gnesio-Lutherans" insisted on debating the Leipzig Interim, although this had never really been put into practice. The Wittenbergers had largely ignored the Interim, because they probably knew (which Flacius did not) the strategy of the electoral court to deceive the emperor. They were dealing with church conditions in Saxony, where few changes had actually been made. Melanchthon's defense was clear: The Saxon churches still had signs of the true pure doctrine of the Gospel, Scriptural use of the sacraments, and rejection of idols. He still stood upon the doctrine of his *Loci*. In short, essential doctrine had been preserved, and the churches and the university had been saved. Further controversy was wrong. (P., I, 85, 90, 97)

No, insisted Flacius, if a controversy arises, there must be an exact decision for the truth and an express rejection of error. Only so can there be protection against the incursion of error.<sup>10</sup> In all circumstances Flacius wanted to guard the pure doctrine (M., 495). For his faith's sake this young theologian, not yet thirty years old, had left his homeland and the religion of his youth and was now risking his security and life. He could not understand Me-

lanchthon's apparent weakness and opportunism, nor did Melanchthon understand Flacius' motives.<sup>11</sup>

Flacius' chief literary contribution to the adiaphoristic debate was his *De veris et falsis adiaphoris* published at Magdeburg in 1549. Although the circumstances for the controversy ended with the Peace of Passau in 1552, when the evangelicals were freed from imperial constraint through the efforts of Maurice, the pamphlet war continued. Wittenberg and Magdeburg, Melanchthon and Flacius, were in opposite camps, and Lutheranism was not to be at peace until after the death of both. (P., I, 107)

#### FLACIUS IN MAGDEBURG

Flacius' stay at Magdeburg lasted from 1549 to 1557. A year after Flacius' arrival in Magdeburg the year-long siege and Magdeburg's valiant defense against the emperor began. Flacius wrote various pamphlets during this period (September 1550 to November 1551). He invited the investing soldiers to disobey their superiors (who were persecuting Christ Himself by persecuting Christ's church in Magdeburg), urged the farmers to supply these armies with no provisions, and encouraged the besieged not to despair or grumble against suffering. Magdeburg finally capitulated in November 1551, but with her religious and civil liberties undiminished. The following spring victorious Maurice of Saxony turned the tables on the emperor, and the settlements of Passau and Augsburg ultimately followed. (M., 105—117, 498 to 500; P. I, 103)

Flacius apparently thrived on this change from conservative Wittenberg and its aris-

<sup>10</sup> Twisten, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> Heussi, pp. 32f.

ocratic university to this commercial city of trade guilds, free farmers, and only a few nobility. Magdeburg was a magnified German Albona, a free city fighting for its religious and economic rights. Flacius also appreciated his freedom to publish in Magdeburg, and his scholarly abilities and productivity grew apace. When Mirkovic asserts that everything to which Flacius laid his hand in Magdeburg succeeded, he is hardly exaggerating (M., 492, see also pp. 74—78). At this time, too, the "Gnesio-Lutherans" who had taken refuge in Magdeburg were consolidating their forces in the continuing of the Interimistic controversy with the support of the northern cities and theologians. And while Amsdorf may have been the dean emeritus of this group, Flacius was now its chief spokesman.

In Magdeburg, beginning in 1552, Flacius produced his great *Catalogus testium veritatis*, the first edition of which appeared in 1556. In this work, Flacius assembled statements by evangelical witnesses to God's truth from all ages and countries. Flacius regarded these men not merely as forerunners, but as essential parts of the Reformation. In Magdeburg Flacius also began work on the famous *Centuries*. Although the volume containing the first three centuries of church history did not appear until 1559 (while Flacius was at Jena), the *Skizze*, the *Consultatio*, the *Methodus*, and the *Katalog der Quellen* were worked out in Magdeburg. Here Flacius began the huge task of assembling his researchers and materials for this work that has often been called the first modern church history. It was a work based on the sources, critically studied and evaluated, and yet with the Flacian scheme which

presents history as a battle between light and darkness, truth and error.<sup>12</sup>

It was also at Magdeburg that Flacius began his study of Hussite literature, which he continued until 1557. In 1555 there appeared the first Croatian Lutheran publication *Razgovaranje meju papistu i jednim luteran* (*A Conversation Between a Papist and a Lutheran*), which Mirkovic regards as Flacius' work. In Magdeburg Flacius lived from the sale of his books. For his scholarly projects he received special help from Nuremberg and from Maximilian, the later Holy Roman Emperor. (M., 126—149, 500—502)

#### CONTROVERSY WITH MAJOR AND MENIUS

Flacius continued to live and work in controversy. The Adiaphoristic controversy had spawned the Majoristic controversy, and this in turn led to Flacius' controversy with Justus Menius. Although these controversies began with Amsdorf's rejection of Major's proposition that good works are necessary for salvation, Flacius was also one of the chief protagonists. In 1552 his *Wider den Evangelisten des heiligen Chorrocks, D. Geitz Major* was published in Basel. It was impossible for Flacius to treat Major's view apart from his involvement in the Leipzig Interim. According to Flacius, Major's proposition was wrong because salvation means forgiveness, and in no sense are good works a cause of forgiveness. Besides, statements

<sup>12</sup> For an extensive evaluation of the *Centuries*, cf. M., 271—335, 528—530. See also Martin H. Scharlemann, "Lutheran Scholarship at Work: The Magdeburg Centuries," *The Lutheran Scholar*, VI (1949), 34—43, and Walter Nigg, *Die Kirchengeschichtsschreibung: Grundzüge ihrer historischen Entwicklung* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1934).



that always need an interpretation to avoid dangerous implications are unsuitable for theological discussion. Major himself denied that good works justify and save in a meritorious way, but held that they are necessary for the preservation of faith and salvation. He subsequently withdrew the objectionable thesis. Flacius was chiefly concerned with what he saw as a threat to justification, whereas Major sought to combat a lazy, complacent Christianity. (P., I, 361, 375—398)

The elderly Amsdorf came to Thuringia in 1553 to suppress Majorism and in 1554 was made a Visitor. Shortly thereafter Menius, the superintendent at Gotha in Ernestine, now ducal Saxony, became involved in the fray. His teaching that the new life which the Holy Spirit creates in the believer is necessary for salvation, that we can lose salvation by our sins, and that we must preserve our salvation in a pure heart, a good conscience, and unvarnished faith was attacked by Flacius in 1556. Subsequent attacks on Menius were published in 1557 about the time Flacius was leaving Magdeburg for Jena. Like Major (and Melancthon, too), Menius was concerned with Libertinism within the Lutheran camp. Moreover, Flacius and Wigand did not agree with Amsdorf's extreme view that good works are detrimental to salvation. Although Menius died in 1558, these controversies continued until after Major's death in 1570.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> P., I, 382—395. Preger also reports on a minor controversy between Flacius and Menius on the priesthood of believers, I, 401—417. On the whole controversy about the "necessity" of "good works" for "salvation," see also Ragnar Bring, *Förhållandet mellan tro och gärningar inom lutersk teologi* (Helsinki, 1933), Part One, ch. III—iii, sec. 2, German translation by Karl-

#### CONTROVERSY WITH OSIANDER AND SCHWENCKFELD

Meanwhile, Flacius was also engaged against Osiander and Schwenckfeld. At first Osiander called the Magdeburgers learned men, but when they took up the cudgel against him, "ignorant swineherds." Preger argues that Flacius' position in this controversy against the bitter enemy of the Wittenbergers demonstrates that he was not driven by jealousy.<sup>14</sup> Osiander was preoccupied with the relationship between creaturely and divine righteousness in Christology. Flacius replied that although the essential eternal righteousness of Christ is not idle in redemption, it is not the righteousness that justifies. From Osiander's preoccupation with the person of Christ Flacius turned, as did Melancthon, to the actional categories of Law and Gospel (P., I, 233, 258). The polemic was bitter,<sup>15</sup> but Preger lauds the carefully developed polemical methodology of Flacius.<sup>16</sup>

Chronologically, Flacius' controversy with

Heinz Becker, *Das Verhältnis von Glauben und Werken in der lutherischen Theologie* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1955), pp. 92—106, 203 to 209.

<sup>14</sup> P., I, 217. Duke Albrecht is supposed to have offered Flacius a present and a position if he would side with Osiander. Flacius wrote that he would rather be in league with the Wittenbergers, his most hostile enemies, who already believed that they had defeated Osiander, than to be on his side against the truth.

<sup>15</sup> Flacius called Osiander "einen stolzen und aufgeblasenen Zungendrescher, einen unverschämten Sykophanten, einen stolzen, frechen Geist." Preger considers this mild compared with the terms bandied about in Königsberg by Osiander. P., I, 279.

<sup>16</sup> P., I, 277. The literature in this controversy was voluminous; cf. P., I, 220—222, 287, and 291 for a description of the Flacian material.

Schwenckfeld occurs after the bulk of his anti-Osiandrian works and before the controversy with Menius. Schwenckfeld's concern was that Christians would make the creaturely into an idol. He held that it would be unworthy of God to employ creaturely means. God's Word is God Himself, and He does not need means. There are two kinds of humanity, inner and outer, and God works on the inner man only through the living Word, Jesus Christ. He argued that the Flacian emphasis on the external word is philosophical, not theological. These avenues from eyes and ears to the heart belong to the natural order of things, not to the spiritual. It is striking that this charge of philosophizing (which Osiander likewise brought against his enemies) is later employed by Flacius himself in his anthropological controversies. (P., I, 314, 329 ff.)

In this controversy Flacius concentrated on the fact that the Holy Spirit truly and powerfully employs the human word as an instrument for His work. Not only did Flacius expose the Eutychian elements in Schwenckfeld's Christology, but he battled against capricious subjectivism of all kinds.<sup>17</sup> As in his answer to Osiander,

<sup>17</sup> P., I, 307, 317, and 351f. Flacius insisted that Scripture was the Word, not in its syllables or letters, but in its meaning. *Ibid.*, 318. Schwenckfeld maintained that the Word was nothing else than God's being, and since Scripture was not God's being, it was not the Word. Flacius replied: The Word is different from God's being; it is a creature; but as the *operatio dei* it is creature and still the Word of God: *Ibid.*, 324. On Flacius' principles of Biblical interpretation see Günther Moldaenke, *Schriftverständnis und Schriftdeutung im Zeitalter der Reformation*, Part I: *Matthias Flacius Illyricus* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1936), and K. A. von Schwarz, "Die theologische Hermeneutik des Matthias Flacius Illyricus," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, . . . (1933).

Flacius rejected Schwenckfeld's view that every gift of God's grace is a part of His essential being. He pointed to Christ's humanity, humiliation, and obedience. (P., I, 323, 331 f.)

In this controversy Flacius' grammatical principles of Biblical interpretation are evident. In the Osiandrian controversy everything hinged on the meaning of "righteousness." In the controversy with Schwenckfeld it was the meaning of "Word." Flacius reacted to Schwenckfeld's hermeneutics of a double interpretation (inner and outer) with these words: "Ich halte mich mit beiden Händen an dem klaren Text."<sup>18</sup>

#### ATTEMPTS AT RECONCILIATION

There were some attempts at reconciling the warring parties within German Lutheranism while Flacius was still at Magdeburg. In 1553 he and Gallus had appealed for a synod. In 1556 Duke Christopher of Württemberg made his first move toward uniting the princes and theologians of the Augsburg Confession. The Religious Peace of Augsburg in 1555, which gave legal status to the adherents of the Augsburg Confession, was a new spur toward solidarity. (P., II, 4—13)

On September 4, 1556, Melancthon wrote to Flacius and conceded his share

<sup>18</sup> P., I, 334. The literature again is voluminous; cf. P., I, 308—310, for a listing of the major works. The polemic was also quite bitter. Like Luther, Flacius sometimes referred to his opponent as "Stenckfeld." — See also Paul L. Maier, *Caspar Schwenckfeld on the Person and Work of Christ* (Assen, The Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum, 1959), and Gottfried Maron, *Individualismus und Gemeinschaft bei Caspar von Schwenckfeld: Seine Theologie dargestellt mit besonderer Ausrichtung auf seinen Kirchenbegriff* (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1961).

of responsibility for the Leipzig Interim. Thereupon Flacius renewed his efforts to get a fuller confession of guilt "in order to preserve the truth and eradicate error" (P., II, 25—29). Earlier Flacius had set forth his "mild proposals" for reconciliation, but they had been declined.<sup>19</sup> The final effort at theological arbitration in this period was initiated from the north. Superintendents from Lübeck, Hamburg, Lüneburg, and Brunswick, with a pastor or professor accompanying them, arrived in Magdeburg on January 14, 1557, favorably inclined toward Flacius' proposals.<sup>20</sup>

Thereupon followed the futile Kosswig negotiations. In this town near Wittenberg, Flacius, Wigand, Judex, and Baumgartner as delegates from Magdeburg waited while the north German commissioners scurried back and forth from Wittenberg. Flacius' big fear was that the Lower Saxons would yield. In the end, although both sides conceded a little, Melanchthon did not give an unequivocal admission of guilt, and the attempt was a failure. Preger, after defending Flacius' role at Kosswig, chides him and the Magdeburgers for acting as judges, although Melanchthon was also unyielding. (P., 58, 59)<sup>21</sup>

#### PROFESSOR AT JENA

In the spring of 1557 Flacius arrived in Jena as the newly called professor of theology in the academy begun by the

Ernestine Saxon dukes in the hard days following on the Smalcaldic War. Jena was not yet a university, but in the following year, 1558, the patent was granted by the emperor.<sup>22</sup> An entirely new phase of Flacius' career begins here.

When Flacius came to Jena, his two colleagues on the theological faculty were Victorinus Strigel, who had been at Jena since its beginning in 1548, and Strigel's father-in-law Erhard Schnepff, who had joined him as a colleague a year later. There were good realations between these two humanistic Swabians who, although strict Lutherans, were friendly to Melanchthon. Actually Jena had been rather undisturbed by the political and theological quarrels of the decade. The Majoristic controversy had indeed passed into Thuringia, but had involved Superintendent Justus Menius rather than the school. But with Amsdorf's advent in ducal Saxony, the strength of the "Gnesio-Lutherans" had grown.<sup>23</sup>

Actually Flacius would have preferred to go elsewhere. Duke John Frederick (called "der Mittlere"), who succeeded his father, John Frederick the Magnanimous (d. 1554), had invited Flacius to Weimar for an interview in 1555. Amsdorf acted in the negotiations in which Flacius finally agreed to the Jena professorship. At the same time, however, Count Otto Henry of Neuberg, who in February 1556 had become elector of the Palatinate, had called Flacius to Heidelberg. He wished to go, but Duke John Frederick would not release him. (P., II, 105—108)

<sup>19</sup> Cf. P., II, 9—11, for the text of these proposals.

<sup>20</sup> P., II, 33. The Brunswick men were Mörlin and Chemnitz.

<sup>21</sup> In 1556, David Chytraeus had written: "So lange Philippus und Flacius lebten, würde wohl nie eine Einigung zu Stande kommen." (P., II, 17)

<sup>22</sup> Heussi, p. 37. For a description of the statutes of the theological faculty cf. Heussi's long footnote, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27—29.

Flacius arrived in Jena on April 27, 1557, and on May 17 held his inaugural address, although he first began his lectures in the following January. In that address Flacius emphasized that the needs of Lutheranism were victory over Trent and the Adiaphorists, and called attention to his own activities in these battles.<sup>24</sup> Apparently Flacius had his difficulties in Jena from the start. Perhaps it was the large salary that he received in comparison to his veteran colleagues, both of whom were doctors of theology. Perhaps it was the acrimony raised by his controversies with Wittenberg (Jena was a school that still respected Wittenberg) and with Menius. Six weeks after his arrival he reported the circulation of a hostile letter written against him by Melanchthon. And when his lectures began in January 1558, colleagues stood outside, according to Flacius, and challenged him.<sup>25</sup>

But outwardly Flacius' influence was unhindered. His first months were spent in preparation for the Colloquy of Worms. The attitude of the Thuringian delegates at Worms, including Strigel, was molded and decided by Flacius. Schnepff, Strigel, and Johann Stössel were instructed to call for an oral judgment upon all corrupters of Lutheranism; that is, the Electoral theologians from Wittenberg were to be made to do public penance in the presence of the papalists.<sup>26</sup> Mirkovic claims that Flacius himself did not go to Worms because he was against all attempts at reconciliation with Rome and was convinced that the

colloquy would weaken evangelical doctrine (M., 508; see also 164—169). When on Sept. 11, 1557 Michael Holding asked whether the evangelicals also rejected among other errors the Flacian view on the bondage of the will and on good works the Thuringians left in protest, and evangelical disunion was publicly demonstrated. (P., II, 68, 69)

#### THE FRANKFURT AGREEMENT (RECESS) AND THE "KONFUTATIONSBUCH"

The attempt by the princes to secure evangelical union eventuated in the Frankfurt Agreement of March 1558. Princes from the Palatinate, Electoral Saxony, Brandenburg, Württemberg, Hesse, and Baden rejected Osiandris and Majorism, affirmed the Real Presence, and made a general statement on adiaphora. There was to be no more discussion of these matters, and strict censorship was to be maintained. This settlement was not satisfactory for the "Gnesio-Lutherans." Critical opinions came from Anhalt, Henneberg, Mecklenburg, Pomerania, Regensburg, and the Lower Saxon cities, but the most vehement came from Ducal Saxony. Flacius wrote several critical pamphlets, and on June 24 the Thuringian theologians sent a formal rejection. When Melanchthon responded, Flacius replied with another rejection of the "Frankfurt Book."

Flacius had specific complaints about the Frankfurt Agreement. He protested that it had treated errors as mere theological differences; the Smalcald Articles had not been mentioned; nothing was said about Schwenckfeld; Osiander had not been named; there were no antitheses; adiaphora had been treated too mildly; and the secular power was now handling spiritual matters. (P., II, 70—77)

<sup>24</sup> Heussi, pp. 34 f.

<sup>25</sup> Mirkovic comments: "Er wurde als Eindringling betrachtet, feindlich angesehen und bei der ersten Gelegenheit feindlich angegriffen." (M., 505; see also 159, 160)

<sup>26</sup> Heussi, p. 35.

That theological controversy was ripening within Ducal Saxony is evident from the preparation of the controversial Weimar *Konfutationsbuch* and the Synergistic controversy with Pfeffinger, both of which led directly into the great Synergistic controversy between Flacius and Strigel. Mirkovic finds the origin of the *Konfutationsbuch* in Flacius' January 1558 appeal to the duke to give a clear directive to the university regarding its mission of holding to Luther's doctrine and rejecting error (M., 169—171, 507, 508).<sup>27</sup> On Feb. 19, a few weeks after Jena became a full-fledged university, Professors Strigel and Schnepff and Superintendent Andreas Hügel reluctantly accepted a commission from the duke to prepare a draft for a Thuringian doctrinal norm. The first draft was finished on April 3.<sup>28</sup>

All the theologians and superintendents of the duchy were then assembled at Weimar. Against Flacius' advice, also the drafting committee was present. When Flacius proposed sharper wording in the text, Strigel openly opposed him and defended the Wittenberg theologians.<sup>29</sup> Thereafter, Strigel openly opposed both Flacius and the *Konfutationsbuch* in his lectures. Claiming that he had done everything he could to effect a reconciliation, Flacius sent a formal complaint against Strigel to the ducal court.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> When John Frederick's attempt to rally the conservative opponents of the Frankfurt Agreement failed, Flacius advised the duke to do for Thuringia what he could not do for Germany. (Cf. P., II, 78)

<sup>28</sup> Heussi, pp. 41 f. Cf. M., 171, 508.

<sup>29</sup> Heussi, p. 42, gives Strigel's words: "Tu tantum rixaris sine causa et ratione."

<sup>30</sup> In his formal complaint Flacius recommended the immediate publication of the *Konfutationsbuch*, the dismissal of all those who

Meanwhile, Flacius' position on the theological faculty was strengthened by the advent of a friend. Schnepff, Strigel's venerable father-in-law, had died on November 1, 1558, and Simon Musäus, who had followed Menius in Gotha, was his successor. This polemically minded man, sent into exile ten times, was a staunch Flacian.<sup>31</sup> Musäus was involved in some of the last revisions of the much debated *Konfutationsbuch*. Ducal sanction was secured at Coburg on November 28, 1558. The book was published bearing the date 1559 and sent to the superintendents for distribution as the doctrinal norm. Pastors were to read sections from the pulpit after Sunday services. There were condemnations of Servetus, Schwenckfeld, the Antinomians, Anabaptists, old and new Zwinglians, defenders of free will, Osiander and Stancarus, Major, and the Adiaphorists.<sup>32</sup>

The book was truly *streng flacianisch*. It was an attempt to suppress throughout Ducal Saxony all those who were opposed to pure doctrine. Twesten and Preger hold that Flacius and his supporters lacked the wisdom of love and patience in the midst of controversy, and suggest that their zealotry for pure doctrine led them to fall into extreme reaction.<sup>33</sup> Mirkovic regards this attempt to compel consciences through political means as an unfortunate

then would still stubbornly defend errors, and a panel of orthodox theologians to censure new books. He appealed to his call to guard the Thuringian churches in the true doctrine. P., II, 121.

<sup>31</sup> Heussi, p. 43.

<sup>32</sup> P., II, 79. Preger argues that Flacius had nothing to do with the document beyond its final revision. Cf. M., fn., 285, p. 171 and 512, for the various editions.

<sup>33</sup> P., II, 133 f., and Twesten, p. 20.

interregnum in Flacius' battles for freedom. (M., 511, see also 177)

The book did not end controversies within Ducal Saxony. Some of the moderates like Stössel defended it. Hügel refused to publish the book. Strigel pleaded to be excused from obligation to this standard. When Duke John Frederick sent it to the princes who had accepted the Frankfurt Agreement, it aroused much bitterness. Elector August requested an opinion by the Wittenberg faculty, which Melanchthon wrote on March 9, 1559, just a year before his death. Philip of Hesse had his theologians write a confutation of the *Confutation*. He spoke of love and patience and the noble intention of errorists like Schwenckfeld and some Anabaptists. Flacius replied: When dealing with doctrine, there must be no consideration of personal motives. (P., II, 79—83, 124)

On Easter Monday, March 27, 1559, between two and three o'clock in the morning, Strigel and the sixty-year-old Hügel were roused violently from bed and brought by the duke's soldiers to Grimmstein castle in Gotha. One hundred soldiers occupied Jena to put down student unrest. Flacius himself was not directly involved, but he was forced to defend himself in the storm of criticism which broke.<sup>34</sup> At the duke's command Flacius visited Strigel in prison in a vain effort to persuade him to accept the *Konfutationsbuch*. Strigel was released on September 5, placed under house arrest, and sworn to silence. It was far from Flacius' intention, however, to cover up their dissension through force. (P., II, 125, 126)

#### THE SYNERGISTIC CONTROVERSY

It was just at this time that the Synergistic controversy was becoming violent. It had begun in 1555 with Johann Pfeffinger's publications on the freedom of the will. He was concerned, as were Melanchthon and Strigel, to reject a deterministic view that the nature of man is like a statue or stone over against the operation of divine grace. Amsdorf, and perhaps also the court preacher Stolz, had written against Pfeffinger. When Pfeffinger answered Amsdorf and in March 1558 issued a new edition of his 1555 disputations, Flacius entered the lists with his *Refutatio propositionum Pfeffingeri de libero arbitrio*. This thorough treatment deals with the doctrine of heathen philosophers and the Greek fathers under their influence, the Pelagian controversy, the scholastic departure from Augustine, the controversy between Luther and Erasmus, Melanchthon's changing formulations, and the false statements in the Interims. (P., II, 115, 193—195)<sup>35</sup>

This book brought the Synergistic controversy to Ducal Saxony and the University of Jena. Preger believes that Flacius, unlike Amsdorf, clearly saw the real issue. Amsdorf had made Pfeffinger out to be a medieval scholastic: by the natural powers of his free will man can prepare for grace. Flacius on the other hand saw that Pfeffinger stressed the Spirit's prior work. The issue was rather over the relation of the Spirit's work and man's natural will. The position which Flacius maintained against Strigel was simple: instead of the natural will being able to follow the movement

<sup>34</sup> Heussi, pp. 46 f. Flacius wrote: "Violentia gladii non feliciter errores extirpari."

<sup>35</sup> Preger discounts Planck's charge that Flacius had waited three years before he called Pfeffinger's views erroneous. (P., II, 116)

of the Spirit, it hates and strives against God. The new creation of a good will is therefore necessary. Flacius' concerns were basic: the doctrines of sin and justification. (P., II, 192—195)

Flacius continued to denounce Pfeffinger's and Strigel's views on free will through disputations, tracts, and lectures. Above all he pressed the duke for an open disputation between him and Strigel. The duke was certainly still on Flacius' side. To supplant the suspended Strigel he called two old Magdeburg friends of Flacius, Johann Wigand and Matthäus Judex, as professors of theology. They arrived in Jena in April 1560. Because Superintendent Hügel had been succeeded by Balthasar Winter, the entire ministerium of Jena was now Flacian. In the midst of the dissension over the *Konfutationsbuch* and the rising tide of the Synergistic controversy, Melancthon died at Wittenberg on April 19, 1560. Flacianism in Jena was at its peak. Flacius' own career had reached a crest.<sup>36</sup>

#### THE WEIMAR DISPUTATION

The famous Weimar Disputation between Flacius and Strigel took place in the hall of the old castle at Weimar from August 1 to August 8, 1560. Besides the Saxon dukes, the students of Jena (and some from Wittenberg), the Thuringian superintendents and pastors (mostly Flacian), and Flacius' old Magdeburg contingent (Amsdorf, Wigand, Judex, Otto of Nordhausen) were present. Chancellor Christian Brück, Flacius' nemesis in the

year ahead, was in charge of the proceedings. The debaters met morning and afternoon for about four hours. During the first seven sessions Strigel set forth his position and Flacius responded. From the eighth session on, the roles were reversed.<sup>37</sup>

Strigel emphasized the free decision of man in conversion as he responds to the power of the Spirit working through means. Without the Spirit and Word man could not respond, but it is *man* who acts. Certainly he is corrupted and free will is weakened, but he is still man. There must be a distinction between human *substantia* with its essential attributes and the "privation." Substance and essential attributes are inadmissible. Otherwise man ceases to be man. Since free will is an essential attribute, it cannot be lost through original sin. Original sin must therefore be something which affects (but does not essentially alter) man's *substantia*, namely, *accidens*. (P., II, 196)

Flacius agreed that God converts man with his will, but he insisted that God must first give us this new will. Although the will is free in secular areas, in spiritual matters it is a slave of Satan. To be sure, the subject remained after the Fall, but this does not mean that original sin is *accidens*. The image of God and original righteousness as its superior part is certainly not *accidens* but *substantia*. When this is lost, the best part of man's *substantia* is removed. Original sin is therefore *substantia*. The image of God has been transformed into the image of Satan.

<sup>36</sup> Heussi, pp. 47—49. The ages of the Jena colleagues in 1560 are interesting: Flacius 40, Musäus 31, Wigand 37, and Judex 31.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51 f. Cf. also P., II, 127—133, for the circumstances and 195—219 for an analysis of the debate.

There is accordingly no innate natural knowledge of God.<sup>38</sup>

Flacius had indeed embarked on paths that opened up the later controversy on original sin, but this discussion of *substantia* and *accidens* was not the issue in 1560. It was free will. Flacius wanted to prove the total inability of natural man for any cooperation whatsoever with the Holy Spirit. He spoke quickly, always pressing toward the central issue, always demanding a Yes or No (P., II, 131). He appealed chiefly to Luther and the Bible, and charged Strigel with using philosophical distinctions in the doctrine of sin.<sup>39</sup> Strigel meanwhile moved very circumspectly, using his not inconsiderable philosophic equipment and avoiding sharp formulas or emphatic answers.

Finally Strigel refused to budge from the paradox: God works and man works. The duke halted the sessions abruptly, much against Flacius' will. He was strengthened in his conviction that Flacius' doctrine was true. But he was also convinced, perhaps through the influence of Chancellor Brück, that Strigel's position was not as dangerous as the Flacians had made it out to be. Although the duke promised to continue the discussions, he never kept this promise to Flacius. Of the five articles that were

to have been debated (Free Will, Law and Gospel, Majorism, Adiaphorism, Neutrality in Controversies) they had only begun to debate the first item!<sup>40</sup>

Flacius, who had tried to be a purely Biblical theologian, had still become involved in scholastic methodology (M., 514f.). Flacius did not deny Strigel's emphasis that God acts in conversion upon man as a rational creature. Nor did Strigel deny that man was corrupted, which was Flacius' passionate concern. That Strigel's concerns also had to be taken cognizance of is demonstrated in the *Formula of Concord*.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Heussi, p. 53, and P., II, 132, 133, 206.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *Formula of Concord*, Art. II, *passim*. — See also Jaroslav Pelikan, Jr., "The Doctrine of Man in the Lutheran Confessions," *The Lutheran Quarterly*, II (1950), 34—44; Bengt Hägglund, *De homine: Människouppfattningen i äldre luthersk tradition* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1959), especially pp. 128—163, 234—252; and Karl Barth, *Dogmatik*, III/2 (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1948), 29—32. On the whole complex of issues in which Flacius was involved and which the Formula of Concord settled, see Lauri Haikola, *Gesetz und Evangelium bei Matthias Flacius Illyricus: Eine Untersuchung zur lutherischen Theologie vor der Konkordienformel*, translated by Christa-Maria Lyckhage (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1952); and his "Studien zu Luther und zum Luthertum" *Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift*, 1958:2 (Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1958); and Friedrich Bente, "Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books," chapters XI—XVI, in *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), I, 102—161; Paul Tschackert, *Die Entstehung der lutherischen und der reformierten Kirchenlehre samt ihren innerprotestantischen Gegensätzen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1910), Part Five, sec. I, pp. 475—572; Reinhold Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3d ed., IV/2 (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, D. Werner Scholl, 1920), 481—550; and Otto Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, II (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1912), 326—500.

<sup>38</sup> P., II, 201—213. Preger argues that Flacius never held that original sin is substance itself, but that it is the loss of the *noblest* substance of man (pp. 201, 202). — See also H. Kropatscheck's Göttingen dissertation of 1943, *Das Problem theologischer Anthropologie auf dem Weimarer Gespräch 1560 zwischen Matthias Flacius Illyricus und Viktorin Strigel*.

<sup>39</sup> P., II, 199—201. Flacius quoted frequently from Luther's Genesis commentary and appealed especially to Rom. 8; Ezek. 36:26, and John 8:44. He also appealed both to philosophy and to experience in his argumentation.



## THE DOWNFALL OF THE FLACIANS

Even before this August disputation had taken place, an event occurred in Jena that was to prove the downfall of the Flacians. On July 8, 1560, Matthäus Wesenbeck, an ex-Roman-Catholic, a Jena jurist and a Strigel sympathizer, had been asked to be a godfather for a child of Johann Stigel, professor of poetry. Superintendent Winter, the Flacian successor of Hügel, demanded to know how Wesenbeck stood on the *Konfutationsbuch*. Wesenbeck stated that he was a jurist, not a theologian, and that the duke had forbidden the other faculties to embroil themselves in the quarrels of the divines. After unfruitful discussions with Musäus and Wigand, Wesenbeck was excommunicated and rejected as a sponsor.<sup>42</sup>

The case was appealed to the ducal court and was awaiting settlement during Flacius' disputation with Strigel in early August. Winter had been reprimanded and enjoined from further action, but was busily preparing his defense. In the meantime he and his curates, Paul Amandus and Valentin Langer, together with Professors Musäus and Wigand, preached against Strigel, and threatened other opponents of the *Konfutationsbuch* with excommunication. On August 28, Winter's reply to the court was rejected. This triggered a great deal of hatred against Winter and the Flacian party in Jena. The students especially were encouraged in their disaffection by Christoph Dürfeld, a professor of law, who meanwhile had also been excluded from Holy Communion by Winter.

Even some of Flacius' friends, Amsdorf,

Maximilian Mörlin of Coburg, and John Stössel of Heldburg (soon to be Winter's successor) stood against Winter. In October, still recalcitrant, he was dismissed as superintendent and shortly afterward died. Flacius and his theological colleagues at Jena (Musäus, Wigand, and Judex) protested to the duke. In November his reply was received: they were to be silent. The duke would take over the superintendency of the churches himself.

In December Flacius and Strigel were ordered to Weimar for an attempted reconciliation. A confession without antitheses was demanded from each. Flacius protested that unless Strigel would clearly and openly renounce his errors, he would still be a heretic to Flacius. There was no reconciliation. (P., II, 134—148)

In January 1561 a meeting of evangelical princes took place at Naumburg. Duke John Frederick had taken along none of the Jena theologians, who were now in his disfavor. To it Flacius sent a *Supplicationsschrift* drafted in 1559 and calling for an evangelical synod. It was signed by 46 notable theologians and 22 superintendents in Germany. Although most of these were Thuringian, there were many from north Germany. This proposed synod had become Flacius' great hope, and he continued to press for it throughout his life. He hoped that this synod would do for all of Germany what the *Konfutationsbuch* had tried to do for Thuringia. Against the objection that the Jena theologians were acting inconsistently in calling for a synod to decide a matter on which they had already passed judgment, Flacius replied that God does not want Christians to suspend judgment in doctrine, but to judge according to Scripture. The Naum-

<sup>42</sup> P., II, 135 ff. Cf. also Heussi's indignant reaction, p. 50.

burg conferees simply returned *Supplicationsschrift* without action. (P., II, 86—88, 94—96; M., 179—181, 513, 514)

The denouement continued at Jena. In February 1561 Johann Stössel became superintendent in Jena. The *Konfutationsbuch* fell into desuetude. As the Jena professors smarted under ducal disfavor, they used the pulpit to air their controversies. On April 22 the duke forbade them to preach. Next came the prohibition against publishing any books, then a proposal for a consistory which would exercise church discipline and censorship. The duke would preside and there were to be four superintendents and four courtiers on the commission, but none of the theological professors from the Jena faculty was to be appointed. Again there was no mention of the *Konfutationsbuch*.<sup>43</sup>

This was the final straw. Flacius regarded this prohibition to publish as a restriction of his confession and calling. The proposed ducal consistory was nothing less than political tyranny over the church. On September 10, 1561, Simon Musäus left Jena to become superintendent at Bremen. On October 1 Judex was deposed for publishing a book on the Antichrist. Johann Aurifaber, court preacher at Weimar, lost his post because he had said in a sermon that there were heresies in Thuringia. Flacius and Wigand complained bitterly in a letter to Stössel about his "turncoat behavior," and the superintendent turned this over to the court with a formal complaint against Flacius and Wigand. There was a hearing at the castle at Jena on November 25 with hostile Chancellor Brück in charge. On December 10 came

the expected dismissal. Flacius and Wigand were summoned to the castle and deprived of their ecclesiastical and academic offices in the presence of the entire faculty, clergy, and town council. The charges against them were: slander under the pretense of rejecting error, arrogantly founding the church upon themselves, refusing censorship, and appealing from the duke to a synod.<sup>44</sup>

#### FLACIUS IN REGENSBURG

January 1562 finds Flacius on the road to Regensburg, with new plans for an academy in south Germany that would serve Bavaria, Bohemia, and Austria. A Slavic printing house was also in his dreams. He had considered the possibility of going northward to Rostock, but they had sufficient orthodox teachers. He was invited to return to Magdeburg where Wigand and Judex had gone. But costly though it would be to go to Regensburg, it was there that he really wanted to go. After his friend Gallus, the superintendent at Regensburg, had prepared the way with the council, Flacius arrived in Regensburg with his wife and seven or eight children

<sup>44</sup> Heussi, pp. 64 f.; P., II, 160—174. The bitterness of feeling is described by P., II, 178 ff. Late in December while Flacius was still in Jena he prepared in manuscript a draft account of his dismissal for possible later printing. A student, John Durnpacher, was imprisoned for possessing a copy of it and was sentenced to death. The duke commuted the sentence to banishment. Flacius' picture was removed from the row of professors; it was not replaced until 1720. For a discussion of factors which help to explain Flacius' failure in Jena, cf. M., 153 to 213, 505—517. On the Flacianist party's attitude toward error, see Hans-Werner Gensichen, *Damnamus: Die Verwerfung von Irrlehre bei Luther und im Luthertum des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1955), pp. 94—117.

<sup>43</sup> P., II, 150—160; cf. Heussi, pp. 57 f.

in February 1562. (P., II, 174—180, 228)

He was a political refugee. Hardly had his presence become known, when the attorney of the city, Johann Hiltner, received a confidential note from the imperial secretary, Wolf Haller, warning the city against receiving this turbulent man who had angered the emperor and some of the princes. Although the city granted Flacius asylum, his ambitious plans for an academy or even a university were unsuccessful. Gallus interceded with the council in vain. He was forbidden to teach except in his own home. Flacius' plight was not just that he had such notable enemies, but that he was no pastor and that with his poor German he could not become one. (P., II, 228, 229)

After the Jena professorship, Flacius never held a position except for a few months in Antwerp. He lived from his literary labors and from gifts from churches, cities, or territorial princes. He must have saved considerably from his princely salary at Jena, although the house and garden that he had bought there still remained unsold. It is possible that on a journey to his homeland in the summer of 1563 he sold his inheritance. At any rate, about this time he deposited the huge sum of 2,100 gulden with the city council, for which he received 105 gulden (5%) a year interest.<sup>45</sup>

A painful controversy followed with some of the clergy of Regensburg, especially Wolfgang Waldner, who charged Flacius with usury. Even Gallus was un-

happy, and of course Flacius' old enemies were delighted. In defense Flacius pointed to his unpaid bills, the moving expenses from Jena, and the needs of his growing family. Mirkovic points to the thrifty commercial homeland of Flacius that could only regard the church's condemnation of interest as feudal and papalistic.<sup>46</sup>

In Regensburg Flacius also faced bereavement. In the beginning of 1564, at the birth of her twelfth child, his wife died after more than eighteen years of marriage. It was very difficult now for the scholar to attend to duties at home. He soon chose as his second wife Magdalena Illbeck, the daughter of the deceased pastor at Dutendorf. She had been living with her widowed mother in Regensburg. The marriage took place in October 1564. (The short period of mourning came in for criticism.) Sickness also plagued the Flacius household. Several small children died, and he himself was troubled with stomach disorders. (P., II, 232—234)

Nevertheless, he worked prodigiously. The publication of the *Magdeburg Centuries* continued, and here in Regensburg a great part of the *Clavis Scripturae* was completed. This includes also the tract on original sin, appended to the 1567 edition of the *Clavis*, which began the later Flacian controversy. Although travel was made dangerous by his past and present controversies, he moved about considerably. He went often to the Frankfurt Fair (in 1555, 1561, 1564, 1565, and 1566). In 1566 he traveled from Frankfurt to Mainz, where he had a narrow escape from Jesuits, and then through Basel

<sup>45</sup> M., 541—543, mentions not only this visit in 1563 and the 1543 mission for Luther, but also a visit in 1552. He does not believe, however, that Flacius ever sold his inheritance. He finds no such record in the notary books at Labin. (See also p. 439)

<sup>46</sup> P., II, 230—232. Mirkovic calculates the purchasing power of Flacius' capital as \$38,000 in American money. (Pp. 221, 520)

to Augsburg. In Basel he had his *De translatione Imperii Romani ad Germanos* printed, and in Augsburg he personally presented this to emperor Maximilian II in a public audience.<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile, the controversies continued. Ernestine Saxony continued to have trying years. Strigel had been reinstated on May 6, 1562, after signing a *Declaratio* in which he said that while the power to do good is absent in natural man, he possesses the *capacitas* to be converted. There had been a meeting between Strigel, Brück, and Jacob Andreae and Christoph Binder of Württemberg. Strigel was declared orthodox by the standard of the *Konfutationsbuch*. This brought a storm of indignation from the many Flacians still remaining in the country. In the midst of this, Strigel left for Leipzig in the fall of 1562, less than a year after Flacius was dismissed. Flacius denounced Strigel's *capacitas* in a critique published the same year. (P., II, 238—244)

The later stages of the Antinomian controversy had also now broken out, and the Flacians were in real difficulty. For if it had been possible to say that Strigel and his sympathizers had never really been "Gnesio-Lutherans" but crypto-Melanchthonians all along, it was hardly possible when staunchly Flacian Antonius Otto of Nordhausen began to break up the "Gnesio-Lutheran" ranks by using "hard words" against the third use of the Law in 1565. When he did so, Michael Neander of Ilfeld and Andreas Fabricius, another

pastor in Nordhausen, turned to Regensburg for support. Flacius decided against them. His opinion was signed by Gallus and others. The argument was simple. If the Law makes no demands of the new man, he has no need to beg forgiveness; he does not need Christ and the Gospel. Flacius thus refuted the Wittenbergers' old charge that he was an Antinomian. (P., II, 253—255)

The Regensburg Council had had many requests to expel Flacius. In July 1566, shortly after Flacius' experience at the Diet at Augsburg, the master of the imperial cavalry passed through Regensburg and informed the city of the emperor's displeasure. Although he had been somewhat favorably inclined toward Flacius and had actually helped him in his scholarly works, the influence of Elector August of Saxony, Flacius' implacable enemy, had turned the emperor against the fugitive. Fortunately, at the very time that the Regensburg Council informed Flacius that they could no longer grant him safe asylum, he received a call to Antwerp. He had spent over four fairly productive years at Regensburg. (P., II, 282—284)

#### FLACIUS IN ANTWERP AND STRASBOURG

Flacius traveled alone in October 1566 to the troubled city of Antwerp in the Netherlands. Besides Flacius, four other German superintendents or pastors, including Cyriacus Spangenberg from Mansfeld, Flacius' ardent supporter in later years, were called by the Lutheran contingent of Antwerp to try to organize church life in that turbulent city. (This was the time of partial religious liberty before the arrival of the Duke of Alba.) In Antwerp, Flacius met the Reformed head

<sup>47</sup> P., II, 236, 237, 280—282, 426. "Flacius Geist war eine unerschöpfliche Quelle immer neuer Entwürfe für die Kirche . . . Flacius Natur hatte einen eingeborenen Trieb rastlos thätig zu sein," p. 236.

on. In the attempt of the two evangelical minorities, Lutheran and Reformed, to try to find some *modus vivendi* and *modus operandi* in their agitated land, some of the Lutherans and many of the Reformed pressed for a union formula. Flacius insisted on a disputation as the only way toward union. The Lutherans who wanted anything else were "false brethren." Flacius also was emphatically Lutheran in his disapproval of the Reformed attitude toward rebellion: if the government persecutes, Scripture says "Flee," not "Take the sword."

During his few months in Antwerp Flacius published his *Exhortation to Prayer* in Latin and in Dutch. He worked on the Lutheran confession which was completed in November 1566 and published in 1567. This Latin confession was translated into Dutch and French. Flacius was still in Antwerp on February 24, 1567, when he addressed the dedicatory preface of his *Clavis*, published at Basel in 1567 to Duke Christopher of Württemberg. On March 5 he was in Frankfurt to meet his family, stranded there on the way from Regensburg because the Rhine was blocked with ice. Soon after, the Duke of Alba came to the Netherlands, and circumstances made it impossible for Flacius to return to Antwerp. So he began to look for another, more permanent asylum. (P., II, 286 to 295)

He had permission to stay in Frankfurt until the fall. In May 1567 a son Johann was born. When the town council ordered him to move, he decided to go to Strasbourg. The literary resources there, especially the scholarly help for his *Glossa* which was under way, and the greater distance from Wittenberg and Dresden was very enticing. On November 14,

1567, about a year after leaving Regensburg and after a few days of pleasant visits with Brenz, Andreae, and Bidenbach in Stuttgart, he arrived in Strasbourg. This was to be his harrassed refuge for many years.

The council of Strasbourg gave him asylum until summer, and then until fall. This privilege was extended many times, but only for short periods. Since Flacius had to apply anew each time, this in itself gave rise to friction in view of the factions within Strasbourg and the efforts that Flacius' enemies made to dislodge him. Since Bucer had left Strasbourg for England in 1551, the head of the mediating, center party (over against the Reformed) was John Sturm, who later became Flacius' antagonist. The head of the "Gnesio-Lutherans" was Superintendent Marbach, who was initially friendly to Flacius.

Soon, however, Flacius lost the support of most of his friends. When Flacius had visited Andreae in 1567, he had agreed with Andreae's attempt at reconciliation. But the articles which Andreae composed setting forth the nature of the controversies had never been sent to Flacius. When they finally reached him and the other clergy at Strasbourg in February 1569, he refused to join them in their approval. The articles had been written without antitheses! By this action he lost favor with the Württembergers as well as many of the Lutherans at Strasbourg. Andreae was no friend of Flacius after this. (P., II, 295 to 301)

#### THE CONTROVERSY ON ORIGINAL SIN

Much more serious was the outbreak at this same time of the controversy on original sin, the Flacian controversy. It was

his tract on original sin appended to the 1567 edition of the *Clavis* which raised the storm. Flacius had made original sin to be man's *substantia*! He had dethroned the Creator and turned Satan into a creator. This was the Manichaean heresy! But it was not Flacius' old antagonists who took up their pens. "Gnesio-Lutherans" themselves, old colleagues, Jena professors, became his opponents.<sup>48</sup>

In 1567 there had been a drastic political upheaval in ducal Saxony. For crimes against the empire Duke John Frederick had begun an imprisonment which would last until 1595. His adviser, Chancellor Christian Brück, who had presided over Flacius' dismissal six years earlier, had been quartered alive in the market place at Gotha. The duke's younger brother, John William, succeeded him and initiated a Flacian revival in Thuringia and at Jena. But it was a Flacian revival without Flacius. Strigel was publicly condemned. In 1569 the *Konfutationsbuch* again became the doctrinal norm for the professors at Jena, and in 1570 this was supplanted by the equally strict Thuringian *Corpus doctrinae christianae*. Johann Wigand was back at Jena in 1569, and he was joined by Flacius' later champion, Johann Coelestin, Timotheus Kirchner, and the redoubtable, oft-exiled Tilemann Heshusius. But Flacius was not recalled. The new duke could not afford to risk the wrath of his cousin, August of Saxony, in concert with whom he had besieged his now imprisoned brother.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> P., II, 310—325. Preger believes that Flacius wrote the tract in Regensburg already in 1564, and that he made use of medical opinions in describing man's *substantia*. (Pp. 325, 326)

<sup>49</sup> P., II, 242, 243, 302 ff. Cf. also Heussi, pp. 74—77.

There was even a new attempt at reconciliation between the two Saxonies. The Colloquy at Altenburg from October 1568 to March 1569, however, resulted only in greater animosity. The Wittenberg theologians charged the Thuringians with being Flacian, a term that even "Gnesio-Lutherans" were beginning to find hard to bear. About a year earlier, after John William had become the new duke, anti-Flacian student riots in Jena had literally demolished Flacius' old but long empty house.<sup>50</sup>

Preger has shown that Wigand's and Heshusius' antipathy to Flacius' views on original sin did not originate from their initial reading of the tract in the *Clavis*. Flacius had actually sent it to Musäus for comment and had asked for Heshusius' reactions too. There was some uneasiness regarding *substantia*, but they were well pleased with Flacius' earnest treatment of sin. Criticism broke first in the north, in Brunswick, where Joachim Mörlin bitterly condemned Flacius' view and set forth a bill of old and new grievances. (P., II, 326 to 332)

Preger feels that Mörlin, Osiander's old antagonist, was the real cause of Flacius' final troubles. For it was through Mörlin that Heshusius became convinced of Flacius' error and it was Heshusius and Wigand who became his chief antagonists in the controversy. The correspondence between Flacius and Heshusius, between Flacius and Gallus, and between Heshusius and Gallus is tragic. Until his death in 1570 Gallus, even though he did not agree

<sup>50</sup> P., II, 302—305; M., 198—201, 515, 516. A placard placed on the house just before the riot read: "Tumultuantur Flaciani, Fluvies diaboli, volumus eos depellere. Fiat. Fiat. Fiat."

with Flacius, remained his friend and made many futile attempts at mediation. (P., II, 330—334)

In 1568 and 1569 Flacius wrote three books explaining and defending his position.<sup>51</sup> At this time the break between Flacius and his old friends was still not fully in the open. The open break came in 1570 with a series of polemical works. Meanwhile, Flacius was having difficulty remaining in Strasbourg. Elector August was determined to get Flacius out of the way. His attempted intimidation of the town council in March 1570 persuaded Flacius to seek refuge in Basel. With no help from that quarter he was fortunately given another reprieve by the Strasbourgers.<sup>52</sup>

Flacius was determined to rebuild some of the broken bridges. He made a very dangerous journey to Kahla and sent Martin Wolf from there to Jena with a plea for a colloquy. This emissary received a very cold reception from Wigand, who claimed that it was dangerous to deal with a man who had so many enemies. Flacius' Jena critics had indeed become his enemies.<sup>53</sup>

In the fall of 1570 Flacius made an extremely dangerous journey to Speier. He wanted to appeal to the emperor for

a judicial decision on his behalf. In vain he asked Duke John William and Wigand, who had accompanied him, for a colloquy. Because of rumors of hostile actions against him there was nothing to do but return to Strasbourg. This is not to say that Flacius had no friends left. Particularly in Mansfeld there was a contingent of loyal supporters, including Count Vollrath and doughty Cyriacus Spangenberg, who had been with Flacius in Antwerp. Spangenberg defended Flacius in his foreword to his volume of sermons on Luther's hymns. One of the new (1569) professors at Jena, Friedrich Cölestinus, was Flacius' supporter. Because of this there was a disputation between him and Heshusius on original sin. With the threat of house arrest from the duke, Cölestinus left Jena on January 25, 1572.<sup>54</sup>

In 1571 a number of books continued the controversy. Flacius' largest work on the subject was his *Orthodoxa confessio de originali peccato*, published on August 1, 1571, in which he charged his opponents with perverting his views. In this and the following year appeared a whole spate of books written by Flacius in response to attacks from Wigand and Heshusius. Flacius also defended his friends who had defended him and who now were deposed in ducal Saxony. Musäus, Heshusius' father-in-law, who in 1568 had approved Flacius' tract on original sin, was also persuaded to enter the controversy. Even young Matthias Flacius,

<sup>51</sup> Γνωθὶ σεαυτὸν. *De essentia originalis iustitiae et iniustitiae seu imaginis Dei et contrariae*. 1568. *De occasionibus vitandi errorem in essentia iniustitiae originalis. Item de eximia utilitate summaque necessitate doctrinae de essentia imaginis Dei ac diaboli, iustitiaeque ac iniustitiae originalis*. 1569. For a description of these writings, see P., 334, 335, 339, 340.

<sup>52</sup> P., II, 306—309, 341—343.

<sup>53</sup> P., II, 341, 342. Cf. Heussi, p. 76, for Wigand's role, and M., 202—205, 516, 517, for a discussion of Flacius' last attempts at reconciliation.

<sup>54</sup> P., II, 344—347, 356, and Heussi, pp. 79 f. As controversy over Flacius raged at Jena in 1570, Elector August of Saxony had a cannon made with this inscription:

"Die Flacianer und Zeloten  
Sind des Teufels Vorboten." (P. 305)

Jr., wrote a short tract defending his father against Heshusius and Musäus. (P., II, 349—364)

Meanwhile Jacob Andreae's work toward reconciliation proceeded. Although he was quite unhappy with Flacius' views on original sin, he was glad that in the spring of 1571 Flacius had signed, with some reservations about amnesty, the Zerbst agreements regarding a doctrinal norm. Now, however, Andreae pressed the other Lutherans at Strasbourg to persuade Flacius to give up his views on original sin. Although Marbach and the Strasbourgers had at first sided with Flacius when Heshusius attacked him, Andreae was bringing them around to a cooler position toward Flacius. When Andreae passed through Strasbourg, a colloquy was held between him and Flacius on August 10, 1571. They apparently reached some agreement, although Andreae always insisted that original sin was *accidens*. What pleased Flacius was that Andreae agreed with him that in the Scripture original sin is "the old man" or "the flesh." But in further negotiations by letter the old conflicts arose again, and ultimately the Flacian controversy arrived with a vengeance at Strasbourg itself. By 1572 the Strasbourg clergy had become Flacius' bitter enemies. They, too, had become *die Accidentalier* and so for Flacius nothing less than Synergists and scholastic Pelagians. Flacius was even willing to give up the expression "substance" in favor of "substantial powers," but the clergy were not satisfied. Once more Flacius attempted to push forward his old proposal for a synod of all theologians of the Augsburg Confession. (P., II, 364—373)

In the midst of this unrest Flacius de-

parted for a journey eastward. Unexpected and uninvited he appeared at Count Vollrath's castle in Mansfeld. Since Andreas Fabricius had recently accused Flacius in a letter to the court, Flacius asked for a colloquy which was held on September 3 and 4, 1572. Here Flacius defended himself against the charge that he had turned sin into substance purely and simply. But his opponents were not satisfied with any equation between sin and substance, even corrupted substance. In a way Flacius was vindicated, for his opponents were not able to prove their charges. And yet the meeting only stirred up more controversy. For Flacius demanded a favorable judgment from the count which his opponents of the Eisleben clergy refused to sign. This led to further polemical pamphlets. Flacius emphasized again and again that he had always meant by *substantia* only the substantial form of the evil image, not the entire man.<sup>55</sup>

#### LAST YEARS AND DEATH

When Flacius returned from Mansfeld in October, the council of Strasbourg informed him that he would have to leave by the following spring. He was weak and ill, and so were others in his large family of eight children. In the spring of 1573 he left his family behind in order to find another asylum. He spent some time with Hermann Adolph Ridesel, the hereditary marshal of Hesse, in the neighborhood at Fulda. On Ascension Day,

<sup>55</sup> P., II, 373—377. The Eisleben pastors had insisted that one must distinguish between corrupted nature and sin. Otherwise God's work is mixed with Satan's. Fabricius said that nature is not conformed to God's Law only in so far as (*in quantum*) it is corrupted. Flacius replied: Not *in quantum*, but *quia*, i. e. because it is corrupted.



May 21, he had some volatile conversations with two Jesuits under the friendly patronage of the abbot of Fulda, Georg Balthasar of Darmbach. Through Ridesel's help Flacius received a place of refuge in the former Cistercian convent of St. Mary Magdalene in Frankfurt-am-Main. That was his destination when he and his family left Strasbourg around June 8, 1573. He had been in Strasbourg for five and one-half years. (P., II, 378—381)

Flacius did not lead a sedentary life in his new home. Early in 1574 he made an extended journey to the east with his son Andrew as his companion. From a visit to Count Vollrath in Mansfeld he traveled to Berlin, where the new elector John George and Superintendent Andreas Musculus received him quite cordially. Flacius' reception in Silesia by Count Sebastian Zedlitz was the warmest experience he had had in years. Here too the colloquy on May 12 arranged with the local clergy at castle Langenau was refreshingly mild, and the aging Flacius apparently warmed under these friendly circumstances. Flacius again emphasized that he was not concerned with *substantia* itself. He merely wanted to see that no one turned original sin into an *accidens*. He returned to Frankfurt by August 1574. (P., II, 385—387)

Still the controversy on original sin continued. Andreae and Flacius exchanged polemical tracts from the time that Andreae's *Six Sermons* appeared in 1573. The third sermon dealt with original sin and criticized Flacius. Years before in Regensburg Flacius had written on the Lord's Supper as the crypto-Calvinist controversy began. But there are also works on the Lord's Supper from the last days at Strasbourg and Frankfurt. Just before his

death he was preparing a translation of his *De mystica sacramentalique seu externa praesentia et manducatione corporis et sanguinis Christi in sacra coena*, in which he pointed to the union of the heavenly and earthly in the purposes of divine revelation as a recurrent theme in the history of salvation. (P., II, 388 f. and 258 ff.)

By the year 1573, Duke John William of Saxony had died, and the new regent for his young sons was Elector August. That meant the expulsion of the "Gnesio-Lutherans" of Jena, Wigand and Heshusius, now Flacius' bitter opponents. They found positions in Prussia. August was a formidable opponent. Over a hundred clergy in Thuringia were deposed as "Flacians." Soon, however, the even greater aboutface came in Electoral Saxony with the disgrace of the crypto-Calvinists. Flacius' old friend turned adversary in the Jena days, Superintendent Johann Stössel, died in prison, a deeply troubled man. He had been accused of crypto-Calvinism. (P., II, 382 ff.)

Flacius' refuge in Frankfurt was made possible by the elderly stout-hearted noblewoman, Catharina von Meerfeld, who was the evangelical prioress of a Lutheran convent for widows, orphans, and dependents of distinguished citizens. In December 1573, for example, through the machinations of August of Saxony the town council gave Flacius a twenty-four hour ultimatum to leave the city. The prioress, other friends in the city, and Magdalena Flacius herself petitioned for clemency. Flacius' long trip during 1574 helped the council to be less mindful of August's demands. (P., II, 517—521)

When Flacius returned to Frankfurt in August 1574, his health was very poor.

He had been troubled with diarrhea for some time and complained that "flesh and blood and warmth were disappearing from my body." His final works against Andreae took so much time away from his *Glossa* on the Old Testament that he was unable to finish it before his death. In January 1575 Flacius received another ultimatum from the council permitting him only another month in the city. After further petitioning and correspondence an extension was granted until May 1, but Flacius never lived to see this day.

On Wednesday, March 9, Flacius remained in bed because of weakness. On March 10, feeling that death was near, he had his son Daniel call Pastors Hartmann

Beyer and Matthias Ritter. He wanted to give them his final testimony on original sin and then receive Holy Communion. But since he was in such a weakened condition, they left, promising to return the next day. Friday morning at nine o'clock Matthias Flacius died very peacefully. It was March 11, 1575. The great scholar and controversialist was 55 years old when he committed himself to Christ with the words: *Jesu Christe, fili Dei, miserere mei*.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> P., II, 523—527. For the final story of the Flacianists of Mansfeld and those driven from Regensburg to Austria until their demise in the Counter Reformation, cf. P., II, 390 to 395.